The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The Department of Jewish Thought

The Self-Evaluation Report

November 2008

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Written by M. R. Niehoff and J. Garb

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1. The Institution

The proposal to establish a Jewish institution for higher education was raised as far back as 1882, yet the cornerstone of the Hebrew University was only laid in Jerusalem in 1918. On April 1, 1925, the university was officially opened on Mount Scopus. The academic life of the university (courses and research) took place on Mount Scopus until 1948, the year of the establishment of the State of Israel. During the War of Independence, the road to Mount Scopus was blocked and the university was forced into exile; it continued its activities thereafter in rented facilities scattered throughout various parts of Jerusalem. In 1955, the government of Israel allocated land in the Givat Ram neighborhood for a new Hebrew University campus. In 1967, the road to Mount Scopus was reopened, and in the early 1970s, academic activities were restored on the Mount Scopus campus.

The University has since continued to grow, with the addition of new buildings, establishment of new programs, and recruitment of outstanding scholars, researchers and students, in fulfillment of its commitment to excellence.

The Hebrew University in Jerusalem was accredited as an institution of higher education by the President of Israel, Mr. Itzhak Ben-Zvi, in accordance with the Law of the Council of Higher Education, 1958, on the 23rd of August 1962.

 The Hebrew University operates on five campuses:

• Mount Scopus campus, site of the Faculty of Humanities and the School of Education, the Faculty of Social Sciences, the School of Business Administration, the Faculty of Law and the Institute of Criminology, the School of Occupational Therapy, the School of Social Work, the Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace, the Center for Pre-Academic Studies, the Rothberg International School, and the Buber Center for Adult Education.

• Edmund Safra campus in Givat Ram, site of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, School of Engineering and Computer Sciences, The Center

for the Study of Rationality, The Institute for Advanced Studies, and the Jewish National and University Library.

• Ein Kerem campus, site of the Faculty of Medicine (The Hebrew University–Hadassah Medical School, School of Public Health and Community Medicine, School of Pharmacy, and the School of Nursing) and the Faculty of Dental Medicine.

• Rehovot campus, site of the Faculty of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Quality Sciences and the School of Nutritional and Home Sciences.

• Beit Dagan campus, site of the Koret School of Veterinary Medicine.

• An additional site is the Interuniversity Institute for Marine Science in Eilat, operated by the Hebrew University for the benefit of all institutions of higher learning in Israel.

*Below is the **over-all** number of students studying towards academic degrees in the institution according to degree:*

2008 Students of the Hebrew University

1st degree	2nd degree	Ph.D	total
11,690	6,819	2,704	23,285

## University Structure:

Chairman of the Board of Governors: Charles H. Goodman
President: Prof. Menachem Magidor
Rector: Prof. Haim D. Rabinowitch
Vice-President and Director-General: Elhanan Hacohen
Vice-President for Research and Development: Prof. Hillel Bercovier
Vice-President for External Relations: Carmi Gillon
Vice-Rector: Prof. Miri Gur-Arye
Comptroller: Yair Hurwitz

Deans:
Faculty of Humanities: Prof. Israel Bartal
Faculty of Social Sciences: Prof. Boas Shamir
Faculty of Law: Prof. Yoav Dotan
Faculty of Mathematics & Natural Science: Prof. Hermona Soreq
Faculty of Agricultural, Food & Environmental Quality Sciences:
    Prof. Eli Feinerman

Faculty of Medicine:	Prof. Ehud Razin
Faculty of Dental Medicine:	Prof. Adam Stabholtz
Jerusalem School of Bus. Admin.:	Prof. Tsvi Piran
Paul Baerwald School of Social Work:	Prof. Gail Auslander
Dean of Students:	Prof. Esther Shohami
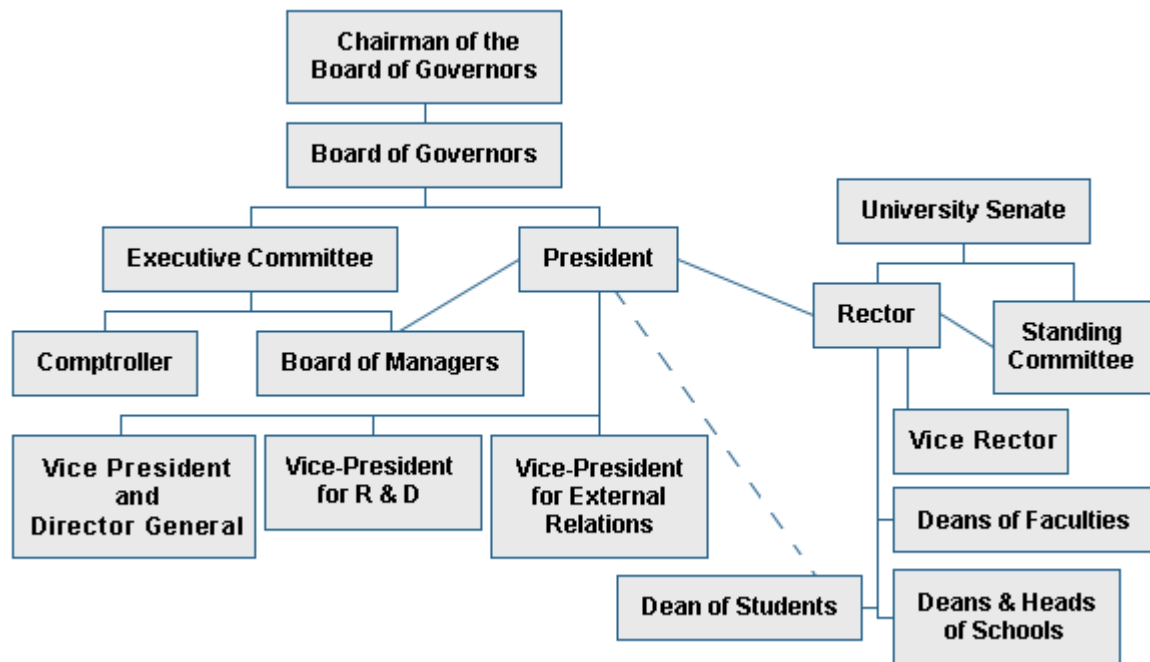
Chapter 2 - <u>The Parent Unit Operating the Study Programs Under Evaluation</u>

2.1 The name of the parent unit and a brief summary of its "history", its activities and development in the period of its existence

The Faculty of Humanities is the largest of the Hebrew University's seven Faculties. Research and teaching are conducted in a wide range of fields. The Faculty was founded in 1928 and originally consisted of three divisions: The Institute of Jewish Studies, Oriental Studies and General Humanities. For two decades the Faculty conferred only the degrees of Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy, the earliest M.A. degree's being awarded in 1931 and the first Doctorate in 1936. In 1949, courses leading to the Bachelor's degree were introduced and the first of these were awarded in 1953. As of the end of the 2008 acadamic year, the departments of the Faculty of Humanities, within the framework of the Ceil and Joseph Mazer Center for Humanities, are organized within the framework of the following institutes:

- Jewish Studies
- Contemporary Jewry
- Asian and African Studies
- Arts and Letters
- Archaeology
- School of Education

At this moment, the faculty has two schools: the school of history and the school of literature.

The Schools supplement the regular departmental structure by providing a framework fordiciplinary inquiry for the faculty and students throughout the University's history and literature departments.

Interdisciplinary research is promoted through a group of specialized Research centres. The faculty serves 4000 students enrolled in degree programs at the B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. level with more than one-third in advanced studies.

In 2006 the Gager Committee was appointed to evaluated the Faculty of the Humanities. The Gager Report resulted in a number of reforms, which are in the process of being implemented. Enclosed is the executive summary of the report.

The Department of Jewish Thought belongs to the Faculty of Humanities and within that framework also to the Institute for Jewish Studies. This double affiliation is significant and has given rise to many discussions concerning the overall orientation of the Department. Indeed, the relationship between the Faculty of Humanities and the different Jewish Studies Departments has been a major concern over the years. The foundation of the Institute of Jewish Studies preceded the official opening of the university, thus signifying the central importance of this field in the first institution of higher learning in Israel. On 8th May 1935 the Faculty of Humanities decided, after an extremely lively debate, to separate the teaching of "Jewish History" from "General History". This fateful decision ushered in a period of separatism and specialization of the Institute of Jewish Studies, with the result that students learnt about Jewish subjects without becoming familiar with the languages and cultures of the environment in which these literatures had originally developed. Many welcomed this situation, feeling that a national culture would thus develop and a unique emphasis be given to a field which is studied from different, sometimes still unsympathetic perspectives around the world.

Recently, the issue of the connection between the general Humanities and the Jewish Studies Departments has once more arisen. The Gager Committee, which evaluated the Faculty of the Humanities in 2006, strongly recommended greater cooperation between the general departments and their Jewish equivalents (for details, see summary below). The Gager Report resulted in a number of reforms, which are in the process of being implemented. As of 2008, the Departments of Jewish Thought, Philosophy, Comparative Religion and Cognitive Studies are part of the newly founded School of Modes of Thought, which is chaired by Prof. Shmuel Scolnicov. Thus far, one core course of the new school has been decided upon ("Great Books in Philosophy and Religion"). Furthermore, following the reforms of the Gager Report, the head of the Institute of Jewish Studies, Prof. Aharon Maman, has initiated an Institute Seminar in order to emphasize research as the main function of the Institute. The seminar was convened three times during the

last academic year, but attended only by a small minority of members of the Institute.

2.2 Mission statement of the parent unit, its aims and goals

The faculty of humanities at the Hebrew University creates and promotes a vibrant discourse between cultures, genres and historic periods. We at the faculty believe strongly that human civilization is worthy of study and can be drawn on in order to educate people to deal with changes in the present and even in the future. The main goals of the Faculty are to enhance research and to develop critical thinking, creativity and originality among its staff and students.
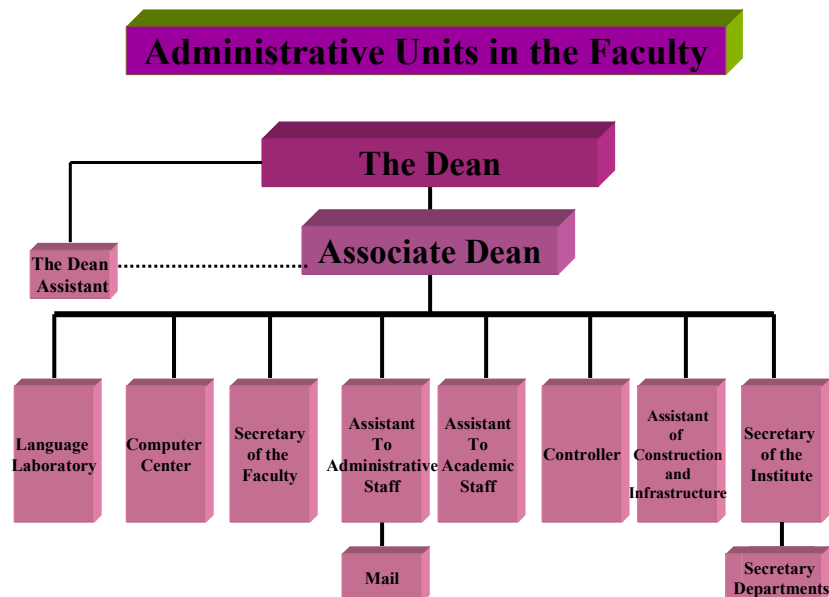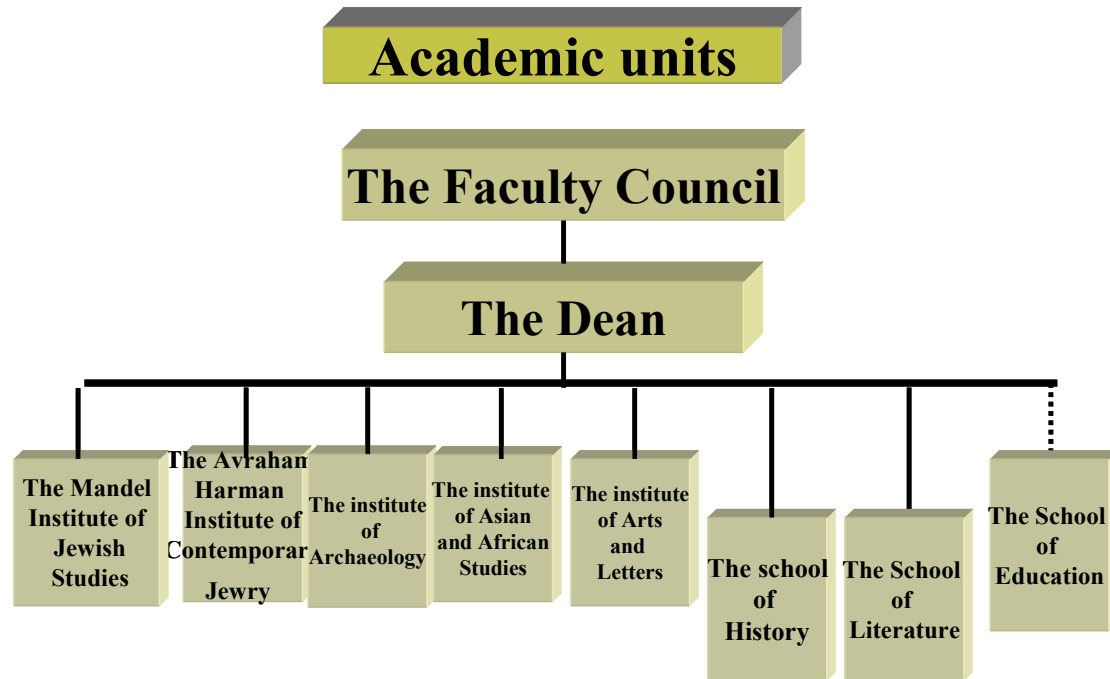
In a letter sent to the writers of the report on July 14, 2008 the dean of the faculty of the Humanities, Professor Israel Bartal, described how the recommendations of the Gager Report are being implemented. He distinguishes between three stages, the first dealing with broad introductory courses to be taken by all students of the faculty, the second treating the creation of wider disciplinary units, which transcend the individual departments, and the last stage addressing research students and special programs to support academic excellence.

The first stage was ushered in by the decision of the faculty's Teaching Committee (Nov. 2007) to design a study program in the spirit of the Gager Report, requiring all students to take three "Gate way Courses" treating a particular subject from a broad perspective of the schools' discipline and through different periods were envisioned. These aspects of the reform are to be implemented in the academic year of 2008-9.

The second stage concerns structural changes of the faculty so as to create larger units and overarching study programs. The faculty council approved (June 2007) the creation of 5 schools: the already existing school of history and school of literature and 3 new ones: Modes of Thought; Arts and Philology. This stage will be implemented in 2008-2009. The third stage will

be discussed by the Teaching Committee at the beginning of the academic year 2008-9 and, according to the dean, will involve some "steps even more radical than those proposed by the Gager Report".

2.3 **Description and chart of the unit's academic and administrative organizational structure (including relevant committees).**

Academic units

The Faculty Council

The Dean

- The Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies
- The Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry
- The institute of Archaeology
- The institute of Asian and African Studies
- The institute of Arts and Letters
- The school of History
- The School of Literature
- The School of Education

Administrative Units in the Faculty

The Dean

Associate Dean

The Dean Assistant

- Language Laboratory
- Computer Center
- Secretary of the Faculty
- Assistant To Administrative Staff
  - Mail
- Assistant To Academic Staff
- Controller
- Assistant of Construction and Infrastructure
- Secretary of the Institute
  - Secretary Departments

2.4 Names of holders of senior academic and administrative positions.

The Dean – Professor Israel Bartal
israelb@savion.huji.ac.il

Vice Dean for Research – Professor Gideon Shelah
msshe@mscc.huji.ac.il

Vice Dean for Curriculum – Professor Rachel Milstein
Milstein@huji.ac.il

Associate Dean – Mr. Nahum Regev
nahumr@savion.huji.ac.il

Senior Academic Secretary – Dr. Dan Altbauer

dana@savion.huji.ac.il

2.5 The number of study programs (departments, etc) operating in its framework; the names of the academic degrees (in English and Hebrew) granted to the graduates of these programs (the phrasing that appears in the diploma.); the number of students who have studied (and are studying) within the parent unit in each of the last five years according to the level of degree (first degree, second degree with thesis, second degree without thesis, doctoral degree). Please provide this data in the format of a table.

