



**T H E O P E N  
UNIVERSITY  
O F I S R A E L**

**SELF-EVALUATION REPORT 2015  
Economics**

### **Acknowledgements**

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## Executive Summary

**The Open University of Israel (OUI)** is unique on the Israeli academic scene. While resembling other universities in its pursuit of excellence in teaching and research, it differs from them in its educational mission – wide accessibility to quality higher education, and in its main method of instruction – distance learning. The OUI is dedicated to the creation of university-level materials that are suitable for independent study, and to the development and implementation of versatile means, including technology, for support of learning.

**Teaching and learning:** At the OUI, the main course materials (books, study guides, etc.) are sent to students before the beginning of the semester, with instructions for independent study and with homework assignments for the entire semester. Study is mainly independent and students submit assignments according to a predetermined schedule. The learning process is supported by detailed personal feedback and by various printed and digital learning aids. Tutorials held at study centers throughout the country, and online, help clarify the material, provide practice, and encourage interaction with peers. At the end of the semester, students take monitored written final exams. Since assignments and exams are prepared in advance, the same pre-set high standards are preserved, regardless of tutorial mode or student profile.

**Academic staff:** The academic staff consists of senior faculty, course coordinators, and tutors. The senior faculty is the academic leadership; its members conduct research, initiate and manage study programs, and are in charge of developing all course materials. Each OUI course is administratively and academically managed by a course coordinator. Coordinators prepare new assignments and exams for each semester, maintain the course website and supplement it with appropriate materials, participate in course revision teams, and hire and supervise tutors. Tutors, whose number in each course depends on the number of students enrolled and their geographical dispersion, conduct group tutorial sessions, grade homework assignments, and provide individual support when necessary.

**Economics programs:** The Department of Management and Economics offers single- and dual-disciplinary undergraduate programs in management, economics, and accounting, as well as an MBA. There are 10 senior faculty members and 65 course coordinators in the department. In addition, approximately 400 tutors lead study groups. In 2013-2014, approximately 11,000 students studied towards an undergraduate degree in the department (approximately 4,000 towards a degree in economics).

## Strengths and Weaknesses

A short summary of the main strengths and weaknesses pointed out in the self-evaluation process.

### Strengths

**Academic excellence:** Our courses and programs are held to superior academic standards, and enable students to continue on to advanced degrees. The OUI study method increases the independent study abilities of our students.

**Equal opportunity and flexibility:** Our programs increase access to higher education through open admissions for undergraduates. The distance learning methods that we employ,

incorporating advanced technologies, address the needs of various population groups. Flexibility in time, place, pace, and teaching methods allows our students to excel in academic studies while maintaining demanding careers or other obligations.

**Academic quality assurance and learning outcomes:** The OUI system ensures the preservation of quality and standards, and greater control of learning outcomes. Rigorous course development procedures ensure academic quality, from the initial stages of course planning, via its rigorous course development procedure, to course operation and examination.

**Research:** A major part of the role of senior faculty members is to conduct research. Although their small number limits the overall impact of their work; individually, they achieve high research standards, as measured by their publications in leading refereed professional journals, research grants, contributions to international conferences, etc.

### Weaknesses

**Small number of senior faculty members:** The main weakness of the OUI's study programs in economics is the small number of senior faculty members. Compared to other universities, studies in the OUI are much more structured, leading to more administrative duties for faculty members. Although the research and high-quality academic studies are definite strengths of the OUI, these could be improved even further if the administrative load could be shared by more than the current ten senior faculty members in the department (five economists and five specializing in management).

### Actions taken to address weaknesses

A short description of the actions the Institution, the Parent Unit and the Department are going to take in order to address the weaknesses that were found.

The number of senior faculty members specializing in economics has grown from 2 to 5 since the previous evaluation. Plans to further increase this number are currently considered by the OUI's management.

### Mission, Goals, and Learning Outcomes

A brief summary of the extent to which the Study Program has achieved its mission, goals and learning outcomes, and whether the outcomes comply with its mission statement.

**Mission and goals:** We believe that the study program in management achieves its mission and goals, which are, to a very large extent, derived from those of the OUI. In fact, the four main strengths specified above correspond to the main elements of the OUI's mission.

**Learning outcomes:** The analysis in this evaluation process reveals that the economics study program specifies learning outcomes clearly and that they are internalized well by our students.

## Changes since the last evaluation

A brief description of the main changes that have been made in the program since the last evaluation.

The Department of Management and Economics is relatively new, having been formed in 1997. Its first 17 years have been characterized by rapid growth, which can be divided into two stages: an initial stage based on new beginnings, and a later stage based on maturing and stabilizing. The 2007 self-evaluation was conducted during the transition from the first stage to the second, and contributed to this evolution.

The most notable elements in the pre-2007 departmental growth were the initiation of the study programs in management, economics and accounting, and the development of a large number of new courses for these programs. The main **post-2007** elements in the department's growth include the following:

- Final and permanent accreditation has been received from the CHE for each of the department's BA degrees and the MBA degree.
- New courses have been added to the economics study program (e.g., Game Theory and its Applications to Economics and Management; Public Economics, Contemporary Theories of Social and Economic Justice; Economic History), but the major effort in course development has been directed towards updating and revising existing courses. In some courses the original version has been replaced by a completely new one (e.g., Intermediate Macroeconomics A; Intermediate Macroeconomics B), and many others have been partially, but significantly, revised (e.g., International Economics, Price Theory B; Price Theory C; Business ethics, Cost and Managerial Accounting; Judgment and Evaluation for Economics and Management).
- The number of students has risen: In 2005-2006 the OUI conferred 164 BA degrees in economics, whereas in 2013-2014 the OUI conferred 275 BA degrees in economics.
- The study program in accounting, which includes a relatively large division of study in economics, was initiated in 2005. It had no graduates in 2005-2006, but has grown and become one of the OUI's largest programs, with 225 graduates in 2013-2014.
- The single-disciplinary study program towards a BA in economics which was initiated in 2003 and had one graduate in 2005-2006, has grown into a viable program with 54 graduates in 2013-2014.
- A study program in economics was created to modularly fit into a dual-disciplinary undergraduate study program. In 2013-2014 the OUI granted 221 dual-disciplinary bachelors degrees in economics.
- The number of the department's senior faculty members specializing in economics has grown from two to five.

# Part 1 – Background

## The Institution

### A. About the Open University of Israel

A. Please provide the following:

- Date of recognition by the Council for Higher Education
- Mission statement of the institution, its aims and goals.
- The institution's location
- Names of the Faculties /Schools/Departments in the institution
- Overall number of students studying towards academic degrees in the institution according to faculty and degree (first degree, second degree with / without thesis, doctoral degree).

**The Open University of Israel (OUI)** is a national university that was established in 1974 following the model of the Open University in the UK. In 1980 The CHE recognized the OUI as an institution of higher education and authorized it to confer bachelor's degrees. Since 1996 the OUI has been authorized by the CHE authorization to offer graduate degrees. The OUI is now the largest Israeli university in terms of enrollment and offers a wide range of undergraduate degree programs and eight graduate programs. The most unique aspect of the OUI is its admissions and teaching model, which combines self-study with intensive academic support, based on each student's wishes, needs and constraints. The model is designed to offer studies characterized by high academic standards, and at the same time to maximize access to higher education.

### Mission Statement of the Institution

The mission of the OUI is twofold: to enrich the scientific community with high-quality research and to provide wide access to higher education.

The key elements of the second part of the mission – wide access to higher education – are:

- Open admissions to anyone who wishes to study towards a bachelor's degree, without preconditions or admission requirements.
- Flexibility in time, place and pace of studies
- Curricular flexibility
- Adaptability to **special populations**

To fulfill its mission the OUI is committed to a unique distant teaching model in which the student's independent-study is embedded within a thick envelope of intensive academic support.

### The teaching model

The main elements of the OUI's teaching model are as follows:

- Course materials, such as textbooks, video lectures and study guides, are developed by senior faculty as a core component of their teaching responsibilities.
- Textbooks are mailed to students and serve as the main resource for study.
- Course assignments are also mailed to students, and are also published on the course websites.

- A variety of additional learning materials are supplied via each course's website: recorded video lectures, supplementary readings, solutions to assignments, sample exams, and more.
- A selection of classes from which students may choose is offered in each course in each semester, and each student in the course chooses in which class to enroll.
- Tutors are assigned to each class. Each tutor
  - meets with the class in a tutorial session on a regular basis to help students navigate the textbook. Most of these lessons are held at OUI study centers located throughout Israel. Other tutored lessons take place interactively online;
  - checks and grades assignments submitted by students via mail, online, or in class;
  - offers individual weekly support by phone at pre-determined hours;
  - offers continuous support online via the course website's interactive forum.
- Each course has a course coordinator that
  - hires, operates and supervises the tutors;
  - writes the course assignments and exams, and ensures that these are approved by the course's supervisory senior faculty member;
  - administers the course website;
  - handles all administrative issues connected to operation of the course.
- Students enroll in each course separately, prior to the start of each semester. This helps them flexibly determine and adjust the pace at which they advance towards the degree.

As an important by-product of this model, the OUI enriches the Israeli higher education community with a large selection of academic textbooks which are widely used, not only by OUI students, but by other universities, and the general public in Israel.

Another important characteristic of this model is that it enables a uniquely large amount of quality assurance for the teaching content and level. In particular – the textbooks and learning materials that the senior faculty prepares are thoroughly refereed. Each learning unit (chapter) is sent to several referees from other universities and their positive evaluation is necessary for these contents to become part of the course materials.

The highly structured nature of the other elements of the teaching model – tutorial classes, courses' websites, etc – enables an efficient supervision and quality assessment of them too.

### **Location – main campus and study centers**

From its headquarters in Raanana (a city in the center of Israel, ten miles north of Tel-Aviv), the OUI operates study centers throughout Israel. In the 2013-2014 academic year, 6,000 tutorial groups of 701 academic courses met in 78 study centers. Most of the study centers, in addition to housing classrooms, provide registration, academic counseling and some library services. Each semester, local student demand for specific courses determines which tutorials are offered in each study center.

### **Number of students**

In the 2013-2014 academic year, 43,500 students were enrolled in one or more undergraduate courses and 3,600 were enrolled in graduate courses.



Measuring the distribution of OUI's undergraduate students between departments is not straightforward because students at the OUI do not enroll in a department or a program, as is customary at other universities, but rather register for individual courses. In addition, an OUI student's program of studies may include courses from different departments.

In order to estimate the distribution of students according to different fields, we use course enrollment data. In 2013-2014, undergraduate course enrollments were divided as follows:

Field	Course enrolments
Social Science	67%
Natural Science, Mathematics, Computer Science	19%
Humanities	14%

Master's degree students have to formally enroll in a specific program. In 2013-2014 the graduate students distribution among the different OUI's programs was as follows:

Program	Students
MSc in Computer Science	216
Master of Business Administration (MBA)	2,265
MA in Democracy Studies (Interdisciplinary)	336
MA in Education: Technologies and Learning Systems	417
MA in Biological Thought	28
MA in Cultural Studies	159
MA in Educational Administration, Policy and Leadership	171
MA in Social Psychology	12

## B. The Organizational Structure of the OUI

**B.** Please provide a description and chart of the institution's organizational structure, and the names of holders of senior academic and administrative positions, including schools and departments.

### Statutory Open University authorities and officers

The **Council** – The highest authority of the University. It determines university policies, oversees their implementation, and administers the affairs and assets of the university.

**Chancellor** – Chairperson of the University Council

**Deputy Chancellor** – Chairperson of the Council in the absence of the chancellor

**Vice Chancellor** – Chairperson of the Council in the absence of the chancellor and the deputy chancellor

The **Executive Committee** – Elected by the Council from among its members; serves as the Council's current executor and guide for policy implementation

**Chairperson of the Executive Committee** – Heads the Executive Committee; elected by the Council from among its members

**President** – Heads the university; elected by the Executive Committee with the approval of the Council

**Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs** – Responsible for all academic aspects of the university; appointed by the president, in consultation with the Senate and with the approval of the Executive Committee; serves as acting president in the president's absence.

The **Senate**, headed by the president, is the highest academic authority of the university. It is responsible for monitoring long-term academic policy and maintaining academic quality.

The **Faculty Council** – Composed of all internally appointed senior faculty members, the president of the university, and the executive vice president for academic affairs. The Faculty Council discusses and provides counsel on academic affairs and submits its recommendations and proposals via the president to the relevant institutions of the University.

### **Senior Academic and Administrative Office Holders**

**Chancellor** – President of the Supreme Court (ret.) Justice Dorit Beinisch

**Deputy Chancellor** – The Rt. Hon. Lord Jacob Rothschild

**Vice-Chancellor** – Prof. Abraham Ginzburg

**Chairman of the Executive Committee** – Mr. Zeev Abeles

**President of the Open University** – Prof. Kobi Metzer

**Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs** – Prof. Aviad Heifetz

**Dean of Academic Studies** – Prof. Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman

**Dean of Research** – Prof. Manor Mendel

**Dean of Development and Educational Technology** – Prof. Sarah Guri-Rosenblit

**Director General** – Mr. Amit Streit

**Dean of Students** – Prof. Haim Saadoun

### **Central academic and administrative bodies**

#### **Academic departments:**

- History, Philosophy and Judaic Studies (Chair: Prof. Mustafa Kabha)
- Management and Economics (Chair: Dr. Yishay Maoz)
- Sociology, Political Science and Communication (Chair: Prof. Oren Sofer)
- Education and Psychology (Chair: Dr. Avner Caspi)
- Natural Sciences (Chair: Dr. Igor Rahinov)
- Mathematics and Computer Science (Chair: Dr. Anat Lerner)
- Literature, Language and the Arts (Chair: Dr. Mati Meyer)

The seven OUI academic departments are directly under the authority of the executive vice president for academic affairs. This system differs from most other universities, which organize departments into colleges, schools, or faculties. This difference arises from the OUI's unique teaching model which, as described above, enables the OUI to employ a relatively small number of senior faculty members (approximately 80-90 in 2014) and yet to teach approximately 40,000 students a year while adhering to rigorous academic standards. Because of their limited numbers, senior faculty members are organized into no more than seven departments, which eliminates the need for additional organizational layers between the vice president and the academic departments.

Due to the small senior faculty, each department is responsible for the research and teaching of two or three distinct (yet related) disciplines.

**Academic Subcommittees** function under the auspices of the Senate. They discuss new course proposals and study programs initiated by the academic departments, evaluate writing samples from proposed authors, and consider external experts' reviews. Proposals approved by the subcommittees require ratification by the executive vice president for academic affairs, the senate and the president.

The Office of the **Dean of Academic Studies** is responsible for university-wide issues related to studying and tutoring at the OUI. It sets general rules and regulations that all students must observe. It defines policies concerning the qualifications of tutors and regulates the number and location of study centers, the number of tutorial hours and the tutorial format. The dean of academic studies formulates guidelines for collaborating with institutions in which OUI courses are taught, and maintains ongoing contact with them. Within the Office of the Dean of Academic Studies, the **Academic Counseling and Study Guidance Center** supports students throughout their studies by providing general counseling, and by teaching learning skills through workshops or individual guidance. A special unit in the center focuses on students with learning disabilities, and another unit focuses on student retention. Also within the Office of the Dean, the **Training Department** develops and implements pedagogical training programs for course coordinators and tutors. Finally, the Office of the Dean of Academic Studies also includes the **Disciplinary Committee**, which deals with offenses detailed in the Student Code of Conduct.

The **Dean of Research** heads the **Research Authority (RA)** which encourages research by assisting in the location of external funding sources and submission of proposals. In addition, the RA supports research through grants and scholarships from the internal research fund. It is also responsible for financial and administrative monitoring of all funded research work. The Office of the Dean of Research is also responsible for the OUI's three **Research Centers** and the OUI's **Ethics Committee**.

The **Dean of Development and Educational Technology** is in charge of the **Academic Development Unit** that supports course development by coordinating the academic subcommittees; handling course proposals and professional reports; drafting contracts with external course writers, consultants, translators, editors, etc.; coordinating development schedules; updating databases on courses, and handling copyright issues. It also serves as a link between course development teams and the **OUI Publishing House**, which is responsible for the graphic design and publication of all OUI textbooks.

The Dean of Development and Educational Technology is also in charge of **Shoham – The Center for Technology in Distance Education**. Shoham develops and integrates technology-based pedagogical tools to make learning more effective and enjoyable; tests and integrates new technologies into appropriate courses; examines distance-learning methodologies and assesses their value as alternatives to tutorial sessions; produces a variety of study materials to complement written study materials; and trains and supports course coordinators and faculty who wish to participate in creating and integrating technology into their teaching. Shoham's staff includes pedagogical experts, multimedia and video specialists, and technology professionals.

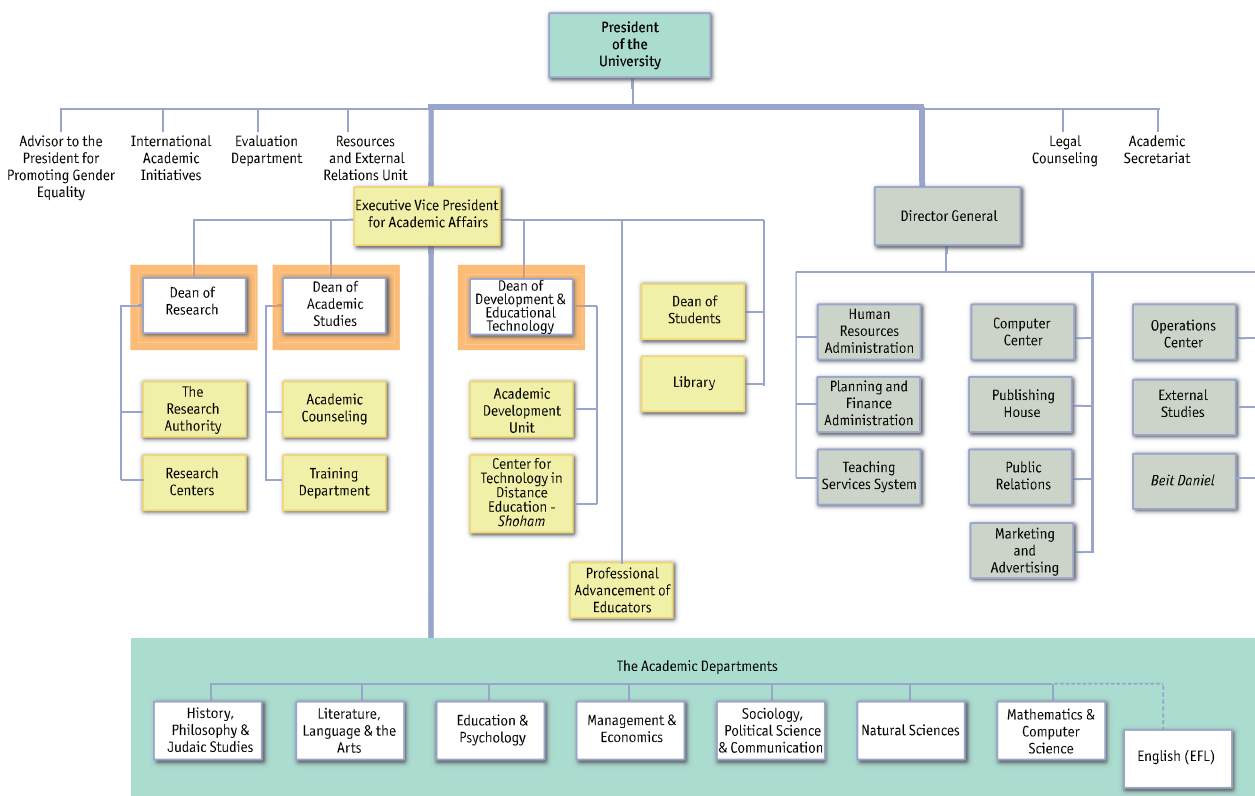
The **Teaching Services System** handles all the learning-related services that the OUI provides. It manages administrative information and registration, distributes study materials, coordinates activities in study centers, organizes examination centers; administers students' assignments, final exams and transcripts; and handles administrative requests, queries, and complaints.

