Overview of the Higher Education System

Israël
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Eurydice
The higher education system in Israel
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1 Overview

Israel is located in the Middle East, at the south-east shore of the Mediterranean Sea and the north shore of the Gulf of Aqaba in the Red Sea; it also shares land borders with Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt. Israel has a total population of 8,462,000 people, with Jews forming the largest ethnic group (74.9%) and Arabs the second largest group (20.7%). The official languages of the country are Hebrew and Arabic. All Israeli school children learn Hebrew, Arabic and English, and many people speak English to a reasonable standard. However, with a population originating from every corner of the world, Israel is multi-lingual with Russian, French and Spanish, as well as dozens of other languages widely spoken. According to the Israeli Census concerning religious affiliation, the population is currently 75% Jewish, 17% Muslim, 1.9% Christian Arabs, 1.8% Druze and 4.3% other (mainly without religious classification).

Israel's GDP (PPP) for 2014 was $272.112 billion and per capita $33,136. GDP growth was 3.3% in 2013. In 2012, Israel spent 6.5% of its GDP on all levels of education, more than the OECD average of 5.3%. However, the average expenditure per student in Israel (PPP) was $7,903 in 2012, lower than the OECD average of $10,220. In 2014 the national expenditure on education grew to 7.9% of GDP.

1.1 Fundamental Principles and National Policies

The vision for the higher education system in Israel is to achieve excellence in teaching and research, be positioned at the forefront of global science, enable full access to higher education and train a qualified academic workforce in response to the needs of society and the economy.

In addition, the principles of academic freedom in higher education institutions must be maintained as well as their independence and autonomy.

The philosophy underlying higher education is founded on the fundamental values of equality, academic freedom, pluralism and a respect for human dignity. As such, the educational programs in higher education institutions are open, in general, to all of students who meet admission criteria, thereby implementing the principle of equality of academic opportunity to acquire higher education, without excluding groups of people based on ethnicity, religion, gender, age and so forth. According to the Council for Higher Education Law, only those possessing a recognized high school diploma (or equivalent) may apply for an undergraduate degree in an institution of higher learning.

Article 15 of the Israeli Higher Education Law guarantees that higher education institutions are autonomous in the conduct of their academic and administrative affairs, within the framework of their budgets and the terms of accreditation.

The higher education system in Israel is regulated by the Council for Higher Education (CHE) and the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC), both of which are public entities; the former founded by law and the latter established by a government decision.

The framework of the system of higher education in Israel is defined in the Council for Higher Education Law, 1958. This law established the Council for Higher Education (CHE) and the procedures for the accreditation of the institutions:

**CHE** has the authority to:

- grant permission to open and operate HE institutions;
- accredit institutions as institutions of higher education;
- authorize an accredited institution to award academic degrees;
- approve studies under the academic authority of an accredited institution;
- authorize an institution to use a name or designation;
• make proposals to accredited institutions in relation to their consolidation, expansion and development;
• submit proposals to the government, through the Planning and Budgeting Committee, to develop higher education and proposals for state participation in the budget of the higher education system, according to the needs of society and the country.
• make recommendations to the government regarding the establishment of additional HE institutions;
• grant licenses to branches of foreign HE institutions;
• conduct quality assessment.

The Committee is composed of seven members (including the Chairman): four are professors (two from the social sciences and humanities and two from the exact and engineering sciences); two are representatives of the public; and one a senior faculty member of a budgeted college. PBC members are appointed by the Council for a period of three years with the possibility of extending the appointment for a further three years.

1.2 Lifelong Learning Strategy

There is currently no national lifelong learning strategy in Israel.

1.3 Organisation of Private Education

The private higher education institutions in Israel are called non-budgeted academic institutions. These institutions are subject to the full academic supervision of the Council for Higher Education (CHE), and their financial stability is monitored by the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC) as part of the conditions for obtaining recognition. All non-budgeted academic institutions of higher education in Israel are fully funded by private entities (not the public) and according to the law, they are prohibited from relying on sources of state financing and its agencies, including physical infrastructure. All non-budgeted academic institutions in Israel are organized as associations or public benefit corporations. All are non-profit institutions.

In Israel the rise of the private sector in higher education began at the end of the 1980s, and it continues today. The non-budgeted institutions are intended to meet the additional demand of students in a range of academic fields; however, in practice, most of the demand relates to areas in which the cost of teaching is low, for example, business administration, law, management science and other disciplines in social sciences. Budget cuts in higher education expenditure also contributed to the rise of non-budgeted academic institutions. The CHE and PBC engage in close academic and budgetary supervision of these institutions, in order to prevent or halt possible collapse due to mismanagement or overwhelming budget deficits, with all the implications this would entail for their student community.

1.4 National Qualifications Framework

There is currently no official National Qualifications Framework in Israel. The topic is being examined by a number of government bodies.

1.5 Statistics on Organisation and Governance

In the academic year 2014/15, 63 institutions of higher education operated throughout Israel, among them 7 research universities, the Open University of Israel, 34 academic colleges¹ (21 of which were budgeted

¹ At this stage, data regarding Ariel University is included in the data of the academic colleges in order to maintain data consistency and allow comparisons between years.
by the PBC and 13 non-publicly-funded colleges), 2 and 21 academic colleges of education (teacher-
training colleges).

Evolution of Higher Education Institutions, 1989/90-2014/15

According to the data collected by the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, in the academic year 2014/15,
307,285 students studied for a degree in the institutions mentioned above (including the Open University
of Israel). Of these, 235,300 were undergraduates, 59,695 were Master degree students, 10,880 were
doctoral students, and 1,410 studied for a diploma.