Department	BA	MA	PH.D
The Mandel institute of Jewish Studies			
Bible	X	X	X
Hebrew	X	X	X
Hebrew Literature	X	X	X
History of the Jewish People	x	x	x
Jewish and comparative Folklore	x		
Jewish Studies	X		
Jewish Thought	X	X	X
Talmud	X	X	X
The Avraham Harman institute of Contemporary Jewry			

Contemporary Jewry	X	X	x

The institute of Asian and African Studies			
Arabic Language and Literature	X	X	X
East Asian Studies	X	X	X
Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies	X	X	X
The institute of Art and Letters			
Classics	X	X	X
cognitive Studies	X	x	X
Comparative Religion		X	X
Culture Studies		x	X
English	X	X	X
French Language and Literature			
General & Comparative Literature	X	X	X
German Language and Literature	X	X	X
History	X	X	X
History of Art	X	X	X
History, Philosophy & Sociology of the Sciences		X	X
Interdisciplinary Program (General Studies)	X		
Linguistics	X	X	X
Musicology	X	X	X
Philosophy	X	X	X
Russian studies	X	X	X
Spanish and Latin American Studies	X	X	X

Theater Studies	X	*	X
Program in Conjunction with the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance (BA Mus/MA Mus)	X	X	
Archaeology and the Ancient Near East	X	X	X
Combined and special Programs:			
Amirim Program for Outstanding Students	X		
Hebrew Literature and Language	X		
History and History of the Jewish People	X		
Individual Program of Studies		X	
Revivim Program (training teachers for Jewish Studies, BA+MA)	X		

The School of Education, as a semi-independent unit, also has programs on all three levels.

Names of Degrees

Bachelor of Arts: The possible tracks are: Two Majors; One major and supplementary studies; one major and one minor; one major and a program).

Master of Arts: The possible tracks are: Studies within a department; an individual program; MA in education.

Doctor of Philosophy.

> **2.6** **The number of graduates of the unit in each of the last five years according the level of degree (first degree, second degree with thesis, second degree without thesis, doctoral degree). Please provide this data in the format of a table.**

The number of students and graduates in the Faculty in each of the last five years

Year	Degree		Students	Graduates*
2004	BA		2626	1298
	MA	with thesis	533	113
		without thesis	695	83
	PHD		566	87
2005	BA		2535	1353
	MA	with thesis	522	111
		without thesis	751	121
	PHD		584	85
2006	BA		2370	1116
	MA	with thesis	504	105
		without thesis	679	132
	PHD		598	73
2007	BA		2247	1152
	MA	with thesis	453	112
		without thesis	624	111
	PHD		590	75
2008	BA		2176	
	MA	with thesis	420	
		without thesis	544	
	PHD		533	

* Not includes the M.A graduates from the school of Education.

2.7   **What bodies (internal/external) decide on rationale, mission and goals of the parent unit and of the study programs, how they are decided upon, examined and, if deemed necessary, changed? Have they been discussed within the last five years? If so, please specify when these discussions have taken place and what were their**

outcomes? If not, when were changes made (if at all)? How are the mission, goals and changes brought to the attention of the teaching staff, the students and the institution's authorities?

The Faculty Board, consisting all of the Professors, Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers and the Lecturers is the major constitutional body of The Faculty that decides on the rationale, mission and goals of the Faculty and its departments. The Faculty has 3 committees: the Development Committee under the chairmanship of the Dean, the Curriculum Committee under the chairmanship of the Vice-Dean for Curriculum affairs and the Research Committee under the chairmanship of the Vice Dean for Research Affairs. The committees submit their recommendations to the plenum of the Faculty Board. Each department as a whole sets its general goals and a steering Committee pursues the means to put these goals into practice. The committees prioritize fields in the departments that need to be strengthened through addition of new academic staff and discuss major changes in the Curriculum. The departments submit their recommendations to the three major Faculty's committees. In addition to the Faculty's committees, the university has a Teaching Regulations Committee, which consists of all the chairpersons of the Curriculum Committees of the different faculties of the University. This committee is in charge of the university regulations concerning teaching and studying. Frequently the President and the Rector of the university decide to convene special committees to evaluate specific faculties or departments. On the Gager Committee, see above 2.1

Executive Summary of Gager Report

The Committee for the Future of the Humanities was appointed by President Menachem Magidor to consider a wide range of issues relating to the future of the Humanities at the Hebrew University. In particular, the Committee was asked to identify fields of strength or weakness within the Faculty of Humanities and to suggest ways to further develop and correct them. We sought to examine both undergraduate and graduate studies and to suggest ways to achieve and maintain high-level, inspiring teaching, and to envisage various structural possibilities that may foster high quality research in the Humanities and encourage cooperation between scholars. On three separate visits to the University, committee members met with many members of the faculty, administration and student body, and the ideas, concerns and suggestions that emerged in these meetings largely shaped the recommendations that follow.

It is the strong belief of the committee that the members of the faculty of Humanities at the Hebrew University rank among the leading scholars of the world. It is, however, clear that there are specific areas of the Faculty of Humanities that require attention and improvement, particularly in light of the ongoing reduction in the number of faculty positions and the prospect of numerous retirements. We propose significant changes in a number of areas. Only full co-operation on all sides will make this possible, but we believe that the work of our Committee has already sparked new conversations on a wide range of issues.

It is the conclusion of the Committee that the Hebrew University must pay special attention to three general areas as it makes new hires in the faculty: the contemporary world in all geographical areas (without at the same time losing the traditional emphasis on earlier or classical periods); the study of gender in all areas; and Israeli culture and society, including social, ethnic and religious groups of all kinds. The Committee also recommends that the following specific areas currently under threat be strengthened and maintained: Yiddish, American Studies, the teaching of modern Arabic and more teaching of courses in Arabic, Russian language and literature, and folklore, theater and musicology. At the national level, the Committee believes that certain fields of study, such as African studies, Romance languages and literature, and ancient Semitic epigraphy are in danger of disappearing altogether and their survival depends of the development of serious cooperation among Israeli

universities at the national level. The Committee holds the view that at this crucial stage in the development of the Faculty, there must be a strategic plan that will serve as the basis for making new appointments. It is our view that the set of priorities listed above might serve as the basis for such a strategic plan.

The Committee has given careful consideration to what we take to be weaknesses in the current BA curriculum. Specifically, we have attempted to address the widely held perception that many students arrive at the University with deficiencies in writing modern Hebrew and the equally prevalent opinion that many students lack a solid grasp on reading and writing in English. We have also sought to provide students with the currently lacking foundation in basic academic disciplines, while keeping in mind that most students arrive at the University after military and other forms of service and have consequently been separated from the classroom and from the culture of academic and intellectual skills. With these factors in mind, the Committee has proposed changes in the BA curriculum, beginning with required courses for first year students in English reading and writing AND in Hebrew writing. We also recommend that students will no longer be required to choose two majors fields of study in order to qualify for the BA. In effect, students will major in (1) a Department or in (2) a Department and a Program or in (3) two Departments.

The Committee has approached the delicate issue of how the existing structure of academic departments might be modified and simplified. It is the view of the Committee that the current structure of departments and programs is no longer appropriate to the proper functioning of a major university, and some departments are too small to maintain an adequate level of academic and intellectual strength. In its own deliberations, the Committee has approached the issue of reorganization from the perspective of the BA curriculum. We propose the creation of four divisions within the Faculty of Humanities: Languages and Literatures, History, Arts and Expressive Culture, and Modes of Thought, with specific departments each being part of one of these Divisions (see report).   In addition to the departments, students may also concentrate in one of several Programs, which will be interdisciplinary in character and as complementary to the Departments, though working in close cooperation with them. Each of the four major divisions will be required to develop one or more team-taught gateway courses for first-year students. The teaching of the new BA first year will require a cultural change in much of the over-specialized approach to teaching among the faculty who will need to implement it. But it is the belief of the committee

that a principal goal of the Hebrew University is the education of citizens, not merely specialists. More than in the past, many first-year students will be exploring their options rather than plunging into a 'major' at the very beginning. Thus, advising by faculty members will be essential in this new model and the administration of the University will need to provide resources so that faculty will be well trained and willing to undertake this important task.

The Committee has dedicated much thought to the graduate programs of the Faculty. We have found that the MA programs were of unequal quality, and serious attention needs to be directed at elevating their quality and articulating their goals. We have also recommended that **all** MA programs offer a first-semester methodological seminar every year. With regard to both MA and PhD programs, the Committee strongly recommends that admissions standards and procedures should be a matter of Departmental concern and authority. In more general terms, graduate students should be seen as working in a department, not just with a single member of the Faculty. The Committee also strongly supports a program whereby outstanding BA students can be identified and granted generous stipends at the MA level. The Committee is also concerned about the low level of funding for all graduate programs.

We have also made some recommendations for improving the physical plant of the Faculty, including renovating offices to make them more inhabitable for faculty members, and updating classrooms into "smart classrooms." We have also proposed that every department and program prepare an up-to-date website in English and Hebrew.   Finally, we have addressed some concerns about the library and future role of the library and its staff as an instructional unit of the university. Personnel must have first-hand experience with the processes of research and writing in order to properly guide students in these areas.

Chapter 3 - <u>The Evaluated Study Program</u>

The report was written by Dr. Maren Niehoff and Dr. Jonathan Garb. Dr. Avinoam Rosenak and Dr. Benjamin Brown assisted with technical details (for further details, see 5.3 and 5.4)

3.1   <u>The Goals and Structure of the Study Program</u>

3.1.1 The name of the study program, a brief summary describing its development since its establishment.

As the most veteran department of Jewish thought in Israel, The Department of Jewish Thought (Mahshevet Israel) is characterized by a strong awareness of its history and a short survey is called for.

The roots of the Department of Jewish Thought lie in the "Department of Hebrew Philosophy and Kabbalah", which was led by illustrious scholars such as Julius Guttmann, Gershom Scholem and later Shlomo Pines. The department was established in 1925, as part of the Institute for Jewish Studies, the first body of the new University. The basic structure was that of one position in Kabbalah and one in Medieval Philosophy (since 1936, Profs. Scholem and Guttmann). This structure persisted through the next decades. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the department was gradually re-organized and given its present name in 1979. One result of this change was the inclusion of modern Jewish thought in the study program, led by Professor Eliezer Schweid.

This re-organization was accompanied by interesting debates between those who questioned the intellectual viability of the rather universal term "Jewish Thought" and those who upheld it. One should note, however, that certain areas of Jewish thought were not consistently cultivated within the new structure. Ancient Jewish Thought was inaugurated in the Department by the appointment of Dr. Suzanne Daniel-Nataf (in the late 1970s) and further supported by the more informal teaching of Dr. Yehoshua Amir in the 1990s. Recently, the appointments of Prof. Shlomo Naeh (1994, partial position in the

department) and Dr. Maren R. Niehoff (2003) have strengthened the field of Ancient Jewish Thought, giving new attention to Rabbinic and Hellenistic Judaism. The area of Modern Jewish Thought, by contrast, has recently been more or less confined to the study of Orthodox thinkers, while German-Jewish Thought, once a jewel of the Hebrew University, is no longer represented at all following the retirements of Profs. Mendes-Flohr and Schweid. Though part of the original re-organization was the return of the field of *mussar* (ethical) literature to the department, this area has recently been weakened, especially since the retirement of Prof. Joseph Dan. Thus, there has been a consistent focus on the original core areas, Medieval Philosophy and Kabbalah, while other areas of study developed more randomly, partly as the result of a conscious desire to expand the program and partly as the result of chance and personal choices.

Following the great expansion of the 1970s, the department was known for its numerous internationally recognized scholars, such as Professors Moshe Idel and Yehuda Liebes. In addition, several professors from the department were notable for their impact on Israel society, through their activity in numerous public institutions. An example is Professor Aviezer Ravitzky, the chair of the department for many years in the last two decades. This activity was accompanied by prolific writing of books and articles accessible for the general public, availability for public lectures, participation in media panels dealing with public issues, etc. Though of course this was not by any means a mandatory mode, and other leading scholars were satisfied with affecting the academic world itself, nonetheless these activities ensured the high profile of the department and indeed contributed to the standing of the University as an institution which is intimately involved in Israeli society.

In recent years, most of these stellar figures have retired, and this has effected a demographic and generational change in the department. The beginnings of this process can be traced to the early 1990s, when Professors Giuseppe Sermoneta and Rivka Schatz-Uffenheimer passed away and were not replaced. This continuous policy of non-replacement has been partly changed in recent years; however the result is a severe lack of younger professors. Another result has been the disappearance of several important areas of research and teaching, for example, following the retirement of Prof. Yehuda Liebes, there is no senior staff member specializing in Zoharic literature.

3.1.2 Mission statement of the study program, its aims and goals

As the aims and goals of the Department of Jewish Thought have never been formally discussed, but provoked in the past harsh disagreements between individual members, we decided that the best way of defining these goals would be to distribute respective questionnaires to regular members of the Department, junior teaching staff as well as the students (for details on the questionnaires and the respective answers, see below Appendix B). We offered the option of anonymous responses, hoping thus to receive the most reliable and precise information about the perceived goals and aims of the department as well as its weaknesses and strengths, as seen by individuals from the different groups.

The questionnaires were distributed at the end of the first semester, i.e. at the beginning of April 2008, while the answers were requested by the end of the semester break, i.e. mid-May. The junior teaching staff responded in high numbers, sometimes adding detailed comments and suggestions, while only slightly more than half of the senior members and tenure track teachers responded. Among the students only approximately 15% returned the questionnaire, not all of them answering all the questions. Nevertheless, the questionnaires have provided important information and ushered in a significant process of self-evaluation.

The most hotly debated issue, raised by the questionnaires to both the tenure-track and the adjunct teachers, was the question of connections with other departments. While the tenure track teachers indicated interest in cooperation with the Departments of Comparative Religion (4) and Philosophy (3), the adjunct teachers expressed interest in closer ties with different Jewish Studies departments. While the needs of the latter are taken care of by the new Institute Seminar (for details, see 2.1), it was suggested that cooperation with the Dept. of Comp. Rel. and Philosophy could be developed by joint seminars. The Dept. of Philosophy rejected this proposal, whereas the

Dept. of Comp. Rel. warmly accepted it (for details of joint seminars, see below 3.2.4-5, paragraph 4). In addition, a meeting between the members of the two departments took place and the various possibilities of cooperation were discussed. The majority voted not only for occasional joint seminars, but also for systematic cross-referencing of courses and, in the future, common structures for graduate students within the new framework of the School of Modes of Thought.

While these decisions were accepted by the vast majority of the lecturers who attended the meeting, one member of our Department raised fundamental doubts regarding the very idea of cooperation between the Departments of Jewish Thought and Comparative Religion. He felt that our Department, representing a particular discipline, could only lose, while the other Department, being general, could only gain. These remarks ushered in a lively discussion. One member of our Department stressed that our Department also gains by exposing our students both to similar materials in the surrounding culture as well as to fundamental methodological issues. A member of the Dept. of Comp. Rel. furthermore stressed that the respective study programs will naturally continue to be independently planned by each department.

The discussion, however, did not come to an end with this majority decision, but was followed by a general meeting organized by the Head of the Department. Invitations were sent also to the MA students and members of the Institute of Jewish Studies. The five invited speakers were all *Emeriti*, one having just declared his imminent retirement. They all spoke against the establishment of a School of Modes of Thought, stressing the damage that may be caused by cooperating or merging with the Dept. of Comparative Religion. The writers of the report responded by clarifying that the Department's affiliation with the School of Modes of Thought is already an accomplished fact, following the recommendations of the Gager Report. In addition, they explained the process of self-evaluation and expressed hope that the recent changes may have positive implications.

The future development of the Dept. of Jewish Thought will to a significant degree depend on how the issue of cooperation is treated and how this tension between the different members will be resolved.

Further issues concerning the future goals of the Department as well as its present situation were addressed by the questionnaires.

1) Summary of the responses to the questionnaires for tenure track teachers

The results of the questionnaire for the senior and tenure track staff show that most members identify training future researchers as the primary goal of the Department (8.6 average score), while training teachers is considered the second most important priority (7.3 average score). The general satisfaction with the standard of the students is low (5.9, 5.0, 3.5 respectively), many members suggesting that the levels should be raised. A large majority supports the requirement of further foreign languages, while the division of the Study Program into study clusters is highly controversial.

The general sense of belonging to a department, where members interact and support each other, was relatively low at the time when the questionnaires were distributed, but many members indicated they were interested in developing closer relationships.

The Gager Report, which has never been formally discussed in the Department, is generally known among the senior and tenure track members (8.0 average score), but evaluated rather differently. Overall, the recommendations of the Gager Committee are not considered to be very helpful (6.8.), while several members wish to see their speedy implementation, being unsatisfied with the present pace of changes in the faculty (3.6.)