The **Office of the Dean of Students** initiates and coordinates issues related to student welfare, including financial aid or special support for students with special needs. The dean of students also serves as the students' ombudsman.

The **Evaluation Department** conducts studies and surveys in order to assess OUI teaching. In addition to an ongoing survey of student attitudes towards the teaching process, the department evaluates programs of study, individual courses, and special projects.

The following chart summarizes the organizational structure of the OUI:

**The organizational structure of the OUI**



## C. Internal Quality Assessment

C. Following the previous evaluation process, has the department/school/institution developed an internal Quality Assessment mechanism? Please describe.

The main area subject to Quality Assessment at the OUI is teaching. As was explained in the beginning of this chapter – the quality assessment of teaching is integrated within the OUI's teaching model, since all learning materials are distributed to students only after being positively evaluated by expert referees from other universities. This has characterized the OUI's teaching model since the 1970s, much before the previous evaluation process and, naturally, after it.

There are two additional important mechanisms for evaluating the quality of the teaching process: (a) at the end of each semester in each course the students fill out a detailed survey form about the course in general (contents, textbooks, website) and also about their specific tutor's performance. The OUI's evaluation unit analyzes the results and submits them to the Office of the Dean of Academic Studies and to the academic departments; (b) A detailed evaluation of tutor performance, based on the course coordinators' evaluation, is conducted by the Office of the Dean of Academic Studies (as described fully in chapter 3).

Quality Assessment of research take place on an ongoing basis since senior faculty members are academically promoted almost solely according to their research achievements. This assessment is done according to the standard academic promotion procedures.

Much of the Quality Assessment takes place through the self-evaluation reports to the CHE. Nearly every year at least one OUI academic department prepares such a report, which evaluates not only the department itself, but also the general bodies and processes of the OUI. Accordingly, additional OUI units (the library, the computer center, the counseling services, the evaluation unit, etc) participate in preparing the report alongside the academic department. The self-evaluation process at the OUI has been directed, since 2006, by the **Coordinator of Self-Evaluation**. The coordinator, who is appointed by the president from among the senior faculty, supports the departmental team that works on the self-evaluation process, ensures that the team has smooth and prompt access to all OUI data, and transfers the know-how accumulated in the past to the units currently involved. The coordinator also serves as a liaison between the CHE, the evaluated OUI units, and the academic management of the university. The current coordinator is Dr. Inbal Ofer, who is a senior faculty member in the Department of History, Philosophy and Judaic Studies.

## The Parent Unit

### A. The Parent Unit – The Department of Management and Economics

- A. The name of the parent unit, its aims and goals.

The parent unit of the OUI's degree program in economics is the **Department of Management and Economics**. The department offers studies towards bachelor's degrees in **management, economics, and accounting**. It also offers an MBA degree.

As described in the previous chapter, the OUI's teaching model enables large-scale teaching based on a small number of senior faculty members. Consequently, the OUI has just seven academic departments, where each department combines two or three related disciplines. Due to their small number – departments are not grouped to faculties. Instead, they are under the direct authority of the executive vice-president for academic affairs.

Due to this structure, both the current chapter ("The Parent Unit") and the following chapter ("The Evaluated Department") refer to the same body. Nevertheless, it was decided not to deviate from the initial format of the report. In the few cases where a question appears in both chapters it will be answered just once, within one of the chapters, and a reference to that answer will be given in the other chapter. In particular, the aims and goal of the parent unit that are requested in the current sub-section are specified in the next chapter within the departmental mission statement.

### B. The Organizational Structure of the Department

- B. Description and chart of the unit's academic and administrative organizational structure (including relevant committees), names of holders of senior academic and administrative positions and list of departments/study programs it operates.

Heading the department is the **Department Chair**, appointed by the president from among the department's senior faculty for a three-year period. The Chair runs the department according to the stated mission and goals, subject to the OUI's rules and procedures, and under the direct authority of the executive vice-president for academic affairs. Under the Department Chair are the following four positions:

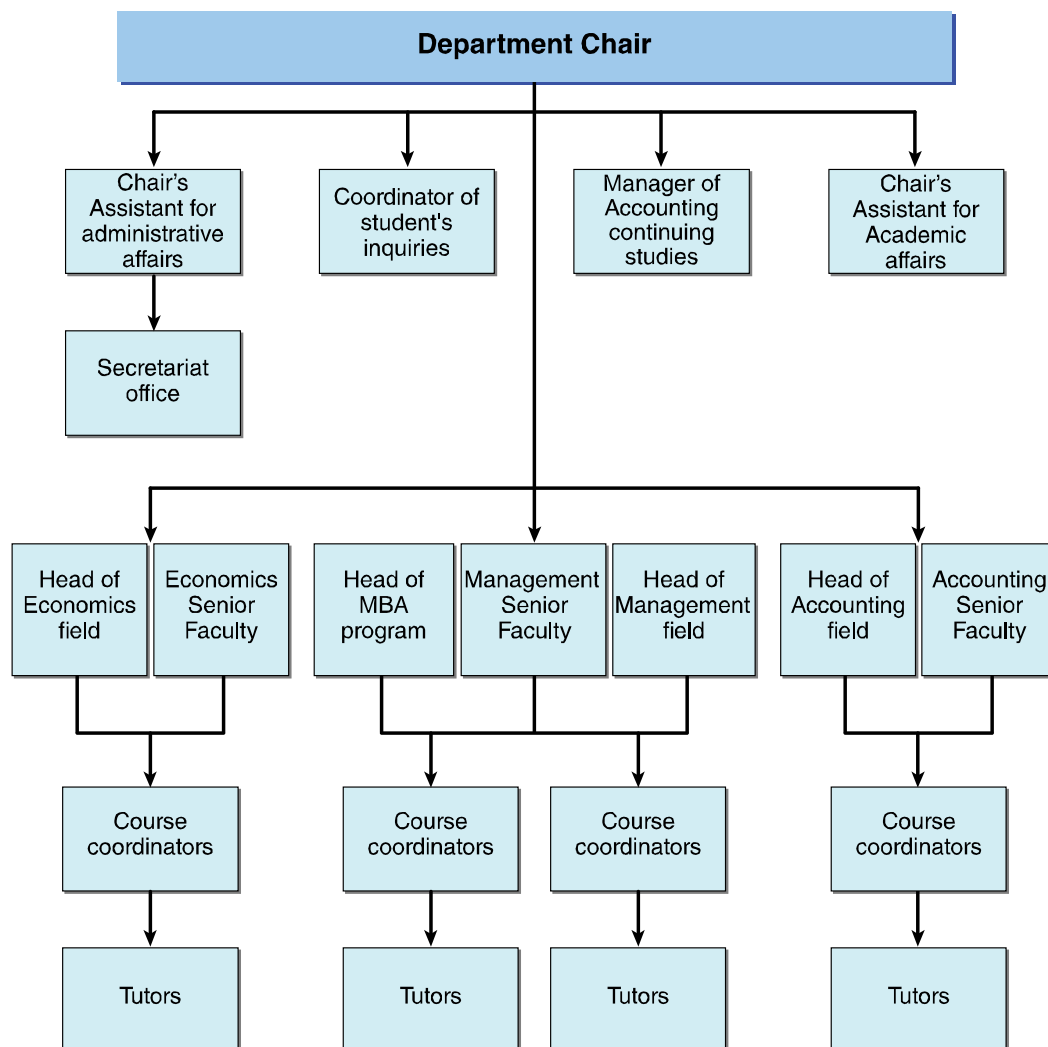
- Head of Management – In charge of the department's management study programs
- Head of Economics – In charge of the department's economics study programs
- Head of the MBA program – In charge of the department's MBA program
- Head of the Accounting program – In charge of the department's accounting study program

Faculty members in these positions are appointed by the president for a three-year period.

The main committee related to the department is the senate's **Academic Subcommittee for Management and Economics**, which includes all of the departmental senior faculty, two course coordinators, and three representatives from other departments. The subcommittee examines and votes on all proposals for new courses and course revisions initiated by the department. The chairperson of this subcommittee is independent of the department chair and is appointed for a three-year period by the vice president, from among the department's senior faculty. Note that the

academic subcommittee for management and economics and the subcommittee's chairperson do not appear in the chart, as they function independently of the department, as described above.

### The organizational structure of the Department of Management and Economics



Currently holding the main positions in the department are the following faculty members:

- Department Chair – Dr. Yishay D. Maoz
- Head of Management Professor Nitza Geri
- Head of Economics – Dr. Yishay D. Maoz
- Head of the MBA program – Dr. Arie Nachmias
- Head of the Accounting program– Dr. David Ravia
- Chairperson of the Management and Economics Subcommittee – Dr. Mordechai Schwarz

Other main positions in the department are the Coordinator of Student Inquiries, the Chair's Assistant for Academic Affairs, the Manager of Continuing (post BA) Studies in Accounting, and the Chair's Assistant for Administrative Affairs. The latter is also in charge of the department's secretariat. These positions are described in detail in the following chapters.

## C. Number of Students

C. Please provide in the format of table no.1 (in the Excel appendix), the number of students in the past two years (2013-2014) according to level of degree and department

Unlike other universities, the OUI does not require undergraduate students to enroll in a specific department or program, but to register for each course separately, which contributes greatly to the flexibility of studies. To further increase flexibility, the OUI advises its students to begin their studies with courses that can be applied to several programs, such as Introductory Statistics or English courses. This helps new students acquire more knowledge about their own skills and preferences and about the nature of the different studies offered, before committing to a specific discipline.

Due to these reasons, measuring the number of students in each specific study program and department can only be done via estimates based on subjective definitions. For the purposes of this report we use the following definition:

*An undergraduate student in the department of management and economics in a particular year is a student who:*

- (a) has registered for at least one course during that year, and registered for at least one course of the department in that year or the previous year*
- (b) has registered, up until (and including) that year, for at least two of the courses offered by the department, including at least **one** of the following:*
  - *Introductory Microeconomics*
  - *Organizational Behavior*
  - *Accounting Principles for Students of Accounting*

These three introductory courses are the gateways for studies in economics, management and accounting, respectively. In these disciplines, successful completion of the introductory course is a prerequisite for registration in most other courses in the study program. Thus, most students in the department take one of these courses as their first or second course. Previous internal OUI analyses have consistently shown that it is highly unusual for students in other departments to take one of these introductory courses with another course from the Department of Management and Economics (even if these courses are offered by their own study program). Thus, condition (b) is both typical of, and unique to, the students of the management and economics department. Since students normally register for the two courses at the beginning of their studies, we use it to define the students in our department. Condition (a) assures that the student is still active in the OUI and also that the student has not transferred to another department.

It should be emphasized that this is not a formal definition, and is not used to officially categorize students. We use it only for the purposes of research, analysis, and evaluation of the department.



The following table shows the number of students in the management and economics department during the past two years:

**Table 1: Students in the department of Management and Economics**

Year	Undergraduate students		MBA students
	Total	Economics	
2012-2013	11,510	4,094	2,472
2013-2014	11,049	3,813	2,215

In contrast to undergraduate students, the MBA students have to formally enroll to the MBA program and their number is therefore based on enrollment.

The table also shows the number of economics students in each year. Due to the reasons described above, this measure is also based on a subjective definition and not on formal registration by students. The definition we use for that end is as follows:

*An economics student in a particular year is a student who:*

*(a) has registered for at least one course during that year, and registered for at least one course of the department in that year or the previous year*

*(b) has registered, up until (and including) that year, for at least one of the following courses:*

- *Price Theory A*
- *Intermediate Macroeconomics A*
- *Accounting Principles for Students of Accounting*

Condition (a) assures that the student is still actively studying at the OUI and also that the student has not transferred to a field other than economics.

Condition (b) identifies the student as an economics student, as only students studying towards a degree in economics tend to take these courses. Specifically, the first two courses appear only in the economics study program or in study programs towards a general degree in social-science. Past surveys have revealed that students studying towards a general degree in social-science refrain from these courses altogether. The third course is taken only by students of the study program for a degree in accounting with a division of studies in economics. This division is not the usual OUI division of studies but an expanded one and contains almost all of the required courses, and several of the electives, from the study program towards a single-disciplinary BA in economics. We therefore view the students in that study program as economics students.

Identifying economics students via courses that are taken at an earlier stage of their studies is impossible because these courses are taken by many more students than those studying economics. For example, the Introductory Microeconomics course and the Introductory Macroeconomics course are required not only in economics studies but also in the single-disciplinary study program in management, which is one of the OUI's largest.

## **D. The Department's Perception of the Evaluated Study Programs**

D. What is the Parent Unit's perception of the evaluated Study Program/Department within its greater framework?

Within the department, and also among the OUI's higher authorities, the study programs in management and economics are considered the department's main teaching mission. This is reflected in the department's name and also in the composition of the senior faculty, which equally represent management and economics.

# Part 2 – The Evaluated Department

## Chapter 1 – Mission and Goals

### A. The Department of Management and Economics

A. The name of the department / study programs, a **brief** summary describing its development since its establishment, and the physical location in the institution.

As described in the "Parent Unit" section of the "Background" part of this report – the OUI's Economics program is part of the department of Management and Economics. The main offices of the department are located in the OUI's headquarters campus in Raanana, while its teaching is spread throughout Israel according to the OUI's teaching model.

#### Historical milestones in the Department of Management and Economics

**1976** – The OUI opens, and initially offers five courses. An ongoing process of developing more courses begins.

**1980** – The Council for Higher Education (CHE) authorizes the OUI to offer its first two bachelor's degrees, one of which is a degree in social sciences and humanities based on a curriculum that includes, among others, courses in management and economics.

**1993** – The CHE authorizes the OUI to offer a bachelor's degree in management and economics.

**1997** – The Department of Management and Economics is created, following changes in structure at the OUI which creates academic departments and divides faculty among them.

**2001** – The CHE authorizes the OUI to offer a variety of single and double-disciplinary bachelor's degrees in management, economics, and accounting, as well as an MBA degree.

### B. Mission, Aims and Goals of the department

B. Describe the mission statement of the department, its aims and goals. Do the departments' structure and study program support these missions?

This subsection outlines the department's strategic plan, i.e. – its mission, vision and goals.

#### Mission

The mission of The Department of Management and Economics is derived almost directly from the mission of the OUI which was described in chapter 1. The main elements in the department's mission are:

- To generate state-of-the-art knowledge that fosters scientific thought in management and economics
- To diversify the higher education offerings available to the Israeli public by providing academic studies at a high academic level, without pre-defined admissions requirements, and which allow a high level of flexibility in the time, location, pace and means of study
- To enhance Israeli academia with textbooks and other teaching materials in the fields of management, economics, and accounting
- To use our decades-long experience in distance education to promote the internationalization of our academic programs and of our graduates

- To provide students with a variety of skills that will serve them in their advanced studies and professional careers, with an emphasis on the ability to be a life-long learner who is capable of independent study, of accessing and evaluating new knowledge, and of taking part in the creation of new knowledge in their fields of expertise

### **Vision**

The Committee for Evaluating Higher Education in Israel, headed by A. Shohat, former Minister of the Treasury, wrote in its 2007 report:

"Strictness with quality of teaching has brought with it recognition of the OUI's courses as equal to those of the regular universities."

The first element in the vision of the management and economics department is that within 5-10 years our courses will not merely be recognized as equal to those of other universities, but will be considered among the best ones within this group. We believe that the highly structured and careful process of course development, maintenance, and updating makes this a realistic vision. Accordingly, we envision the OUI as one of the top choices for talented students seeking a degree in management, economics or accounting.

Senior faculty members in the Department of Management and Economics are engaged in active research, and often publish in highly-ranked journals. Our vision is that over the next 5-10 years this will be sustained and even enhanced, as the senior faculty will enjoy a significantly improved research infrastructure, as well as a restructured distribution of their time between research, course development, and administrative tasks.

We further envision that in 5-10 years the studies in the department will include a viable international component in which the department will offer in English, international versions of a significant number of its courses for Israeli and international students. Moreover, our Israeli students will be encouraged to combine their OUI studies with courses from open and traditional universities in other countries.

### **Selected goals towards fulfilling the vision**

In general, our courses are updated, and comply with university-level academic standards; some exhibit exceptionally high academic quality. We wish to push this forward and to have **all** of our courses excel to the highest standards, and to have **all** of them significantly updated. In this way we hope to take a large step towards fulfilling the corresponding part of our vision.

In particular, we aim to intensively incorporate cutting-edge technology in teaching. Specifically, we intend to further intensify the already broad use of our course websites. In addition, some of our textbooks already use modern technologies to link to additional materials, via internet links in their digital versions and barcode links in their printed versions.

Achieving the goals listed above is based on first achieving the more fundamental goal of increasing the department's senior faculty. With additional faculty members, more courses can be developed simultaneously, leading to more rapid improvements and more frequent revisions. As a first step towards enlarging the department, three new faculty members were hired in 2014. As a second step towards achieving this goal we have submitted a request to the OUI's authorities to

hire three more senior faculty members, in order to raise the level of our courses. The request was submitted in April 2014, in a detailed letter to the committee for assessing academic development headed by the OUI vice-president.

Recruiting more faculty members should help us achieve another goal – that of lessening the amount of time that the department's senior faculty devotes to academic administration. In the OUI, where teaching and development are highly structured and formal, the administrative burden is higher than in other universities.

Our goal of enabling senior faculty members to allocate more time to research should be facilitated by reducing the amount of time devoted to administrative duties, as detailed above. Another goal which is related to promoting departmental research is described in *The Department of Management and Economics Behavioral Research Program*, submitted to relevant OUI authorities in 2013. Its three main elements are: (I) a departmental ethics committee; (II) a behavioral research lab for use by the department; (III) a system that credits students for participating in research. The ethics committee has already been formed, and implementation of the other elements is planned for the coming year.