Over the past two decades, the higher education system has undergone some dramatic changes; one
manifestation of this has been in the varying numbers of students attending higher education institutions.
In the 1990s, the system was characterized by a rapid and significant growth in the number of students.
The heavy demand for academic studies, and the opening of new higher education institutions in
response to this demand, resulted in an annual average growth rate of 8.1% in the overall number of
students, and in an even higher average annual growth rate (8.7%) in undergraduate students.

In view of the expectation that the decline in student numbers will continue, the Israeli system of higher
education is now moving from a policy of expansion to one of strengthening and consolidation of existing
institutions. Present challenges include bolstering, empowering and academically developing existing
institutions; addressing issues of supply and demand; improving cooperation between Israeli and foreign
institutions; improving teaching quality and continuing to promote excellence in research.

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2 Non-publicly colleges are those colleges not funded by the PBC.
Students in Higher Education Institutions by Institution Type, 1989/90-2014/15

(Population in Israel increases by approximately 2% annually)

Data regarding academic tracks under university auspices is included in the data for academic colleges funded by the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC).

Students in institutions of higher education by institution type and degree, 2014/15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bachelor degree</th>
<th>Master degree</th>
<th>Doctoral degree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Universities main</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>campuses in Israel</td>
<td>64,733</td>
<td>38,091</td>
<td>10,878</td>
<td>113,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic colleges,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>102,380</td>
<td>12,432</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>114,812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicly funded by the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBC</td>
<td>59,136</td>
<td>4,032</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>63,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-publicly funded</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>colleges</td>
<td>37,192</td>
<td>8,400</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>45,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic tracks under</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>university auspices</td>
<td>6,052</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6,052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic colleges of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education (Teacher -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>training colleges)</td>
<td>24,578</td>
<td>6,077</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>191,691</td>
<td>56,600</td>
<td>10,878</td>
<td>259,169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The data do not include students enrolled in the Open University of Israel and the 1,410 students studying for diplomas at universities
In contrast to the vast growth of the 1990s, the turn of the new millennium was characterized by a significant decline in the student growth rate, on average about 3.5% per year, similar to the growth in the number of undergraduates.

### 1.6 Distribution of responsibilities

In higher education, educational policy is formulated by the **Council for Higher Education** as the national institution responsible for matters of higher education in the country. CHE performs its functions in accordance with the powers conferred on it by the Council for Higher Education Law – 1958, and is responsible for regulating the higher education system in the country. CHE is a public, professional, academic, apolitical and independent entity. It is positioned between the government and higher education institutions, and deals with all matters of higher education in the country including setting policy (on matters of principle), while ensuring the political independence, development and high quality of the academic system.

CHE is composed of between nineteen to twenty-five members, one of whom is the Minister of Education who acts as Chairman *ex officio*. The Chairman of the Planning and Budgeting Committee and the Chairman of the National Association of Students are also members of the Council by virtue of their positions. At least two-thirds of the members must be persons of standing in the field of higher education, who have been recommended by the Minister of Education after consulting with recognized institutions of higher education. There must be suitable representation in the Council of all types of accredited higher education institutions.

CHE members are appointed by the President of the State upon the recommendation of the government. They hold tenure for a period of five years.

The second central body concerned with higher education policy is the **Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC)** of the Council for Higher Education. This body was established by a government decision in June 1977 to serve as an independent body between the government and higher education institutions in all matters relating to budgets for the higher education system. See further information in section 1.1.

PBC is a committee and the executive arm of the Council. It was established by a government resolution in 1977. The function of the PBC is, inter alia, to serve as an independent body acting as an intermediary between the government and the national institutions (such as national funds or public organizations) on the one hand and the institutions of higher education on the other hand. Under its purview are all matters relating to the budget for higher education.

### 2 Higher Education Funding

#### 2.1 Public Education

In the 2014/15 academic year, the PBC's regular budget for the Israeli higher education system stood at approximately 9 billion NIS (~2 billion Euro), which accounts for roughly 60% of the total higher education budget. Of this, approximately 6.5 billion NIS (~1.5 billion Euro) is budgeted through the PBC’s Higher Education Budgeting Model.

**The Budgeting Model**

In the 2010/11 academic year, after nearly two decades of accelerated growth, which saw a dramatic increase in student numbers and higher education institutions, but on the other hand, a reduction in public funding per student, as well as a decrease in faculty numbers (from an all-time high of 4,700 faculty
members in the universities in 1997/98, to as low as 4,200 in 2009/10) and a deterioration of infrastructure, the PBC launched a multi-year reform plan for the Israeli higher education system. This was facilitated by a substantial increase in budget, initiating special programs such as the Israeli Centres of Research Excellence (I-CORE) to improve research and teaching infrastructure, and improving the existing budgeting model for the higher education system.

**Objectives of the budgeting model:**

- To provide an objective and fair tool for the allocation of public funds to the regular operating budgets of the Israeli HEIs for teaching (universities and academic colleges) & research (universities only) while encouraging the efficiency, quality and enhancement of teaching & research outputs.
- To enable the universities and colleges to plan and budget their teaching & research activities in a way that maintains the academic and administrative autonomy of each institution.

**Principles of the model:**

- Budgeting for the Teaching Component is based on an absolute model, whereas the Research Component is based on a competitive (relative) model.
- The allocations formulae are based on outputs and not according to inputs.
- The model is based on objective, timely and reliable data that is obtained to the extent possible from sources external to the HEIs.
- The model is transparent to the HEIs and stable over time to enable the HEIs to manage and plan their activities in the short and medium term (1-5 years)
- The model is a tool for allocating funds among HEIs. Each individual institution is free to allocate the public funds received in accordance with its own internal priorities, under the condition that it maintains a balanced budget.