2) Summary of Responses to the Questionnaire for adjunct teachers

The adjunct teachers identify the training of future researchers even more clearly than the senior members as the main goal of the Department (9.0 average score). Training teachers, a major concern of the latter, receives less priority among the junior members (6.3).

The junior members generally have not received much instruction regarding their teaching. While they did not express a strong need for such instruction (4.3), it is clear that the lack of coordination creates a situation where course requirements and the structure of the courses are entirely left to the discretion of the adjunct teachers. Several of them reported, not surprisingly, that they designed courses similar to those they teach in other non-university frameworks.

The junior members are generally much more satisfied with the students (8.1., 8.0, 6.5. respectively). Several adjunct teachers reported that the students are similar to those in other, non-university frameworks. Most significantly, only two junior teachers reported that they required any reading in a language other than Hebrew. By contrast, eight senior members reported to have required non-Hebrew reading and most of them were unsatisfied with the students' readiness to do so. As the adjunct teachers constitute approximately half of the teaching staff in the Department, this discrepancy has serious consequences: almost half of the classes do not require English reading and thus create a sub-class of courses with significantly lower requirements. Moreover, this low level of requirements has not been formally acknowledged or accepted by the Department.

The Gager Report is remarkably unknown among the junior members: six out of seven indicated virtual ignorance (1), while one pointed to very partial familiarity (3). The contrast with the senior members is again glaring.

3) Summary of Responses to the Questionnaire for students

Generally, the MA students are far less satisfied than the BA students. This result contrasts glaringly with the perceived goal of the Department, which was primarily defined as training future researchers.

The BA students perceive three major weaknesses: the course requirements are not at all uniform, the division of the Study Program into sections is problematic and the advising as well as the secretariat are highly controversial.

The MA students generally feel insufficiently prepared by their BA studies. The course offering is perceived as limited and unbalanced.

Only three of the Department's PHD students responded to the questionnaire (less than 10%). All of them found their advisor through personal acquaintance from previous studies, a method which is presently under consideration by the Authority for Research Students (see below 3.5.1.7). Moreover, all of them expressed a strong interest in some kind of forum of exchange for PHD students (see further 3.2.5, section 5).

Following the above findings, the Department conducted intensive discussions and implemented some changes during the process of self-evaluation (as described in 3.1.2 and also below 3.2.5).

3.1.3 Description and chart of the academic and administrative organizational structure of the study program (including relevant committees)

The academic and administrative - organizational structure of the study program

Name	function
Professor Zeev Harvey	Chair of the Department
Dr. Caterina Rigo	MA Advisor
Dr. Avinoam Rosenak	BA Advisor
Dr. Maren R. Niehoff	Organizer of the Departmental Seminar

Administrative Staff

Secretary of the Departments of Jewish Thought and Bible – Chedva Gedalov

3.2 <u>The Study Program – Contents, Structure and Scope</u>

3.2.1 The name of the study program, specializations/tracks within the program, the campus where it is taught (if the institution operates on a number of campuses), date of opening the program. If the study program is offered on more than one campus, is the level of the program uniform on different campuses, and what measures are taken in order to ensure this?

The name of the program is the Department of Jewish Thought. The program is taught entirely on the Mount Scopus campus. On specializations, see below 3.2.2.

3.2.2 The study program and the specializations it offers, its content, scope and structure (years of study, semesters, hours per year and credits) and the distribution of the studies throughout the academic year. Please submit this information in Table 1 (page 14). Does the study program supply courses to other units within the institution?

Table 1 attached.

Undergraduate studies for students of Jewish Thought:

Undergraduate students whose major discipline is Jewish thought are required to take 59 credits. These are based on 28.5 classroom hours, each hour counting for two credits and an examination that tests their knowledge of core texts, which counts as 2 credits. (One classroom hour is defined as one semester of weekly classes lasting for two academic hours each. Thus, a year-long course or a class held twice a week in the case of a semester-long course counts as two hours, whilst a course held once in two weeks, such as

bibliographical guidance, counts as half a hour). Besides 53 credits of Jewish thought, students must take 4 credits of introductory Talmud as well as a two-credit course, "Great Books in Philosophy and Religion", within the School of Modes of Thought (see above, 2.1).

In the first year, students must take required courses as follows: Introduction to Jewish Thought, Greek Philosophy and its Influence on Jewish Thought, Modern Philosophy and Modern Jewish Thought, Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed, Zohar Readings for Beginners and Bibliographical Guidance.

All together they must take 22 credits. The remaining credits consist of elective courses. However, students are required to submit two seminar papers in two distinct areas of study (clusters/ medorim). The clusters are: The Second Commonwealth Period, Medieval Jewish Philosophy, Kabbalah, Messianism in Various Periods and Modern Trends in Jewish Thought. A seminar paper does not grant credits, but the grade is calculated as part of the final average.

Students who take Jewish Philosophy as a minor must take 36 credits: Five of the first year required courses (20 credits) and an additional 16 credits in the following years, including the course "Great Books in Philosophy and Religion" and one Seminar (Here there is no obligation to write a seminar paper).

Towards the M.A. degree: Graduates of the Hebrew University or any other university who have not taken Jewish Thought in their B.A. studies must take 24 credits of Jewish Thought, as well as an introductory course in Talmud if they lack adequate background in Jewish Studies.

For admission to the non-research track, students must complete their B.A. degree with a grade of at least 80. To be admitted to the research track, one must have completed the B.A. degree with a grade of at least 85 and acquire preliminary proficiency in an additional foreign language required by the department (see below 3.2.5).

<u>M.A. Studies – The research track</u>: The student must take 28 credits of frontal instruction, with most of the courses concentrated within the department. The student must demonstrate proficiency at an advanced level in one of the required additional languages, take a MA level Talmud course (4 credits) and must also write one seminar research paper. After having completed the courses of studies, the students must write a research thesis and two concluding tests in two different fields (one with the advisor and one with another teacher).

<u>The non research track</u>: includes 40 credits of frontal instruction, two seminar papers and an introductory course in Talmud for M.A. students. After having concluded the courses of study, the students must take concluding examinations in three different fields (two of which must be within the department and one determined through consultation with the departmental M. A. advisor).

The study program supplies courses to two main programs: The general B. A degree includes sections (*hativot*) in various departments in the faculty, including Jewish Thought, which is a popular choice. The Revivim program is a special 4-year training program for students with high admission scores, who receive scholarships and later commit to teach Jewish studies in high schools. Their degree includes a major in the "Jewish studies program" – a broad B. A. degree within the Institute for Jewish studies, which is also chosen by a small number of students outside Revivim. In this framework, Revivim students take two sections (*hativot*) in Jewish Thought. The Department enjoys close relations with Revivim, and a member of the department is currently head of the Jewish studies program. Furthermore, the Department supplies an interdisciplinary workshop in the field of Judaism and Hellenism for graduate students from a variety of other departments. The workshop was founded by one of the senior members of the Department in 2006, following the discussions of the Gager Committee. For the first time at the Hebrew University a special forum of exchange between senior and junior researchers in the field of Antiquity was thus

created, representatives from "general" and "Jewish studies" departments increasingly getting to know each other and cooperating. The group meets once in two weeks, studying together Jewish texts in Greek. The workshop was registered also as a graduate course for the academic year 2008-9, thus enabling highly qualified students to profit from an interdisciplinary discussion. The transformation of the reading group into a course, however, has also changed the pattern of participation among the lecturers: they attend far less regularly.

3.2.3 To what extent do the structure, scope and contents properly reflect the main goals of the study program?

We aspired to answer this question by the use of questionnaires. See the relevant findings to questions of structure and scope of course offerings, above 3.1.2 and the discussion of weaknesses in course offerings and contents, below, 3.3.9.

3.2.4. Specify what bodies are responsible for the planning and managing of the study program. What are the mechanisms responsible for introducing changes and updating the study program, and how do they operate. If fundamental changes have been introduced into the study program during the last five years, please specify what they are.
 3.2.5. Describe the mechanism for coordinating and examining the contents that are, in fact, being taught, if such a mechanism exists.

Recent Changes to the Study Program following the Questionnaires

The results of the questionnaires ushered in a significant process of self-evaluation and discussion. The following changes were implemented during the summer semester of 2008 and the beginning of the winter semester 2008.

1) Abolition of the study clusters in the B.A. program.
Thus far, after the completion of several mandatory courses, every student had to choose two clusters (*medorim*) within the program, organizing his or

her courses around two areas of specialization. Already when making first oral inquiries about the concerns of our own students with a view to writing the questionnaires, we immediately realized that the division of the study program into clusters causes considerable problems. Students were frustrated, because they received conflicting answers concerning the affiliation of their respective courses. Moreover, given the increasingly limited offering of courses in the program (see below, 3.2.6), students often found it exceedingly difficult to fulfill all the requirements of a particular cluster.

Consequently, we addressed the issue in our questionnaire for the members of the department, asking: "Does the division into clusters contribute to understanding Jewish thought?". The answers indicated that the department is split: while three voted against the maintenance of the clusters, four approved of them to varying degrees of consent. We decided to examine the issue from an academic point of view and reached the conclusion that the clusters are artificial and thus disadvantageous. It is not justified to separate Jewish philosophy, for example, from Jewish mysticism. On the contrary, a basic course on Maimonides is likely to prepare the student better for a course on a Kabbalist engaging this thinker than a course on Frankism in Eastern Europe. Moreover, we realized that the division into clusters preserves the traditional focus of the department on the Middle Ages, but does not allow students to spread themselves more evenly.

At a full Department meeting, including junior teachers with no tenure track position, the issue was discussed. In the end, the members voted to abolish the clusters, except for the required two seminars in two different areas (see above, 3.2.2). This final decision was facilitated by the fact that the head of the Department had just introduced new courses for first year students, who will now be exposed to a wider range of fields (for details, see below). In light of these innovations, it was furthermore decided to raise the level of the entrance requirements for the different programs. At present we are in the process of checking the relevant procedures (see below, 3.3.9).

2) Requirement of a second foreign language to enter the M.A. research program.

The questionnaire indicated relative unanimity among the members of the Department regarding the general importance of languages for research, yet diversity of opinions regarding the practical consequences. This issue, too, was dealt with at the full Department meeting, where we suggested that enrolment in the M.A. research program should be dependent on the completion of a beginner's course in one of the following languages: Greek, Latin, Arabic, French, German or Yiddish. A lively discussion ensued, three teachers opposing the suggestion, because it will in their view prevent whole populations from entering the MA program, especially Yeshiva students and women, as both populations are expected to invest less time in their academic studies. The supporters of the language requirement stressed that students may in any case opt for a "non-research" M.A. program. Given the continuous diversity of opinions, the head of the Department decided to call for a vote and ask the opinion of regular members of the Department who did not attend the meeting. The result was a clear vote for the requirement of an additional foreign language as a condition for enrolling in the MA research program and this change has already been added to the yearbook (see above). It is hoped that in the future more MA courses will involve an analysis of texts in the original languages. Furthermore, the new language requirements will enable students of the Department to attend MA seminars, traditionally requiring Arabic or Greek, which have thus far been almost exclusively attended by students outside the Department.

3) Balancing the study program.

Responding to the questionnaire, the head of the Department asked every teacher to provide more than one course in each rubric so that the program would be better coordinated. This was a very timely correction of the previous situation, when every teacher was free to offer whatever course he or she wished, resulting in teachers sometimes teaching basically the same course.

Moreover, the head of the Department introduced two new mandatory first year courses: one on Modern Jewish Thought in light of General Philosophy, the other on Medieval Jewish Thought in light of Classical Philosophy (the latter replacing the introductory course on Greek philosophy, traditionally quoted from the Philosophy Dept., which, however, focused on the pre-Socratics and was thus not very relevant to our students). The new courses are especially important, as they draw connections between Jewish thought and general philosophy, thus placing the former in a broader context. For Israeli students, who are often not familiar with the general culture, such introductory courses are vital.

Furthermore, one junior guest lecturer from the Talmud Department commented in his questionnaire that the Department does not provide any broad introduction to the field of Ancient Jewish Thought, which presents the diversity of thought from Second Temple Judaism to rabbinic literature. After some consultation, one senior teacher volunteered to offer such an elective course, which is rather unique at the Hebrew University, comparing the ideas of the rabbis to those found among Jews in Alexandria and at Qumran as well as in apocalyptic, Heikhalot and New Testament Literature. In light of these changes, as well as the scarcity of elective courses, the necessity and effectiveness of the general introduction to Jewish Thought need to be re-examined.

4) Renewal of the Departmental Seminar

At the beginning of the last academic year the Departmental Seminar was renewed after a ten-year break. Members of the Department thus have a chance to learn about the work in progress of their colleagues and also to listen to guest lecturers. The following meetings were organized during the last academic year:

Dr. M. R. Niehoff, Jewish Bible Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria.

Dr. J. Garb, Trance Techniques in Hasidic Literature.

Prof. S. Stroumsa, Maimonides in his World: Questions of Life and Death.

A further meeting was devoted to a general discussion of the question: "What can be learnt by comparing Jewish Thought to general Philosophy?". This meeting was initiated by short statements of two junior lecturers, Dr. Z. Weiss and Dr. B. Brown, and resulted from a discussion following the questionnaires. At the end of last year, we hosted a guest speaker, Dr. Katell Berthelot from the CNRS in Aix-en-Provence, who spoke about "Humanism in Antiquity: between Jews and Greeks".

This year four sessions each semester are planned, including two joint seminars with the Dept. of Comp. Rel. We opened with a joint seminar, Dr. R. Yukeles (Lady Davis Fellow), addressing the following subject: "Transcending official/popular dichotomies: Jurists' responses to pervasive devotional practices in medieval Islam and Judaism". Subsequently, Dr. A. Rosenak shared "Reflections about New Research Avenues regarding Philosophy of Halacha" and A. Meir, a doctoral student of the Department, spoke about "Ibn al-Sid al-Batalyusi: his Place between Jewish and Islamic Thought in the Middle Ages". Prof. E. Wolfson (NYUC and Inst. for Advanced Study, HU) addressed the following topic: "The Anonymous Chapters of the Elderly Masters of Secrets: New Evidence for the Early Activity of the Zoharic Circle".

   During the second semester, we anticipate lectures by our new member P. Maciejko and the candidate for a partial position in the Department, R. Leicht, as well as the junior lecturer and Scholion fellow, E. Krinis. We shall moreover have a joint meeting with the Dept. of Comp. Rel. where a member of each department will discuss the place of his/her own department in relation to the other, i.e. Judaism as an object of the study of Comp. Rel. and Methods of Comparative Religion in the study of Jewish Thought.

The Departmental Seminar has ushered in very positive changes in the culture of the Department, but requires further support from all its members in order to thrive in the future. Initially, the renewal of the departmental seminar has been experienced as a tremendous success.

Many members, both junior and senior, commented on the good experience of getting to know each other and pointed to the revival of the Department as an organic unit. The joint dinner after the guest lecture was seen as a special high-light. This year the atmosphere is far more ambiguous, one session being well attended and provoking a lively discussion, while others drew only a rather small audience, one lecture only three people. Again the guest-lecture, followed by a joint dinner, was a significant event which consolidated the Department.

Overall, there remains a problem of commitment by both the faculty and research students. While four senior members, two of them with partial appointments, have systematically abstained from the beginning, one additional young lecturer has this year chosen not to attend the seminars. Two other senior members are presently on Sabbatical or otherwise engaged in administrative responsibilities. In addition, doctoral students are not obligated to attend the seminar as part of their training in the Department. In order to develop a stable culture of discussion and interaction it is important that the Head of Department encourages commitment to the seminar as well as a willingness to actively participate and offer suggestions.

3.2.6 In summary, to what extent has the program achieved its mission and goals? What are its strengths and weakness?

See at length above 3.1.2. Following the changes already implemented, the main weakness of the study program and the main barrier to further development is the severe shortage of teachers, which forces us to offer only a limited selection of courses: In the 1990s and even as late as 2000, there were 30-40 BA courses and at least 15 MA courses. In the program for 2009, we have 24 BA courses and 15 MA courses (including several courses from outside the department "quoted" by the department). Even this selection requires high reliance on adjunct staff, due to the low number of senior positions (see also below, 3.2.8). The weakness of the study program has led, in recent years, to the inclusion

of courses given by volunteers, not all of whom are trained in Jewish Thought.

    3.2.7 Are additional non-academic bodies involved in the running and the activities of the parent unit and study program? If so, what are these bodies and what is the mutual relationship between them and the leadership of the parent unit (for instance, the mutual relationship between Business School and Manufacturers' Association or Industrial Factories)?

