English follows the Hebrew

Shalom to the students and students at the Hebrew University.

Berechot va'amit ha-shinuy be-t-school regular, with the wish and wish of the successful end of the academic year 1/2022, and I wish all the best with the examinations. I request you to update me on the regulations for the examinations.

We review briefly the state of our university.

1. Condition of the University

In order to continue being Israel's leading academic institution, in innovation in teaching, in relation to the students, in the provision of grants and above all in academic training quality. I am happy to report that in the annual in July satisfaction survey (which comprises a sample of students / women / men), the overall satisfaction rose to 77,700 students / women / men (which represents 40% of all students / women / men for baccalaureate and master's degrees), maintaining a moderate satisfaction level (table 1) (the data are based on a range of 1 to 5: 1 – 0 not at all satisfied; 2 – 1 moderately satisfied; 3 – 2 satisfactorily; 4 – 3 fairly satisfied; 5 – 4 very satisfied). The overall satisfaction trend is a recognition of the efforts of the faculty and staff of the academic and administrative teams. We don't stop, especially because there are still a number of departments where the reported satisfaction level of the students is low. The academic units are working hard to implement the results of the general and feedback surveys and the experiences related to different courses. Please comment on the feedback from the courses taught in the past semester.

We are in the middle of a wide-ranging effort to encourage active learning, especially in the extension of work, which is mostly conducted in groups. Accordingly, among the 2,200 courses taught in the first semester, only 800 were planned to take place (and in many cases, the weight in the final grade does not exceed 70%), and with the recent increase of the pandemic, the number of examinations was reduced to 600, so that only in a quarter of the courses there is an examination. This is a process that will improve the quality of learning and teaching significantly.

2. Academic year calendar: In the academic year, the studies continue almost without any holiday. I am happy to announce that starting next academic year, there will be a week's vacation in the first semester, around Chanukah (without delaying the semester, so that it will include 13 weeks). This vacation will allow for the renewal of learning and teaching.

3. Grants: The Hebrew University continues to lead in grants in Israel. I remind you of the grants portal site for students (beside a wide range of additional services provided by this unit), here. It is strongly recommended to visit the grants site from time to time. The University Office for International Relations is extremely busy in raising funds, which are intended for grants for you and for the advancement of research infrastructure. After the year last year, 2021, in which grants were awarded to an unprecedented degree – which is why / why / why – donations increased to 151 million dollars, and the year that passed, 2022, the record was broken again, and $151 million was raised.

4. Research: The Hebrew University is known as a research university. Research and teaching are combined, and for the students a notable contribution to the advancement of research. I am happy to report that the University returned to its position as the leading academic institution in Israel according to all relevant measures. Among them, in the thematic rankings, which is the main ranking index in the world, our university is ranked 90th in the world and first in Israel (among the first 100 universities in the world and first in Israel)

Amden to the contributions of the grants to the research in the University from the government (through the planning and budgeting committee, VAT) for all the universities, 3 billion shekels is allocated to each institution according to the achievements of the researchers / researchers in various ways that are related to research: academic publications (after considering impact factor), and winning grants competition 49% (of this, 29% – product development, 7% – academic development – 10% – product development, 10% – product development) and the number of PhD students 17%.

The detailed report on the achievements of the University is available here; the data in the next table (table 2) show the percentage of each institution in the pie chart.
After two years, 2019-2020, where we were second, we returned in 2021 to be first, and even increased our lead from second place:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Hebrew</th>
<th>Tel-Aviv</th>
<th>Technion</th>
<th>Bar-Ilan</th>
<th>Hof</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, you are learning at the best academic institution in the country, a success that is a clear measure of your skills and contribution to society and beyond; thank you for being a part of the Hebrew University community.

b. Preparations for Exam Period

In light of the surge in the disease, as announced, we decided to switch to remote teaching for the remaining days of the semester.

This is intended to reduce the number of cases of infection, of course to protect the health of all members of the university community, and secondarily to increase the chances that all of you will enter the exam period healthy.

The management of the university is currently working in a “capsule” mode. All student service in the secretariats will be done remotely, online.

According to the updated policy of the university, entry to the campus is prohibited in the following cases (in addition to the requirement of showing a green pass):

- Presence of symptoms of coronavirus (even if there was a negative test)
- Contact with a confirmed coronavirus patient, or with a confirmed patient.

In the case of contact with a confirmed patient, you must isolate yourself for 48-72 hours and then perform a home test. Only after receiving a negative result after the time mentioned can you return to campus

In addition to what was mentioned above, please be aware that in order to remain healthy, it is crucial to study with friends, to participate in social events, and to observe as much as possible on social distancing.

But do so wisely, do not risk yourself in meetings with many participants and wear a mask.

6. Out of the 600 exams that will be held in the coming period, most (about 550) will be held remotely (the so-called model exam) as part of the regular model.