**The budgeting model's components:**

**a. Teaching component (universities and academic colleges)** – a "bottom-up" absolute model consisting of the following indicators:

- \( S(i) \) - Number of students by discipline and degree level (bachelor and master degrees only).
- \( T(i) \) - Fixed tariff per discipline and degree level (differs between universities and academic colleges).
- \( E(i) \) - Graduation rate coefficient based on the number of graduates divided by the total number of students.

\[
\sum_i (T(i) \times S(i) \times E(i)) \times F
\]

**Example:**

Institution A. has 100 students studying for a B.A. in History, has a graduation rate coefficient of 0.8 and has an institutional student to faculty ratio of 0.9. The Tariff per student for a B.A. in history is 32.5K NIS, so the total budget for bachelor's degree students in history for institution A. is:

\[
32.5K \times 100 \times 0.8 \times 0.9 = 2,304K
\]

**b. Research component (universities only)** – a "top-down" competitive model with a predetermined budget, consisting of the following indicators:
- Competitive research grants (CG) – total amount of research grants in USD from a list of 13 research funds including ISF, EU, DFG and others (34% of model).
- Scientific publications (SP) – total number of publications weighted by Impact Factor (34% of model).
- Doctorate students (DS) – calculated by total numbers, efficiency coefficient and field coefficient, similar to the teaching sub model (15% of model).
- Other research funding sources (OFS) – total amount of research grants in USD (15% of model).
- M.A. graduates with thesis (MAG) – total number of graduates with thesis, as opposed to graduates who do not write a thesis, such as in the case of most MBA students (2% of model).

Both Competitive Grants and Scientific Publications indicators also include a competitive advantage bonus of up to 20% for the two highest ranking institutes in each scientific field (9 major fields).

The share of each university is determined, for each indicator, by its own outputs out of the total outputs of all the other institutions weighted by the indicators portion in the model, then multiplied by the total predetermined budget for the research component.

In addition to the teaching and research components there are appropriations earmarked for specific issues such as research, participation in the construction of centres for particular disciplines (Centres for Nanotechnology, SESAME, etc.) and programs for scholarships and the absorption of researchers, which are awarded on a competitive basis by committees that select the winning candidates. Furthermore, there are appropriations earmarked for support and assistance in specific areas in institutions of higher education such as the development and upgrading of infrastructure, increasing accessibility for the Arab and ultra-Orthodox sectors, the advancement and representation of women in centres of higher education, promoting accessibility for people with disabilities and learning difficulties, loans and more. These allocations are distributed to institutions in accordance with budgetary models established for each subject separately with the approval of the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC).

2.1.1 Financial Autonomy and Control

The Council for Higher Education Law guarantees the academic and administrative freedom of institutions of higher education by virtue of its principal provision (Section 15) which states: “A recognized institution shall be at liberty to conduct its academic and administrative affairs, within the framework of its budget, as it may see fit.”

The budgeting model of the institutions of higher education is fully compatible with the provisions of this section. The budgeting model may be divided into two groups:

1. **Direct participation** – A “free” budget which constitutes about 90% of the institution’s budget. The budget is awarded to the institution as a global sum, as opposed to being itemized, and the institution may utilize it in any way it sees fit. Direct participation relates to several budgetary items, the most important of which are calculated using output-based models.

   In university budgeting, the main items relate to the teaching and research components which are based on the teaching and research outputs of the universities, whereas in college budgeting, the central item relates to the teaching component which is based on the teaching output of the colleges.3

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3 Teaching outputs including the number of students according to discipline and degree level, target adjustment coefficient, etc.; research outputs +including winning competitive and non-competitive research grants, publications, doctoral students and Master’s degree students with theses.
2. **Designated participation** – Earmarked allocations which are intended to lead to the achievement of specific targets. Usually, the funds are transferred for specific activities and are subject to performance reports.

Further to the above, the institutions possess full autonomy and discretion when managing the necessary resources.

At the same time, the institutions are obliged to submit various budgetary reports and certificates in accordance with the government decision that established the PBC (Government Decision No. 666 dated 5 June, 1977). This decision states, *inter alia*, that the PBC “… shall act to streamline the institutions of higher education and coordinate between them, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and achieve savings …“ and "… to monitor utilization of budgets in order to avoid deficits or excesses”.

Accordingly, at the beginning of each academic year each institution must submit its budget for approval to the Budget Division of the PBC. In general, as a condition of approval, the institution’s budget has to be balanced and based on conservative assumptions. In addition, at the end of the academic year each institution must submit a performance report and an audited financial report on activities during the reporting year to the Budget Division of the PBC.

### 2.1.2 Fees within Public Higher Education

The full basic tuition fee in budgeted higher education institutions for the 2015 academic year is equal to the full basic tuition fee which was set for the 2014 academic year, adjusted for changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) between July 2014 and July 2015 (published on 15.8.2015). Accordingly, the tuition fee for the full academic program for Master’s degree students in 2015 is NIS 13,781 (approximately 3,000 Euro). The tuition fee for the full academic program for undergraduate studies in 2015 is NIS 10,198 (approximately 2,300 Euro).

Tuition fees per academic year are the same in all fields studied. The student pays directly to the institution in which s/he is enrolled.

In accordance with the recommendations of a public committee on tuition fees, students with foreign nationality pay tuition fees which are 25% higher than the normal fee when enrolled in the regular, budgeted programs in public HEIs. There are also programs for international students (mostly taught in English) that are not taken into account in the PBC’s budgeting model, for which the public HEIs can charge higher tuition fees.

### 2.2 Private Education

There are currently 13 higher education institutions operating in Israel that are not supported financially either directly or indirectly by the state. These institutions are funded through students’ registration fees and tuition payments, as well as donations contributed by individuals or private entities. In terms of Israeli law, these HEIs are considered public entities which bear dual characteristics, and therefore they are subject to Israeli public administration rules. Likewise they are obliged to organize and act as a public benefit organization or association in accordance with the rules of associations determined by the Council for Higher Education.