No

3.2.8 What are the future development plans of the evaluated study program, and how were they decided upon?

The Department has not formally discussed future development plans, but is generally split regarding the Department's overall orientation. Some see the Department primarily in the context of Jewish Studies as an institution teaching mostly in Hebrew. This means in fact aiming at a population which is to a large extent rooted in the religious world. Others see the Department in the context of Comparative Religion and wish to broaden the spectrum of languages as well as academic methods. The latter have suggested cooperation with the Department of Comparative Religion, which would involve, among other things, a joint seminar for doctoral students (see also 3.2.5). This split also affects suggestions for the allocation of new positions, as it appears that some of the teachers wish to strengthen the study of canonical Jewish texts whilst others wish to strengthen areas such as modern non-Orthodox philosophy. A related issue is that of the advisability of a non-research MA track, which mainly serves local cultural needs, such as teacher training. Given the marked controversy within the department, the department would welcome the view of the international committee on these issues.

3.3. <u>Teaching and Learning</u>

> 3.3.1. Specify what teaching and learning methods are applied in the program: frontal lectures, self-study, distance learning, laboratories, seminars and pro-seminars, practical training, group exercises, role playing and simulations, organized tours, conferences and other methods. To what extent are these methods applied (% of the overall number of teaching hours, % of the overall number of credits).

The primary method of learning is a combination of frontal lectures with discussions and self-study based on preparation for classes. Exercises are given as self-contained courses, rather than as part of larger courses. Organized tours are rare, partly due to budgetary constraints (in the past such a tour was conducted through cooperation with the department of Comparative Religion). Two seminars are required for a BA major, and one for a minor. MA courses usually take the form of seminars. For conferences organized by members of the department, see below, chapter 4.

> 3.3.2 What steps are taken in order to evaluate teaching and improving teaching? How are the results of these activities used, specifically, the negative findings about staff members' teaching? Does the unit act in order to locate and encourage excellent teachers? Does the unit or the institution offer the teaching staff regular and systematic activity, including courses/in-service training/instruction and guidance programs in order to improve the quality of teaching? Do new staff members receive special support?

The faculty employs two methods for evaluating teacher performance: visits in the classes by more senior colleagues (which is part of the promotion process for tenure-track staff) and the student evaluations (which are also taken into consideration in the promotion process). The teachers of the Department have consistently achieved good results in the student surveys (see Appendix A). However, in one departmental meeting, several teachers voiced concerns as to the detrimental effect of student evaluations on the standards and demands in courses, especially in the case of junior staff or non-tenured members, who might feel that

they have to lower their standards and relax their demands in order to maintain their popularity, which might impact on their continued employment. On this danger see: C. Emery, T. Kramer and R. Tian "Return to academic standards: A critique of student evaluations of teaching effectiveness", <u>Quality Assurance in Education</u> 11 (2003), pp. 37-46.

Training and instruction in teaching methodology is now mandatory for new senior staff members on the University level and is available for all other teachers, through seminars advertised by the faculty. On support for new teachers, see below, 3.5.3.

3.3.3 Describe the use of information technology in teaching and learning: methods, scope, types of course etc.

A significant number of the courses offered by the department have sites in the high-learn system (<u>http://owl.huji.ac.il</u>). This is a very effective system which enables lecturers to upload syllabi and other supporting materials, post and mail messages, create discussion groups and monitor the utilization of the system by students. In addition, practically all the courses have entries in the e-reserve system, which enables on-line access from any computer, upon identification, to scanned articles (see below 3.6.4) On an individual basis, lecturers can utilize the smart classes available in the faculty (see below 3.6.2.1).

3.3.4 Describe the policy of the study program/parent unit regarding lecture attendance. What steps are taken in order to implement this policy? Please describe the current state of events in your answer.

There is no Department policy on this issue, each teacher deciding on his or her own discretion whether to check students' attendance. The senior and tenure-track staff is significantly divided, some objecting in principle to such surveillance, while eight reported that they check attendance with different degrees of stringency.

3.3.5/6/8 Describe the methods applied to measure the achievements of the students that are used in the study program.
Describe the method of examinations and their character, the relative weight of each type of examination in the final grade (written/oral/open/multiple-choice etc.)
Describe any other methods applied to measure the achievements of the students used by the institution.

There are two standard methods of evaluation in the department: Exams (containing integrative essay questions and analysis of texts) and papers (seminars and shorter papers, according to the definition of the course). The impression one gets from the syllabi submitted by the teachers is that of great diversity regarding the methods of measuring the achievements of the students. While most of the teachers (except for two) specify the percentage of each part of the final grade, there is a discrepancy between teachers requiring only exams (often mid-term and final) and those adding written exercises throughout the year. Also, in some courses the evaluation of presentations in class during term make up part of the grade and in others the evaluation of the paper submitted at the end of the course makes up the entirety of the grade.

3.3.6.2 How are the grades distributed? Is this method influenced by statistical considerations?

The astoundingly high grade average (88.15 for BA/ 93.43 for MA) found below exceeds that of the faculty (respectively 86.64 and 89.95), which is already problematic. These results show that the distribution of grades most certainly does not follow any statistical method. This issue was raised in the departmental meeting in January 2008, and it was decided that teachers will increase their awareness of this problem. It was also decided to take a fair, yet firm stance towards the "culture of complaints" amongst students, which may have contributed to the problem. Some members feel that the unusually high proportion of adjunct staff (see above 3.2.6), who may feel that they depend on

student registration for their continued employment, is another contributing factor. The updated data on grade inflation was immediately brought to the attention of the head of the department by the writers of this report, but no action has so far been taken.

> 3.3.6.3/ 3.3.7.3: If the relevant information is available, please present (in the format of histogram) the distribution of the overall average grade of the graduates (not including the grade of the thesis for the second degree) for each of the last three years.
> What is the average grade given to the graduates of the program in the final project/ final seminar/thesis in each of the last three years. Please present (in the format of histogram) the grades distribution of the final project/final seminar/thesis.

The number of graduates according to level of excellence - B.A. M.A. and PhD

Year	Degree	Summa cum laude	Magna cum laude	Total	Average grade
2005	B.A.	---	13	39	88.93
	M.A.	1	6	11	92.71
	PhD	---	---	4	
2006	B.A.	---	4	28	87.08
	M.A.	1	4	6	93.36
	PhD	1		10	
2007	B.A.	1	10	45	87.97
	M.A.	2	4	10	93.43
	PhD	1		6	

- summa cum laude, or special distinction, is defined relatively (the top 2% of BA graduates who receive an average grade above 90 [95.61 in 2008] and the top 3% of MA graduates, who receive an average grade above 92 [96.6 in 2008). There are only two possible grades at the PHD level: Approval of the dissertation or summa cum laude.
- Magna cum laude, or distinction is defined by a relative cut-off point placed after the percentiles receiving special distinction (a further 18% of BA graduates [90.71 in 2008] and 22% of MA graduates [93.6 in 2008] who receive an average grade above 85.

Average Grades for Thesis

Year	Degree	Average grade
2005	M.A.	92.56
2006	M.A.	94.83
2007	M.A.	92.74

3.3.9 In summary, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching and learning? To what extent have the methods applied to measure the teaching and learning achieved their goals?

Strengths

The greatest strength of teaching in the Department is that the great majority of courses are taught by experts with a proven high standard of research, as reflected in the CV's attached to the report. The teaching surveys (see Appendix A) indicate that the great majority of our teachers are enthusiastic in their teaching and are highly regarded by the students. Furthermore, the praiseworthy willingness of the Department to engage in frank discussions on weaknesses in teaching and their remedies, as part of the self-evaluation process, should be seen as a major source of strength for the future.

Weaknesses

The relatively large number of students, coupled with the decline in the number of lecturers (only 8 active full-time tenure-track positions) has led to a very sharp increase in the number of students in many classes. This is especially apparent in MA seminars, where courses are usually taught by senior staff, while as of 2008 there are no less than 56 MA

students in the department. In addition to the relatively high number of BA students in the Department numerous students enrol from allied programs such as "Revivim" (see above 3.2.2). Thus, it is not uncommon to have "seminars" with 40 or even 70 students. The decline of personal accountability in an overcrowded class exacerbates disciplinary problems, which are increasing at a national level (See volume 7 (March 2008) of *Al Hagova: Journal on Teaching in Higher Education*). In addition, it is hard to monitor the extent of preparation for classes, which is a faculty-wide problem.

The large size of many classes also makes it extremely difficult to address the challenge posed by the heterogeneity of the student population, which was noted in some of the responses to the questionnaires: Many of our students have some previous background in the study of Jewish texts (such as Yeshiva or Ulpana studies) while others have virtually none (due to the decline of Jewish studies in the Israeli Education System and the extremely partial implementation of the Shinar report). Conversely, numerous students from a more traditional background lack wide general knowledge or the ability to read in English. It is especially distressing that some of these students actively resist broadening their horizons for ideological reasons. These problems are again increased at the MA level, when the BA graduates are joined by numerous students from other universities as well as colleges of mixed quality. This problem is somewhat offset by the supplemental BA courses required by the department from these potential graduate students, which in turn further increase the heterogeneity and crowding of the undergraduate courses.

These challenges, which were addressed in a departmental meeting, underscore the vital role of the Department as a bridge between various sectors in Israeli society, especially in terms of teacher training (see below 3.4.8). However, it is also urgent to keep up vigilance in maintaining high academic standards and to develop a firm Department culture in order to facilitate such vigilance. In this context,

we must note that there is a substantial discrepancy between courses requiring a substantial amount of reading in English and those requiring practically none. This gap creates a situation where students are faced with the decision whether they wish to attend courses with only Hebrew reading requirements or courses with a heavy load of English readings as well as regular assignments in source analysis. Some of the teachers also suspect that the prevalence of courses not requiring English reading creates a form of negative selection and that the Department may be attracting students seeking to avoid such readings.

In addition, it is conspicuous that some courses focus on sources, while others rely mostly on secondary literature, the former usually requiring knowledge of the original languages. Naturally, basic courses focus more on secondary literature, while MA seminars gravitate more towards an analysis of the sources.

A final weakness is the tendency on the part of many students to hand in their papers or write their final exams only in December - i.e. well into the following year (after this point the students need to re-register with the approval of the Faculty, as well as paying again for the course if they still wish to submit their papers, however not all students are deterred by this requirement). This phenomenon makes it harder to monitor copying, disconnects the papers from the courses in which they were written, and make it harder for students to fully involve themselves in their current courses. This is a faculty wide problem, as the faculty does not meet its regulations, according to which final MA exams must be taken by the end of the first semester of the second year, and that after September 30 only the head of the department can approve a delay in handing in papers.

Possible Remedies

The findings of this section call for a more uniform and consistent departmental policy on course requirements, submission dates and evaluation of achievements: The writers of the report hope that the

department will consider the option of more written assignments and/or oral presentations throughout the year in order to improve the analytical and writing skills of the students. Also, we would welcome a discussion of uniform requirements for reading in English and ways to encourage the study of texts in the BA seminars, as the acquisition of textual skills is the most important basis for independent research. The new requirement of an additional language for registration in the MA research program indeed supports a more text-centred approach, which will prepare the students for their MA studies and subsequent research. This requirement further strengthens the incorporation of language acquisition as an integral and vital part of the training of students in the Department.

3.4. <u>Students</u>

3.4.1 What are the admission criteria for the program, the selection and admission procedure, the criteria of advancement from year to year and for completion of the studies, including the requirements for being entitled to receive an academic degree. Is there a policy of affirmative action and standards for the admittance of candidates with special needs? In case such policy and standards have been established, please describe them. How are the admission criteria decided upon, and to what extent are the criteria and procedures for admission related to the aims of the program? What have been the lowest admission criteria (psychometric score and matriculation grades) the candidates should meet?

In general, the admission criteria are composed of the following: A matriculation certificate, psychometric scores, a minimum pass grade in English (level 3), and a Hebrew exam for students whose high school did not conduct classes in Hebrew (the departmental requirements for Hebrew scores are higher than the general University requirement). The selection for the different departments of the university is based on a composite of average matriculation grades (or grades in the pre-academic preparatory school [mekhina]) and the psychometric score. For candidates with exceptional scores in one of these exams, the grade

required in the other is lowered. Overseas students require an equivalent of the Israeli matriculation certificate or academic credentials. (For admission scores, see table at the end of the section.)

Candidates list four departments by order of choice. If candidates are not accepted into the department of their first choice, their eligibility for the department of their second choice is examined and so on. According to the material received from the Student Affairs Division, some candidates were accepted into Jewish Thought and then cancelled their registration upon being eventually accepted for a department which they listed as a prior choice.

In general, students can appeal the University's decision during registration. Since 2002, the University follows an affirmative action policy on acceptance: based on the criteria of the Association for Educational Advancement, a designated number of places are designed for candidates who meet these criteria, if their scores are slightly lower than entrance bars. Candidates with disabilities are accorded special conditions in the psychometric exams.

Although in theory the completion of first-year courses is a requirement for continuing to the second year, in practice this is not enforced by the secretary. Following the departmental meeting, in which this issue was raised, we asked the secretary to be more vigilant on this issue. Upon completion of academic requirements, the secretary ensures that the student's courses have been completed accordingly (while consulting the academic advisors if necessary), and then transmits the file to the Student Secretariat of the Faculty, which ratifies the degree.

The criteria for 2008 may be seen in the table below. According to the Student Affairs Division, these criteria, though low, do not differ from the general requirements of the faculty, though it may be added that individual departments have raised their entrance bar in recent years.

Average grades for admittance of students beginning their studies towards the B.A degree

		Year				
		2004	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**
Average matriculation test	average	9.81	9.94	10.16	10.26	9.97
	No.	50	44	38	36	30
Grade of psychometric examination	average	614.0	613.4	647.5	649.6	640.0
	No.	40	41	35	36	20
Number of pre-academic graduates		3	3	3	2	--

In a departmental meeting, it was decided in principle to raise the low admission criteria. As this change involves a decrease in the number of students at a time when there is a general drop in registration to the faculty, it will be implemented only after much further discussion, if at all. Also, some teachers feel that the inflation of grades in the matriculation exams, coupled with the costly courses which prepare students to pass the psychometric exam without always acquiring genuine knowledge (for example ability to read academic material in English), render the admission criteria less relevant from an academic point of view. (However, it should be noted that the entrance requirements are periodically re-examined by the University, in terms of their ability to predict success in academic studies. The findings of this investigation are referred to a committee which includes experts in psychology, statistics and education and its implementation is coordinated with the faculty).

In any case, the opinion of the writers of the report is that the main focus should be on the internal sifting mechanisms of the university – i.e. genuine grades (see 3.3.6.2). We hope that the Department will discuss steps that can ensure that students will not be

able to finish their second year and to move from one degree to another unless they have genuinely mastered the material acquired, textual and research skills, and demonstrated dedication to study.

      3.4.2   To what extent is the relevant information concerning the courses taught in the study program passed on to the students and available to them, e.g. syllabus (bibliography specifying required reading, exercises and assignments, components of the final grade) collection of the examination papers. How is this information brought to the attention of the students, where is it published and how are the students updated on changes that have been introduced?

The study program is available on-line in the format that

appears in appendix A.

      3.4.3   What is the yearly drop-out rate of students from the program over the last five years, and what are the reasons for their leaving (academic/financial/other)? Is there satisfaction with the drop-out rate? In case there is not, what steps does the unit take in order to prevent, reduce or increase drop-out?

The Faculty could not provide detailed data on drop-out rates, as the students commence their studies at different points, and cannot be properly regarded as a cohort. However, through a comparison of the tables below and those found in Appendix A, one can get a very rough sense of the rate: In 2004, 61 students began their BA degree, and in 2006, 28 students graduated. Thus one can assume that 33 students either dropped out or else they failed to complete their degree within 3 years. However, the department does not appear to differ from the faculty in terms of the estimated drop-out rate (25-30%). Possible reasons for dropping out or not graduating on time could range from personal situations to financial constraints. The responses to our questionnaires did not point at any dissatisfaction with the department that could account for cases of curtailing studies prematurely.

Data on Students – registered and beginning studies

Degree	Group	Year				
		2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
B.A	Candidate	197	160	130	111	109
	Accepted*	110	99	78	71	68
	Began studies	**61**	**50**	**44**	**42**	**32**
M.A	Candidate	35	42	36	35	37
	Accepted*	27	27	21	23	15
	Began studies	**22**	**26**	**19**	**20**	**13**

* Including candidates whose acceptance to the department was canceled after they were accepted to other departments more congenial to them

3.4.4 To what extent are the program's students involved in research projects of the staff members? Specify in which projects, the number of students involved and the scope of their involvement. Is there a procedure for encouraging students to carry out independent research of their own?