Our vision of including a viable globalization component in our teaching program will be realized by joining a specific initiative of the OUI's International Office: to translate several closely-related courses into English, and offer them as a division of studies to other universities to be added to their programs. In exchange, these universities will offer a similar English option for our students.

### **C. Deciding upon the strategic plan and current actions**

C. What is the Strategic Plan of the department? How was it decided upon? What actions will be taken in the near future? (Please also refer to the previous evaluation process).

This subsection presents an outline of the department's strategic plan, i.e. – its mission, vision and goals. The mission and goals were decided by the department's senior faculty and approved by the OUI's vice president. The general intention underlying these decisions is to match the mission and goals of the department with those of the OUI, as expressed in part A of the first chapter of this report ("The institution").

The goals and objectives are discussed (and if necessary modified) on an ongoing basis in the regular departmental meetings, and in ad-hoc meetings convened for a specific purpose. They are communicated to the department employees, the teaching staff, the students, and the general public via the department's website, by regular and e-mail, via annual department meetings, and, when relevant, in individual and group meetings of course coordinators and tutors.

In the near future, the main action to be taken towards achieving our specified goals is the ongoing effort of writing new courses, updating existing courses, and increasing our use of teaching technology. To improve the efficiency of these course development processes, a five-year plan specifying each senior faculty member's course development tasks was prepared and submitted to the OUI's management. The program was prepared based on a series of ten

departmental meetings held in March 2015 dedicated to evaluating and planning our study programs.

Another noteworthy step related to these goals is the OUI management's approval of our request to hire two additional senior faculty members. A call for applicants will be issued in the 2015 fall.

#### **D. Representation in departmental decision-making**

D. Is the Department represented in the Parent Unit's decision-making bodies?

As described above the Department of Management and Economics is the parent unit of the Economics study program. Currently five members of the department's senior faculty are economists and five are from the field of management. Departmental decision-making reflects this equal distribution as almost all issues are decided upon in departmental meetings with the participation of all 10 senior faculty members. The department's Chair position is held either by an economist or a management person, according to personal suitability and with no priority given to a particular field. The same applies to the position of Chair of the management and economics subcommittee and for the position of Chair of the ethics committee.

## Chapter 2 – The Study Program

### A. Organizational structure of the department

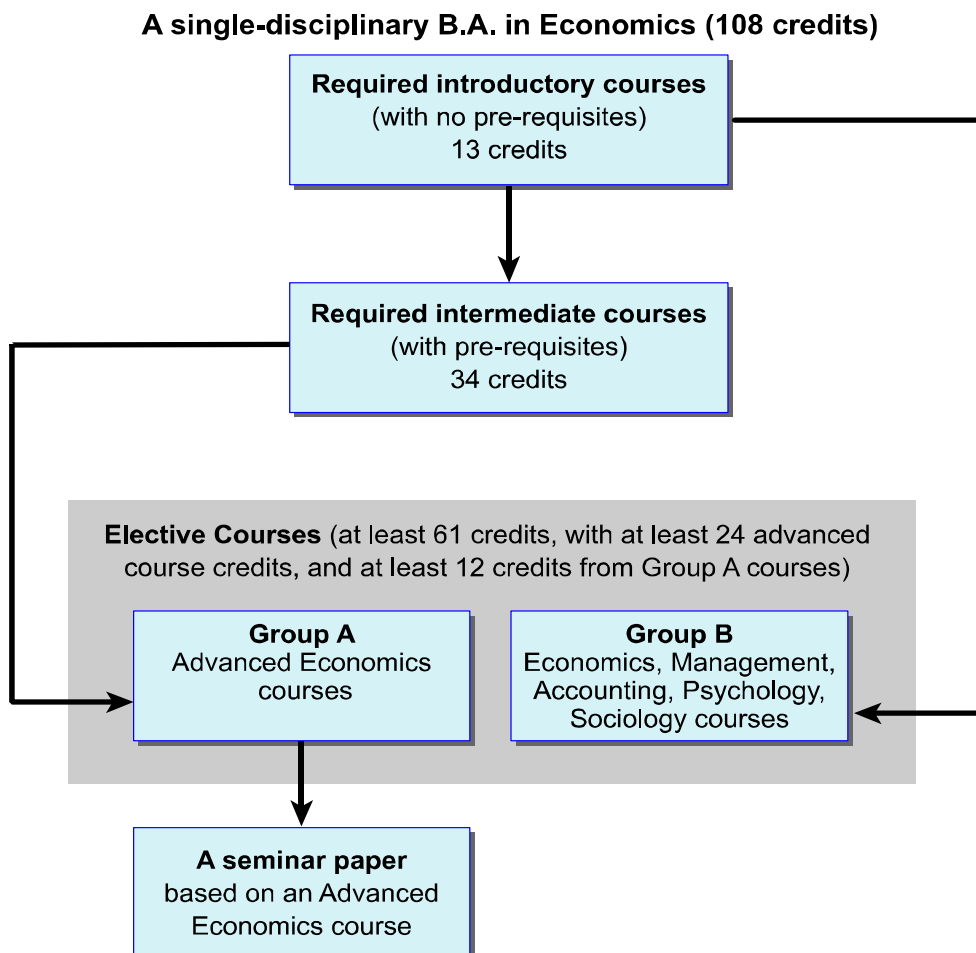
A. Provide a chart of the academic and administrative organizational structure of the departments and its study program/s (including relevant committees and names of senior administration).

For these details please see the "Parent Unit" chapter in Part 1 ("Background") of the report.

### B. A flow chart of the Economics program "at a glance"

B. A flow chart of the program presenting the process of completing the degree fully. The chart should present the "program at a glance" at all degree levels.

The following flowchart presents the structure of the study program towards a single-disciplinary B.A. in economics. The program is fully presented in sub-section C below.



An important pre-requisite that does not appear in the flowchart is that students must acquire at least 36 credits before registering for advanced courses. This prevents students from enrolling in advanced courses from Group B immediately after studying the introductory courses, even if they satisfy all other pre-requisites for those courses.

The flowchart also does not show the English requirements of the program, which are the same for all OUI undergraduate programs. Specifically, the OUI offers English courses in five different levels. A preliminary test determines the starting level, after which students advance from one English course to another according to level of difficulty. A student must successfully pass the English course in the highest level to register for any OUI advanced course. A particularly high score in the preliminary test may exempt the student from English studies altogether. English classes are non-credit courses.

### **Dual-disciplinary degree in economics and another discipline**

For almost every discipline taught in the OUI there is a study program that can be modularly combined with a similarly structured study program from a different discipline, so that together they form a study program towards a dual-disciplinary BA degree in both disciplines.

The dual-disciplinary degree in Economics is offered in combination with the following disciplines: management, political science & international relations, sociology, psychology, education (curriculum & instruction studies), history, computer science – systems and applications, life sciences, chemistry, and mathematics.

The study program in economics towards a dual-disciplinary degree has the same structure and the same required economics courses as the single-disciplinary program. The programs differ only in the requirements regarding electives. The main difference is that in the dual-disciplinary program the total number of credits for electives is 18 and the Group A requirement is 9 credits.

### **Single-disciplinary degree in Economics with a division of studies in another discipline**

An OUI undergraduate degree in economics can include a division of study in one of the following disciplines: management, accounting, political science, international relations, communication, public policy, sociology, education, psychology, Judaic studies, history, philosophy, arts, social science, literature, music, film studies, mathematics, and the world of the bible.

The study program in economics with a division in another discipline has the same structure and the same required economics courses as the single-disciplinary program. The programs differ only in the requirements regarding electives. The main difference is that in the program towards a single-disciplinary degree in economics with a division of studies the minimum number of total credits for economics course electives is only 33 and the Group A requirement is 9 credits.



## C. The economics study program in detail

C. Please provide (according to table no.2 in the Excel appendices) the study program's structure and content, including specializations/tracks, division of courses according to number of credits and type of course (lecture, seminar, workshop, mandatory, elective etc).

The following box presents the study program towards a single-disciplinary BA in Economics:

### BA Degree in Economics (Single-Disciplinary)

At least 108 credits, including at least 24 advanced credits

Foundation courses: required – 13 credits	Level	Credits
Introduction to Statistics for Students of Social Sciences I (30111)	introductory	3
Introduction to Statistics for Students of Social Sciences II (30112)	intermediate	3
Calculus for Students of Economics and Management (10142)	introductory	3
Topics in Mathematics (10444)	intermediate	4
Required economics courses – 34 credits	Level	Credits
Introduction to Microeconomics (10131)	introductory	3
Introduction to Macroeconomics (10126)	introductory	4
Intermediate Macroeconomics A	intermediate	3
Intermediate Macroeconomics B	intermediate	3
Price Theory A	intermediate	3
Price Theory B	intermediate	3
Price Theory C	intermediate	3
Financial Theory: Financial Management of Business Firms (10230)	intermediate	6
Econometrics	intermediate	6
Electives – at least 61 credits, including at least 24 advanced credits	Level	Credits
<b>Group A (At least 12 credits)</b>		
The Economy of Israel (10954)	advanced	3
Public Economics (10918)	advanced	3
Labor Economics (10519)	advanced	3
International Economics (10397)	advanced	3
Social Preference and Choice (10502)	advanced	3
Strategic Thinking: Game Theory and its Applications to Economics and Business (10599)	advanced	3
International Monetary (10397)	advanced	3
Intergenerational Economics (10574)	advanced	3
<b>Group B</b>		
Introduction to Psychology (10134) or - Introduction to Sociology (10136)	introductory	6
Law of Contracts (10800)	introductory	6
Introduction to Accounting (10280)	intermediate	6
Cost and Managerial Accounting (10404)	intermediate	6
Financial Statement Analysis (10389)	advanced	6
Business Ethics (10523)	advanced	6
Judgment and Evaluation under Uncertainty (10522)	advanced	6
Contemporary Theories of Economic and Social Justice (10960)	advanced	6
Economic History (10933)	advanced	6

**Seminar requirements:** A seminar papers within a Group A advanced course

Table 2, in the appendices chapter at the end of this report (Chapter 8), presents the study program in economics with more details about its courses.

## D. Providing courses to other units

D. Does the study program provide courses to other units?

The study program in economics provides courses to other OUI degree programs. In particular, Introduction to Microeconomics and Introduction to Macroeconomics are required courses in the study program towards a BA in management, and several other economics courses, such as Game Theory Applications for Management and Economics and Economic and Social Justice are used as elective course in that program as well. The study program towards a BSc in industrial engineering and management also requires Introduction to Microeconomics, together with several other economics courses as electives. The Economic and Social Justice course is an elective course in the study program towards a BA in political science and international relations, and in several other study programs. All economics courses can be taken as electives by students studying towards a BA in social sciences.

In addition, students from other universities often elect to take a few of their courses at the OUI, and have these courses accredited within their own university's study programs.

## E. Collaboration with other departments

E. To what extent does the department collaborate with other departments within/outside the institution?

One way in which the department collaborates with other departments is through the dual-disciplinary study programs. Each discipline has a study program that modularly fits into a dual-disciplinary study program, together with a similar study program from another discipline. The modular fit may not be perfect, due to a certain degree of overlap between courses, and joint efforts by faculty members of the two relevant departments may be required in shaping each specific dual-disciplinary program. Similar collaboration is necessary in the case of BA programs with a division of studies in another discipline.

Collaboration between the Department of Management and Economics and two other OUI departments has yielded the BA in social science: emphasis on behavioral sciences, which combines studies in economics, management, psychology, and sociology.

Another example of inter-departmental collaboration relates to courses in the undergraduate economics study programs which are offered by other departments. Examples of such courses are Calculus for Students of Economics and Management (operated by the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science), and Introductory Statistics for Social Studies (operated by the Department of Education and Psychology), which are required basic courses in the economics study programs. Another example is the Judgment and Evaluation under Uncertainty for Students of Management and Economics course which is offered by the Department of Education and Psychology but was created specifically for the management and economics study programs. The development and revision of such courses are done in cooperation with other departments. The courses are taught solely by the teaching staff of the department offering the course.

OUI faculty members also cooperate regularly via the subcommittees of the Senate and the Senate itself.

Cooperation in research between faculty members from different departments is widespread. Two OUI research institutes serve as important hosts for such cooperation – The Research Center for Innovation in Learning Technologies and The Research Institute for the study of Policy, Political Economy and Society. Currently both institutes are headed by members of the Department of Management and Economics.

In addition, joint research serves as another channel of widespread cooperation on a personal level between members of the Department of Management and Economics and members of other departments in the OUI and in other universities.

Members of the Department of Management and Economics and members of other OUI departments also cooperate in joint participation in OUI duties, such as ad-hoc committees appointed by OUI central authorities. In particular, it is OUI policy that academic committees for recruiting senior faculty members for a specific department also contain one member from another department.

Finally, there is ongoing collaboration between OUI faculty and colleagues at schools and management departments at other universities who participate in the design, development and teaching of the courses as authors, advisors and lecturers.

## **F. Planning and managing the study program**

F. Specify what bodies are responsible for the planning and managing of the study program.

At the OUI, the development of new courses and programs of study, and the revising of existing ones, are highly structured, careful, and controlled processes. They are initiated by senior faculty members and are usually developed by OUI faculty members together with teaching staff, in consultation with scholars from other universities as reviewers.

Two subcommittees of the Senate play important roles in these processes: The Subcommittee for Management and Economics, and the Social Science Subcommittee.

Decisions on creating or revising courses of the evaluated study program are made by the Management and Economics Subcommittee. The subcommittee comprises all the senior faculty of the department, three senior faculty members from other departments, and representatives of the department's teaching staff.

Decisions on the structure of the evaluated study program are discussed by the Senate's Social Science Subcommittee, which comprises all senior faculty members from all three OUI social sciences departments: management and economics, psychology and education, and sociology, political science and communication. All major decisions regarding the structure of the study programs of these departments require the subcommittee's approval.

Decisions by these subcommittees must be approved by the executive vice-president for academic affairs.

## G. Changing and updating the study program

G. What are the mechanisms, if exist, responsible for introducing changes, updating the study program, coordinating and examining the contents that are taught.

### Design of study programs

New OUI programs of study are initiated by senior faculty members and are usually developed by OUI faculty, together with teaching staff, in consultation with scholars from other universities. In most cases, one of the initiators also heads the program and is responsible for running it. Every program undergoes the following stages before it is approved:

1. The proposal is prepared by its initiators, in consultation with the head of the department, the head of the relevant sub-committee of the Senate, and the executive vice-president for academic affairs.
2. The program is submitted to experts in other universities for evaluation.
3. The department revises the program, according to the reviewers' comments.
4. The revised proposal and the reviewers' reports are presented to the relevant sub-committee of the Senate. For economics programs the relevant subcommittee is the Senate's social science subcommittee.
5. If approved by the subcommittee, the Senate discusses the program.
6. If approved by the Senate, the program is submitted for approval to the CHE.

Programs are continuously evaluated and updated, as necessary. Major changes in the programs go through stages 2-5, as specified above.

### Development of new courses

The need to develop new courses or replace existing ones is referred, with a detailed rationale, to the Dean of Development and Learning Technologies and to the department chair. If deemed justified, permission is granted to proceed. The proposed head of the development team (either an internal senior faculty member, or an external scholar who is a senior lecturer or professor at another university) submits a proposal. The proposal states the rationale, defines the scope (in terms of credits) and the prior knowledge assumed, and describes the contents in detail. New authors who have not previously written OUI study materials are asked to submit a writing sample (15-30 pages of the proposed course). Two or three expert referees from other universities review each course proposal and provide written comments. Referees are asked to address content, structure and quality, and the feasibility of covering the content within the timeframe proposed. The referees are also asked to compare the proposed course with parallel or similar courses in other institutions, if relevant. If the course is based on an existing textbook, the referees receive the book for inspection; in the case of revision of an existing course, they receive the original together with the proposal. The head of the development team may suggest referees, but the final list of reviewers is decided upon by the Chair of the Management and Economics Subcommittee, in order to enable referees to remain anonymous if they wish. The referees' comments are answered in writing by the course proposer.

After the reviews have been collected and responded to, all the information is presented to the Management and Economics Subcommittee, and discussed at a meeting in the presence of the proposer. The proposal is either rejected or approved, with or without changes. Following approval by the subcommittee, proposals must be approved by the president and by the Senate,

before development begins. When a first draft of the study materials is available, it is reviewed by referees (who are free to elect whether to be anonymous or not) and, at the author's discretion, corrected according to their remarks. The next steps include editing, improvement of pedagogical aspects, graphic design, proofreading, and publishing. The entire process may last a year or longer if centered on an already existing textbook which the OUI purchases and the main development actions are the search for an appropriate textbook and the preparation of a study guide which fits the OUI's self-study model. Alternatively, the process may require over three years in cases where the process is based on writing a new OUI textbook, or on translating an already existing textbook from abroad.

### **Updating courses**

Outdated courses are discontinued or revised. Proposals for updating courses are brought before the head of the management and economics subcommittee, and if needed (depending on the extent of the update) may go through a procedure similar to that of new courses. Minor updates do not require formal procedures. Senior faculty and course coordinators are expected to detect the need for such changes and execute them or supervise their implementation.

### **Examining the contents**

The main element in the OUI's teaching model is independent study from the course's textbook and other formal materials. Thus, the main part of the contents that are actually submitted to the students is known to the letter and in advance to all bodies involved in supervising teaching.

Second in importance in the OUI's teaching model are the tutorial sessions. The content taught in these sessions has several strong anchors to the course's formal materials. The first anchor is the defined target of these tutorials – to help students understand the contents in the course's formal materials. Another anchor is the supervision of the tutors by the course coordinator in a formal and documented process coordinated by the Office of the Dean of Academic Studies. The supervision takes place mainly via regular class visits by the course coordinator and also through active structured communication between course coordinators and students. Communication channels include email, regular phone hours, and the discussion forum on each course's website, which is continuously active and serves as a virtual meeting place for students, tutors, the course coordinator and the senior faculty in charge of the course. The third element in anchoring the tutorial sessions to the course's formal materials are the course assignments and exams which are prepared by the course coordinator under the supervision of senior faculty members. The assignments and exams are uniformly administered to the students in all the tutorial classes and help focus the tutorial sessions on the textbook content and other course materials.

## **H. Changes in the study program since previous evaluation**

H. What changes have been made in the study program since the previous evaluation, what are the implications of these changes and how do they comply with the strategic plan?

**Senior faculty.** In 2007, the year of the previous evaluation, the Department of Management and Economics was relatively young (having been formed in 1997) and included only two economists on its senior faculty: Professor Aviad Heifetz and Dr. Mordechai Schwarz. Since then, three more economists have joined the department: Dr. Yishay Maoz, Dr. Rica Gonen, and Dr. Dror Goldberg.

Concurrently, the number of senior faculty members on the management side of the department has also increased, from 3 to 5, which also supports the economics program as it lightens much of the administrative load for the economists in the department.