#### 2.2.1 Financial Autonomy and Control

According to the Council for Higher Education’s regulations, a higher education institution cannot be established as a for-profit private company.

Concerning financial independence and responsibility, non-budgeted HEIs have the right to manage their academic, financial and administrative affairs as they see fit, provided that their actions are carried out in a balanced and appropriate manner, and in accordance with the directives received from the internal
institutions of the organization (Executive Committee, the General Meeting and Audit Committee) and from the national institutions (CHE, PBC and sub-committees of the CHE).

In accordance with the requirements of CHE and its committees, non-budgeted institutions submit reports on their various activities, including audited financial statements which are presented to the attention of the competent officials. Likewise, occasionally individual tests are conducted on the financial strength of the institutions on behalf of the PBC.

2.2.2 Fees within Private Higher Education

Non-budgeted academic institutions may determine and collect the students’ tuition fees as they consider appropriate. Annual tuition fees vary over time depending on the needs of the institutions and vary from one institution to the next.

Today annual tuition fees range from NIS 25,000 to NIS 40,000 (approximately between 5,000 and 8,000 Euros).

These institutions provide grants and scholarships to outstanding students based on the socio-economic level or the student’s request for aid, in accordance with the policy of the institution. Additionally, Israeli students studying in these institutions may submit an application for a subsidized loan or grant to the Committee for Student Grants and Loans, which is fully financed and budgeted by the Council for Higher Education and the Ministry of Education.

2.3 Financial Support for Learners’ Families

Financial support is not given to the families of students. Direct support is only provided to students.

2.4 Financial Support for Learners

PERACH Scholarships

In this project, volunteer students tutor children of school age and in return receive a scholarship. PERACH operates in all higher education institutions that have received a permit or recognition from CHE, including non-budgeted higher education institutions. In accordance with the decision of the management of PERACH, in 2015 PERACH financed 20,389 scholarships, the PBC granted 16,250 scholarships and the remainder was granted by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Economy and other sources. The scholarship stands at NIS 5,200 per tutor (1,200 Euro). The PBC passes the PERACH budget through the Weizmann Institute. The total budget of PERACH is approximately NIS 140 million (32.5 million Euro) of which approximately NIS 104.507 (~24 Euro) million is provided by the PBC.

Student Aid Fund

The Fund distributes grants and loans on the basis of socio-economic criteria. The total budget of the Fund for 2015 stands at NIS 121 million. There are three levels of grant and one level of loan, in accordance with the following: grants of the amount of NIS 12,480, NIS 6,240 and NIS 4,000, and a loan to the amount NIS 7,000. Assistance is provided to all students based on a variety of socio-economic criteria. The loan mechanism is the following: Loans are granted from the state budget, more precisely from the aid fund budget and are intended for students who have accumulated a relatively low score in the relevant criteria making them ineligible for a grant. The loan does not bear any interest but is linked only to the CPI. The student must repay the loan over 36 months, commencing one year after graduation. The percentage of loans taken by eligible students is very low.

Irtika Scholarships

These scholarships provide student aid to Arab students coming from low socio-economic backgrounds, who are enrolled in undergraduate degrees in designated areas of study (areas required by the economy
where Arab society is under-represented). The scholarships are within the framework of the “Irtika” program – a joint program of the PBC, Prime Minister’s Office, Ministry of Education, National Lottery and philanthropic funds from abroad. The scholarship is provided for the standard time required for a student’s undergraduate studies and amounts to NIS 10,000 for the first two years and NIS 5,000 for the standard years remaining to complete the first degree. In order to receive the scholarship, students are required to meet certain academic prerequisites and pursue community service activities. 2015 is the third year of implementation of the program. New scholarships are awarded each year to 650 Arab students; in total, 2,000 students have received the scholarship. The program is monitored by a special steering committee and its members are representatives of program partners and public representatives from Arab society.

**Excellence Scholarships**

In addition, a number of scholarships are provided by the PBC to outstanding doctoral and post-doctoral students, based on their academic background and achievements. Specific scholarships are available to Arab doctoral and post-doctoral students, as well as to doctoral students in the fields of Humanities and the Israeli economy, and from the periphery of Israel (areas outside of the centre of Israel, which is where the majority of industry is (south and north of the country).

Israeli HEIs also offer scholarships based on criteria that they themselves determine.

### 3 The structure of the Higher Education system

The system of higher education institutions in Israel consists of budgeted research universities (including the Open University), budgeted academic colleges, non-budgeted academic colleges and colleges of education.

All HEIs can offer Bachelor’s and Master’s degree programs but currently only research universities offer PhDs. The structure of the academic degrees recognized in Israel is: Bachelors, Masters and PhD degrees. The undergraduate degree takes between three to four years depending on the field and requires between 120 and 160 credits. A standard Master’s degree takes two years and consists of 28 to 36 semester teaching hours, depending on the study track, with a thesis or without a thesis. A standard doctoral degree takes 4 years (the actual average is 5 years) and under the rules of some institutions requires attendance valued at least at 12 credits, writing an independent scientific research dissertation or publishing a collection of reviewed articles, with theoretical and methodological references and conclusions.

The structure of studies in Israel is based on semesters – two semesters in one academic year, autumn and spring, each of which consists of 13 or 14 weeks. Some programs allow study during a more concentrated summer semester. In these cases, the calendar year consists of 3 semesters.

The Council for Higher Education is the body authorized by law to deal with all matters of higher education in the country and has been granted the power to carry out its functions in this regard.

#### 3.1 Types of Higher Education Institutions

In Israel, there are five types of institutions of higher education:

1. **Universities** - funded by the PBC, engaged in teaching and advanced research for undergraduate degrees (apart from the Weitzman Institute of Science), Master degrees and PhDs, in a range of fields.