The faculty does not assign budgets for research assistants for the Department and its teachers, however teachers who receive competitive or inter-mural research grants (see the table in Appendix A) can utilize part of their funds to employ students in their individual research projects. According to the responses to the questionnaires, three senior members involve students in their research projects.

3.4.5   Counselling systems

3.4.5.1   Describe the system of academic counselling for students before and during the period of study (including reference to the structuring and approval of the study curriculum). Do students with special needs receive special support? If so, please specify.

Prior to recent changes, the study program was encumbered by the division into clusters. Thus, much of the BA advising was devoted to helping the students adjust their program to these constraints. Hopefully, the abolition of clusters will streamline the advising process. In addition, the advisor assists students from other departments taking

sections (*hativot*) in constructing their program within the department. We hope that streamlining of the study program will make the advising more feasible for the BA advisor as well as the students and enable them to focus more on students with special needs.

On the MA level, the advisor's task was to enable students to construct a reasonable program in view of the limited selection of MA courses in the department. Here the policy has been one of flexibility towards special requests for more courses outside the department, while maintaining the integrity of the degree requirements. Other issues dealt with by the MA advisor include assisting research-track students in locating suitable advisors, handling requests to move from the non-research track to the research track, and handling applications from students with degrees from other institutions or with degrees in other areas and determining the extent of supplementary courses. The advisor's ability to locate and address special needs is hampered by the high number of MA students (56), which is created inter alia by the grade inflation which enables practically any undergraduate to continue to MA studies (see 3.3.6.2).

3.4.6. What are the mechanisms that deal with students' complaints?

Student complaints in the department usually concern grades (see above, 3.3.6.2). The mechanism in these cases is as follows: Initially the student, who is not satisfied with his or her grade, turns to the teacher, asking for more explanations or a re-reading of the paper. In most cases either the students accepts the grade given by the teacher or else an agreement is reached, which may entail additional work on the part of the student, correcting the original paper. If that fails, the student may turn to the head of the department, who judges the case and may appoint another reader of the seminar paper. The grade may then be changed as a result of the second reading. Should the student still be unsatisfied, he or she may turn to the dean. Complaints on infringements on ethics on the part of students are referred through the Faculty to the University's disciplinary committee, where

the students are entitled to representation, whilst infringement of ethics on the part of lecturers are dealt with by the Ethics Committee. The study code for students is found at the end of the report. For staff, see http://www.huji.ac.il/huji/intranet/discliplinary_actions.htm

3.4.7 Does the unit take steps to locate outstanding students and reward them? What financial assistance is provided to students with financial problems?

Candidates with exceptionally high entrance scores are exempt from tuition, as do BA graduates with exceptionally high grades. Students with financial difficulties can independently apply to the university either for financial assistance or loans without interest. The success of such applications depends only on the student's financial situation. Fellowships on the basis of academic excellence for MA and PHD students are awarded respectively by the President, the Faculty and the Institute for Jewish Studies to MA and PHD students (See chapter 4 below). The Gager report states as follows: "The Committee strongly supports a program whereby outstanding BA students, who are interested in pursuing the MA, can be identified and granted generous stipends at the MA level". This recommendation has not been implemented as yet. One possible direction that ensued from our discussions was that of supporting language studies at the BA level, as presently our students have to pay extra tuition if they choose to pursue these studies.

3.4.8 Does the institution and/or the parent unit maintain contact with their graduates, employers, and with employment market. If data is available, please specify the measure of integration of graduates into the labor market (which is especially relevant regarding study programs in professional fields): where have they found employment, what positions do they hold, how much time has elapsed between graduation and employment, and how many students continue their studies to advanced degrees or other areas (specify area of study and degree level). Please supply the data on the number of graduates who have completed their studies with distinction. Relevant survey of the unit/institution on this matter might be provided.

There is no formal mechanism for following up on the employment of graduates. Based on the questionnaires, many staff members defined the

goal of the department as training future researchers (see above, 3.1.2). It is common knowledge that a relatively large amount of lecturers in Jewish Thought, in Israeli universities but also abroad, studied in the Department at some point. Obviously, present employment prospects are limited by the nation-wide decline in the number of academic positions, coupled with the scarcity of post-doctoral scholarships. Our senior staff, who advise numerous PHD students (see 3. 5.1.7), customarily continue to support them with advice and letters of reference after they conclude their studies.

Another major goal defined by many members of the department is that of training high school teachers in Jewish Thought. Although this is not a mandatory requirement for the matriculation exams, many high schools offer such an elective. The Department offers a special MA program for future teachers, who receive special training through the School of Education. In this context, one should also mention our cooperation with the Revivim program (see 3.2.2). This goal is of national importance and naturally contributes to the quantity and quality of the reservoir of future Jewish Thought undergraduates. However, one should mention here the detrimental effect of constant cuts in school hours, especially in humanistic studies, during the last decade, as well as the fact that our graduates must compete with graduates of similar programs in other universities in Israel.

 Over the last 3 years, 28 students completed their BA degree and 18 their MA degree magna cum laude or summa cum laude (out of respective totals of 112 and 27). These high percentages are rather less gratifying if one recalls the general inflation of grades. For doctoral students, see below, chapter 4. We have no data as to the effect of these distinctions on employment prospects.

3.4.9 In summary, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the issues specified above?

Universities in Israel and especially in Jerusalem, enjoy an unparalleled "natural resource" in terms of the student body, as many of the students already have an extensive background in Jewish textual study. Furthermore,

the last two decades have seen the expansion of the study of Jewish thought, as well as Talmud in the Yeshiva world. As noted above (3.3.9), though these resources need to be cultivated, there is need for vigilance with regard to the integration of this student body into academic studies in the full sense and a common departmental agenda needs to be established. The balance between these requirements has caused some controversy in the department, and its resolution shall be an ongoing process.

On the graduate level, we also have a large number of overseas students, many of whom are outstanding. This resource too must be deliberately cultivated, as in the creation of a culture in which reading in English, and the acquirement of further languages, become more natural.

3.5 Human Resources

3.5.1. Teaching Staff

3.5.1.1 Describe the profile of the program's teaching staff in the format of the tables 2a through 2d (pages 15-17). What are the areas of specialization of the staff versus the requirements of the study program? To what extent does the staff profile enable flexibility and dynamism within the program?

For the staff profile in historical perspective, see above 2.1. For the current profile, see the tables in Appendix A.

Generally speaking, the Department is undoubtedly in the midst of a demographic crisis. Whilst in 2003, even after the retirements of Professors Dan, Mendes-Flohr, Rosenberg and Schweid, we still had 11.3 positions including 8 professors (5 with full positions). Today "on paper" we have 13 lecturers and 7 professors (4 with full positions) totaling 11.1 positions. However, one Professor is due to retire in 2012, another in 2013, another in 2015 (however one has announced his intention to retire at the end of 2009 and another is on extended sick leave following a tragic accident) and two more in 2018. Three members of the department (including our newest member) have not yet received tenure. The Department has recently received a position, and according to the current plan for the development of the

faculty, we shall probably receive half a position in 2010, a full position in 2013 and one more in 2015, that is to say 1.5 positions over the next 5 years. Finally, Professor Sarah Stroumsa has been elected Rector, which is a source of pride for the department, but further diminishes the senior staff available on a routine basis.

Assuming the absolutely optimal scenario, in which all the younger lecturers receive tenure and all our senior lecturers are promoted to professor, then in 2013 we shall have 12 lecturers (including 8 professors - 2 with less than half a position and 2 more within five years of retirement) and 9. 6 positions. As even the current staff-student ratio, especially on the graduate level, is very far from feasible, one needs a strong dose of optimism to envisage the continued vibrancy of this prestigious and long-standing Department given present rates of retirement and replacement, unless special action is taken, beyond the current planning of the Faculty.

3.5.1.2 What specializations and skills are required of the staff members teaching in the program? Are their research areas related to the study program?

The members of the Department teach in the areas of their specialization, often offering courses reflecting their immediate research interests. In the past this has led to problems in the distribution of courses. Sometimes there was a severe lack of courses in certain areas, while at other times two teachers realized that they are teaching practically the same course. As described above, the new Head of Department has introduced significant changes, aiming for greater centralization in the planning of the study program. He has asked each teacher to propose more than one course in each rubric, so that there is an element of selection and coordination (see above, 3.2.4-5).

3.5.1.3 What steps are taken to ensure that staff members are updated, academically and professionally, with regard to the program?

The study program is distributed amongst all staff members once it is approved. Currently, no further steps are taken to update the teachers with regard to the program, nor are the syllabi routinely submitted to the head of the Department or otherwise published. Publication of the syllabi through the report is of course part of the self-evaluation process, which was also accompanied by greater involvement of the staff in updating and discussing the study program.

3.5.1.4 What are the rules, criteria and procedures for appointing the head of the study program and the staff, including tenure and promotion, the standard duration of service at each position?

A new head of Department is appointed according to the criteria of respective seniority. Thus far heads of departments were professors with a full position in the department. Members with half appointments have not expressed interest in serving as the head of the Department. The duration of the office is officially three years, but in the past it was sometimes extended without official confirmation by the whole department.

3.5.1.5. What is the definition of the position of the head of the study program? What credentials are required for the position?

The head of the Department is responsible for coordinating the study program, chairing discussions about new tenure track positions and appointing assistant teaching staff. During the last year, the head of the Department was also responsible for transmitting the proposals of the writers of the present report to other members of the Department and coordinating the discussion between them.

3.5.1.6 How is full employment defined in the institution for senior and junior staff, and how many hours are they required to teach in each of the study programs?

The tenure-track staff is required to teach three courses (6 hours) per week on a yearly basis (i.e. a semester-long course counts as 1 hour). However, obviously, preparing and teaching the courses, guiding the

students and grading the papers, all important in and of themselves, are but a small part of the daily work of a lecturer in a research-oriented university, which includes research, advising graduate theses, obtaining grants, organizing conferences, developing international ties, refereeing publications, fulfilling administrative functions in the department, institute, faculty, university and the academic world at large etc.

Besides their teaching, the junior staff is expected to participate in the life of the department, as in the departmental seminar and do so. Adjuncts usually teach one course, and their duties do not extend beyond this. This being said, some adjuncts have volunteered for extra tasks in the department on an ad hoc basis, and some adjuncts have joined the departmental seminar.

3.5.1.7 Are staff members obliged to serve as advisors for final projects, theses and dissertations? Are there criteria for assigning advisors to the above-mentioned papers and projects?

As noted above, the training and supervision of PHD students currently rests with the Authority for Research Students. In the present system, faculty members are not formally required to serve as thesis advisors for graduate students (MA and PHD), although this is seen as an academic duty which is taken into account in the promotion proceedings. However, as reflected in the data cited below (chapter 4), most members of the department have a large number of advisees. Under the present system, there are no formal criteria for assigning advisors to different research projects: Students approach individual staff members and suggest a research plan, and if the plan matches the area of expertise of the staff member, then s/he accepts the student. In the case of PHD students written acceptance by an advisor is a condition for registration at the Authority for Research Students. In the case of MA students, according to faculty regulations any student in the research track should have an advisor assigned by the Department, however again this occurs in an informal manner.

The advantages of the present system are: The academic freedom of the student and the advisor and the lack of "red tape" involved. The disadvantages in the present situation of the Department (as pointed out in the response of some department members to our questionnaires and as raised in a departmental meeting), are as follows: a large number of advisees per advisor, which may impinge on the quality of the advising; the tendency of students to "cluster" in certain areas, such as Modern Thought or Kabbalah; the resultant difficulty some students encounter in finding an advisor in such areas; the problem of the great majority of MA students who can be accepted to the research track due to inflation of grades (the required final BA average of 85 is significantly below the average of the department: 88.15), but are not really competent to write a research thesis.

Some of these issues can be resolved by raising the demands for acceptance to the research MA track and PHD (the required MA final average for admittance to the PHD program is 85, as well as a grade of 90 from both readers of the thesis. The Department average is 93.43, while the average for the thesis itself is 92.74). The latter step was firmly recommended in a recent policy paper sent to all faculty members by the head of the Research Students Authority. Once the number of students is reduced to feasible levels which prioritize quality, then it will be possible to adopt the system proposed in the Gager Report (and respectively seconded by the Research Students Authority), namely that MA and PHD students be accepted and assigned their advisors by the department as a whole and "should not be left to the discretion of individual faculty members". A qualitative improvement and quantitative reduction (as also suggested in a report by the Planning and Budgeting Committee [Vatat] from January 2007) will also facilitate implementation of yet another recommendation of the Gager Report and the Research Student's Authority: An accredited seminar exclusively for PHD students (besides the existing departmental seminar, which is intended for staff members and doctoral students, see above 3.2.4/5). Our PHD students indicated in the questionnaires that they are keen for study frameworks directed at their level. Yet another recommendation of the Authority –

improvement of the supervisory function of the steering committees (convened by the Authority in order to approve doctoral proposals and follow progress in the dissertation) would also be much easier to implement with a smaller number of doctoral students (and thus committees). It was agreed that further discussion of this question shall be part of our process of our ongoing self-evaluation process.

> 3.5.1.8 What is the policy regarding recruiting and absorbing teaching staff (senior as well as junior) and what are the plans for the future recruitment to the study program under evaluation? How are these plans made and by whom?

Recruitment of senior staff is conducted through a faculty-wide search, though the Department submits its opinion as to the ranking of the candidates who apply. The custom in the department is that the hiring of junior staff and adjuncts is at the discretion of the Department head. As this custom dates back to times when a higher percentage of courses was taught by a greater number of senior members, this may be a good point to raise the possibility of greater input by members of the department on this issue perhaps through appointing a departmental committee to select the non-senior staff members.

See also above, 3.2.8.

3.5.2 Technical and administrative staff

> Describe the technical and administrative staff, including the
> number of staff members and their job descriptions. What kind
> of support does the technical and administrative staff provide for
> the academic activity?

The administrative staff, consisting of one secretary, is overloaded with the care for two departments (Jewish Thought and Bible). Moreover, the secretary is highly controversial, either being found cooperative or incompetent. This divergence of opinion derives from the fact that the

secretary often works on the basis of personal preference rather than an overall sense of duty to the department and a clear definition of her tasks.

3.5.3 In summary, what are the points of strength and weakness of the human resources (teaching staff, technical and administrative staff)?

The senior teaching staff is comprised of scholars who have gone through rigorous processes of selection and evaluation by the faculty, including international review. On more than one occasion, members who did not meet these requirements were denied tenure. The junior staff is few in number due to budgetary cuts, but extremely dedicated and competent. On the selection of adjuncts, see above, 3.5.1.8. The questionnaires show that the latter do not receive guidance and feel the need for more support and advice on their teaching. We hope that this issue shall be addressed by the head of the Department.

The weakness of the administrative staff discussed above is a serious impediment obstructing the improvement of departmental life. It should be noted that budgetary cuts have also reduced the general level of support given to the staff by the administrative staff in the faculty and the university, who are seriously overloaded.

3.6 Infrastructure

3.6.1 Laboratories

Not Relevant

3.6.1. Administration

3.6.1.1. What is the physical location of the unit in the institution, in which building is it located, and where does the study program under evaluation operate? Do other study programs share the building?

The secretariat of the Department of Jewish thought is located in the Humanities building, Block 1, 3rd floor. Classes in Jewish Thought are held in the same building, usually in blocks 1-2, on the first floor.

3. 6.1.2. What is the location of the secretariat/administration of the parent unit? Does the study program under evaluation have a separate secretariat?

The parent unit of the Department of Jewish Thought is the Institution for Jewish Studies. Its secretariat is located in the same building and the same block, but on the 2nd floor. The secretariat of the Department of Jewish Thought is shared with the Bible Department.

3. 6.1.3. How many rooms serve the academic staff (senior, junior and external) and technical staff of the program, and what standard equipment is available in each room?

17 rooms serve the teachers of the Department of Jewish thought. Most of the rooms are in the Humanities building. Each room is equipped with a desk, 2-3 chairs and bookshelves. The secretariat has 2 rooms (equipped with a computer, printer and fax machine) and right near it there is an supplementary room with 2 tables and a few chairs, that is usually used by students for personal exams etc. Most of the teacher's rooms, the secretariat,

as well as the study rooms are conveniently located in the same bloc (2) of the Faculty building.

3.6.2. Classes

> 3.6.2.1. How many classrooms, seminar rooms, rooms for group activities
> and auditoria serve the study program, how many seats do they have, and
> what equipment can be found in each room /classroom/auditorium (including
> reference to the possibility of using personal laptop computers on campus).