For the first time, a large number of exams will be held remotely, which presents new challenges and opportunities.

In order to ensure that these exams are conducted remotely, we urge you to familiarize yourself with the precautions and guidelines, and to inform us of any technical difficulties you may experience.

In the case of any technical difficulties during the exam, you can also contact the support center.

The online exam is not a trivial matter, and the university has chosen to conduct many exams online in order to reduce the risk to health.
January 10, 2022

Dear Hebrew University students,

Congratulations on the successful completion of your studies in the first semester of the 2021/2022 academic year, and good luck on your upcoming exams. I would like to update you on exam procedures, and before that, to share with you some aspects regarding the state of our University.

A. The Hebrew University status

1. We are working to continue to be the leading academic institution in Israel in innovative teaching, in appropriate treatment of our students, in the number of scholarships and especially in the quality of academic training. Our success in this regard is reflected in a variety of aspects. The satisfaction survey that we conduct every year (to which 7,700 students, about 40% of all undergraduate and master’s degree students responded this year) indicates an upward trend in satisfaction continues (Table 1). (The data shown are the average of the answers given, in the range of 1 to 5: 1 – Not at all satisfied; 2 – Low satisfaction; 3 – Medium satisfaction; 4 – High satisfaction; 5 – Very high satisfaction).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching quality</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research excellence</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student services</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University reputation</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The Hebrew University status

1. We are working to continue to be the leading academic institution in Israel in innovative teaching, in appropriate treatment of our students, in the number of scholarships and especially in the quality of academic training. Our success in this regard is reflected in a variety of aspects. The satisfaction survey that we conduct every year (to which 7,700 students, about 40% of all undergraduate and master’s degree students responded this year) indicates an upward trend in satisfaction continues (Table 1). (The data shown are the average of the answers given, in the range of 1 to 5: 1 – Not at all satisfied; 2 – Low satisfaction; 3 – Medium satisfaction; 4 – High satisfaction; 5 – Very high satisfaction).

3. The Hebrew University status

1. We are working to continue to be the leading academic institution in Israel in innovative teaching, in appropriate treatment of our students, in the number of scholarships and especially in the quality of academic training. Our success in this regard is reflected in a variety of aspects. The satisfaction survey that we conduct every year (to which 7,700 students, about 40% of all undergraduate and master’s degree students responded this year) indicates an upward trend in satisfaction continues (Table 1). (The data shown are the average of the answers given, in the range of 1 to 5: 1 – Not at all satisfied; 2 – Low satisfaction; 3 – Medium satisfaction; 4 – High satisfaction; 5 – Very high satisfaction).

4. The Hebrew University status

1. We are working to continue to be the leading academic institution in Israel in innovative teaching, in appropriate treatment of our students, in the number of scholarships and especially in the quality of academic training. Our success in this regard is reflected in a variety of aspects. The satisfaction survey that we conduct every year (to which 7,700 students, about 40% of all undergraduate and master’s degree students responded this year) indicates an upward trend in satisfaction continues (Table 1). (The data shown are the average of the answers given, in the range of 1 to 5: 1 – Not at all satisfied; 2 – Low satisfaction; 3 – Medium satisfaction; 4 – High satisfaction; 5 – Very high satisfaction).

5. The Hebrew University status

1. We are working to continue to be the leading academic institution in Israel in innovative teaching, in appropriate treatment of our students, in the number of scholarships and especially in the quality of academic training. Our success in this regard is reflected in a variety of aspects. The satisfaction survey that we conduct every year (to which 7,700 students, about 40% of all undergraduate and master’s degree students responded this year) indicates an upward trend in satisfaction continues (Table 1). (The data shown are the average of the answers given, in the range of 1 to 5: 1 – Not at all satisfied; 2 – Low satisfaction; 3 – Medium satisfaction; 4 – High satisfaction; 5 – Very high satisfaction).

6. The Hebrew University status

1. We are working to continue to be the leading academic institution in Israel in innovative teaching, in appropriate treatment of our students, in the number of scholarships and especially in the quality of academic training. Our success in this regard is reflected in a variety of aspects. The satisfaction survey that we conduct every year (to which 7,700 students, about 40% of all undergraduate and master’s degree students responded this year) indicates an upward trend in satisfaction continues (Table 1). (The data shown are the average of the answers given, in the range of 1 to 5: 1 – Not at all satisfied; 2 – Low satisfaction; 3 – Medium satisfaction; 4 – High satisfaction; 5 – Very high satisfaction).