2. **Budgeted academic colleges**: higher education institutions that offer undergraduate and often Master’s degree programs in a variety of areas, some of which are professional. Some of the academic staff in these institutions undertake their own research. Among the institutions are general colleges, arts institutes and technological engineering colleges.
3. **Non-budgeted academic colleges** – private colleges for undergraduate and often Master degrees in various fields, particularly in the social sciences. These institutions are not funded by the state. Tuition fees are higher there than in the subsidized institutions. In these institutions, some of the staff are involved in research. In general, their curricula are not subject to PBC planning; however, where national resources are limited in respect of a particular matter, the PBC will express its opinion on the requested program. The PBC also reviews the financial stability of these institutions before academic recognition is conferred upon them by the CHE.

4. **Academic teacher training colleges** – offer undergraduate and Master degrees in education. These are institutions established and planned by the Ministry of Education; however, it is the Council for Higher Education which confers academic recognition on them and permits them to grant academic degrees. In recent years, a small number of these institutions have moved to the PBC (planning and budgeting).

5. **The Open University**; this institution is considered to be a university and offers undergraduate and Master's degree studies. However, the teaching methods employed there are typical of open universities around the world, namely, online teaching, distance learning, teaching technologies, etc. The Open University is funded by the PBC.

### 3.2 First Cycle Programmes

Undergraduate programs are offered in the vast majority of institutions of higher education in Israel, after they have been approved by the Council for Higher Education.

#### 3.2.1 Branches of Study

Undergraduate programs are offered in the vast majority of institutions of higher education in Israel, whether they are in the research universities or in the academic colleges. The duration of studies ranges from 3 to 4 years, depending on the nature of the degree, BA, BSc, B.Ed. or other, and generally range from 120 to 180 Israeli credits. Almost all fields of study are offered at undergraduate level, among them the humanities, social sciences, arts, natural sciences, exact sciences, paramedical and medical sciences, engineering and various interdisciplinary studies.

#### 3.2.2 Admission Requirements

The official condition for admission to higher education institutions is an Israeli matriculation certificate or equivalent, and in most institutions it is also a practice to require the applicant to sit a psychometric test as an admission requirement. These tests are carried out by the National Institute for Testing and Evaluation, the only body authorized to conduct psychometric tests for applicants to higher education. The institutions for higher education establish their own admission criteria for undergraduate degrees in each and every field. Generally, admission to an institution is dependent on the total score of the applicant, consisting of matriculation grades and psychometric grade. However, on occasion, additional admission requirements are imposed such as personal interviews and particular skills such as musical proficiency, etc.

#### 3.2.3 Curriculum

The curriculum of the study program is determined by the HEIs independently; however, in every undergraduate program, the program and its curriculum is examined by the review committee of the Council for Higher Education which then makes a recommendation to CHE whether to approve it. In the event that the curriculum requires modification, it must be changed in accordance with CHE’s requirements before it can be approved. The curriculum must reflect the content of the course and degree
to be awarded at the end of studies. It must include introductory courses, core courses, electives, credits per course, requirements and obligations and the distribution of semesters of the program, etc. In certain disciplines, CHE has established an outline for undergraduate programs (e.g. law). In professional study programs which require professional training, such as paramedical-nursing programs, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, the curriculum must also include hours of practical training and locations for practical training and scoring. All this must be performed in accordance with the directives of the relevant Ministry (the regulator) or statute.

3.2.4 Teaching Methods

HEIs are autonomous in determining their teaching methods. The vast majority of undergraduate studies in HEIs are carried out using the lecture style teaching methods. In cases of introductory courses and core and elective courses they are carried out in large classes, and in instances of seminars in smaller groups. Other teaching methods include workshops, master classes (in music and art institutions) and field trips (for example, in geographical courses) etc. Some of the institutions use advanced teaching technologies, in online courses and other methods. The Open University in Israel is a unique institution which uses its own unique teaching methods, distance learning, online courses, advanced study technologies, etc., consistent with its unique character.

3.2.5 Progression of Students

HEIs are responsible for determining the conditions of transition from year to year and their examination policy. All these are anchored in their academic by-laws. Failure to pass a compulsory course means that the student must repeat the course. If the student fails twice, his studies in that particular track where the course is mandatory are discontinued.

A “failing” grade is weighted and remains registered in the student's grade sheet as long as the student has not completed the quota of courses for the degree. As long as the student has not corrected his grades in the course he failed and has not met the requirements of the course, a score of “incomplete” is noted in his records.

In every case where a student sits for two exams in the same course, the score obtained in the last exam is the valid one.

In general, the Council for Higher Education’s policy is that students should complete their undergraduate degree no later than six years after they start their studies. CHE/PBC incentivizes institutions to ensure that undergraduates study full-time and complete their studies in the standard period (three or four years).

3.2.6 Employability

In Israel, cooperation between institutions and employers and CHE is not formally regulated. Nonetheless, there is interaction between all sides on the issue of employability. In addition, in some institutions, there are career guidance and job placement centres, which have direct links to various employers in society.

3.2.7 Student Assessment

All elements of assessment are determined by the HEIs. Assessments of student achievements take place throughout the degree process, by means of quizzes, tests, exams, papers, seminar papers, presentations, guided reading, performing practicum in practical subjects, etc. Each course requires home examinations or an exam in a classroom with a test score. There are conditions for transition from year to year and conditions for eligibility to receive a degree.
3.2.8 Certification

HEIs are responsible for the degree certificate which is granted to undergraduates upon the completion of their studies, each according to the field studied. However, the CHE approves all degrees and all certificates for degrees prior thereto, during the stage of approval of the program itself. The graduate’s degree certificate contains the name of the higher education institution and its logo, the name of the senior office-holder awarding the certificate (President, Rector, Dean, etc.), the student’s name, ID, field of study (department), the degree symbol, study format (single major program, dual-major program), student’s achievements (cum laude, magna cum laude, standard), date and place of award of the degree.