The allocation of rooms is not made according to a departmental key, but is arranged by the faculty level authorities. Most of the classes in Jewish Thought are held in blocks 1-3, on the first floor. The classrooms in this area contain varying numbers of seats, usually from 10 to 50. Smaller classrooms contain tables, and if they are not enough – chairs with arm rests are added. Larger courses are held in block 7, where there are rooms of more than 50 seats..

> 3.6.2.2. How many computer labs serve the students in the program, and
> how many computers are there in each lab? Specify the existing hardware
> and software, and state if it includes special hardware and/or software.
> Specify the institutional and unit computer
> lay-out, and how it serves the parent unit and the study program.

No particular computer lab is exclusively dedicated to the Department of Jewish Thought, but all the laboratories of the Mount Scopus campus are accessible to them, including the 2 large computer farms: the Berel Ginges Computer Center (containing 230 desktops) and the Agnes Ginges Computer Center (containing 200 desktops). Besides these, there are a few open spaces with computer positions in the campus, one of them in block 1 that is very close to the rooms of the Department of Jewish Thought. All the computers have internet access and numerous software programs including Microsoft

and Open Access programs. The students of Jewish Thought usually use the "Responsa Project" and the DBS program, and these are available both in the computer labs and at the Mount Scopus central library. Printers are available in all the existing labs. A few of them are also equipped with a scanner.

> 3.6.2.3. Do the parent unit and study program have access to additional facilities for special purposes, e.g. conference rooms, study centres, research centres and meeting rooms? If teaching activities take place outside the campus, please specify which activities and the frameworks in which they are carried out.

A small supplementary room and a small lobby are located near the secretariat of the Department. A small (and badly aired) conference room and a photocopier room are located in the area of the Institute for Jewish Studies.

The Library (3.6.4)

> 3.6.2 Describe the library which serves the students and the teaching staff of the study program: its location, its physical structure, the number of titles according to subjects, journals, computerised databases, the number of obligatory books relative to the number of students, opening hours, number of seats, number of computers, the library's professional staff and their qualifications, to what extent do the students receive assistance and guidance in the library, the ability of students and teaching staff to use the databases from outside the library (using a code to connect to the computer). Specify likewise the policy guiding the purchase of material for the library: how are decisions made with regard to the purchase of books, journals, computerised databases etc. and based on which recommendations/requirements, what are the procedures for updating the library, is there a clear and well-defined budget for the library?

The Bloomfield Library for Humanities and Social Sciences was established in 1981 with the merging of 24 departmental libraries from the Givat Ram campus in one new building on Mt. Scopus. This year it has more than 14,000 registered borrowers. The library's five story building is located in the center

of the Mt. Scopus campus, lodged between the buildings of the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences. The 3rd floor, that it is the entrance floor, includes the Reference and Circulation Departments, Periodicals Reading Room and the Administrative offices. The Acquisition and Cataloging department is located at the 4th floor.

The lower level houses the Photocopy Service and storage facilities.

The floors 2, 4 and 5 are the Reading Rooms that accommodate book collections divided up by the various fields of study. There is a media department for the music, audio and video collection at the 2nd floor. There are four seminar rooms and four "smart" classrooms equipped with audio-visual and computer facilities. The entrance floor is in the process of renovation this year. A donation enabled adding an information center intended for individual and collaborative studies, with up-to-date computer equipment, a seminar room and a computer class.

The Collection

566,665 cataloged titles, including:

- 1,066 print journal subscriptions
- 22,437 electronic journal subscriptions
- 6,372 DVD and videocassettes
- 132 electronic databases
- 971,490 volumes on shelves

Required Reading for Courses

The Reserved Reading Collection is updated every semester. It includes textbooks and a database of scanned articles and digitized music based on the required reading lists of the teachers. If a title is on the required reading list the Library usually provides an item for every 30 students (the correlation can be changed in case of need). This year there are 5,760 books and 6,751 scanned articles on reserve. For legal reasons, access to the on-line database

of scanned materials (e-reserves) is open to students only after logging in with their personal identification code.

Circulation Services

The majority of the monographs can be circulated and each patron may borrow up to 50 books simultaneously. There are approximately 3,400 circulation transactions on an average day during the school year. The patrons themselves enter requests into the system. Daily renewals are performed automatically by the Aleph500 system. Materials that are not available in the collection may be obtained by inter-library loan, from Israeli libraries, as well as from abroad, for a fee. This service handles annually about 4,300 requests for articles and books.

Library Hours

During the school year:

Sun.-Wed. 9:00-22:00

Thurs. 9:00-19:00

Summer hours:

Sun.-Thurs. 9:00-19:00

Seating Capacity

There are about 1,700 seats in the various reading rooms, some in quiet areas and some in areas designated for group study. There are also individual carrels throughout the building for students who seek a quiet private corner. In addition there are classrooms for collaborative learning. The Periodicals Reading Room, where current periodicals are displayed, offers informal seating. Once renovation works are finished patrons will get more library workstations or with private laptops, as well as more seats.

Computer Stations

About 150 stations are available for patrons. At the stations the library readers can search the library's catalogs, databases and electronic journals.

Access to the internet, email, Microsoft Office and many programs provided by the University Computer Authority are also available on the library stations. Wireless connection for students bringing their own laptop computers is accessible in all the areas. All computers, including wireless laptops allow printing from printers located in the library.

Library Staff

The library staff is comprised of 36 librarians (28.5 tenured positions), one computer specialist, one technical assistant, and one administrative assistant. The library also employs student assistants, approximately 54,000 hours annually. All librarians have academic degrees in library science and in the fields of humanities and social sciences and several have advanced degrees. There is a subject specialist for each area of study covered by the library. The librarians are active in both inter- and intra-university forums, publish in professional journals, lecture at conferences, and have served as chairpersons of national committees.

Library Instruction and Reference Services

The main reference desk providing face-to-face assistance during all library opening hours is located at the entrance floor. Other floors reading rooms render general guidance during the busier hours. Individual help can be also obtained from a relevant subject specialist librarian by e-mail, by phone or by making an appointment.

Library orientation sessions are offered to new students at the beginning of each semester by our reference staff. There are specialized instruction classes coordinated by subject specialist librarians and teachers keyed to particular course subjects. In-depth training is given to acquaint students with the databases and reference tools in their field of study. The Reference department team has produced a number of training videos on library resources - linked to the homepage.

Library Homepage

The library homepage (www.mslib.huji.ac.il) is arranged to help the student or researcher find the material in his subject area. There are general pages on "How to find…" and pages devoted to a subject. Each page has explanations about the materials and links to on-line resources. A detailed database page offers descriptions of each of the 125 databases. All pages are in both English and Hebrew. Any patron who is in need of assistance can reach a librarian directly from the homepage and will receive a reply by email.

Access to Electronic Resources

Students, teachers and researchers can access most of the electronic journals and databases from any computer that is connected to the university network on campus or from home. They can access electronic resources and especially the e-reserves system from home or dorms 24 hours a day 7 days a week by entering a personal identification code.

Collection Development

At the beginning of each academic year the Library Authority allocates an acquisitions budget to each individual faculty. Each Faculty Library Committee, whose members are appointed by the Dean, meets and decides on the division of the budget among the many departments and fields of study in the faculty. Part of the budget is for journal and database subscriptions. The remaining budget is for monographs and non-book materials.

Subscriptions are acquired in cooperation with other libraries in the Hebrew University, as well as through the Malmad system. Subscriptions to new databases are approved only after a trial period has been made available to the librarians, researchers and teachers who are requested to give their evaluation. The collection development is a joint effort of librarians and faculty members. Heads of departments appoint a member of the department as a liaison with the library to help sort out the requests of his colleagues.

Though this has not been done formally in the case of the department, several department members are very active in recommending new purchases. Selections are made from required reading lists, teachers' recommendations, publishers' catalogs, professional publications and on-line resources.

> 3.4.6.2 Do the institution and the study program take steps to enable the convenient access of the students with special needs to the study material and the different facilities, e.g. classrooms, laboratories, library? If part of the programs takes place on different campuses, how is equal opportunity of access to the facilities and equipment at the main campus ensured for all students?

All areas of the library building are accessible to the handicapped by ramps and elevators. There is an adaptive technology worksite for people with disabilities, equipped with a variety of additional devices. Special guidance is given by the staff to disabled students on both the library resources and the adaptive technologies. In general, students with special needs are cared for by the Student Dean. See http://studean.huji.ac.il/index-in.asp?id=82 ; http://studean.huji.ac.il/index-in.asp?id=138 and http://studean.huji.ac.il/index-in.asp?id=179

> 3.6.4.3 In summary, what are the points of strength and weakness of the physical infrastructure?

Though many students use personal computers, even after the latest renovation there are very few sockets in classes. Generally routine maintenance and cleaning of classes is poor, most likely due to shortage of support staff. The staff offices are not air-conditioned, which is a must in Israeli climate, and it is difficult to obtain necessary facilities such as bookcases. On this subject, the Gager Report stated as follows: "The offices themselves are unsuitable places for study. They are small, isolated and not air-conditioned. Thus it is little wonder that many faculty members spend as little time as possible in their offices".

The Bloomfield library is certainly one of the strongest resources for the study of the humanities in Israel, and the recent renovation is of course a timely improvement in the facilities offered. Especially for graduate research, this library is supported by the resources of the National Library in Jerusalem (whose links with the Hebrew University are in the process of gradual change). These resources include the Judaica Reading Room, the excellent collection of microfilms of Hebrew manuscripts, and the Gershom Scholem library for Kabbalah, which has over 50, 000 books and articles. These serve as an invaluable research tool for the researchers in the department and as a laboratory, as it were, for MA and PHD students. The possibilities offered by these collections for research and advising in the Department constitute a significant advantage, which could in fact be utilized to a greater extent. However, the Gager Report had the following to say on the library and its well worth quoting at length, as the library is our most central resource for research and teaching:

"In its most general terms, the problem of the library on Mount Scopus concerns its fundamental character and mission. Is it to be a reference library for undergraduate studies or a research library for all students and faculty? This issue must be addressed in a systematic fashion."

One particular area that requires careful attention is the future role of the library and its staff as an instructional unit of the university. Many university libraries now support such units and they have become an increasingly and indispensable important element in the educational mission. At the physical level this means creating a fully computerized teaching classroom in the library where faculty can send students for sessions on all aspects of research and writing. More importantly, at the level of personnel, this means hiring and/or developing library staff who are competent to teach these sessions. Such staff must be fully trained in the field of information technology. At the same time they must also be trained scholars, at least at the level of the MA, in one field or another. In short, they must have first-hand experience with the processes of research and writing. One possibility worth considering is

whether a select group of MA students could be trained, and paid, to carry out these functions.

Another issue that requires attention concerns the protocols for library acquisitions. At present, the system appears to depend largely on recommendations from members of the faculty, with library staff functioning primarily as cataloguers. This system is seriously out of step with most academic libraries at major universities. Without entirely abandoning the option of faculty recommendations, the faculty and administration must undertake a serious analysis of the present system and consider significant changes for the future. The Committee has given serious consideration to reports from members of the faculty regarding serious holes in library collections. There will need to be cooperation among all Israeli universities and the National Library to ensure that acquisitions in all fields will keep pace with new publications… Implicit in this recommendation is the maintenance and strengthening of a national union catalogue and a highly efficient system of inter-library loans."

In addition to the issues mentioned by the committee, the library is rather understaffed, as is apparent from the data presented above: As a result, the purchasing process is extremely slow, and this adversely affects the ability to conduct updated research and teaching. Many students (many of whom live outside Jerusalem) do not greatly avail themselves of the library resources, partly due to the rather restricted opening hours. This problem is alleviated to some extent by the E-reserves system, however this department of the library also suffers from understaffing, and several teachers feel that it is not extremely efficient.

Finally, the present annual budget for Jewish Thought – 44, 000 shekels (around 11, 000$) is far too small for keeping up with the vast output of new sources and studies in the field.

Chapter 4 - <u>Research</u>

Research Students and Funding

The Financial aid provided by the Authority for Research Students is limited to 2000 NIS for costs of preparing the copies of the PHD thesis and $500-1700 for travel to one conference overseas. The department has six relatively small scholarships and prizes for both MA and PHD students (two of which are not granted every year). Due to the limited resources at the disposal of the department, which is considered one of the least endowed in the Institute for Jewish Studies, the latter body provides our very best students with a relatively large proportion of its own scholarships (5 this year). In addition, there is a small amount of supplemental prizes and scholarships offered by the Faculty (5 this year). Finally, PHD students who have had their research proposal approved may apply to the Memorial Foundation for Jewish studies in New York.

One can easily deduce that only a small percentage of our 100-some MA and PHD students have any financial aid at all, and only in rare cases are we speaking of a full stipend - such as the new "Presidential" felowship, one of which is accorded on average per department. This award was a response to the Gager report, which stated: "There is currently a serious lack of funding for PhD students and we would like to see more fellowships made available", and apparently further scholarships are currently planned on the Faculty level. It should be noted that the University receives a significant subsidy per PHD student, who also pay 40% of the tuition in their first two years and 10% in each subsequent year.

As listed above (3.3.6.3/3.3.7.3) 20 Jewish Thought PHD students graduated in 2005-2007. Of these 2 were awarded the degree *summa cum laude*. In addition, our students are well represented amongst recipients of general competitive prizes such as the Pines, Urbach, Polonsky, Segal, Max

Schlomiuk and Bronfman awards as well as the Rottenstreich Fellowship of the Council of Higher Education.

As of June 2008, the department has 48 registered doctoral students. This is a very high percentage not only of the total of students in the eight departments of the Institute of Jewish Studies (around 200), but also of the faculty's PHD students (533). This is justly a source of pride, however one should bear in mind that there are currently 13 senior staff members in the department who are able to advise, including three non-tenured members (two newly appointed), one member who will soon retire, one whom is currently on unlimited sick leave and three part-time appointments. On the other hand, some of the emeriti continue to advise MA and PHD students. The authority for Research Students allows 5 PHD students per advisor, and the tables in appendix A show that many members of the department have reached or even exceeded this limit. One should ask if this ratio enables the advisors to give enough time to each student. We received only three responses to this question, one of which was negative. More generally, one can question whether such a large number of PHD is feasible for the future, in light of the large number of MA advisees (23), the paucity of financial aid the slim job prospects for PHD graduates (see above, 3.4.8) and the fact that this quantity has not produced results that are significantly above average in terms of achievement, as shown above. One proposal raised at the departmental meeting on the report, was to require an extra language as an entrance requirement to the PHD program. As some members opposed this proposal, it was decided to continue discussing it in the future. For further comments on this issue, see above 3.5.1.7.

Research Achievements of the Staff

Research is undoubtedly the traditionally strong point of the department: its members have all published oft-quoted books and articles in leading presses and journals, in Israel and abroad; they are regularly invited to lecture and teach in top institutions and frequently obtain highly competitive and

substantial grants in Israel and abroad. The funding sources for competitive grants are almost invariably the Israel Science Foundation (ISF) and the German-Israel Foundation (GIF), as is generally the case in the Humanities, (for sums, see table 5 in Appendix A). All members of the department are very prolific in their writing while maintaining a very high level of activity in service on editorial boards, participating in and organizing international conferences and workshops, and other forms of service to the general scholarly public (writing book reviews and encyclopedic entries, Internet projects, editing jubilee volumes and memorial volumes, organizing research groups and interdisciplinary research groups etc.). The department has published 22 volumes of *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* since its inception in 1980, including jubilee volumes and conference proceedings. In addition, members of the department are frequent contributors and editors in the Institute for Jewish Studies' journal *Tarbiz*. The departmental activity in recent years also included regular memorial evenings (e.g. in memory of Gershom Scholem), conferences in honor of retiring members, special guest lectures by distinguished overseas scholars etc. Further activity on the part of individual members may be found in the attached CVs.

Many members have taken part in international research centers (such as the Jewish Studies Research Center in Princeton, the Institute of Advanced Studies in Jerusalem, etc.) and maintain intensive ties with leading scholars worldwide. Others serve on the board of leading academic bodies in Israel and abroad (such as the Rothschild Foundation, the World Union of Jewish Studies, the Academy for the Hebrew Language). In addition, some senior members have served as directors of research institutions. We are proud that many of the retired and active members have received prestigious awards (such as the Israel Prize, the Emmet Prize, the Rothschild Prize, The Gershom Scholem Prize, the Michael Bruno prize etc.) and remarkable honors such as membership in the Israel Academy of Sciences. Younger scholars have also received national awards (such as the Alon award). Finally, a very substantial portion of candidacies for prizes, proposed books, research proposals, journal articles etc. in the field are referred to review by members of the department.