Therefore, a much larger number of senior faculty members now run the study program.

**Courses.** An intensive course development effort has taken place since the 2007 evaluation. The following completely new courses – Public Economics, Intermediate Macroeconomics A, Intermediate Macroeconomics B, Economic and Social Justice – were developed and added to the study program, with the first three courses in the list replacing outdated courses with the same name.

Three additional new courses that are in the middle of their development are Economic History, Auctions and Electronic Markets, and Monetary Economics. The development of the Economic History course is almost complete and it will enter the program in the 2016 spring semester. The Monetary Economics course will replace the International Monetary Economics course which is currently in the study program.

Several other courses have undergone a large scale update: International Economics, Price Theory C, Price Theory B, Business Ethics, Judgment and Evaluation for Economics and Management, and The Economy of Israel.

Following its update, the level of the Economy of Israel course was upgraded from intermediate to advanced, which added the option to write seminar papers in that course. We view the opportunity to write seminar papers in that topic as an important improvement in the study program.

The seminar paper requirement in the single-disciplinary program was lowered from two seminar papers to one, in line with the requirements of the other Israeli universities.

**Accreditation.** In 2012 the CHE granted permanent accreditation to the OUI's study program towards a single-disciplinary BA in economics, replacing its temporary recognition. This has completed a process in which all of the Department of Management and Economics study programs have received the CHE's permanent accreditation.

## **I. Involvement of non-academic bodies**

I. Are 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 the Business School and the Manufacturers' Association or Industrial Factories)?

No non-academic bodies are involved in the running and the activities of the OUI's management study programs and in the MBA study program.

## J. The diplomas awarded to graduates

J. Specify what is written on the academic diplomas awarded to graduates of the department.

See a copy (with translation to English) of the diploma awarded to graduates of the economics program in the appendix at the end of this report.

## K. Strengths and weaknesses of the study program

K. What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the study program?

### Strengths

The detailed description of the study program and its courses within this chapter shows that it comprehensively cover the canonical material in the field of economics. The program's required courses comprise the standard list of required undergraduate economics courses in most universities. The program's elective courses cover a wide range of topics (e.g., Game Theory, Labor Economics, Public Economics) that form the standard list of electives in undergraduate economics studies.

The program also contains several courses that are non-standard in undergraduate economics programs such as Economics and Social Justice, Business Ethics, and Judgment and Evaluation. We view the presentation of these topics to economics students as a strength of the program.

The quality of the program and its courses is carefully supervised via the OUI's highly structured and supervised processes through which programs are created or changed and course are developed

The other elements of the OUI's teaching model – tutorial sessions, courses' websites, etc – are also highly structured and therefore lend themselves to an efficient supervision of quality.

The very large selection of thirty different study programs in economics allows students to choose between focusing on economics alone (via the single-disciplinary program), or studying economics as a major while adding a division of study in another discipline, or even combining economics and another discipline in a dual-disciplinary degree. These possibilities contribute to the students' ability to widen their horizons within their economics studies, and also to expand their post-graduation employment possibilities, and increase their graduate studies options.

### Weaknesses

The main weakness of the economics study program is the heavy workload of the senior faculty in the management and economics department. A relatively small number of senior faculty members must allocate time for course development and revision, and also for supervising the OUI's large-scale teaching. The time needed for all of this comes at the expense of research, long-term planning, and investment in the academic long-term potential of the department.

The program's coverage of the standard topics in undergraduate economics is comprehensive, yet not complete. In the coming years we hope to add several elective courses in topics such as economic growth and natural resources economics.



## Chapter 3

# Human Resources

### Faculty (Academic Staff)

As described in previous chapters, the academic staff at the OUI consists of a relatively small number of senior faculty members and a large number of tutors and course coordinators.

As in traditional universities, OUI senior faculty members have three general categories of responsibility: research, teaching, and academic administration duties. The research and academic administrative responsibilities are similar to those in traditional universities, while the teaching component is different. Instead of lecturing, senior faculty members at the OUI develop learning materials for new courses, update and revise existing courses, and collaborate with course coordinators in managing the courses.

Course coordinators have both administrative and academic responsibilities. As part of their academic responsibilities, Course coordinators have the following tasks:

- preparing exams and assignments, and formulating criteria for assessment;
- providing supplementary learning materials;
- administering course websites;
- approving seminar paper topics, referring students to a supervisor, and monitoring seminar papers (in advanced courses);
- grading exams;
- evaluating appeals concerning exam and seminar paper grades;
- recruiting and advising supervisors who mentor students in writing their seminar papers;
- monitoring tutors (visiting tutorial sessions; sampling student assignments);
- conducting formal evaluations of tutors;
- providing feedback to tutors and answering questions;
- solving academic issues pertaining to students (answering questions, etc.);
- providing individual academic counseling to students.

Course coordinators have the following managerial responsibilities:

- recruiting tutors and assigning them to study groups around the country;
- managing course-related administrative issues vis-à-vis OUI administrative bodies;
- handling student inquiries such as requests about examinations, submitting different or additional assignments, changing study groups, participation in tutorial sessions, etc., and
- managing the administrative aspects of seminar papers.

The tutors' responsibilities include the following:

- preparing materials for tutorial sessions;
- leading tutorial sessions, which may include lecturing, elucidating difficult topics, discussing assignments, and fostering discussion;
- responding to students on the course website forums;
- evaluating assignments and providing feedback and grades; and
- responding to student inquiries by phone, e-mail, or in person during weekly office hours.

The Economics program staff includes 5 senior faculty members, 15 course coordinators, and approximately 100 tutors. The responses to this chapter's eight questions about faculty will be divided according to the three categories of staff: senior faculty, course coordinators, and tutors.

### **A. A detailed description of the academic staff**

A. Attach Tables 5-7 (In the Excel Appendix) detailing senior and junior faculty, adjuncts, teaching and research assistants, post-doctoral staff members.

Please see Tables 5-7 in the appendices chapter at the end of this report (Chapter 8).

### **B. Rules, criteria and procedures for appointment**

B. Specify the rules, criteria and procedures for appointing, renewing appointments and dismissals of academic staff, including rules regarding tenure and promotion; what is the standard duration of service at each position?

The department chair and the head of the economics program are appointed by the president. Criteria are abilities, seniority, and rank. Each appointment is usually for three years.

**Senior faculty:** Recruiting and promotion procedures are similar to those at other universities and are based on high-quality research output.

Recruitment of new faculty members is conducted according to the OUI's long-term plan for each department and is based on the department's research and teaching needs. Exceptions to this rule are possible in specific cases, such as when an opportunity arises to recruit a faculty member of unusual merit. All recruitment processes are initiated by the president.

The academic promotion process of a senior faculty member can be initiated by the president, a member of the Academic Committee, or by a senior faculty member ranking above the current rank of the candidate. After consultation with scholars in the specialization area of the candidate, the president decides whether to open the promotion process. If so, the president appoints an ad-hoc professional committee that receives at least three external experts' reviews of the candidate, evaluates the candidate for promotion according to accepted academic standards, and presents the summary of the evaluation to the relevant university appointment committee (one committee for appointments to lecturer and senior lecturer, and one committee for appointments to associate professor and full professor). On the basis of the professional committee's review, the appointment committee decides on the promotion.

The main difference between the OUI and other Israeli universities with regard to senior faculty appointments is that the OUI's senior faculty members do not enjoy tenure. Instead, their contracts are renewed on a periodic basis by the president following a review process. The decision not to renew a contract requires the president bringing the case before a committee.

**Course coordinators** are recruited through a carefully controlled selection process. An internal call for applicants is written by a committee appointed by the department head, and is distributed to all OUI employees. Applications are pre-screened to ensure compliance with the prerequisites,

and all eligible applicants are evaluated by the committee. A short list of candidates is created, who are asked to produce recommendation letters, and are interviewed by the committee. If no employees of the OUI are found to meet the requirements of the position, the process is repeated, and the call is distributed both internally and externally. Such cases are rare, as a comprehensive knowledge of OUI systems is required for the managerial component of the positions. The recommendation of the committee is subject to the approval of the dean of academic studies and the executive vice-president for academic affairs. The course coordinator's position has four ranks, with promotion from one rank to the next dependent on academic degree, research conduct, and contribution to course development. Ranks 1 and 2 are for course coordinators without a PhD, and ranks 3 and 4 are for coordinators with a PhD.

**Tutors** are employed based on a short-term one-semester contract, though many work as tutors in a long-term capacity. The collective agreement with the tutors states that recruitment of a new tutor can only occur when a study group is opened and no current OUI tutor who is an academic fit for that course agrees to teach it. This process requires the approval of the department's chair, and the department must report it to the dean of academic studies.

### C. Informing staff members of appointments procedures and rules

C. What steps are taken to ensure that faculty members are informed of these policies and procedures?

The rules and procedures regarding academic appointment and promotion are available online and faculty members can view them on the OUI's website. In addition, a veteran senior faculty member is appointed to guide each new recruit in all OUI rules and processes, including the ones on promotion and appointment renewal.

### D. Areas of Specialty

D. How is the faculty members divided into areas of specialty in the discipline?

**Senior faculty:** The relatively small number of senior faculty members does not allow a complete coverage of all specializations in economics. The responsibility of acting as academic supervisors of the courses is shared by senior faculty members, mostly according to their specializations. Senior faculty members are also responsible for the development of new courses and for updating existing courses. When this requires expertise that the senior faculty members do not have, the department may outsource the writing to an expert in the field who is a senior faculty member in another university.

**Course coordinators:** The coordinator of each course is a subject-matter expert for that course with an MA or a PhD degree.

**Tutors:** Tutors have expertise in each course that they tutor. This expertise is based on academic education, as well as on subsequent training. They must hold at least an MA degree.

## E. Gender equality in the department

E. Please provide the following information regarding gender equality in the department:

- How many faculty members are women and what is their percentage in each rank?
- Are there any policies supporting recruitment and promotion of women, in the department or at the institutional level? (e.g. proactive recruitment of woman; affirmative actions; adjusted promotion rules in light of maternity leave etc.) Are there any other activities in that regard?
- How does the department ensure the dissemination of these regulations and of other activities offered to enhance gender equality (e.g. seminars, special grants and programs, legal rights etc.)
- What are the department's goals in regard to gender equality in recruitment and promotion in the faculty?
- Is there a person in charge of women affairs in the institution and/or department? If yes, what are his/her responsibilities?

Half of the ten senior faculty members of the Department of Management and Economics are women. One of the department's two senior faculty members with the academic rank of Professor is a woman. Half of the other eight senior faculty members are women and all of them have the academic rank of a senior lecturer. There are also 32 women among the department's 60 course coordinators. There were 2 women among the 5 last department chairs and the next chair, scheduled to enter the office in October 2016 is a woman (Dr. Varda Wasserman).

At the institutional level it should be noted that one of the past two presidents, three of the past four vice-presidents, and three of the past four Deans of academic studies were women. Approximately half of the OUI's senior faculty members are women.

There are no policies supporting recruitment and promotion of women in the department or at the institution. The apparent equality described above has emerged by recruiting and promoting based solely on professional performance. The department has no specified goal on that matter.

The Advisor to the President on Women's and Gender Issues is in charge of women's affairs at the OUI. The advisor reports to the president. Currently in office is Professor Judith Gal-Ezer, the former vice-president.

## F. Updating of staff members

F. What steps are taken to ensure that staff members are updated, academically and professionally, with regard to the program? Are there professional development plans? Please specify.

Senior faculty members keep updated in their area of expertise through on-going scientific research, scholarly activities and interaction in their areas of specialty.

A prerequisite for the hiring of course coordinators and tutors is the expectation that they will remain academically up-to-date. Although there are no formal mechanisms in place, there is a policy of encouraging them to remain current in their field, by providing funds for travel to international conferences and through interaction with the senior faculty. This policy relies mainly on opting to hire staff that hold, or study towards, doctoral degrees, and are active researchers. To this end, the OUI supports their research via financial aid and administrative benefits (see chapter 6 for more details).

Course coordinators are responsible for making sure that tutors possess the knowledge and skills relevant to the course they tutor. To that end, course coordinators may distribute relevant literature to their tutors, arrange course staff meetings visit tutorial sessions. In addition course coordinators have to refer to the issue of knowledge and skills in the formal process of tutor's evaluation that they must execute periodically.

### G. The head of the study program

G. What is the definition of the position of the head of the study program? What credentials (experience and education) are required for this position? How is the head of the study program appointed and what is the duration of the position?

The head of the economics program is a member of the senior faculty who is responsible for the overall processes of developing and updating the program. The head of the program collaborates closely with the other senior and teaching faculty members on initiating new study tracks, decisions concerning new course development, and updating and revising existing courses. Together with the department chair, the program head is also responsible for recruiting course coordinators, and for improving the quality of teaching and services to students. Experience at the OUI and in the department, academic excellence in research and in course development, and managerial abilities are important for the position. The position is held for three years and the appointment is made by the Executive Vice-President for Academic Affairs in consultation with the department chair.

### H. Policy on recruiting and absorbing teaching staff

H. What is the policy on recruiting and absorbing teaching staff (senior/junior/adjuncts) and what are the plans for the future recruitment to the study program? How are these plans made and by whom?

**Senior faculty:** Planned recruitment and absorption of senior faculty is proceeding according to the president's five-year plan. As described in the department's mission, aims, and goals, departmental meetings of the senior faculty have led to the conclusion that more department members are needed. A formal request was sent in October 2014 to the president and the recruitment of two additional senior faculty members was approved. In subsequent meetings, the department's senior faculty and the vice-president have decided to favor candidates specializing in finance, and that candidates from other sub-fields of economics or management must exhibit an exceptional promise to be considered for the position. The recruitment process is currently underway.

**Course coordinators** Recruitment of course coordinators is based on the course offerings. Every course offered by the department requires a coordinator. New coordinators are recruited before launching new courses, or when existing coordinators resign or retire.

**Tutors** are recruited by course coordinators, based on the ongoing demand for classes, qualifications, and geographic preferences.

## I. Definition of full employment

I. 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?

**Senior faculty members** hold full-time positions. Since their teaching responsibilities are fulfilled mainly through the development of new courses, updating existing courses, supervision of the work of course coordinators, etc., the definition of full employment does not include a quantitative component of teaching hours.

**The employment definition of course coordinators** is primarily determined by the number of students enrolled in their courses. Through careful planning and allocation of course coordinator positions, any substantial changes in employment status and salary can usually be avoided. Course coordinators are employed via a collective work agreement, on a personal contract basis.

**Tutors** are employed under a newly signed collective work agreement which links their employment status and their remuneration to the number of tutoring hours and students enrolled in study groups.

## J. Advising for final projects, theses and dissertations

J. Are staff members obliged to serve as advisors for final projects, theses and dissertations? Is there a limitation of a maximum number of graduate students per faculty? Are there criteria for assigning advisors to different research projects?

Currently, none of the OUI's economics programs include theses, dissertations or final projects. Some faculty members act as supervisors of masters and PhD theses in other universities. Staff members who hold a PhD are able to supervise undergraduate seminar papers in advanced courses in which they have the academic expertise.

## K. The department's technical and administrative staff

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

The Department of Management and Economics depends on its administrative staff for its operation. The main positions and bodies of this administrative staff are:

- The Chair's Assistant for Academic Affairs
- The Coordinator of Students Inquiries
- The Chair's Assistant for Administrative Affairs
- The Secretariat

**The Chair's Assistant for Academic Affairs** is directly responsible for coordinating the extensive student advising offered by the department; supervising the distribution of courses and study groups throughout the country prior to each semester; overseeing the inclusion of departmental studies information in all university publications, in particular the OUI's annual catalog; continually updating all printed and online OUI publications in real time about every

relevant new information regarding the studies in the department; and overseeing many academic aspects of course development processes in the department.

In addition to these direct responsibilities, the chair's assistant is also in charge of assisting the chair in all academic affairs. This includes help with acquiring and processing information, advice and participation in consultations, and help in executing decisions.

The OUI's unique distance-teaching model makes academic teaching highly structured, and therefore calls for exceptional skills in fulfilling this position. In addition to the intrinsic personal skills, a high level of familiarity with the department and with OUI academic features and procedures is mandatory. Tali Mendelson is the current Chair's Assistant for Academic Affairs, and is also the coordinator of the International Management course.

**The Coordinator of Students Inquiries (CSI)** is the address for inquiries and appeals from the many thousands of students we teach each year. The role is described in detail in section E of the following Chapter 4. Mr. Mordechai Sassoon serves in this position, and is also the coordinator of the Human Resources Management course.

**The Chair's Assistant for Administrative Affairs** is responsible for managing the secretariat office; handling all human resource issues for the department's hundreds of employees, including salaries, room allocation, etc; helping to determine and manage the department's budget; and assisting the Chair in all administrative aspects, including information, advice, and implementation. The OUI's distance-teaching model relies on a large amount of administration, and the task of coordinating the activities of the department with those of the large administrative body surrounding the department requires exceptional managerial skills and a deep knowledge of the OUI's many units. Ms. Smadar Baum currently holds this position.

**The Secretariat Office** includes seven administrative coordinators who provide administrative assistance to the department chair and to faculty members, including extensive assistance to course coordinators, and cooperation with the administrative units of the OUI.

## L. Changes in human resources since the previous evaluation

L. What changes have been made in human resources since and in light of the previous evaluation, what are the implications of these changes?

The main change in the human resources of the economics program since the previous evaluation is the increase in the number of senior faculty members. Specifically, at the time of the previous evaluation there were only two economists among the senior faculty of the department and now there are five. This happened as Professor Aviad Heifetz and Dr. Mordechai Schwarz were joined by Dr. Yishay Maoz, Dr. Rica Gonen, and Dr. Dror Goldberg. During the same period the management side of the department's senior faculty grew from three members to five, as Professor Nitza Geri was joined by Dr. Yoram Kalman, Dr. Varda Wasserman, Dr. Sharon Arieli-Langer and Dr. Sarit Moldovan, while Professor Aviva Geva and Professor Aviad Bar-Haim have retired.

This expansion of the senior faculty springs from the department's growth, which was described earlier in this report. Specifically, the department sprang in 1997 from a study program towards a dual-disciplinary degree in management and economics, and since then has initiated study programs towards single-disciplinary and dual-disciplinary undergraduate degrees in management, economics, accounting, and an MBA. The new courses written for these study programs and the associated tasks have required the additional faculty.

An important change in the human resources of the institution took place in 2010 when the tutors and course coordinators unionized. Their employment is now based on a collective bargaining agreement signed between their union and the OUI management.

## M. Human resources strengths and weaknesses

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

**Senior academic staff:** The OUI is founded on the concept of a very small cadre of senior faculty who provide academic leadership for large programs. This is evident in our economics program where a small number of senior academic staff is responsible for the education of approximately 7,500 students a year. Our faculty is carefully selected to ensure that they are flexible and capable of dealing with the unique academic and administrative challenges of the OUI, while still maintaining a high level of academic research. The high level of trust among members of the senior faculty is key to its success.