3.3 Short-Cycle Higher Education

Post-secondary school higher education exists in Israel and focuses on professional training, for example, teaching, nursing, technicians, etc. However, it is not considered to be part of the higher education system. Graduates of these institutions which provide professional education receive a “diploma”, not an academic degree. The institutions are connected to the relevant Ministry and are not subject to the supervision of the Council for Higher Education. However, over the years CHE has established special and concrete blueprints for completing undergraduate degrees in those fields (for example, engineering, nursing or teaching) in order to create a bridge between studies in the post-secondary school professional schools and undergraduate studies in academic institutions of higher education. The system as a whole fully complies with these blueprints and acts accordingly. Likewise, CHE has set policies for granting exemptions/credits to those who have studied in these institutions and are interested in pursuing an undergraduate degree in HEIs in a range of fields.

3.3.1 Branches of Study

The areas in which post-secondary school institutions focus on are professionally oriented, for example, teaching, nursing, engineering, etc. Generally, these are not higher education institutions but rather state run professional institutions.

3.3.2 Admission Requirements

The admission requirements for post-secondary professional institutions are not set by the Council for Higher Education, but by the government ministries responsible for that field.

3.3.3 Curriculum

The core curriculum in these institutions and fields are set by the state (i.e., by the particular government ministry responsible for the field concerned).

3.3.4 Teaching Methods

In general, formal lectures are used. However, due to the diversity of fields, a variety of teaching methods are employed.

3.3.5 Progression of Students

Decisions regarding the progression of students are made by the relevant government ministry.

3.3.6 Employability

As short-cycle programs are not regulated by the Council for Higher Education, information on this subject was not available.
3.3.7 Student Assessment

Decisions regarding the progression of students are made by the relevant government ministry.

3.3.8 Certification

Graduates of these professional institutions receive a diploma and not an academic degree.

3.3.9 Organisational Variation

As short-cycle programs are not regulated by the Council for Higher Education, information on this subject is not available.

3.4 Second Cycle Programmes

3.4.1 Branches of Study

Study programs for Master’s degrees are offered in the vast majority of higher education institutions in Israel, whether they are research universities or academic colleges. Some of the institutions (universities) have received permission from CHE to open and confer their own Master's degrees, in programs approved for five years by the PBC for a limited time. The standard period of study is two years, although in practice, some studies can also take three years. Students can pursue a Master’s degree program either on a research track which requires them to write a research thesis or a non-research track called a “teaching track” which requires the students to accumulate more credits than on the research track. The purpose of the track for the title of "Master's without thesis" is to deepen the student’s knowledge and expand expertise in a certain field which does not necessarily require research and therefore, the teaching hours in these tracks are increased compared to the research track for a Master’s degree that requires a thesis.

The CHE has determined that in the study tracks for a Master’s degree without thesis, the quota of teaching hours should be at least 36 hours per semester (or 18 hours a week) or 25% more than the total number of teaching hours in research tracks for a Master’s degree with a thesis in the same field.

The CHE has also determined that in the study tracks for a Master’s degree without thesis, students must submit a final test or final paper.

The areas of study offered at Master’s degree level are numerous and varied: humanities, social sciences, arts, natural sciences, exact sciences, medicine, agriculture, engineering and more. A standard MA degree comprises of 28-36 semester teaching hours, depending on the study track with a thesis \ or without a thesis. Some institutions offer executive study programs for Master degrees, for example, in business administration that take one calendar year (three semesters) and usually do not require a thesis.

3.4.2 Admission Requirements

According to the regulations of the Council for Higher Education, a person who does not hold a recognized academic undergraduate degree from a recognized HEI cannot be accepted for graduate studies. In addition to this prerequisite, the institutions impose admission requirements relevant to the field of study, as well as acceptance thresholds, for example, an average score of at least 80 for the first degree, or, if the degree concerns an executive professional field, the student must prove experience in the field.

3.4.3 Curriculum

All new graduate programs are reviewed by the CHE and must be approved before they are opened. Some institutions (universities) received the CHE’s permission to open and confer an independent MA
degree in programs approved for five years by the PBC and for a limited time. The institutions set their own curriculum for the programs. In certain fields, the CHE has determined a particular structure for the degree in question (e.g. law) with requirements and mandatory courses, and the institutions must comply with these standards. The vast majority of Master’s degree programs with thesis are operated by universities.

3.4.4 Teaching Methods

HEIs are autonomous in determining their teaching methods. Most of the Master’s degree studies are conducted in small classes or seminars, except for mandatory courses which are taught in larger groups. Master’s degree studies in HEIs are conducted using lecture style teaching, seminars, workshops, master classes (in music and art institutions), field trips (for example, in geography courses), departmental colloquiums, online courses, new learning technologies, etc.

3.4.5 Progression of Students

The conditions of transition from one year to the next and exam policies within the framework of Master’s degree studies are decided upon by the HEIs and are anchored in their academic by-laws.

1. **Passing scores:**
   A) The institution sets the minimum passing grade for the course being studied for the Master’s degree.
   B) The institution sets the minimum average grade for transition from the first year to the second year.
   C) The institution sets the minimum passing grade for the research thesis (average scores of the assessors).
   D) The institution sets the minimum passing score for the defence of the thesis.
   E) The institution sets the minimum passing score for final exams.
   F) The institution sets the minimum passing score for each of the components of the final exam.
   G) A student who fails the final exam and receives a grade which is below a particular threshold – a weighted score of all the components of the exam – will be permitted to sit the exam again. The repeat exam will include all the components of the first exam.
   H) A student must be examined again on one or more components of the final exam if he receives a grade which is below the threshold determined by the institution.
   I) The repeat exam must be held within twelve months of the final exam in which the student participated. The date of the repeat exam is determined by the chairman of the departmental committee for graduate degrees. A student who fails a final exam twice will have his studies discontinued.