In terms of the main concerns of the report, the following goals follow from this state of affairs:

Ensuring that the faculty, and especially its emerging generation have reasonable, if not optimal research conditions in terms of infrastructure, budgeting and time (through re-consideration of the student-teacher ratio and administrative load).

Ensuring that the high standards of research in the department are fully expressed in teaching and advising.

Maintaining our strengths in existing areas of research and strengthening weaker areas through careful planning of future development goals and enhanced support from the Faculty in terms of allocation of senior positions (See above 3.2.8).

Chapter 5 - <u>The Self-Evaluation Process, Summary and Conclusions</u>

5.1 To what extent do the institution and the parent unit perform self-evaluation on a regular basis? (apart from the self-evaluation initiated by the Council for Higher Education)

5.2 Has the Institution appointed a senior staff member to deal with self-evaluation? If so, please state his name and his past and present position within the institution. State and evaluate the definition of his task as the staff member in charge of quality evaluation in the institution, including the scope of his authority and his method of operation.

The Hebrew University initiated a systematic process of Review and evaluation of all its units at regular intervals (usually each unit is being evaluated every 5-7 years). The review process relies on external committees consisting of internationally renowned experts in the reviewed field from leading universities abroad. The mandate of the Committees, as stated in the nomination letter, is to evaluate the unit's academic performance in teaching and research, and its standing within the field, in Israel and internationally. The Committees are asked to identify areas of strength and weakness and to advise the University on ways to improve and develop the unit. To achieve that goal committees examine all aspects of the reviewed unit: the activity of faculty members in both research and teaching, , curricula, students' level, infrastructure, and administrative functions.

The Vice-Rector, Professor Miri Gur-Arye, is responsible for the academic evaluations at the Hebrew University. Assisting the Vice-Rector since June 2005 are two Heads of Academic Review, Prof. Kobi Metzer as Head of Academic Review in the Humanities, Social Sciences and Law; and Prof. Eli Friedman as Head of Academic Review in the Sciences. Both have served as

Deans of large faculties (Social Sciences and Mathematics and Natural Sciences, respectively). The "team" of the academic review at the Hebrew University coordinates the whole process of the review, which begins with the appointment of the Committee members, and the preparation of material by the reviewed unit. Preparing the material for the Review Committee gives the unit an opportunity for self-assessment, itself an important stage in the review. The Committee then convenes in Jerusalem for approximately a week, in which the Committee members get access to all relevant material and meet with staff, faculty and students. The Committee's report is submitted to the Rector, and its recommendations are carefully studied by the University administration (The President, the Rector, the Vice-Rector and the two Heads of the Academic Review). The reviewed unit is asked to prepare a response, which is brought, together with the report of the review committee, before the University's Committee for Academic Policy. This Committee, chaired by the President and the Rector, discusses all the relevant matters and decides on implementing all, or parts, of the recommendations.

The experience of the authors of this report was that the team was most helpful, encouraging us to relate to the contents of the various questions posed in the guidelines in the order and form which appear most suitable from our point of view. Their advice has been most conducive to the integration of the questionnaires and their results, a new procedure which is used in the present report for the first time.

> 5.3 The methods used by the study program in its self-evaluation process and what are the conclusions with regard both to the methods /the way it was performed and to its results?

At the beginning, diametrically opposed attitudes towards the process were expressed. While some members of the Department saw it as an opportunity, others dismissed it as another piece of bureaucracy, which may even lead to further budget cuts. It was furthermore discussed whether there should be a separate Hebrew version as well as who would be responsible for writing the report and what role the head of the Department should play in the final

version. Following lively deliberations, the head of the Department appointed two senior lecturers, Dr. Jonathan Garb and Dr. Maren Niehoff, to write the report, and two junior lecturers, Dr. Benjamin Brown and Dr. Avinoam Rosenak, to help with graphs and other technical details.

The heart of the self-evaluation process in the Department of Jewish Thought was the distribution of the questionnaires (details in chap. 2). Questionnaires have never been used before in the context of the self-evaluation processes and we thus faced a very considerable challenge in designing them. Initially, one of us asked our students what their prime concerns are in order to ensure a meaningful questionnaire. In addition, a personal acquaintance with experience in designing questionnaires was consulted. Our experience with the questionnaires was excellent as they allowed us to receive a balanced and diverse picture on sensitive issues. They also prompted a real discussion on subjects which had thus far not been formally approached. Therefore we can recommend the use of this method to every department undergoing a self-evaluation process. For this purpose it is recommended that the university may coordinate between the departments undergoing a self-evaluation process and departments dealing with statistics, computation etc., the latter offering assistance in designing and evaluating the questionnaires.

Even though the initial participation was relatively low, the questionnaires initiated a significant process of self-evaluation. Substantial issues, which divide the members of the Department, could for the first time be openly discussed and significant changes have already been introduced. At the same time, however, it is clear that the democratic process of self-evaluation and discussion is difficult. The issue that provoked the greatest discrepancies and tensions among the members of the Department was the question of possible cooperation with the Department of Comparative Religion (See above, 3.2.5, section 3).

5.4. Describe the consolidation process of the self-evaluation process, including its preparation and final approval.

Dr. Maren R. Niehoff was, among other things, responsible for the design of the questionnaires, the reception of the responses by e-mail and their evaluation as well as the numerical representation of the results. She also initiated the discussion of the changes following the questionnaires. Dr. Jonathan Garb was, among other things, responsible for collecting and analyzing information on the Institution, parent unit and study program. The completed draft of the report has been circulated among the members of the Department. We regret to say that only two members commented at all (one after the designated date), however the designated date for comments was clearly advertised, and the members of the Department were informed that should no comments be received after this date the report shall be considered as ratified by them. The dean of the Faculty also approved the draft of the report in a special meeting prior to its submission to the Vice-Rector and Prof. Metzer, who both offered detailed comments. Finally, the report was commented upon and approved by the Rector, Prof. Sarah Stroumsa.

> 5.5. If a mechanism/structure has been decided upon for the future treatment of problematic issues that were highlighted by the self-evaluation activity, specify while referring to the functionary within the institution who would be responsible to follow-up on this activity.

On the University level, in principle, such issues are brought by the Rector to the University's Committee on Academic Policy. On the level of the faculty, The Dean has stated his support for our efforts and unofficially announced his intention to assist with their implementation.

> 5.6 Are the results of the self-evaluation open, transparent and accessible to staff (academic as well as administrative) and students?

The Hebrew University regards transparency and accessibility of evaluation reports as essential to the usefulness of the self-evaluation process. Following the discussion by the committee for academic policy (see above), the reports are made public and posted on the University's website.

Appendices

Appendix A: Tables

The Study Program - Table no. 1

Found in separate Excel document and printed at end of the report, due to size of file

6.2 Teaching Staff – Tables

Academic Year of Evaluation - (2009)

Table 2A

Found in separate Excel document and printed at end of the report, due to size of file

Table 2B

Junior Academic Staff Employed

Found in separate Excel document and printed at end of the report, due to size of file

Table 2C
External Teaching Staff – Senior

Name of Teacher			Employment Status	Yearly Teaching Units	Area of Specialization	Courses taught by the teacher	Additional Tasks in Institution
First	Family	Academic degree					
Melilah	Hellner-Eshed	Dr.	External teacher	4	Kabbalah	Zohar for Advanced Students	---
Oded	Israeli	Dr.	External teacher	4	Kabbalah	*Zohar* Readings for Beginners	---
Moshe	Meir	Dr.	External teacher	4	Modern Jewish Philosophy	Man and Nature– Aharon David Gordon	----
Alon	Dahan	Dr.	External teacher	4	Kabbalah	Bahir - Midrash R' Nehunia Ben Hakane	----
Amira	Eran	Prof.	External teacher	4	Medieval Jewish Philosophy	Pedagogical Considerations in Maimonides' Thought	----
Ehud	Krinis	Dr.	External teacher	4	Medieval Jewish Philosophy	Judah Halevi and the Kuzari	----
Estie	Isman	Dr.	External teacher	4	Medieval Jewish Philosophy	Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*	---
Michah	Goodman	Dr.	External teacher	4	Medieval Jewish Philosophy	Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*	---

Table 3A:

**<u>Number of Students and Graduates
in the Unit and Study Program</u>**

<u>For the faculty, see above, 2.6</u>

**<u>Number of students and graduates in the Department in each of the
last five years</u>**

Year	Degree		Presently studying	Graduates
2004	BA		156	42
	MA	with thesis	35	11
		without thesis	23	2
	PHD		58	14
2005	BA		159	39
	MA	with thesis	34	8
		without thesis	31	3
	PHD		55	4
2006	BA		148	28
	MA	with thesis	30	6
		without thesis	32	
	PHD		58	10
2007	BA		132	45
	MA	with thesis	23	9
		without thesis	39	1
	PHD		52	6
2008	BA		119	
	MA	with thesis	23	
		without thesis	33	
	PHD		48	

Table 4:
        Teaching Evaluations

Teacher	Year	Yearly Hours	Courses	Surveys	Grades	
					Course	Teacher
Benjamin Brown	2003	4	2	2	18.8	19.5
	2004	4	2	2	17.5	18.0
	2005					
	2006	4	2	1	14.8	15.8
	2007	2	1	1	15.1	16.4

Teacher	Year	Yearly Hours	Courses	Surveys	Grades	
					Course	Teacher
Rachel Elior	2003	3	2	2	17.9	17.7
	2004	6	3	3	19.4	19.2
	2005	6	3	2	19.5	19.6
	2006	6	3	1	14.4	16.4
	2007	5	3	2	15.4	15.7

Teacher	Year	Yearly Hours	Courses	Surveys	Grades	
					Course	Teacher
Jonathan Garb	2003	6	3	2	18.7	19.5
	2004	6	3	3	17.5	19.2
	2005	6	3	3	18.7	19.1
	2006	6	3	3	19.0	19.8
	2007	6	3	3	17.4	18.8

Teacher	Year	Yearly Hours	Courses	Surveys	Grades	
					Course	Teacher
Moshe Halbertal	2003	3	3	3	18.5	19.2
	2004	6	4	4	18.7	19.4
	2005	3	3	3	18.3	19.1
	2006	3	3	3	17.6	18.8
	2007	3	2	2	19.7	20.4

Teacher	Year	Yearly Hours	Courses	Surveys	Grades	
					Course	Teacher
Zeev Harvey	2003	8	5	3	18.6	18.5
	2004	4	3	3	17.1	17.7
	2005	6	4	4	17.6	18.2
	2006	7	4	3	16.8	17.9
	2007	5	3	2	15.5	15.9

Teacher	Year	Yearly Hours	Courses	Surveys	Grades	
					Course	Teacher
Moshe Idel	2003	8	4	4	17.5	17.0
	2004	4	4	4	18.3	19.0
	2005	6	4	4	17.9	17.8
	2006	8	4	3	17.9	18.3
	2007	4	4	3	16.4	17.3

Teacher	Year	Yearly Hours	Courses	Surveys	Grades	
					Course	Teacher
Pawel Maciejko	2003					
	2004					
	2005					
	2006					
	2007	2	1	1	15.1	16.2

Teacher	Year	Yearly Hours	Courses	Surveys	Grades	
					Course	Teacher
Maren Niehoff	2003	9	5	1	15.2	15.7
	2004	6	3	3	16.5	17.2
	2005	6	3	1	17.3	17.7
	2006	3	2	1	18.9	17.5
	2007					

Teacher	Year	Yearly Hours	Courses	Surveys	Grades	
					Course	Teacher
Shlomo Naeh	2003	2	1	1	14.3	17.8
	2004	6	4	4	18.1	18.7
	2005	6	4	3	17.5	17.9
	2006	3	2	1	14.1	15.7
	2007	3	3	3	15.9	17.7

Teacher	Year	Yearly Hours	Courses	Surveys	Grades	
					Course	Teacher
Aviezer Ravitzky	2003	3	2	2	18.6	19.0
	2004	3	3	3	18.0	18.4
	2005	4	3	3	18.2	18.6
	2006	3	2	2	18.6	19.4
	2007					

Teacher	Year	Yearly Hours	Courses	Surveys	Grades	
					Course	Teacher
Katherina Rigo	2003					
	2004	6	3	3	17.4	18.9
	2005	6	4	3	18.6	19.5
	2006	6	3	1	19.5	19.0
	2007	6	4	3	16.6	18.4

Teacher	Year	Yearly Hours	Courses	Surveys	Grades	
					Course	Teacher
Avinoam Rosenak	2003	10	6	6	20. 14	20. 24
	2004	6	3	3	19.56	19. 36
	2005	7	4	4	19.4	19.5
	2006	8	4	4	17.4	18.4
	2007	8	4	4	15.0	16.0

Teacher	Year	Yearly Hours	Courses	Surveys	Grades	
					Course	Teacher
Sarah Stroumsa	2003					
	2004	6	3	2	16.7	18.5
	2005	4	2	2	15.8	16.5
	2006					
	2007					

Table 5:
      Research Grants

- See above Chapter 4 (Research Achievements of the Staff) for sources for competitive grants.
- Calibrated number of budgets and sum total = Number of budgets divided by the number of researchers receiving the grant.
- Competitive active = The sums refer to the relative proportion between 1/10/7-30/9/8

Teacher	Source	Number of Budgets	$sum	Calibrated number of budgets	Sum Total
Benjamin Brown	Competitive	0	0	*****	0
	Other	1	4,213	1.00	4,213
	Total Projects	1	4,213	1.00	4,213
	Competitive Active	0	0	*****	0
	Other Active	1	3,154	1.00	3,154
	Total Active Per Year	1	3,154	1.00	3,154

Teacher	Source	Number of Budgets	$sum	Calibrated number of budgets	Sum Total
Rachel Elior	Competitive	1	42,735	1.00	42,735
	Other	9	62,355	9.00	62,355
	Total Projects	10	105,090	10.00	105,090
	Competitive Active	0	0	*****	0
	Other Active	2	6,898	2.00	6,897
	Total Active Per Year	2	6,898	2.00	6,897

Teacher	Source	Number of Budgets	$sum	Calibrated number of budgets	Sum Total
Jonathan Garb	Competitive	0	0	*****	0
	Other	4	24,500	4.00	24,500
	Total Projects	4	24,500	4.00	24,500
	Competitive Active	0	0	*****	0
	Other Active	1	8,855	0.15	1,347
	Total Active Per Year	1	8,855	0.15	1,347

Teacher	Source	Number of Budgets	$sum	Calibrated number of budgets	Sum Total
Zeev Harvey	Competitive	3	185,679	3.00	185,679
	Other	5	1,276,994	4.99	1,276,994
	Total Projects	8	1,462,673	7.98	1,462,673
	Competitive Active	0	0	*****	0
	Other Active	0	0	*****	0
	Total Active Per Year	0	0	*****	0

Teacher	Source	Number of Budgets	$sum	Calibrated number of budgets	Sum Total
Moshe Halbertal	Competitive	0	0	*****	8
	Other	2	14,022	2.00	14,022
	Total Projects	2	14,022	2.00	14,022
	Competitive Active	0	0	*****	0
	Other Active	0	0	*****	0
	Total Active Per Year	0	0	*****	0

Teacher	Source	Number of Budgets	$sum	Calibrated number of budgets	Sum Total
Moshe Idel	Competitive	1	46,466	1.00	46,466
	Other	7	432,530	6.97	430,530
	Total Projects	8	478,996	7.97	476,996
	Competitive Active	0	0	*****	0
	Other Active	4	14,616	4.00	14,615
	Total Active Per Year	4	14,616	4.00	14,615

Teacher	Source	Number of Budgets	$sum	Calibrated number of budgets	Sum Total
Pawel Maciejko	Competitive	0	0	*****	0
	Other	0	0	*****	0
	Total Projects	0	0	*****	0
	Competitive Active	0	0	*****	0
	Other Active	0	0	*****	0
	Total Active Per Year	0	0	*****	0

Teacher	Source	Number of Budgets	$sum	Calibrated number of budgets	Sum Total
Maren Niehoff	Competitive	4	195,996	3.00	195,996
	Other	2	16,020	2.00	16,020
	Total Projects	5	212,016	5.00	212,016
	Competitive Active	0	0	*****	0
	Other Active	1	3,997	1.00	3,997
	Total Active Per Year	1	3,997	1.00	3,997

Teacher	Source	Number of Budgets	$sum	Calibrated number of budgets	Sum Total
Shlomo Naeh	Competitive	-	-	-	-
	Other	2	36, 433	0.87	15, 858
	Total Projects	2	36, 433	o.87	15, 858
	Competitive Active	-	-	-	-
	Other Active	-	-	-	-
	Total Active Per Year	-	-	-	-

Teacher	Source	Number of Budgets	$sum	Calibrated number of budgets	Sum Total
Sarah Stroumsa	Competitive	1	43,387	0.50	21,693
	Other	4	110,242	4.00	110,242
	Total Projects	5	153,629	4.29	131,935
	Competitive Active	1	14,489	0.50	7,244
	Other Active	2	32,544	2.36	38,420
	Total Active Per Year	3	47,033	2.91	45,665

Teacher	Source	Number of Budgets	$sum	Calibrated number of budgets	Sum Total
Aviezer Ravitzky	Competitive	2	47,792	2.00	47,792
	Other	5	52,005	4.90	51,005
	Total Projects	7	99,797	6.93	98,797
	Competitive Active	0	0	*****	0
	Other Active	0	0	*****	0
	Total Active Per Year	0	0	*****	0

Teacher	Source	Number of Budgets	$sum	Calibrated number of budgets	Sum Total
Katherina Rigo	Competitive	1	31,064	1.00	31,064
	Other	2	12,350	2.00	12,350
	Total Projects	3	43,414	3.00	43,414
	Competitive Active	0	0	*****	0
	Other Active	0	0	*****	0
	Total Active Per Year	0	0	*****	0

Teacher	Source	Number of Budgets	$sum	Calibrated number of budgets	Sum Total
Avinoam Rosenak	Competitive	0	0	*****	0
	Other	8	40,942	7.80	39,942
	Total Projects	8	40,942	7.80	39,942
	Competitive Active	0	0	*****	0
	Other Active	1	2,188	1.00	2,187
	Total Active Per Year	1	2,188	1.00	2,187

Appendix B: The Questionnaires

The following general instructions were provided at the head of each questionnaire:

As part of the self-evaluation process that the Departments of Jewish Thought and Philosophy are conducting at the request of the Council for Higher Education, we wish to receive your response on several questions in order to assist us in preparing our report and correctly reflecting the range of opinions within the department. Please give the questions your serious consideration.