**General administrators and course coordinators:** The administrators and course coordinators are an asset to the department. They are a group of knowledgeable and dedicated professionals, most of whom have many years of experience with the OUI. Most were selected and promoted from the ranks of more junior employees, and they have an in-depth understanding of their role and of the roles of those they manage and collaborate with. Despite the significant workload they carry, they perform their duties effectively, and provide mutual support. When openings for these positions are announced, we have the advantage of being able to select out of a diverse and extensive pool of internal applicants.

**Tutors:** Unlike other positions in the department, this area suffers from weaknesses that could have a negative influence on the department's future. The department's tutors are professional, effective and dedicated to their work, and in general, students are satisfied with the instruction they receive. Nevertheless, recent changes in the employment structure and in the contractual relationship with the instructors make it more difficult to recruit excellent new tutors, and to retain our top talent. Economics instructors and tutors are sought-after by almost all institutes of higher education in Israel, and if the trend continues, we risk deterioration in the professionalism and quality of our tutors. Tutors are not only the ones who work most closely with our students, but they also provide a major pool of talent for more senior positions at the OUI. We can not afford to accept mediocrity as the standard for tutors, without risking the quality of our program.



# Teaching

## A. Evaluating Teaching

A. Does the institution have a structured system for evaluating teaching (e.g. peer reviews; students survey etc.)? Please provide a brief description.

The main teaching activity of OUI senior faculty is "course development", a term that refers to writing textbooks and preparing other materials for new courses, as well as revising the contents of already-existing courses. This process is overseen, via continuous monitoring, by the OUI's Development Unit, which operates under the authority of the dean of development and learning technologies. The course development process is as follows:

- A senior faculty member submits a development project proposal to the development unit.
- The development unit sends the proposal for evaluation to several referees from other universities who are experts in the relevant field. Reviewers (who may elect to remain anonymous) are paid 1,250 NIS for this service.
- If the intended author has not previously written texts for the OUI, he or she must also submit a writing sample of an independent-study pedagogical text to the development unit. The writing sample is sent to two reviewers, who are usually OUI senior faculty members.
- After referee reports on the proposal and the writing sample (if required) are returned, the Management and Economics Subcommittee discusses the proposal and approves or rejects it. The subcommittee's approval requires the reaffirmation of the Senate and the president.
- Once approval is granted, writing begins. Courses are divided into units, which the authors submit, upon completion, to the development unit, which sends the manuscript to reviewers from other universities, as was done with the proposal. The reviewers may require that corrections be made to the text, and that the corrected text be re-sent to them for evaluation.
- Each unit that has been approved by the reviewers is sent for language editing.

Negative evaluations by referees prevent further progress of course development. Thus, the major portion of OUI teaching reaches students only after it has been positively evaluated.

Courses and learning materials are evaluated, both while being written, and also after the development has ended and the course is being taught. Specifically, each course is re-evaluated every seven years by the senior faculty of the Department of Management and Economics, in a process administered by the Office of the Dean of Development and Learning Technologies.

Tutorial sessions serve as yet another instructional means at the OUI. Tutors are evaluated by course coordinators in a highly structured process directed by the Office of the Dean of Academic Studies. The main elements of this evaluation process are as follows:

- At the end of each semester, students complete a survey about the course in general, and the tutors' performance in particular.
- Course coordinators visit tutorials on a regular basis, and document their impressions.
- Course coordinators check sample assignments in order to monitor the tutor's effectiveness in grading and constructively commenting on student work.

- Based on the above, and on observing other parts of the tutor's activities, course coordinators complete evaluation forms provided by the Office of the Dean of Academic Studies.
- Course coordinators meet with tutors to discuss the evaluations, and clarify expectations.
- After these meetings, the forms are submitted to the Office of the Dean of Academic Studies.
- Each tutor undergoes evaluation every one or two years.
- Tutors whose evaluations do not meet a certain threshold may be dismissed through a process initiated by the Office of the Dean of Academic Studies.
- Some tutors with low evaluations may be advised to contact the OUI's training department which will offer them a variety of ways in which they may improve their teaching skills.

A.1. How are the results of the evaluation activities used? How are negative findings addressed? How are excellent teachers rewarded?

As described in the previous sub-section, the main teaching activity in the OUI's model is writing textbooks and preparing other formal learning materials, and the evaluation of this teaching activity is done by sending the learning units to referees from other universities. A negative evaluation by the referees of a certain learning unit prevents its progress towards becoming part of the course.

Thus, the main part of the OUI's teaching is evaluated before it is actually executed and then it is delivered to the students only if positively evaluated.

OUI senior faculty members do not have tenure, and are instead employed by contracts which are renewed every few years. While promotion in academic rank depends mostly on research achievement, contract renewal depends greatly on productivity in course development. Thus, negative evaluations of senior faculty teaching may lead to termination of employment.

The OUI does not have a formal process for rewarding senior faculty for excellence in teaching, since the development of learning materials is evaluated in a manner that is too detailed and course-specific to be reduced to a simple measure that allows reliable comparison between the outputs of the different senior faculty members.

Tutors too are not directly rewarded for excellence, but there are several channels by which they may indirectly benefit from it. First, outstanding tutors may be assigned by the course coordinators to more classes, which raises their salaries. An excellent tutor may also be recruited by the course coordinators of several related courses, which also contributes to salary and employment stability. Second, excellent performance may be advantageous when applying for a course coordinator position. In general, the policy of the Department of Management and Economics is that a course coordinator must first be an outstanding tutor.

To foster further excellence in teaching, the policy of the Department of Management and Economics is that course coordinators must assign their best tutors (often – themselves) to the online classes. These classes are critical because they are uploaded to the course's website, remain there until the end of the semester, and are viewed repeatedly by all of the course's students, including those who participate in non-web tutorial sessions.

Tutors who receive negative evaluations from their course coordinators are referred to the Training Unit to improve their skills. If a tutor's performance is found to be repeatedly inadequate despite help from the Training Unit, then the tutor will be asked to leave the OUI.

A.2. Does the institution have a center for enhancement of teaching? If yes, do all faculty members (including adjunct faculty) participate in its activities? Please provide a brief description. If not, does the institution offer the teaching faculty systematic activities (courses/in service/training/guidance) in order to improve the quality of teaching? Do all faculty (including adjunct faculty) participate in these activities? Please provide a brief description.

Currently the OUI offers no specific programs for enhancing the pedagogical writing skills of its senior faculty members, or for developing other learning resources such as online materials, and recorded lectures. The quality of the learning products the senior faculty members create relies therefore on their self-acquired skills, and on the strict and continuous evaluation of the course development process that was described in the previous sub-sections.

With regard to tutorial sessions, the OUI requires training for all employees involved in tutoring, even though most tutors and coordinators have prior teaching experience from other academic frameworks. The training department of the Office of the Dean of Academic Studies provides instruction for course coordinators and tutors, including these main resources:

- Multi-day mandatory workshop for new course coordinators, covering the following main topics: OUI orientation, assignment and exam preparation, OUI database proficiency, and website management.
- Four-day mandatory workshop for new tutors, focusing on the following topics: OUI orientation, grading assignments and providing effective feedback, tutoring skills, and learning skills for students.
- Each semester, a variety of workshops are offered to tutors and course coordinators on a wide range of topics: dealing with a heterogeneous group, effective use of presentations, learning skills, effective use of voice, dealing with professional burnout, and more. A list of workshops is sent to tutors and coordinators at the beginning of the semester, allowing them to select and participate in the workshops that interest them.

Course coordinators often lead informal, yet intensive, tutor training and mentoring tailored to the course's specific characteristics.

A.3. Do new faculty members receive special support for teaching (preparation seminar, guidance, etc.)? Is there a mentoring program for new faculty (regarding their teaching)? Please specify.

Upon the arrival of a new senior faculty member, the department chair assigns a veteran faculty member to help the newcomer become acquainted with the department and the university. The mentor guides the guest through the OUI's administrative and academic processes. In particular, the mentor helps the guest pass the threshold requirement of planning a course and having the plan approved.

A dedicated research grant of 20,000 NIS is given to recruits upon their arrival. In addition, new recruits receive the same research funds as faculty members with the same academic rank.

New course coordinators begin their employment two months before the semester starts. The office of the Dean of Academic Studies provides an orientation, including guided visits to various OUI units (human resources, library, computer center, etc.). The department chair assigns veteran course coordinators to mentor them in their first year. In addition, new course coordinators participate in workshops conducted by the training department, as described above.

A.4. Are new faculty entitled to reductions or are they excused from teaching in the beginning of their employment?

The Department of Management and Economics, usually frees guests from most other duties, in order to help them focus on submitting their first course development proposal and having it approved. This also gives them the opportunity to enhance their research portfolio for the determination of their academic rank, should they be accepted as faculty members.

## B. Evaluating teaching

B. If a structured system for evaluating and improving teaching exist at the department level as well, please provide an answer according to question a.

The intensive evaluation system described in section A involves both OUI bodies and departmental bodies. There is no parallel system which operates merely at the departmental level.

## C. Quality of evaluation methods

C. To what extent the methods applied to assess and improve the quality of teaching achieve their goals?

The methods applied to assess and improve the quality of teaching achieve their goals uniquely well, because the OUI's teaching model ensures that the major part of the teaching is evaluated **before** it reaches the students and only positively evaluated teaching is included in the course.

Specifically, as described in sub-section A of the current section, the main teaching activity in the OUI's model is writing textbooks and preparing other formal learning materials. The evaluation of this teaching activity is done by referees from other universities. A negative evaluation by the referees of a certain learning unit prevents its progress towards becoming part of the course.

We believe that the evaluation of other elements in the OUI's teaching model, including – tutorials sessions, courses websites, personal support from tutors, is very efficient, accurate and effective, mostly due to its highly detailed and structural nature, as described in the previous sub-sections.

# Learning

## A. Examinations and exercises

A.1. Describe the method of examinations and their character, the relative weight of each type of examination in the program (written/oral/open/multiple-choice etc.).

Written final exams are held at the end of each OUI course. Usually the exam grade accounts for 70%-100% of the final grade, with the remainder determined by grades on written assignments. Multiple-choice questions are used mainly in the more mathematical courses. They are less used in the more advanced courses which put a greater emphasis on complex systems, the analysis of which cannot be effectively reduced to closed-form questions.

Most final exams include one or two broad open-ended questions that require integration, and analysis of the main course topics. Shorter questions may also be included, as well as questions on definitions and explanations of concepts. Due to these different types of questions, tests students' familiarity with theories, phenomena, events and concepts that have been learned, and also assess their ability to apply the theories and concepts to a particular event or phenomenon that does not appear in the course material.

A.2. Who writes the examinations and exercises and how is their validity assessed?

Exams are written by the coordinator of each course, under the guidance and supervision of the senior faculty member who serves as the course's academic supervisor. Often this senior faculty member is also the one who has created or revised the course.

The type of validity the OUI seeks for its tests is Content Validity which means that test items must reflect the knowledge and skills defined as the course's learning outcomes. In particular, it refers to knowledge about terms, concepts, and theories, and their application to situations in the field of economics. The assessment of this type of validity is based mainly on the expertise in the relevant field of the faculty member that serves as the academic supervisor of the course. Accumulated statistics on tests results over time help the course coordinator and the academic supervisor improve the exams' validity and its assessment.

Much effort is invested in preventing the repetition of exam questions from semester to semester. Course coordinators may access the OUI's question bank which includes questions that have appeared on previous assignments and exams, together with detailed statistics on student performance with regard to these questions. Re-used questions are expected to be sufficiently altered, and course coordinators must also include completely original questions on every exam. Questions that have been found to be problematic are removed from the question bank.

A.3. Who grades the examinations and exercises? Please describe the feedback given to students, apart from the grade.

Each course coordinator is required to grade at least thirty exams each term. The remaining exams can be graded by the coordinator or by tutors of the course under the coordinator's

supervision. Comments are written on the examination booklet. Students may request a photocopy of an examination booklet (for a fee) up to five weeks after notification of the grade.

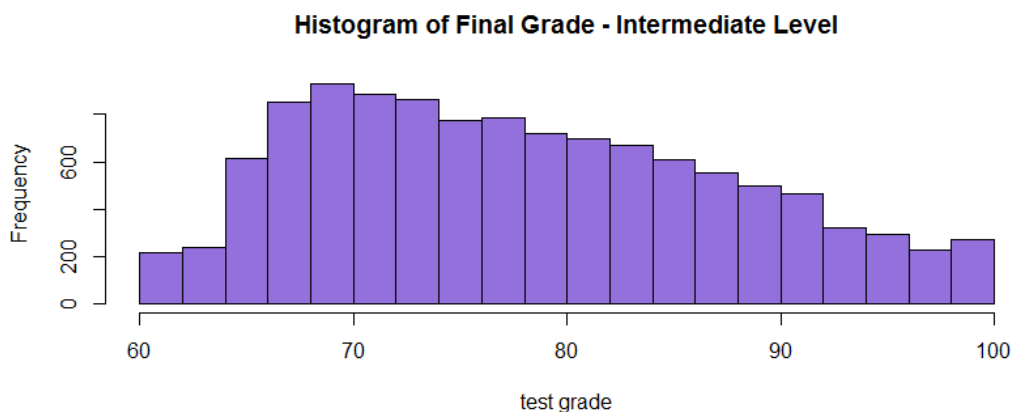
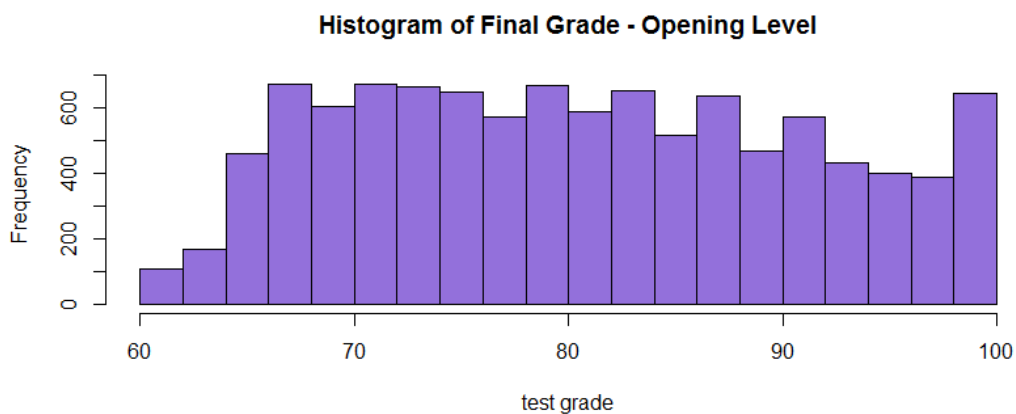
The policy of the Department of Management and Economics is that only veteran, highly skilled, and reliable tutors may participate in exam grading. Tutors who participate in exam grading receive financial compensation in the form of additional payment to the regular salary.

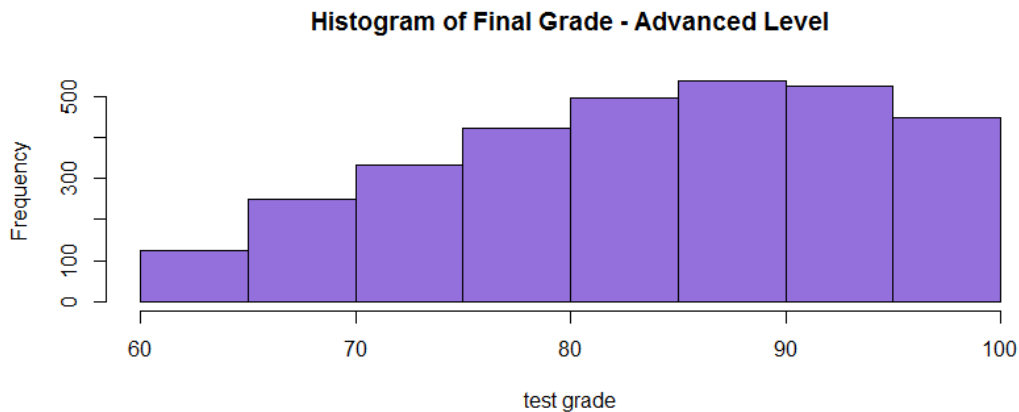
Students may formally appeal a grade. An appeal cannot be examined by the original grader.

Class assignments are graded by the tutors of the study groups. Grades range from 0 to 100 and tutors write explanations for their grading, as well as add other relevant comments to the assignments. Course coordinators supervise and guide the grading process, examine samples of checked exercises, and refer to it in their periodic tutor evaluation.

A.4. Please present the distribution of the final grades over the last three years in the format of a histogram (in all degree levels).

The following histograms present statistics of final grades in all undergraduate economics courses over the last three years. Students who fail a course (receive a grade below 60) do not have a final grade and therefore the data on average grades and the histogram refer only to those who have successfully completed their courses. The histograms contain data only on the courses that are taught primarily to economics students. It therefore does not contain data on the foundation courses in statistics and mathematics, and on the Group B elective courses, as a large number of the students in these courses are not economics students.





## B. Written assignments (seminar papers, projects, theses, dissertations, etc.)

B.1. Describe the types of written assignments and other projects required in the program, their contents and scope.

### Course Assignments

Written assignments are an essential component of teaching and learning at the OUI. Writing helps students cover course material systematically, understand course content, and extract the main ideas from the texts. Feedback on written assignments helps students recognize and maintain academic expectations and improve test writing skills. Students' written answers also provide feedback to the teaching staff on how well students understand the course material and difficulties they may be encountering.

In all courses, students are required to submit from 3-5 mandatory written assignments. In most courses, there are also additional optional assignments. The assignments and dates for submission appear on each course's website, as well as in the course booklet that is sent to students, together with the learning materials before the beginning of each semester. At tutorial sessions, tutors provide guidelines for writing the assignments. In most courses, guidelines also appear on course websites.

Each assignment has a relative weight depending on its difficulty and complexity. Assignments in economics courses generally amount to 15%-30% of the overall grade. In a case where the average grade on assignments is below 60, and the final exam grade is a low pass, the assignment grades may lower the course grade to below 60, and the student will fail the course. In a borderline case such as this, the final exam will be re-checked by another faculty member before the student is failed. Students may turn to the course coordinator to appeal an assignment grade.

As in exams, multiple choice questions are used mostly in the courses which are more technical-mathematical, such as Introduction to Microeconomics, Introduction to Macroeconomics, Financial Theory, and Introduction to Accounting.

### Seminar papers

In order to fulfill all requirements for an economics undergraduate degree, students must write a seminar paper in economics, integrating the skills and knowledge that they have acquired in their advanced courses.

In the OUI's undergraduate economics studies, a seminar paper can be written only in a field in which the student has already successfully passed an advanced course. The course coordinator oversees the writing of the seminar paper.