   **Each class may require a higher passing grade than indicated above.**

2. **Transition requirements in courses (the relevant provisions are as follows):**
   A) In Master’s degree studies there will only be one examination date for the transition exam.
   B) A student who does not sit the exam on the regular date for a reason recognized by the departmental MA committee (reserve duty, hospitalization, confirmation of an illness that has lasted over five days, bereavement, etc.) will be eligible to apply to the departmental MA committee to take the exam on a special date.
C) It is possible to improve the course grade by re-registering for the course in the following year. In this case, the last grade is decisive.

D) A student who has failed a course may choose between repeating the same course and choosing another course. If he has chosen to take a course other than the course which he failed, he must obtain the approval of the chairman of the departmental MA committee. In such a case the grade “failed” will be recorded in his file, but will not be calculated within the overall average.

E) A student may repeat a failed course once only. A second failure in the same course will result in the discontinuation of studies.

3.4.6 Employability

In Israel, cooperation between institutions-employers-and CHE is not formally regulated. Nonetheless, there is interaction between all sides on the issue of employability.

3.4.7 Student Assessment

Assessments of student achievements take place throughout the degree period, by means of quizzes, tests, exams, papers, seminar papers, presentations, guided reading, final exams, defence of theses, and so on. Each course requires home examinations or an exam in a classroom with a test score. There are conditions for transition from year to year and conditions for eligibility to receive a degree (see question 3.4.5). All these are determined by the HEIs.

3.4.8 Certification

HEIs are responsible for the degree certificate which is granted to the graduates of the Master’s degree program upon the completion of their studies, each according to the field studied; however, it is CHE that approves all degrees and all certificates for degrees prior thereto, during the stage of approval of the program itself. The Master’s degree certificate contains the name of the institution of higher education and its logo, the name of the senior office-holder awarding the certificate (President, Rector, Dean, etc.), the student’s name, ID, field of study (department), the degree symbol, the study track (in case of a research degree the certificate will state that the graduate completed a thesis), the student’s achievements (cum laude, magna cum laude, standard), date and place of the award of the degree.

3.5 Programmes outside the Bachelor and Master Structure

The higher education system in Israel offers study programs that are unique and differ in some characteristics from the normal structure of the classical undergraduate or Master’s degree programs. These include an undergraduate program in architecture - B.Arch. (five years); a doctoral degree program in medicine - M.D. (normal track of six years plus one year internship); Doctor of Dental Medicine - D.M.D. (six years); Doctor of Veterinary Medicine - D.V.M. (seven years). Generally, these study programs are in applied professional fields. Conditions for admission to these programs are determined by the higher education institutions. All new programs of this nature are reviewed and approved by the PBC/CHE, as is customary. In some programs, training guidelines have been issued by other government regulators as well, such as in the case of the Ministry of Health medical studies – internship. In various medical programs, the six-year curriculum also includes the award of a Bachelor’s degree - B.Med.Sc after three years, after which the student continues his studies.

In addition to these programs, there are other programs in which the universities and some colleges allow outstanding candidates and high-achieving students studying for BA degrees in certain fields, to join a direct track to a graduate degree in their field of study. In the direct track, students in the last year of their
first degree can participate in graduate courses and begin research work under the guidance of a supervisor who is a member of the faculty. In some programs, the period of study for a Master’s degree is actually shortened in the direct track. In addition, participants in shortened Master’s degree programs are entitled to exemptions from certain courses and scholarships; the overwhelming majority of direct track Master’s degrees are regulated internally by the HEIs.

3.6 Third Cycle (PhD) Programmes

3.6.1 Organisation of Doctoral Studies

The organisation of doctoral studies is determined separately by each HEI. Usually, in order to receive a doctoral degree, the student must successfully complete his/her designated curriculum of courses; perform independent and original research work which makes a unique contribution to advancing knowledge and understanding in the topic of research – work which is summarized in the PhD thesis and prove his/her mastering of background materials and professional literature in the field of research. Ph.D. programs require the students to conduct high-level research independently, and demonstrate creativity, innovation and originality in research. The standard period for doctoral studies is 4 years (if taken as 3rd cycle) but the average is 5 years. The length of the program may vary according to the field, institution, and the nature of the research performed. Doctoral studies cover a large variety of disciplines: humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, exact sciences, engineering, agriculture, medicine and more.

Standard doctoral studies are composed of two stages. In the 1st stage, the student must complete a set of courses, write a research proposal which should be approved and in some cases pass an exam. The 2nd stage focuses on performing research, writing and submitting the PhD thesis. Doctoral theses must go through a review process by a panel of judges from inside and outside the university.

It should be noted that research universities in Israel are empowered to conduct doctoral studies and confer degrees on their graduates in an independent manner.

3.6.2 Admission Requirements

Higher education institutions individually determine their PhD admission requirements (usually the institutions set specific thresholds and each faculty may determine additional requirements). They are also autonomous to decide on the number of students in each program and to select the students. The only involvement of the PBC is via the budget: (1) part of the budget the universities receive takes into account the number of PhD students and their fields of research; (2) the PBC allocates the budget for the ISF (Israeli Science Foundation), which in turn allocates competitive research grants to local researchers (the researchers may also use these grants to give a scholarship to their PhD students); (3) the PBC has 3 dedicated PhD scholarship programs for excellent candidates: one in the Humanities ("Rothenshtreich scholarships"), one for candidates from the geographical periphery ("Lev-Tzion scholarships") and one for minority candidates. In all cases the candidates are submitted by the institutions to the PBC.