The responses will we treated with utmost discretion. Please return your responses until the end of the semester break, i.e. 11.5.08.

You may send your response via e-mail to: msmaren@mscc.huji.ac.il

Whoever wishes to answer anonymously may leave a printed copy of the questionnaire in our mail-box.

Sincerely yours and with thanks in advance

Maren Niehoff

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Guidelines

The questions have a verbal component and a numerical component. Depending on the question:

10= to the highest extent, very satisfied, I certainly agree, I feel it to be very necessary,

1= to a minimal extent, entirely unsatisfied, I entirely disagree, entirely superfluous.

We will be happy to receive detailed verbal responses.

1) Questionnaire for Senior and Tenure-Track Staff

(The number next to the questions indicates the voting of each respondent, the thick number at the end represents the average)

What, in your opinion, are the major educational goals of the department?

To train teachers for high schools? 5 6 7 7 8 8 8 9 / **7.3**

To train future researchers? 5 6 9 9 10 10 10 10 / **8.6**

To provide general knowledge for students taking Jewish thoughts as a secondary degree? 2 5 6 6 8 8 8 9 / **6.5**

Other?

Do you find the level of our students to be satisfactory in terms of:

Their intellectual curiosity? 1 3 5 6 7 8 8 9 / **5.9**

Their willingness to invest effort? 1 2 4 5 6 7 7 8 / **5.0**

Their willingness to read in foreign languages (if you require such reading)? 1 1 2 2 4 5 6 7 / **3.5**

Should the entry levels for the various degrees be raised? 3 5 8 8 10 10 10 / **7.7**

To what extent do you feel free to exchange views with Department members:

Concerning teaching? 2 4 4 6 8 10 10 / **6.3**

Concerning your research? 1 2 4 8 9 10 10 / **6.3**

Concerning research grants? 1 1 1 2 4 5 8 / **3.1**

To what extent did you experience mutual support? 2 5 7 8 9 10 10 / **7.3**

To what extent did you have intellectually stimulating talks? 2 5 7 8 9 9 10 / **7.1**

Are you interested in forging stronger or more active ties between members of the department? 3 5 6 8 8 8 10 / **6.9**

To what extent are you interested in closer work relationships with another department? 3 5 7 7 7 10 10 / **6.1**

If so, which one/s? Department of Comparative Religion: 4

                     Department of Philosophy: 3

To what extent does the departmental seminar assist you? 5 5 8 9 10 10 / **7.8**

How can it be improved? At the time when the questionnaires were distributed, the Departmental seminar had just been renewed, after a break of about a decade, and only two sessions had already taken place. Most teachers responded that the actual fact of having a seminar is excellent and now we have to see in which direction it develops.

The Study Program:

To what extent is the offering of courses in the study program balanced? 1 3 5 5 5 7 8 / **4.9**

If not, how may balance be achieved?

Does the division into sections contribute to understanding Jewish thought? 1 1 1 7 8 9 9 / **5.2**

Should additional proficiency in foreign languages be required? 1 9 10 10 10 / **8.0**

To what extent should the course topics be at the discretion of each staff member? 5 5 7 7 8 8 9 / **7.0**

To what extent is the head of the department entitled to determine the study program? 4 5 5 7 8 9 9 / **6.7**

To what extent do you insist on class attendance? 1 2 8 9 9 10 / **6.5**

To what extent do you think the current method of assigning MA advisors is effective? 4 4 8 10 10 / **7.2**

To what extent do you find the current system of final MA exams effective? 3 6 8 9 10 / **7.2**

To what extent do students participate in your research projects? 1 1 1 3 8 9 9 10 / **5.3**

To what extent is the current policy regarding the deadlines for submitting papers effective? 2 3 4 6 8 / **4.6**

Are you satisfied with the current division of the load of advising and administration in the department? 1 1 5 5 7 / **3.8**

To what extent is the scope of your advising and administration compatible with your research? 2 4 5 6 7 / **4.8**

To what extent are the recommendations of the Gager Committee familiar to you? 2 7 8 9 10 10 10 / **8.0**

If they are, to what extent do you find them helpful? 5 5 8 9 / **6.8**

To what extent do you find their implementation by the faculty satisfactory? 1 3 4 4 6 / **3.6**

How do you wish the department to implement these recommendations?

One senior member made the following suggestions: following the Gager Report, the Department of Jewish Thought will continue to be a separate Department, but will be

integrated into the School of Modes of Thought. This will result in a significant exposure of our students to courses on broader topics and thus in a widening of their horizons. In addition, following the recommendations of the Gager Report, the Department should select its research students more carefully and support those much more than has hitherto been done.

Another senior member suggested that the number of doctoral students should be limited and co-teaching with the Department of Comparative Religion be fostered.

Another senior member suggested that cooperation with other Departments, especially the Department of Comparative Religion, as well as interdisciplinary frameworks of discussion should be developed.

To what extent do you find the policy-making processes in the department satisfactory? 1 1 3 7 8 10 / **5.0**

Is there need for an additional forum for discussion? 1 1 2 7 8 / **3.8**

Do you think the department has a mechanism for revision and reassessment in face of developments and changes? 1 1 2 6 8 9 / **4.5**

To what extent are the proceedings for appointing new staff members satisfactory? 1 1 1 1 5 7 8 / **3.4**

Should there be a decision of principle as to the participation of non-tenure members in these proceedings? 5 8 8 10 10 / **8.2**

Should there be a preliminary departmental decision as to the area which the department wishes to develop? 5 8 8 9 10 10 10 / **8.6**

Should the department's recommendation for appointments be based solely on excellence? 5 7 8 10 10 10 / **8.3**

To what extent did you find the secretariat useful and helpful? 1 2 6 8 9 9 10 / **6.4**

With which matters could you obtain its assistance?

With which matters could you not do so?

One senior member reported that the secretary was generally found uncooperative, sometimes even causing real damage.

Should the department prepare for the imminent generational change? 5 5 6 6 10 10 / **7.0**

If so, in what manner?

One member answered that the issues at stake are not related to the generational change, positions being taken irrespective of seniority. Another member commented that the process of self-evaluation gives already prominence to the young generation.

2) Questionnaire for Adjuncts and Junior Staff

What, in your opinion, are the major educational goals of the department?

To train teachers for high schools? 3 5 6 6 6 7 9 9 / **6.3**

To train future researchers? 6 8 9 9 10 10 10 10 / **9.0**

To provide general knowledge for students taking Jewish thoughts as a secondary degree? 5 5 6 8 8 8 9 9 / **7.3**

Other?

To what extent did you receive guidance and orientation for your teaching in the department?

Course topic? 1 1 5 5 7 9 9 10 / **5.9**

Course requirements? 1 1 1 3 4 5 6 6 / **3.4**

Course structure and syllabus preparation? 1 1 1 3 5 6 7 / **3.4**

To what extent did you feel that you needed support with your teaching during the year? 1 1 2 2 6 7 7 8 / **4.3**

Do you feel free to ask for support with difficulties in teaching (no -; yes +):

To the head of the department? --++++++

To a senior colleague? ---+++++

To a younger colleague? -+++++++

Other:

If you give a course in an institution other than an University,

the course is similar to the course you teach elsewhere in:

Reading requirements? 2 3 3 3 5 6 7 8 / **4.6**

Imparting critical tools in analyzing sources? 2 2 3 4 4 5 8 8 / **4.5**

To what extent are the students in the department similar to those outside the University? 1 3 6 7 8 8 8 9 / **6.3**

Do you find the level of our students to be satisfactory in terms of:

Their intellectual curiosity? 7 7 8 8 8 9 9 9 / **8.1**

Their willingness to invest effort? 7 7 8 8 8 8 9 9 / **8.0**

Their willingness to read in foreign languages (if you require such reading)? 67 / **6.5**

To what extent did you find the secretariat useful and helpful? 6 6 8 8 8 10 10 / **8.0**

With which matters could you obtain its assistance?

With which matters could you not do so?

To what extent do you feel free to exchange view with department members on

Teaching? 2 5 5 7 8 8 9 9 / **6.6**

Your research? 4 4 5 7 8 8 8 9 / **6.6**

Obtaining grants? 1 3 4 5 7 / **4.0**

Are you interested in forging stronger or more active ties between members of the department? 8 8 8 8 8 9 10 10 / **8.6**

To what extent are you interested in closer work relationships with another department? 5 7 8 9 10 10 10 / **8.4**

If so, which one/s? Various Jewish Studies Departments, the Department of Comparative Religion

To what extent are the recommendations of the Gager Committee familiar to you?

1 1 1 1 1 1 3 / **1.3**

If they are, to what extent do you find them helpful?

To what extent do you find their implementation by the faculty satisfactory?

How do you wish the department to implement these recommendations?

To what extent does the departmental seminar assist you? 1 1 1 4 8 / **3.0**

How can it be improved?

One junior teacher suggested that the seminar should address more general, overarching subjects rather than treat a specific issue.

Do you have suggestions for improving the department and its functioning?

- One junior teacher suggested the following improvements: the level of training for research can be significantly raised by requiring further foreign languages and offering courses in reading manuscripts as well as introductions to the diversity of methodological approaches. Moreover, there should be much more coordination of the study program in general, ensuring that central fields are regularly represented, senior and junior teachers complementing each other. Senior members were criticized for offering courses too narrowly focusing on their own research interests, while ignoring the needs of the students and the overall study program.

- Another junior teacher observed that the Department of Jewish Thought does not provide a uniform methodology and does not teach a clearly defined body of knowledge with the result that the students are not provided with an adequate training as researchers. Especially in view of other Departments, such as the Department of Talmud, the field of Ancient Jewish Thought was found to be missing an overall structure, lacking a relevant introductory course.

- Another junior teacher commented that the Department should strengthen interdisciplinary studies, abandoning the traditional, rigid divisions between periods and fields. In addition, more attention should be given to training researchers. This could be achieved by locating outstanding students, providing them with grants and special supervision as well as advising.

3) Questionnaire for Students

A. The Structure of the BA Program

1. To what extent are the requirements for the various BA tracks clear to you?
2223444445556667778888888889910101010 / **9.2**

2. To what extent is the supply of courses in various areas balanced?
334444456666677777777777778888910 / **6.3**

3. To what extent are the course hours evenly distributed throughout the week?
2334455556677777778888999999 / **6.6**

4. To what extent does the division into sections contribute to understanding Jewish thought?

3444555566777777888888888991010 / **6.9**

5. To what extent did the following compulsory courses assist you in acquiring basic tools and orientation towards your further studies:

Introduction to Greek Philosophy - 344555667777888899999101010101010101010 / **7.7**

Reading the Zohar - 236677778888889999991010101010101010101010 / **8.3**

Reading the Guide for the Perplexed -

456777888888999999999910101010101010 / **8.5**

The Talmud preparatory - 44677788888999101010 / **7.8**

The proficiency exams - 35557777777788889101010 / **7.3**

6. To what extent does the BA program provide broad knowledge of the field?

4455556666677777777778888991010 / **6.9**

7. To what extent does the BA program provide critical tools for future studies?

255556666777777788888889910 10 / **6.7**

8. To what extent do the courses offered by the department widen your horizons?

366677778888889999999999101010101010 / **8.3**

B. The Structure of the BA Courses

1. To what extent are course requirements uniform?

13333445555555566666677788888810 / **5.7**

2. To what extent are lecturers present in their office hours?

578888888899999101010 / **8.4**

3. To what extent are they willing to assist during these hours?

777888888999999910101010101010101010 / **8.8**

4. To what extent does the number of students per class enable in-depth study?

45555666777778888888889999999991010 / **7.6**

C. Advising and Secretarial services

1. To what extent did you find the advising useful in choosing courses?

11122233445666667777788 / **4.8**

2. To what extent did it assist you in solving specific problems.

122233445566777788889910 / **5.7**

3. To what extent is the secretariat accessible and helpful?

123333444555566677778889991010 / **5.6**

4. Were there issues with which you could not obtain its assistance?

- In addition, we received a detailed letter from an outstanding student, enrolled initially in the Revivim Program and then in the Amirim Program, who took already numerous MA courses during his BA and urged us to raise the general level of requirements in the Department. The student felt that the present situation has so far deteriorated that the Hebrew University seriously has to ask whether it wants to defend its place of superiority as the most important institution of higher learning in the field of Jewish Studies.
His suggestions for improvement were the following: add mandatory courses in Comparative Religion, Jewish History and Bible criticism as well as instruction in the reading of manuscripts and additional languages. These requirements would both broaden the horizon and allow for greater specialization. A special track for outstanding students should be developed so as to support potential researchers.
Moreover, the student pointed to a problem in the student population, which needs to be considered: the gap between students with a traditional background, familiar with many texts, but unaware of research methods, and students with no such background, who are usually more open to academic research methods, but lack familiarity with traditional concepts and texts.
- Another letter reached us in which a student complained about the lack of courses in Modern Jewish Thought on non-orthodox thinkers. The student felt that there was a serious imbalance between courses on concepts of Halacha, which are well represented, and courses on French Jewish thinkers, for example, which are either completely lacking or given on a voluntary and thus random basis.
This student, too, pointed to the difference of student populations, some being "only" religious, while others are only "academic". In addition, it was

suggested that more attention should be given to the study of original texts rather than articles about them.

D. **The structure of the MA program**

1. To what extent did your BA studies prepare you for research?

357778 / **6.2**

2. To what extent is the MA course offer sufficient?

223366 / **3.6**

3. To what extent are the various areas of study balanced?

155668 / **5.2**

4. To what extent did the program provide you with critical tools for your further studies?

4456710 / **6.0**

5. To what extent did the courses in the department widen your horizons?

488101010 / **8.3**

6. To what extent did you find the advising helpful in choosing courses?

167777 / **5.8**

7. To what extent did it assist you in solving specific problems?

25569 / **4.5**

E. **Research in the Department**

- How did you choose your thesis supervisor?

   By personal acquaintance: 3 students

 - Is the supervising satisfactory?

   2 are very satisfied, one finds the advisor overloaded

 - Are there informal meetings between doctoral students?

   no

- Are you interested in establishing a forum for doctoral students to exchange ideas?

   Yes, indeed; one student stressed the need for a structured framework and some academic guidance, while another urged us to organize a forum with other departments.

- Are you interested in closer ties with another department? If so, which one?

   Comparative Religion, Philosophy, Hebrew Literature, Jewish History

- Did you find the departmental seminar for faculty and PHD students helpful?

  Two students were abroad and did not attend the seminar.

  To what extent can it be improved?

Additional Materials

Registration Guide

http://info.huji.ac.il/ShowPage.asp?prog_id=49#1

Study Codes

http://info.huji.ac.il/ShowPage.asp?cat=436

Tuition Fees

http://info.huji.ac.il/ShowPage.asp?cat=196