Seminar papers are written with the guidance, supervision and final evaluation of a person with a PhD in the relevant field. As described above, the Department of Management and Economics currently comprises just five economists among its senior faculty members, while annually, several hundred economics students face the seminar paper requirement. Therefore, the vast majority of OUI seminar paper supervisors are faculty members from other universities who are paid for each supervising task. Tutors and course coordinators with a PhD may also serve as supervisors for seminar papers, and receive the same pay as senior faculty members from other universities.

After successfully completing an advanced course, students submit a seminar paper proposal to the course coordinator. Course coordinators do not suggest specific topics, because formulating the topic is part of the seminar paper process. If the course coordinator approves the proposal – he or she refers the student to a supervisor, based on the topic chosen.

According to OUI procedures, a student and a supervisor must meet several times to formulate the research question, methodology, contents and preliminary bibliography. Students then submit a proposed outline and a list of references which must be approved by the supervisor. Following approval, the student writes the paper independently and is required to submit it within six months, during which the student and the supervisor will meet as necessary. After submitting the paper, another meeting is held in order to discuss the paper. Following that meeting, the supervisor sends a copy of the paper, with comments, a detailed evaluation, and the final grade, to the course coordinator. The senior faculty member serving as the academic supervisor of the course also reads the supervisor's report and approves, or disapproves, the final grade. If a grade and evaluation are rejected, the supervisor of the seminar receives instructions for re-evaluation.

In all advanced economics courses, students receive a detailed guidebook for writing seminar papers. The booklet is posted on the department website and on the websites of advanced courses. Seminar papers previously submitted by students are also available on the department's website, on the specific course websites, in the library, and in course coordinators' offices.

The passing grade for seminar papers is 60. It is included as part of the overall degree grade.

Some advanced economics courses offer workshops for writing seminar papers. These workshops, attended by between 10-20 students, are led by lecturers who supervise the students in writing their seminar papers post-workshop. The 4-6 workshop meetings are considered to be very helpful, based on the large percentage of submissions resulting from them.

## B.2. Who writes the assignments and how is the validity of the assignments assessed?

The regular assignments of an OUI course are written by the course coordinator, under the guidance and supervision of the senior faculty member who is the academic supervisor of the course. The questions in the assignments change from semester to semester. As in the case of tests, the validity sought is content validity and its assessment relies on the expertise of the academic supervisor in the relevant field.



### B.3. Who grades the written assignments?

Regular assignments are submitted to tutors, usually through the online assignment system, by mail, or in class meetings. The tutors grade the assignments on the basis of criteria provided by the course coordinator and return them to the students with detailed feedback and a grade.

As described in detail in sub-section B.1 above, pre-seminar assignments are graded by the tutors and seminar papers are graded by the senior faculty members supervising the writing.

### B.4. What methods are applied to evaluate written assignments and projects? What kind of feedback, apart from the grade, is given to the students?

On regular assignments, the feedback includes correcting mistakes, highlighting missing components in the answer, commenting on wording and structure, and providing a general evaluation that may include encouragement and reinforcement. Feedback also relates to the structure of the answer, its layout, syntactic structure, clarity, reasoning, and the use of sources and examples.

After the submission date, detailed solutions to regular assignments are often posted on the website to enable self-assessment, in addition to the feedback on individual papers provided by the tutors. In the less mathematical courses it is strongly emphasized that the posted solution is not necessarily the only true solution, and that students should therefore pay special attention to the personal feedback they have received.

For the evaluation and feedback on pre-seminar assignments and seminar papers, see the detailed description in sub-section B.1 above.

### B.5. 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.

As described above, writing an economics seminar paper is a highly structured process which requires formal registration, much like a course. Over the past three years (2012-2014), economics undergraduates have enlisted to 1,923 seminar paper writing processes, which produced 1,184 seminar papers with an average grade of 85.6 (SD = 9). These relatively high grades spring mostly from the fact that the failures received no grade and are not in the calculation of the average and the standard deviation.

## C. Training and field work

1. Describe the training/field work required in the program, their contents and scope. Please provide us with a list of places of training including the number of students in each place.
2. What methods are applied to evaluate training/field work? What feedback is given to the students?

There is no training or field work in the OUI's study programs in economics.

## D. Learning Outcomes

D.1. What are the program's intended Learning Outcomes (LO)? How were they set and where are they stated? Are LO defined in the course syllabi?

The learning outcomes of the OUI's study programs in economics are:

- **Acquisition of knowledge:** In particular, knowledge about the facts, models and theories that are perceived as important in the contemporary teaching of economics.
- **Acquisition of skills in the fields of economics:** In particular, the ability to analyze situations and texts (both academic and professional) with the analysis tools students acquire during their studies, and the ability to apply these tools to decisions and actions.
- **Acquisition of general learning skills:** Indirectly, via the OUI learning process (rather than from specific course content), students are expected to acquire independent learning skills that should serve them in their future studies and occupations.

Course-specific learning outcomes are specified to students at the beginning of each unit of the course textbooks. They are also specified in each course description on the OUI website.

The following box shows the opening page of Unit 10 of the course Intermediate Macroeconomics B which is a required intermediate course in all of the OUI's economics study programs. It exemplifies how learning outcomes are specified in the OUI's economics textbooks.

### Unit 10: The Open Economy – Basics

#### 10.1 Introduction

In this unit we will learn about several topics related to the economic relations between the home economy and the rest of the world. Familiarity with these topics shall provide us with tools for analyzing the macroeconomic equilibrium of the open economy throughout the next chapters of this course. The main learning outcomes of this chapter are:

- We shall become familiar with the national accounting report called "The Balance of Payments" which summarizes the flow of currency between the home economy and the rest of the world during a given period.
- We shall adapt the system of national accounting we use in this course so that it shall be based upon two aggregate goods – the home good and the foreign good – instead of being based on a single aggregate good. This adaptation shall help us define several important concepts such as "real exchange rate".
- We shall become familiar with the structure of the market for foreign currency and the different regimes under which it may be managed. In particular we all become familiar with the two main regimes for the market's operation – a flexible exchange rate regime and a constant exchange rate regime.
- We shall learn about the Interest Rate Parity which is supposed to exist between economies that the capital flows between them are absolutely free.

The learning outcomes of each course stem from the more general decisions on its role in the program. As described above, these decisions are shaped during the process of course development or during a major revision of an already existing course. These processes are highly structured, involving not only the author of the course, but also other members of the department, and culminate in a meeting of the Management and Economics Subcommittee which discusses the course proposal and decides whether to approve it or not. As described above, this subcommittee comprises the department's senior faculty members, three senior faculty members from other departments, and representatives of the department's course coordinators.

D.2. To what extent have the methods applied to measure the learning outcomes achieved their goals?

As described throughout this chapter, under the OUI's teaching model all aspects of teaching at the OUI are highly structured and closely monitored.

The reliability of the methods we use for measuring teaching and learning outcomes implies that the final grade distribution reliably reflects the degree to which our students have acquired the intended learning outcomes. Using the final grade data of 2013-2014 (presented in subsection A.4 of the "Learning" part of the current chapter) for that purpose reveals that the intended learning outcomes were achieved to differing degrees: Some students acquired them very well, as their high grades demonstrate while others have not acquired them well enough and therefore have failed the relevant courses. In-between are students with median-range grades, indicating a similar degree of acquiring the intended learning outcomes. The resulting normal distribution around a mean grade of (about) 75 and standard deviation of (about) 10 seems to fit our expectations for combining the high academic standards of our course materials with the large and varied population we teach, and also with our teaching methods.

D.3. Are any other methods applied to measure the achievements of the students.

There are no other methods for measuring student achievement.

## **Chapter 4 – Students**

### **Admission, Acceptance process and graduation**

#### **A. Entry requirements**

A. Specify the entry requirements/criteria for admittance to the program (first degree and advanced degrees, including "on probation" status).

As described in the first chapter, the OUI's open admissions policy enables students to enroll in undergraduate study programs with no formal prerequisites (such as a high-school matriculation certificate, psychometric test score, or prior academic experience).

#### **B. Admission data**

B. In the format of a histogram, please present the range of psychometric test scores or the equivalent and the range of matriculation averages of the students admitted to the program in the last 3 years. If there is a discrepancy between the admission criteria and the de facto admission data please elaborate.

This is not applicable Irrelevant to the OUI, as explained in subsection A above.

#### **C. Admitted and Enrolled students**

C. In the format of table 3 (In the Excel Appendix) submit data concerning the number of students in the past 3 years (divided by degree) as follows: a. Numbers of applicants; b. number of admitted students and students admitted on probation; c. number of students who started studying in the program; d. total number of students.

Requests a, b and c are not applicable to the OUI, which has an open admission policy. For data concerning total number of students (d), please see "number of economics students" (Table 1 in part C of the chapter "The Parent Unit") above.

#### **D. Advancement towards the degree, and graduation requirements**

D. Describe the selection and admission process and how are they decided upon. What are the criteria of advancement from year to year and for completion of studies?

Since OUI study programs are not divided into academic years, and students register for individual courses, advancement from year to year does not apply to OUI studies. The closest analogy is the advancement from introductory courses with no prerequisites, to intermediate-level courses and then to advanced courses. Most intermediate and advanced courses have, as prerequisites, other courses that supply required content. In addition, in order to enroll in an advanced course students must have earned 36 credits, passed the highest level English course and completed the bibliographic instruction in the library.

As specified in detail in Chapter 2, the general requirements for a BA degree in economics are: completion of at least 108 credits (required and elective courses as specified in the programs

including at least 24 credits in advanced courses); writing a seminar paper in economics; fulfillment of English-language requirements; and bibliographic instruction in the library.

### **E. Affirmative action in admittance**

E. Is there a policy of affirmative action and standards for the admittance of candidates with special needs? If so, please describe them.

This is not applicable to the OUI, as explained in subsection A above.

### **F. The drop-out rate**

F. Please specify what is the drop-out rate of students from the program over the last five years in table no. 4 (In the Excel Appendix). What are the common reasons for their leaving (academic/other)? Is there satisfaction with the drop-out rate? If not, what steps does the unit take in order to change it? In the same table please provide the number of students who graduated with honors, for each year in the last five years.

Measuring and interpreting the dropout rate at the OUI should be undertaken with much caution because many OUI undergraduates are not necessarily studying towards a degree. In particular:

- Many students enroll in OUI courses for personal enrichment.
- Some students study towards a degree in another university but also enroll in specific OUI courses, for which they receive credit in their original university. Such students usually do so in order to optimize their pace towards the degree or to diversify their studies with courses not offered at their university.
- Some students use the "transfer tracks" program, which enables students to start with the open and flexible studies of the OUI and then transfer to other institutions after earning a sufficiently high GPA in a specifically determined set of courses.
- Many students enroll in OUI courses with the purpose of understanding what academic studies are and thus to verify for themselves whether they are interested in it or not. They turn to the OUI for that purpose because in the OUI students enlist to each course separately, rather than committing in advance to an entire year of studying.

In addition, the flexibility of OUI studies means that drop-out data should be interpreted cautiously for the following two reasons:

- OUI students who discontinue their studies are entitled to return to the university at a later date to complete their degree at any time, with all previous courses accredited. Thus, while a student may be officially labeled a "drop-out" after three semesters have passed without registration to a course – it may be the case that the student is merely on a temporary break.
- The open admissions policy, together with the high level of academic courses, means that some students are not able to meet the requirements of the economics program and choose to continue in other OUI programs. These students indeed drop-out of the economics program, but many of them do continue their studies and earn their degree, usually in management.

Notwithstanding the reservations specified above, in order to estimate the perseverance and dropout rates of our students, the OUI defines "dropouts" as students who have not enrolled in any course at the OUI for three or more consecutive semesters. The table below presents the dropout statistics in undergraduate economics programs.

**Table 4: Students' graduation and dropout in undergraduate economics programs**

Year	Students	Graduated	Still enrolled	Dropped out	Graduated with honors
2009	1,023	46%	16%	37%	96
2010	1,192	35%	25%	40%	78
2011	992	26%	40%	34%	55
2012	812	14%	59%	26%	29
2013	545	3%	78%	19%	7
2014	560	0%	89%	11%	0

In each row, the "students" column shows the number of students who joined the economics program in that year, based on the definition of an economics student given in sub-section C of the chapter "The parent Unit" in the "Background" part of this report. The three right columns show the distribution of this cohort to those who graduated, those who are still active students, and those who have dropped out. Thus, for example, the table shows that 1,023 students have become economics students in 2009 and that by the time this report was written (August 2015) 46% of these students had already graduated, 16% were still enrolled and 37% had dropped-out. Assuming that the future dropout among them will be balanced with a similar amount of return of dropouts, leads to a prediction that eventually there will be about 65% graduates among those who became economics students in 2009. The rates in the other years seem to be consistent with the 2009 pattern.

In general, the Department of Management and Economics finds these rates satisfactory, as they show that the majority of our undergraduate students earn a degree, despite the OUI's high academic demands on one hand, and the open admission policy on the other.

Even though we are satisfied with current graduation rates, we also aim to significantly increase them.

### **Steps taken to reduce dropout rates**

**At the university level:** In 2012, the Retention Unit was established within the Department of Academic Counseling and Study Guidance. The Retention Unit focuses on students who have dropped out after reaching an advanced stage in their studies (over 60 credits). The unit's main goal is to bring students back to a regular study schedule, and to help them complete their degree. Over 2,000 students who were defined as 'dropouts' have been targeted by the unit and over 40% have either completed their degrees or returned to their studies. It was decided that the unit should focus on bringing back students who had already dropped out and on preventing future student dropout. Efforts have included conducting seminar-paper writing workshops, assisting students from disadvantaged social groups (such as ultra-Orthodox Jews and Israeli Arabs), funding students who have financial hardships, increasing counseling services (see more details below), learning skills workshops, and more.

In order to prevent the dropout of students in the early stages of studies, the focus in recent years has been on the strengthening of learning skills, mostly via efforts by the OUI's study guidance unit. The unit offers individual and group study skills training, including strategies for organization, effective reading of academic material and texts, summarizing information, analyzing questions and formulating answers, and exam preparation. The unit also offers guidance in writing seminar papers. In addition, informational sessions are offered to prospective students.

In July 2014, OUI management appointed a committee to suggest ways of identifying students likely to drop-out, and to formulate strategies to help them overcome their obstacles. The process aims to integrate logistical and academic elements. The committee is expected to submit its suggestions by the end of 2015.

**At the departmental level:** The management and economics department has conducted complementary activities to increase student perseverance. These have included preparatory workshops in specific courses which were identified as having high dropout rates (such as Introduction to Microeconomics and Calculus for Management and Economics); complete sets of recorded lectures in Arabic in several key courses (including Introduction to Microeconomics and Introduction to Accounting); seminar workshops which provide students with tutored sessions, group support and a well-structured process of academic writing; increasing the variety of seminar courses; an effective departmental counseling service to guide students as to the courses best suited to their capabilities and preferences; flexible learning programs which accredit courses from other academic programs; encouraging the best tutors to teach the largest classes; and more.

## Students and research

The OUI teaches economics only at the undergraduate level. Therefore, sub-sections B-E of this section, which deal with graduate students, are not applicable to this report.

### A. Undergraduate students

#### A. Undergraduate students

- To what extent are the undergraduate students involved in research projects of faculty? Is there a structured mechanism (e.g. courses; credits for participating)?
- Specify in which projects, the number of students involved and the scope of their involvement (in the format of a table)
- Is there a procedure for encouraging students to carry out independent research?

Economics undergraduate students usually do not participate in the research projects of faculty members, mainly because there is little student-professor interaction at the undergraduate level since the senior faculty members' teaching is done through the writing of textbooks. In OUI graduate programs students are involved in faculty members' research, so it is reasonable to assume that this would be the case in economics too, if a graduate study program would exist.

Students often do carry out independent research projects as part of their seminar paper requirement. For more details, see sub-section B.1 of the "learning" section in Chapter 3.

## Student Support Services

### A. Counseling and assistance before and during studies

A. Describe the system of academic counseling for students before and during the period of study (including reference to the structuring and approval of the study curriculum).

The OUI's flexibility in studies necessitates a uniquely large body of counseling services to help students efficiently navigate through their many options. The main elements of the counseling services are:

**The Department of Academic Counseling and Study Guidance:** This is a large unit which manages a range of academic counseling services. Approximately fifty professional counselors advise students via phone, internet, and in personal meetings at the Raanana campus and in study centers country-wide. The unit also has counselors who provide guidance services in nearly every study center on a daily basis. The counselors are highly experienced and are attuned to the needs and aspirations of the students. All counselors hold a masters degree or Ph.D. and most of them are also employed as tutors at the OUI, and therefore are familiar with the OUI's unique characteristics. As counselors, they receive continuous training and updating of academic changes taking place in the university. In particular, they are trained in using the OUI's academic information system (Oracle) which enables them to counsel within the context of each particular student's academic status and needs. Academic counselors assist students in a variety of ways, including

- Describing specific disciplines and courses;
- Helping students decide upon a degree program;
- Helping students understand their course options for particular semesters;
- Helping students build a long-range study program to be submitted to the Study Program Approval Committee;
- Monitoring each student's advancement towards a degree;
- Helping students become aware of the types of learning support offered by the OUI and selecting the appropriate ones for their needs; and
- Directing students to sources of information on specific matters.

Counselors document each meeting via the Oracle system. No limit is placed on the number of advising sessions. Phone or email counseling sessions take place within hours of a student's request, and appointments for face-to-face meetings are generally scheduled within one or two days.

**Field-specific counseling:** Field-specific counseling is provided by the department's people – senior faculty members, course coordinators, and experienced tutors. Counseling by field-specific advisors is professional and academically oriented and supposed to relate to topics that require particular knowledge of the field. Such topics may be related to courses' content, inter-relations between courses, specific learning skills, etc. The field-specific counseling in the Department of Management and Economics is managed by the chair's assistant for academic affairs.

Up until 2014 the field-specific counseling was based on all of the department's course coordinator's, as each one of them was required to provide a weekly hour of counseling. Senior faculty usually provided one hour of phone counseling per week as well, although it is not



officially a job requirement. Students have reached the field-specific counseling mainly via the department's website which included a list of counselors' weekly hours. Students could also be referred to field-specific counseling by counselors from the Department of Academic Counseling and Study Guidance in cases where these counselors thought that a more specific knowledge of the relevant field was required.

Since 2014 field-specific counseling for the undergraduate study programs of the Department of Management and Economics is done by a small team of eight course coordinators and tutors who together provide about 60 counseling hours a week. These counselors were thoroughly trained in order to add professional counseling skills to their academic knowledge of the field and the study programs. Each student's request for field-specific counseling leads to a counseling meeting (usually by phone) that takes place within 24 hours of the student's appeal. All field-specific counseling sessions are documented by the counselors in the OUI's computerized information system. This creates continuity in the support the OUI provides to the student over time. Reports by the OUI's Evaluation Unit have shown exceptionally high satisfaction by student's regarding the current way in which the field-specific counseling operates.