7. The Hebrew University status

1. We are working to continue to be the leading academic institution in Israel in innovative teaching, in appropriate treatment of our students, in the number of scholarships and especially in the quality of academic training. The satisfaction survey that we conduct every year (to which 7,700 students, about 40% of all undergraduate and master’s degree students responded this year) indicates an upward trend in satisfaction continues (Table 1). (The data shown are the average of the answers given, in the range of 1 to 5: 1 – Not at all satisfied; 2 – Low satisfaction; 3 – Medium satisfaction; 4 – High satisfaction; 5 – Very high satisfaction).

8. The Hebrew University status

1. We are working to continue to be the leading academic institution in Israel in innovative teaching, in appropriate treatment of our students, in the number of scholarships and especially in the quality of academic training. The satisfaction survey that we conduct every year (to which 7,700 students, about 40% of all undergraduate and master’s degree students responded this year) indicates an upward trend in satisfaction continues (Table 1). (The data shown are the average of the answers given, in the range of 1 to 5: 1 – Not at all satisfied; 2 – Low satisfaction; 3 – Medium satisfaction; 4 – High satisfaction; 5 – Very high satisfaction).

9. The Hebrew University status

1. We are working to continue to be the leading academic institution in Israel in innovative teaching, in appropriate treatment of our students, in the number of scholarships and especially in the quality of academic training. The satisfaction survey that we conduct every year (to which 7,700 students, about 40% of all undergraduate and master’s degree students responded this year) indicates an upward trend in satisfaction continues (Table 1). (The data shown are the average of the answers given, in the range of 1 to 5: 1 – Not at all satisfied; 2 – Low satisfaction; 3 – Medium satisfaction; 4 – High satisfaction; 5 – Very high satisfaction).

10. The Hebrew University status

1. We are working to continue to be the leading academic institution in Israel in innovative teaching, in appropriate treatment of our students, in the number of scholarships and especially in the quality of academic training. The satisfaction survey that we conduct every year (to which 7,700 students, about 40% of all undergraduate and master’s degree students responded this year) indicates an upward trend in satisfaction continues (Table 1). (The data shown are the average of the answers given, in the range of 1 to 5: 1 – Not at all satisfied; 2 – Low satisfaction; 3 – Medium satisfaction; 4 – High satisfaction; 5 – Very high satisfaction).
The full data from the survey (in Hebrew) are available [here](#). The data relating to satisfaction in the various departments will be published on the departments’ websites and can also be obtained by contacting the relevant dean. The continuing upward trend in satisfaction expresses your recognition of the efforts of the University’s academic and administrative staff. We are not resting on our laurels, especially in light of the fact that there are still some units in which the level of student satisfaction is lower than acceptable to us. The administration of the academic units is working vigorously to draw lessons from the findings of the general survey, and from the feedback you provide us relating to the various courses with the aim of continuing to improve. Please complete the submission of your evaluation of the quality of teaching in the courses you took in the past semester.

We are in the midst of an extensive move to encourage active learning, especially by expanding the scope of papers and research projects assigned, most of which are done in groups. Accordingly, out of about 2,200 courses taken in the first semester, an exam was set to be administered in only about 800 courses (and in many cases, the exam’s weight in the final grade does not exceed 70%). With the renewed outbreak of the pandemic, the number of exams was reduced to only about 600, therefore only approximately a quarter of the courses will have an exam. This is a move that fundamentally improves the quality of learning and teaching. We thank you for your cooperation.

2. **Academic calendar**: Traditionally, studies in the first semester take place continuously, with almost no vacation days. I am glad to announce that starting next school year, the first semester will include a week-long vacation, around Hanukkah (without extending the duration of the semester, so that the semester will include 13 weeks of study). The vacation will allow students and instructors to return refreshed from the sequence of learning and teaching.

3. **Scholarships**: The Hebrew University continues to lead in Israel in the number of scholarships offered. This is an opportunity to mention the scholarships portal run by the Dean of Students (along with a wide range of additional services provided by this unit), [here](#). I highly recommend that you peruse the site from time to time. The University’s external relations department is very busy raising donations for the University, and most of these donations are intended for scholarships for you, our outstanding students. After breaking a record in 2020, in which the University was granted the highest amount in the history of the University in one year, last year, 2021, the record was broken again, and $151 million were donated.

4. **Research**: As you know, the Hebrew University is a research university. Research and teaching are intertwined, and the student population makes a significant contribution to advancing research. I am pleased to announce that the Hebrew University has regained its status as the leading academic institution in Israel according to all relevant indices. In the Shanghai index, which is the main index for ranking institutions in the world, our University is ranked 90th in the world and the first in Israel (the institutions ranked among the top 100 in the world also include the Weizmann Institute, ranked 92nd, and the Technion, ranked 94th).