**The Prospective-Students Call Center:** This OUI unit receives calls from prospective students, documents all inquiries and personal details and holds information sessions for the benefit of the prospective students in order to introduce them to the OUI's unique study method, technologies and academic programs. Students are then encouraged to make an appointment for an individual counseling session at one of the study centers, to receive assistance in their first steps at the OUI.

## B. Academic support for students with special needs

B. Do students with special needs receive special support? If so, please specify.

**Counseling and assistance for students with learning disabilities:** Extensive efforts are invested in students with learning disabilities. The Center for Students with Learning Disabilities provides assistance to students with diagnosed learning disabilities. Students may ask for a meeting to discuss their diagnosis and its implications for dealing with academic tasks, and they can also receive guidance to improve their study skills. Guidance sessions focus on managing time, analysis strategies, organizing answers, strategies for reading and summarizing theoretical material, and preparing for and taking exams.

Guidance is either provided individually or in small groups, and is offered by subject-matter experts or student-tutors in the appropriate field of study. Individual meetings with tutors specializing in learning strategies are conducted at study centers throughout the country.

## C. Career Counseling and Guidance

C. Are counseling and assistance provided to students with regard to possible directions for their future professional careers? If so, describe these procedures. Are there work placement services for the graduates? If so, please describe this activity.

The Guidance and Placement Unit in the office of the Dean of Students, also known as *Opjob*, serves as a coordinating body between OUI students and organizations providing academic and

career counseling services, as well as employment placement services. The unit coordinates and manages these services on the OUI campus and at the study centers.

More than 3,500 jobs were advertised on the *Opjob* website in 2013-2014, and e-mails were sent out directly to target populations, customized to field of study, area of residence, stage of study etc.

Several career guidance workshops were held at various campuses. One workshop was geared towards students with special learning needs and four workshops were offered on searching for employment. In addition, 100 meetings were held with new employers with the goal of expanding the existing employer base.

Information published by *OpJob* can be found on the website of the Dean of Students, on bulletin boards at study centers, and in brochures mailed with study materials.

#### **D. Monitoring the progress of graduate student's research**

D. Does a monitoring mechanism of the progress of graduate students' research exist? Please specify.

The OUI teaches economics only at the undergraduate level.

#### **E. Students' inquiries and complaints**

E. What are the mechanisms that deal with student complaints? Please provide a list of students' complaints over the last two years and the way they were resolved.

The immediate address for many student complaints in a specific course is the course coordinator. Complaints may be submitted by email or by phone (at scheduled times).

Less immediate but more serious complaints are addressed to the department's Coordinator of Student Inquiries (CSI) who is in charge of handling all student inquiries, requests, and complaints. The CSI is expected to handle all matters from a broad organizational perspective that addresses all courses and study programs. The policy of the Department of Management and Economics is to appoint a veteran course coordinator to this position, in order to ensure that the students' complaints are handled by a person highly familiar and experienced with all related matters. The current CSI is Mordechai Sassoon who is also the coordinator of the Human Resources Management course. Considerations applied in making decisions are standardized and therefore do not discriminate between students. The CSI has the authority to overrule the decisions of the course coordinators and issue alternative decisions.

Most student requests pertain to special exceptions to the prevailing academic rules, such as taking an exam after the entitlement date, re-enrolling in a course after failing twice, taking an additional exam, completing course requirements after the due date, receiving permission for a later submission of seminar papers, etc.

All inquiries are handled according to predetermined guidelines, and the CSI considers each request on its merits in accordance with the student's specific situation. As an academic advisor, the CSI is able to check whether the request indicates a specific difficulty in one course or reflects a lack of suitability for the chosen academic program. In the latter case, students are advised to meet with a general or field-specific counselor, and in some cases they are encouraged to receive assistance from the Center for Students with Learning Disabilities.

Another type of inquiry concerns complaints about tutoring or exams. The CSI gathers the relevant course coordinator response and then handles the issue, possibly together with the relevant senior faculty members such as the academic supervisor of the course or the department's chair. The following table<sup>1</sup> presents examples of the most frequent complaints and the sources of information the CSI uses in order to examine their causes:

Complaint	Sources of information
"The final exam was too difficult"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- course coordinator's response</li> <li>- The opinion of the senior faculty member supervising the course</li> <li>- The student's previous academic achievements (attained through the Oracle web-system)</li> </ul>
"low quality service to student on the course website"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- checking the course website for speed and quality of answers given to students</li> <li>- course coordinator's response</li> </ul>
"Tutor's guidance was not good"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Checking the tutor's previous semesters' grades</li> <li>- Checking the course website</li> <li>- Course coordinator's response</li> </ul>

Since considerable importance is given to the quality of teaching at the OUI, complaints are examined very carefully. If the grievance is even partially justified, the teaching staff is required to take steps to ensure that the oversight is not repeated. Students who have submitted a complaint receive a letter with a detailed reference to their claims. Appeals to the CSI are submitted by email, either directly to the CSI, or via the department's secretariat office.

Students not satisfied with how their appeal has been handled within the department may appeal to the Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs, or to the coordinator of student appeals in the president's office. In such cases the department is requested to supply a response to the relevant office, and it is decided whether or not to change the department's decision.

## F. Financial assistance to students

F. What financial assistance is provided to students with financial problems and to outstanding students? What other types of financial support is available to students?

Outstanding students who meet predetermined criteria are awarded a certificate of academic excellence. The list of outstanding students is published once a year by the Dean of Students; students do not submit candidacy. Certificates are awarded on two levels: The President's List –

<sup>1</sup> To prevent confusion, only the tables requested in the guidelines to this report are numbered.

weighted grade average of 95 and above, and the Dean's List – weighted grade average of 90-95. In the 2013-2014 academic year, an average grade of 95 or over was earned by 224 students, and 1,100 students completed their degrees with an average of 90-95, placing them on the Dean's List. President's List students receive a tuition scholarship for one course at the OUI.

**Financial assistance:** Students may apply for a financial assistance scholarship, provided they have successfully completed at least one course and are registered for the semester for which their application is considered.

## Alumni

### A. Maintaining Contact with Graduates and Employers

A. Do the institution and/or the department maintain contact with their alumni, employers, and employment market?

The OUI has over 30,000 graduates. The OUI Alumni Association publishes a newsletter twice a year and conducts monthly activities, including trips, lectures, and cultural events, which are publicized on the alumni website. In addition, the Alumni Association contributes scholarships to students annually. The OUI is also interested in maintaining contact with its graduates in order to learn from their experiences about the contribution of the degree to their personal, professional and academic lives. To this end, the evaluation department administers an annual survey to OUI graduates.

### B. Alumni integration into the labor market

B. Please specify the extent of integration of alumni into the labor market: where have they found employment, what positions do they hold, how much time has elapsed between graduation and employment.

**Survey among bachelor's degree recipients:** In May 2014, the OUI conducted a survey among its 2009-2014 graduates. Of 1,069 BA graduates in economics who received a questionnaire, 256 have responded (24%).

Of those who responded, 99% are employed today, 95% have been working during their undergraduate studies, 64% have stayed in the same workplace, and 36% are people who changed their workplace or who joined the work force after graduation. About 75% of those who did not stay at the same job report of finding a new position in less than six months.

Fifty-five percent of the respondents have stated that the level of the connection between their current employment and their studies is "high". Nineteen percent defined this level "moderate" and 26% has defined it "low".

Most respondents experienced improvement following their studies, including those who remained in the same workplace, as the following table specifies:

<b>Improvement after studies at the OUI (BA)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Raise in salary	85	34%
Promotion to a more senior position or rank	94	38%
Other improvement in employment conditions	59	24%
Transfer to a better workplace	55	22%
Improved social status	47	19%
Personal development	90	36%
Other improvement	9	3.6%
No improvement	70	28%

Since choosing more than one answer was allowed, the percentages in the table above add up to more than 100%.

Of the respondents, 50% are now employed in private firms, 24% are employed in public firms, 8% are employed by the government, 6% run their own business, 3% are employed in a non-profit organization, 8% are employed in a different type of organization and 1% are not working.

The following table shows the distribution of the respondents' employment by sector:

<b>Sector</b>	<b>%</b>
Information and communication	11
Banking, insurance and other financial services	41
Technical services	9
Management, support, and consulting services	5
Retail and wholesale commerce	5
Public administration	5
Health and welfare services	4
Education	4
Other	16

### **C. Further studies of alumni**

C. How many students continue their studies to advanced degrees or other areas (specify area of study and degree level). Relevant surveys would be appreciated.

Of the 256 respondents to the 2014 survey of 2009-2014 OUI economics graduates, 34% reported beginning additional degree studies. The majority of them studied towards an MA in economics or an MBA.

Among those who started additional degree, 83% reported that the extent to which undergraduate studies prepared them for their continuing studies was "high". Thirteen percent have defined the level as "moderate" and 4% as "low".

Sixty percent of those who continued their studies have remained at the OUI and chose MBA studies, 7% have turned to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 5% to Tel-Aviv University, 10% to Bar-Ilan University, 4% to Haifa University, and 4% to the College of Management. The remaining 10% are distributed among other academic institutions.

## Summary

### A. Strengths and weakness

A. What are the strengths and weakness of the issues specified above?

In the students-related issues evaluated in this chapter, the main strengths of the economics program are the open admissions policy and the flexibility of studies – features that are part of the OUI's mission.

Another related strength is the very large body of counseling services. The counselors are professional and experienced to a degree that is exceptional relative to other universities, and derives directly from the unique flexibility that the OUI offers its students.

Students have several addresses for all kinds of enquiries. In particular, there are many ways to appeal the decisions of the department's officers. We view this as a strength, as it provides structure, allows monitoring of the way in which students' appeals are handled, and ensures its integrity.

Despite the open admissions policy, approximately 70% of undergraduate economics students attain a degree. As was explained in detail, many others do not study towards a degree, but to achieve other goals. We therefore view the degree-completion rate as evidence of the effectiveness of the efforts to prevent dropout, which is another strength of the program.

A possible weakness relates to the rate of dropout in the early stages of studies. The strategy so far has concentrated on the learning environment and on offering students a variety of tools for improving their learning skills, both general and course-specific in some core courses. While this has been helpful, it is possible that the OUI's programs for lowering dropout rates should also include a more direct approach of identifying typical dropout points and targeting proactive assistance to students.

## Chapter 5 – Research

### A. Strengths and uniqueness in research

A. What are the department's special strengths and uniqueness in research?

**Quality of Publications.** As their appended CVs show, during the past few years the economists among the senior faculty of the department have published in high-quality economics journals such as *Journal of Economic Theory*, *Games and Economic Behavior*, *Review of Economic Studies*, *Journal of Economic History*, *Economic Theory* and others.

**Diversity.** The economists in the senior faculty of the department specialize in a wide range of topics such as game theory, mechanism design, public economics, monetary economics, law and economics, economic growth, investment under uncertainty, economics history, and more.

The diversity in research interests also contributes to the ability of the senior faculty members to manage a full-fledged economics program despite their relatively small number.

**Finance.** Financing of research for OUI members is based on: the OUI's internal funding of the research authority; the Scientific Relations Fund which is shared by all Israeli universities; and by outside-OUI research grants which OUI faculty members are encouraged to try to obtain, with intensive support from the OUI's research authority.

Members of the teaching staff – course coordinators and tutors – who are engaged in research are also entitled to financial support from the OUI's research authority.

**Small size of senior faculty.** The small number of senior faculty specializing in economics is a significant weakness of the research in the department, as it renders cooperation between members of the department almost impossible. Naturally, researchers in the department collaborate intensively with colleagues from other universities, but they do not have the advantage of cooperating with a person in the same department.

### B. Research funds of the study program

B. What are the research funds (in \$) of the study program in the **last 3 years** (competitive sources (government/non-government), non-competitive public funds, other non-competitive funds (non-government), internal funds, donations) please provide the information by faculty member in the format of table 8 (in the excel appendix).

The following table shows the research funds received by economists in the senior and the junior faculty of the Department of Management and Economics in 2013-2015. It is based on a currency translation rates of \$1=3.76NIS and \$1=0.91€.

**Table 8: Economics program Research funds 2013-2015**

name and rank (Full/associate Prof; Senior Lecturer; Lecturer)	Main Research Area	research funds raised in the past 3 years (total amount from resource)	Grant Source	Duration of the grant
Dr. Dror Goldberg, Senior Lecturer	Monetary Economic History	51,500 \$	Israeli Science Foundation (competitive)	3 years
		16,000 \$	Internal	/
Dr, Rica Gonen, Senior Lecturer	Mechanism Design	245,000* \$	European Commission Horizon 2020, "TYPES" (competitive)	2.5 years
		9,400 \$	Internal	/
Dr. Mordechai Schwarz	Political Economics	10,600 \$	Internal	/
Dr. Gregory Yom Din, course coordinator	Modeling Evaluation of Agricultural Projects	34,000 \$	National Institutes of Health (competitive)	2 years
Dr Ronen Bar-El, course coordinator	Political Economics	2,700 \$	Internal	/
Dr. Eyal Lahav	Behavioral Finance	4,700 \$	Internal	/

\* Dr. Rica Gonen's 245,000 \$ grant from the European commission Horizon 2020 fund is half the total sum that Dr. Gonen and Prof. Tamir Tassa from the OUI's department of Mathematics and Computer Science have received.

The term "competitive" is a label given to a specific list of 12 funds: Israel Science Foundation (ISF); Ministry of Science Research Foundations; US-Israel Bi-national Science Foundation (BSF); US-Israel Bi-national Agricultural Research and Development Fund (BARD); German-Israeli Foundation for Scientific Research and Development (GIF); The Israel Foundation Trustees – The Ford Foundation (IFT); The EU Framework Program for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020); National Institutes of Health (NIH); German-Israeli Project Cooperation (DIP); The Israel Cancer Research Foundation (ICRF); Ministry of Health Research funds (MOH); Ministry of Agriculture Research funds (MOA).

### C. Research activities of faculty members

C. Please provide information about the research activities of faculty members (including publications, activities in research centers or other academic bodies and institutions, awards and prizes) from the **last 3 years**, in the format of table 9 (in the excel appendix).

The following box specifies refereed publications, activities in academic bodies, awards and prizes of the five economists of the senior faculty of The Department of Management and Economics during 2013-2015. For a more detailed presentation of the activities of these members, together with a detailed description of the academic activity of the department's senior faculty specializing in management, please see the CVs of the entire senior faculty of the department which are appended to this report.



## **Selected Academic Activities of OUI senior faculty economists, 2012-2015**

### **Professor Aviad Heifetz**

#### Publications in refereed journals

S. Pruett-Jones and A. Heifetz. 2012. "Optimal Marauding in Bowerbirds," *Behavioral Ecology*, pp. 607-614.

R. Ostreiher, S. Pruett-Jones, A. Heifetz. 2012. "Asymmetric Contests at the Nest," *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology*, Vol. 66, pp. 1237-1246.

A. Heifetz, M. Meier and B. Schipper. 2013. "Unawareness, Beliefs, and Speculative Trade," *Games and Economic Behavior*, Vol. 77, pp. 100-121.

A. Heifetz, M. Meier and B. Schipper. 2013. "Dynamic Unawareness and Rationalizable Behavior," *Games and Economic Behavior*, Vol. 81, pp. 50-68.

S. Alon, and A. Heifetz. 2014. "The Logic of Knightian Games," *Economic Theory Bulletin*, 2(2), 161-182.

A. Heifetz and A. Perea. 2015. "On the Outcome Equivalence of Backward Induction and Extensive Form Rationalizability," *International Journal of Game Theory*, Vol. 44(1), pp 37-59.

#### Editorial Boards

Games and Economic Behavior  
International Journal of Game Theory  
Mathematical Social Sciences

#### Additional Activities

2013 - elected member of the Council of the Game Theory Society

### **Dr. Dror Goldberg**

#### Publications in refereed journals

D. Goldberg and I. Milchtaich. 2013. "Property Rights under Administrator-Dictators: The Rise and Fall of America's First Bank", *Journal of Economic History* 73(4), 1098-1124.

D. Goldberg. 2012. "The Tax-Foundation Theory of Fiat Money," *Economic Theory* 50(2), 489-497.

#### Additional Activities

Secretary of Economic History Association of Israel

### **Dr. Mordechai Schwarz**

#### Publications in refereed journals

Schwarz M. E. 2012. "Subgame Perfect Plea Bargaining in Biform Judicial Contests". *Review of Law and Economics*, 8(1), 297-330.

Lipschits I. and Schwarz M. E., "Aggregation of Estimates in the Absence of a Majority", *Jewish Law Annuals*, forthcoming (Tager Prize for outstanding article in Jewish Law).

## Selected academic activities of OUI senior faculty economist, 2012-2015

(cont'd)

### Dr. Rica Gonen

#### Publications in refereed journals

A. Lerner and R. Gonen. "Autocratic Mechanisms: A Form of Dictatorship in Constrained Combinatorial Auctions." *International Game Theory Review*, 17(3), 2015.

A. Lerner and R. Gonen. 2014. "Characterizing the Incentive Compatible and Pareto Optimal Efficiency Space for Two Players, k Items, Public Budget and Quasilinear Utilities." *Games*, 5(2), 97-115.

Gonen, R., Raban, D., Brady, C., & Mazor, M. 2014. "Increased Efficiency through Pricing in Online Labor Markets," *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, 15(1), 58.

Gonen, R., & Lerner, A. 2013. "The Incompatibility of Pareto Optimality and Dominant-Strategy Incentive Compatibility in Sufficiently-Anonymous Budget-Constrained Quasilinear Settings," *Games*, 4(4), 690-710.

Buchbinder, N., & Gonen, R. 2015. "Incentive compatible multi-unit combinatorial auctions: a primal dual approach," *Algorithmica*, 72(1), 167-190.

Lerner, A., & Gonen, R. 2013. "Dictatorial mechanisms in constrained combinatorial auctions," *The BE Journal of Theoretical Economics*, 13(1), 363-380.

### Dr. Yishay D. Maoz

#### Publications in refereed journals

Doepke, M., Hazan, M., & Maoz, Y. D. 2015. "The baby boom and World War II: A macroeconomic analysis," *The Review of Economic Studies*, 82(3), 1031-1073.

## D. Cooperation in research

D. Please list cooperation activities by department members both in Israel and abroad

Following is a partial list of cooperation activities: Aviad Heifetz has recently co-authored and published several articles with Martin Meier from the Institut für Höhere Studien, Wien, Austria and Burkhard C. Schipper from the University of California, Davis; Professor Heifetz has also recently published joint works with Elhanan Ben-Porath from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Enrico Minelli from the University of Brescia, Stephen Prueett-Jones from the University of Chicago, Shiri Alon from Bar Ilan University, Ella Segev from Ben-Gurion University, Eric Talley from the University of California Berkeley, and Andres Perea from Maastricht University. Yishay Maoz has co-authored several articles with Moshe Hazan from Tel-Aviv University, and also a recent article with Matthias Doepke from Northwestern; Rica Gonen has co-authored several articles recently with Anat Lerner from the OUI's Department of Mathematics and Computer Science; Dr. Gonen has recently joined an-Israeli-European

workgroup participating in the Types project which is part of the European Horizon 2020 project. Dror Goldberg has recently co-authored an article with Igal Milchtaich from Bar-Ilan University; Mordechai Schwarz has worked recently with Itay Lipschits from the College of Law and Management.

As mentioned above – this is a partial list and members of The Department of Management and Economics work intensively with co-authors from Israel and abroad.

## E. Research infrastructure

E. Please detail the research infrastructure of the study program: research laboratories, research centers, specialized equipment and budget for maintenance (level and sources of funding)

Currently the Department of Management and Economics has no laboratory for its research. The department submitted a plan for developing a laboratory for behavioral research in management and economics to the OUI's administration in 2013. Currently, departmental faculty members rely on other solutions for their lab needs, such as working with co-researchers from other universities and using their laboratories, or renting laboratory services from other universities.

The OUI has three research centers, but none are related to economics research. It should be noted though that two of these research centers are headed by members of The Department of Management and Economics – The Research Center for Innovation in Learning Technologies is headed by Professor Nitza Geri, and the Institute for Policy Analysis is headed by Dr. Varda Wasserman. Both Professor Geri and Dr. Wasserman are from the management side of the department's senior faculty.

It is also important to note that the OUI has recently served as the home for several events of the Economic History Association of Israel, including its 2014 annual meeting and several meetings of the society's Money Credit and Banking Forum. This connection between the OUI and the association has emerged because Dror Goldberg, the association's secretary, is also a member of the Department of Management and Economics.

## F. Commercialization unit

F. Is there a commercialization unit in the institution? Briefly describe its function: number of patents registered and where have they been registered. What is the intellectual property policy of the institution in relation to the specific department?

In 2008 the OUI founded a commercialization unit: The OpMop Ltd. Technology Transfer subsidiary of the OUI. The OpMop strives to protect the proprietary rights of research conducted at the OUI, and seeks to support the commercialization of research conducted at the OUI. Three patents have been registered since the establishment of OpMop Ltd.

The OUI has focused its outreach activities on the educational, rather than commercial, field. The OUI is the largest academic publisher in Israel, with an output of one million Hebrew-language volumes annually, as well as a limited number of texts in Russian and Arabic for our non-Hebrew-speaking students. The OUI books are required or recommended reading for students in

all Israeli universities and colleges. As the primary and, in many fields, the only source of academic materials in Hebrew, the OUI represents the major source of academic information worldwide for the highly regarded Israeli academic community. As such, the OUI enjoys the cooperation of academic authors and publishers who, through the outlet of OUI publications, find their way to Israeli academic textbooks.

### **G. Journal ranking for evaluating publications**

G. Which journal ranking does the department relates to when evaluating faculty publications? If the department or institution has its own scale (not international) or another method for evaluating (e.g. peer review) please provide a brief description (and the ranking list if exist).

The department uses the Hebrew University's ranking of economics journals for evaluating faculty publications. The ranking is appended to this report.

### **H. Strengths and weaknesses**

H. In summary, what are the points of strength and weakness of the research?

As described in detail in this chapter, the main strengths of research in the department are its members' ability to publish in quality journals, the diversity of topics they cover, and the finance of research. The main weaknesses are the small number of senior faculty members and the lack of research infrastructure such as laboratories.

## Chapter 6 – Infrastructure

### A. The physical infrastructure serving the department

A. Please describe the overall physical infrastructure that serves the unit (classrooms, computerization, and offices). Are the structures accessible to special needs?

**Offices:** The offices of the Department of Economics and Management are located on the third and fourth floors of the Technologies Building on the Raanana main campus. The offices on these floors are distributed among senior faculty members and course coordinators from all three of the disciplines: economics, management (undergraduate and MBA program) and accounting. There are no classrooms in the building, as most of the tutorials meet at OUI study centers.

Senior faculty members have their own offices; course coordinators share offices. Standard furniture in each office includes a desk, chairs, telephones, a computer for each occupant, wall cabinets, and bookshelves. On each floor, there is a large kitchenette equipped with refrigerator, microwave, kettle, and a beverage machine (free of charge). The kitchenette also serves as a shelter and as a technical services room, with a network printer, scanner and photocopier. A fax machine and scanners are available in the department's secretariat office.

**Conference rooms:** A departmental conference room is available for faculty meetings. The conference room seats approximately 15 people comfortably and has infrastructure for audio-visual equipment and Internet connection.

The OUI campus in Raanana has two lecture halls (70-150 seats), one large auditorium (350 seats), and 19 conference rooms (12-20 seats) allocated to the department upon request. The conference rooms, which are used for committee meetings, seminars, presentations, interviews, etc., are set up for audio-visual equipment and Internet connection, and have a coffee corner. Conference rooms must be reserved in advance and any special equipment requests must be specified. Facilities for different types of meetings are also available at the main OUI study centers in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Beer-Sheva, and Givat Haviva. The OUI also runs Beit Daniel, a retreat on Mount Carmel near Zichron Yaakov, where it hosts conferences, workshops, and seminars.

**Study centers:** During the 2013-2014 academic year, 36 OUI study centers, out of a total of 91 located throughout Israel, held 506 economics tutorial sessions.

Most classrooms are furnished with desks for two, and occasionally with tablet-arm chairs, and have access to electric outlets and Internet connections. In the largest study centers, classrooms are equipped with permanent computers and overhead projectors for use by instructors. In other centers, this equipment must be ordered in advance for specific tutorial sessions.

The OUI has a centralized classroom allocation system for tutorials at study centers, which is managed by the OUI's Department of Study Facilities. In all study centers, electronic boards provide real-time schedules and class locations.

**Interactive distance learning:** In certain courses, lectures and tutorial sessions are held through a synchronized interactive distance learning system. The lecturer or tutor and the students are

located in various distant sites (class, office, home etc.) and employ a variety of communication technologies to conduct a common lecture or tutorial session.

The two main systems of Internet-based distance tutorials are:

**OFEK system:** This is a live interactive broadcasting system of tutorial sessions from the OFEK studios on the OUI campus that transmits directly to the student's PC. Students are encouraged to interact with the tutor and peers. The communication between tutor and students during the live broadcast is by phone and chat. Lectures and tutorial sessions broadcast live via OFEK are recorded, and are available to students on the course websites for further review, or in place of live participation.

**Video-Conference (VC).** This system enables the broadcasting of live class video lectures to several classrooms simultaneously. The lecturer may be in one classroom and the students can see and hear the lecturer and all of the other students from distant locations. In some courses the VC system is accessible by student PCs via real time Internet broadcasting, and students can chat with the lecturer. VC sessions are also recorded and are available for students on course websites.

**Computerization:** OUI studies are based, in large part, on online materials and exercises. The OUI provides software to students according to the requirements of the various courses. The software programs are licensed and usually downloaded from the Internet. Computer classrooms located in the large study centers are available for student use.

**Computer Networks:** A three-layer Local-Area-Network (LAN), with backbone bandwidth of 4-8 gigabits/second, is spread over the buildings on the Raanana campus: Edge switches (operating at layer II) on the users' floors, aggregation switches (operating at layer III) at the building level and core switches (also operating at layer III) at the campus level. Fast Ethernet links (100 megabits/second) or (where needed) Gigabit Ethernet links (1000 megabits/second) connect end-users' workstations to the LAN. A Wide-Area-Network (WAN) (4-10 megabits/second) connects the OUI regional campuses. The OUI is connected to the Israel Academic Network (ILAN) and through this network to the Internet. The current main uplink to IUCC (and the internet) is 10 Gbit/sec primary line, with a 1 Gbit/sec backup line.

The OUI provides secure remote access communication (SSLVPN – virtual private network over SSL) to all employees requiring such communication. Wireless networks (WLANs) are installed in Raanana and in most OUI regional study centers to provide users access to specific computer services through a personal computer with a wireless adapter. The wireless network covers public and student areas such as the library, classrooms, laboratories, and lecture halls.

**Security:** The network is secured using several layers of firewalls and related security solutions.

**Computer services:** Intra-organizational e-mail, online calendar and schedule management, and shared activities, based on the MS-Exchange system; Internet e-mail; access to the Internet; file servers for central and backed-up storage of personal and departmental documents and files; printing services for the variety of printers on campus; MS-Office package; statistical packages; a secure system for remote access (SSLVPN) to organizational computer services and to OUI information system services.

**Computer support:** The computer support unit provides periodic workshops on various applications and software at different levels. On-call support provides personal trouble-shooting assistance. The help desk can be reached by phone or e-mail. Its response is quick, courteous and efficient. The help desk takes control of the user’s computer remotely (with permission) and solves most problems instantaneously. Faulty equipment is rapidly replaced. Users who connect to the OUI system from their home computers receive similar support services.

In accordance with our mission statement, the distribution of classrooms in study centers throughout the country enables the OUI to achieve flexibility of time and location. Flexibility in studying is achieved by adding the option of various distance learning systems to the face-to-face tutorials in several of our study program courses.

## B. Laboratories

B. What laboratories serve the program, who uses them, how are they equipped, and how many seats do they have?

Currently the Department of Management and Economics has no laboratory for its research. The department submitted a plan for developing a laboratory for behavioral research in management and economics to the OUI's administration in 2013. Currently, departmental faculty members rely on other solutions for their lab needs, such as working with co-researchers from other universities and using their laboratories, or renting laboratory services from other universities.

## C. The library

C. Describe the library, including computerized databases that serve the students and teaching staff of the study program, its strengths and weaknesses.

The OUI's central library offers reference, loan, and information services to students, faculty and administrative staff. The library collection includes all OUI publications; collections of books, journals, and CDs; a digital collection of bibliographic databases, electronic journals, digital books, an exam database, a course reader database, a database of sample chapters from OUI course books, etc. Nearly all electronic materials and most library services are accessible online.

**The collection available to economics students and faculty:** Among the library’s 26 bibliographic databases and over 51 full-text databases, 20 are economics database and 26 others are multidisciplinary academic databases that include economics. Of the library’s 46,803 electronic journals (unique titles), 1844 are e-journals in economics. The electronic book collection includes 15,396 e-books and 7 OUI economics courses (in Hebrew). The print collection includes multi-volume OUI textbooks from 39 economics courses, 1280 books (738 in English and 542 in Hebrew), and 35 print journals in the field of economics. All required texts are mailed to enrolled students; students can search for, and download, the full text of articles in electronic journals, as needed.

**Location:** The library occupies a four-story building on the OUI campus in Raanana, spanning a total area of 2,000 sq. meters. The library has reading halls (54 seats and 17 computer stations), a training classroom (15 computer stations), multimedia storerooms, and staff offices.

**Library hours:** Three days a week from 09:00 to 16:30, twice a week from 09:00 to 19:30, and on Fridays from 09:00 to 13:00.

**Library staff:** The library employs 16 librarians with academic degrees in library and information studies; 15 hold graduate degrees. The director holds a PhD in Library Science.

The Library Committee, composed of the director of the library and senior faculty members representing the disciplines taught at the OUI, provides assistance in all issues pertaining to acquisition policy, updating the library, and development of the library collection.

**Training:** As a prerequisite of advanced courses, students must pass an exam in information literacy. Online training developed by the library provides training tutorials on the various subjects that comprise information literacy: introduction to library resources, deconstructing citations and citing sources, using the online catalog, database searching concepts, locating sources online or in the library, searching specific databases and searching with a discovery tool, evaluating information sources, and more.

**Assistance:** During all library hours, librarians offer advisory services and assistance to students and faculty in searching for information, using electronic resources. Distance services (online and by telephone) are provided 45 hours a week.

**Acquisitions policy:** Acquisitions can be initiated by an academic staff member or the library staff, subject to the approval of the relevant department chair or the dean of academic studies, and taking into consideration the available inter-library loan services. Literature required for faculty research may be purchased through the library services via faculty research funds.

In recent years the library has expanded its collection through quite large acquisitions of new titles. Faculty member requests for the acquisition of books are generally approved and effectuated rapidly. The library is currently expanding its collection of e-books, thus making the acquisition of new titles easier and faster. The development of the e-books collection will facilitate students' and faculty members' access to new titles.

The inter-library loan service facilitates access to articles in journals to which the OUI library does not subscribe, and to books it does not own. Agreements with the other Israeli universities provide OUI faculty and students with reference and loan services from their libraries too.

## **D. Accessibility**

D. If part of the programs takes place on different campuses, how is equal opportunity of access to the facilities and equipment ensured for all students

All facilities on the Raanana campus and in study centers throughout the country are accessible to students with special needs, in accordance with Israeli law, and the OUI's mission of openness.

**Physical access:** In coordination with the Department of Study Facilities and the Center for the Organization of Exams, study and exam centers are adapted for students with motor disabilities. Those confined to their homes receive special tutoring and may take exams at home. The



department offers individual home tutoring to students with motor disabilities, with the financial assistance of The Center for Students with Special Needs.

**Access to services:** The Coordinator for Students with Special Needs personally accompanies students with special needs and coordinates contact with entities within and outside the University.

**Access to study material:** As specified earlier, all students, including students with special needs, receive their study materials each semester by mail. Additional study materials are available online on the course website, which is accessible for all students enrolled to the course. With advance notification, students with a visual disability are entitled to receive the study material recorded on an audio version (in coordination with the *Aleh* Association and libraries for the visually impaired). Upon request, tutorials are recorded and sent to students who are unable to participate.

**Distance services for students:** As specified above, the library provides access to a wide variety of online databases, including full-text download availability for most academic journals. This enables all students, as well as students with special needs, to enjoy easy access to a rich variety of academic materials. Moreover, the library offers distance photocopying services (for a fee). Book sections and articles from the OUI library and other university libraries in the country are scanned and e-mailed to students upon request.

In addition, almost all academic services, such as accessing learning materials, submitting assignments and consulting with tutors, are available online and by phone, which helps students with physical limitations.

**Regional libraries:** Regional libraries, offering OUI course books and additional materials, are located at the main study centers. The OUI has agreements with libraries in most other universities in Israel to provide reference and loan services for OUI students and staff.

**Special exam conditions:** In accordance with their specific learning needs, students receive special conditions for exams, including extended time, writing the exam using a word processor, assistance from a proctor (who reads, writes, and copies the exam), various aids (an enlarged or recorded exam questionnaire, enlarging paper, Braille pages, closed circuit TV, a magnifying lens, etc.).

## E. Strengths and weaknesses

E. In summary, what are the points of strength and weakness of the physical infrastructure?

**Strengths:** The physical infrastructure of the OUI is highly sophisticated in terms of its distribution, operational flexibility, and efficiency. It serves approximately 45,000 students per semester, and yet enables most students to study in classrooms near their place of residence or in other convenient locations.

Library service is efficient and the option of connecting to a wide range of leading journals and receiving the full text of articles electronically is of particular importance since library services are limited in some of the study centers used by more remotely-located students.

The computerized systems are well-developed and offer a solid platform for the OUI's extensive online study resources.

The Raanana main campus is comfortable, well-equipped and well-maintained.

**Weakness:** In order to provide classrooms throughout the country, some may be located in buildings which serve other purposes, such as schools, community centers, or other municipal buildings. Thus, although all facilities satisfy set requirements, study centers may differ in terms of the quality of their physical infrastructure with regard to level of technological services, furniture, handicap accessibility, and supportive facilities, such as libraries, copy machines, or even availability of parking.

## Chapter 7 – Implementation of previous QA recommendations

### A. Previous QA recommendations and their implementation

A. Please provide in a format of a table the previous recommendations that were given to the program and the changes that were made accordingly

In November 2008 the Committee for the Evaluation of Economics Study-Programs published its report on the OUI. In its meeting on April 27, 2010, the CHE adopted all the reports by the committee and instructed all evaluated institutions to report on their implementation of the committee's recommendations by the end of 2010. The OUI submitted this report in December 2010. In April 2012, the committee's representative, Professor Joel Mokyr, completed his review of the institutions' implementations of the committee's recommendations and specified that the OUI had satisfactorily dealt with the recommendations. In its meeting on July 24, 2012, the CHE adopted Professor Mokyr's conclusions and wrote in a letter which was sent to all evaluated institutions that it wishes to "... approvingly note that the Technion, The OUI, and the college of Management have implemented the recommendations of the evaluation committee".

The following table presents the four recommendations of the evaluation committee and the way the OUI has dealt with them.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response</b>
1. "The OUI wishes to apply in the near future for accreditation for an M.A. in economics. We are not supportive of this effort at this time"	To this date, the OUI has not promoted an initiative to form an M.A. study program in economics.
2. "We believe that the OUI ... should be open to appointing faculty members who are outstanding teachers in the broad sense, even at the cost of current activity in research."	The "Human resources" section (sub-section B) of Chapter 3 of this report specifies the 4-rank structure of course coordinator employment. In his report to the CHE, Professor Mokyr wrote about this relatively new (at that time) employment schedule: "the OUI has opened a track of advancement for outstanding tutors and teachers, much along the lines of the recommendations of the Evaluation Committee."
3. "The leadership of the Open University should attend to the working conditions of the course coordinators"	In 2008, tutors and course coordinators became unionized. Since 2010, their compensation and working conditions are part of a collective bargaining agreement approved in a general meeting of all union members.
4. "It is especially important for the OUI to do a much better job tracking the progress and post-graduation careers of its students ... The OUI might want to investigate in particular the post-graduation outcomes of its best students."	The "Alumni" sub-section of Chapter 4 ("Students") describes the detailed alumni survey the OUI currently conducts, and provides specific results relevant to this report.

<p>5. "Other institutions of higher education in Israel could and should learn a lot from what the Open University is doing with its technological systems for learning at a distance. The Open University, with the support of MALAG, should undertake efforts to show what it is doing and then share it with others."</p>	<p>In April 2015 the OUI announced the formation of "Online Academe", a fully owned subsidiary whose main goal is to serve the Israeli higher education system in the area of educational technologies. "Online Academe" was tasked with identifying projects where educational technologies can provide significant added value to the Israeli higher education system. These include not only the development of online courses, but also supporting hybrid and "flipped classroom" approaches in Israel's universities and colleges, developing digital learning aids, assisting in overcoming the challenges of inter-university courses, and more. Seed funding for "Online Academe" was provided by the OUI.</p>
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## **B. Standards set in the previous evaluation**

B. If standards were set in the previous evaluation, please specify how the department/program meets them.

The recommendations of the previous report did not call for a change in our standards regarding academic activities. The standards of research and teaching at the OUI are set by observing those of the best universities in Israel and abroad. The recommendations of the previous report reaffirmed these standards and our success in meeting them.

## **C. Internal QA processes to implement the committee's recommendations**

C. Following the previous evaluation process, does the department maintain a constant internal quality assurance process in order to implement the committee's recommendations?

As follows from sub-section A of this chapter, no such internal process was required for implementing the recommendations of the committee.