A good estimate of the University’s research contribution is obtained from the data according to which the government (via the Planning and Budgeting Committee) budgets the universities in Israel. The government allocates a total of about 3 billion NIS to all universities in Israel to finance their activities, depending on the relative achievements of the institutions’ researchers in various aspects related to research: academic publications (after weighing the impact factor of the journals in which the articles were published) – 34%; winning competitive research grants – 49%; and the number of research students at the institution – 17%. A detailed report on the Hebrew University’s achievements is available [here](#). The data below (Table 2) represents the share (in percent) of each institution in the budgetary “pie,” and therefore the relative share in contribution to research in Israel. After two years (2019 and 2020) in which we dropped to second
place, we returned to first place last year, and this year we even increased the gap between us and the institution in second place:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew Univ</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel Aviv Univ</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Technion</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weizmann Inst</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Gurion Univ</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar Ilan Univ</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ of Haifa</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, you are studying at the best academic institution in Israel, and the fact that it has achieved this status is also thanks to you. We have been blessed with the best student body in Israel, in terms of academic skills and in terms of contribution to society and others.

B. Preparing for the exam period

5. In light of the increase in Covid patients, we have decided to move to distance learning for the remaining days until the end of the semester. The main goal of this move is to reduce the number of cases of infection with the virus, first and foremost to protect the health of all members of the University community, and secondly, to increase the chance that you will all reach the exam period healthy.

According to the Hebrew University’s updated policy, it is strictly forbidden to come to campus in any case in which one has developed symptoms of COVID-19 (even if a negative COVID-19 test result is obtained) or of influenza. Anyone living with a verified COVID-19 patient is barred from attending the University for a week from the onset of symptoms. In any case of exposure to a verified COVID-19 patient, wait 48 hours and only then perform a home COVID-19 test. When a negative result on the said COVID-19 test is received, and after the said time, one may return to activity on campus.

Act wisely. Do not endanger yourself in gatherings with multitudes of participants, be sure to wear a mask and if you have been exposed to a verified COVID-19 patient, please isolate yourself and be tested (using a home COVID-19 test) after about 48 hours, and of course update your friends if you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19. We continue to update you in real time on verified COVID-19 patients present on campus.

At the same time, as long as you do not have to be in self-isolation, please do not isolate yourself from the world: study with friends, participate in social gatherings and maintain as much routine as possible.

6. Of the approximately 600 exams that will be held in the coming exam period, most of them will be held remotely, using the Moodle Exam site (which is separate from the regular Moodle site). If this will be your first time being tested remotely, please practice this week. Also make sure that you have the contact details for the personnel in the faculty responsible for handling technical glitches. If you do not have the contact details for the said personnel, please contact the department secretariat this week to obtain them. In case of a malfunction during the exam, you can also contact The Computing Division Support Center. In case of a malfunction that
impairs the possibility of completing the exam, you will be able to take the exam on a special date (after the second sitting exam date), by contacting the teaching committee and presenting documentation of the malfunction. On the day of the exam, be sure to log in to the exam website on the time given to you, as it will not be possible to log in to the exam late. Being in home isolation during an online exam is not a reason to miss the exam.

Please note: Online exams increase the temptation to break the rules and act with academic dishonesty. The University administration has chosen to hold many exams in an online format to reduce the health risk to students and staff, and the exams that will be held remotely are those in which we believe we can detect cases of fraud to a relatively large extent. We do not run tracking software (some units will have blocking software installed on computers), but we do run a variety of copy detection tools, including “originality” software, which automatically detects similar texts, and we use human supervision during the exam. According to disciplinary regulations, any case in which a student is caught copying on an exam, the minimum compulsory penalty is a one-year expulsion from school, along with the mark involved in having a disciplinary offense, denial of eligibility for scholarships and other unpleasant consequences. Please behave fairly and do not be tempted by shortcuts.

7. A minority of exams will be held on campus. These are exams for which we have found that it would be difficult to ensure academic integrity reasonably if conducted remotely. Those registered in the relevant courses have been notified regarding these exams that will be held on campus. We will hold these exams while adhering to the rules of caution: students will maintain social distance while in the exam hall and we will enforce the obligation to wear a mask during the exam. If a student has symptoms of COVID-19, he/she is strictly forbidden to sit for the exam (even if the COVID-19 test that the student took showed a negative result).

A student who is unable to attend an exam being held on campus due to personal medical reasons (a verified COVID-19 patient, exposure to a verified COVID-19 patient near the time of the exam or the obligation to stay in isolation and symptoms of the illness shortly before the exam), will sit for the exams during the second exam sitting, and if necessary, will be eligible to sit for the exam on a special date, after submitting a reasoned application to the department's teaching committee. A student who is at high risk of developing complications in the event of contracting COVID-19, or a student who resides with a family member who is at risk of developing complications as stated, should contact the accessibility unit in the Dean of Students’ office, for special arrangements.

We wish you good health and success on your exams. Hopefully we can get back to normal conditions at the beginning of the second semester, this coming spring.

Sincerely yours,

Barak Medina, Rector