According to CHE’s regulations, a candidate cannot be accepted for doctoral studies without first holding a Master’s degree with thesis, unless he is following a direct track from undergraduate degree to doctoral program which is anchored in the academic by-laws of the particular university.

3.6.3 Status of Doctoral Students/Candidates

Doctoral students are legally considered as students and may receive a fellowship to support them financially. However, they may also be employed by the HEI as teaching or research assistants, in which
case they will be regarded as employees and receive the associated healthcare, social security and pension rights.

3.6.4 Supervision Arrangements

In most Higher Education institutions, the research authority issues a set of regulations for PhD students. These regulations relate to issues such as the nature and aim of studies, the research students authority, admission requirements, course of studies, supervision, committees, period of studies, the thesis and its evaluation, the degree, scientific publications etc.

Typically, the university limits the maximum number of doctoral degree students which any one supervisor may instruct at the same time. In general, a maximum of 5 PhD students or of a total of 10 Masters and PhD students are allowed per supervisor.

The institution’s by-laws govern which faculty members are entitled to supervise a research student in his doctoral studies. Usually, these are lecturers or senior lecturers or higher who hold PhD degrees and have sufficient seniority and experience in the relevant field.

Generally, multiple supervision is allowed, as long as at least one supervisor is a faculty member in the institution awarding the PhD. In principle, the secondary supervisor(s) can be from academic and research institutions in different countries, as long as they are allowed to supervise PhD students in their home institution.

3.6.5 Employability

Currently there are no concrete measures on the part of central authorities to facilitate access to the labour market after the third cycle (PhD) degree. There are various programs in the planning or pilot stages at the Israeli Council for Higher Education and the Israeli Ministry of Economy, which are supposed to address this issue.

Additionally, there are good relations between universities and relevant employers, which naturally lead to the employment of PhD graduates.

3.6.6 Assessment

The Authority for Research Students or a designated committee at each university conducts close and structured supervision of the student’s progress and course work. The Authority for Research Students or committee usually works via the disciplinary PhD committees it appoints. There are stages in the doctoral studies: the first phase is devoted to studies and submitting a research proposal. Each student is assigned with a designated supervisory committee or is supervised by the relevant disciplinary PhD committee. This committee is responsible for discussing the students’ research proposal and approving it as a prerequisite for his/her progress from the 1st stage to the 2nd stage of doctoral studies. Phase 2 is dedicated to conducting research, analysing data and writing the dissertation. This takes between two and three years. The supervisor or supervisors maintain continuous contact with the student throughout each phase. After the submission of the doctoral thesis, the Authority for Research Students and/or supervisory committee appoints an evaluation committee which then reports back with its recommendation. The thesis is reviewed in light of its standard of research, originality, creativity and innovation. If the assessors approve the dissertation, subject to amendments or as it stands, the supreme academic committee of the Authority for Research Students makes a final decision as to whether to confer the PhD degree on the student.

3.6.7 Certification

HEIs are responsible for the degree certificate which is granted to the doctoral student upon the completion of his studies, according to the field studied by the student. The PhD certificate contains the
name of the institution of higher education and its logo, the name of the senior office-holder awarding the
certificate (President, Rector, Dean, etc.), the student’s name, ID, field of study (department), the degree
symbol, student’s achievements (cum laude, magna cum laude), date and place of the award of the
degree. Occasionally, magna cum laude entitles the student to a prize.
The certification awarded to doctoral students who have completed all their duties and requirements is
"Doctor of Philosophy" (Ph.D.). Some universities award doctoral students in law the title "Doctor of Laws"
or "Doctor of Juridical Science" (J.S.D) or "Legum Doctor" (LL.D.).

3.6.8 Organisational Variation

Currently third cycle programmes are not offered by distance learning or by the Israeli Open University.

4 Teachers and Education Staff

4.1 Initial Education for Academic Staff in Higher Education

According to CHE regulations, all HEIs must have a mechanism in place to foster teaching excellence
and must report the activities of its operations to the CHE. The regulations require that all new staff,
including adjunct faculty, receive initial professional training through seminars and workshops provided by
their institution. Many of the HEIs conduct these trainings through Centres for Teaching Excellence. The
format and content of the trainings vary in the different types of institutions.
Budgeted HEIs can apply for funding from the PBC for their teaching excellence system provided that,
amongst other criteria, they provide mentoring for new staff during the first three years of their teaching
career.

4.2 Conditions of Service for Academic Staff Working in Higher Education

Conditions of employment are determined by the institutions budgeted by the PBC. The State, acting
through CHE / PBC, does not establish rules of employment and salary levels for non-budgeted HEIs,
unless academic decisions have been made that have indirect implications for issues concerning the
employment of senior academic staff and officials.
With regard to budgeted institutions— the employment conditions and salaries of senior academic staff are
determined in collective agreements and PBC guidelines. A special collective agreement applies to senior
academic staff in universities and a special collective agreement applies to senior academic staff in
colleges budgeted by the PBC.
There are four levels of employment for senior academic staff members: lecturer, senior lecturer,
associate professor, full professor. As a rule, the staff member is appointed to the rank of lecturer and
advances from rank to rank in a review and testing process performed by the appointments committee of
the individual institution or the national appointments committee for the rank of professor in academic
colleges. Promotion is awarded according to criteria accepted in Israel and internationally. CHE does not
define or specify the criteria regarding this issue, and appointments and promotions fall within the ambit of
the academic freedom of the individual HEIs.
Salaries are paid in accordance with the salary tables and the salary bonuses regulated by the collective
bargaining agreements of the institutions. A certain percentage of staff members may be employed under
individual contracts containing beneficial terms, upon obtaining special permission of the PBC. It should
be noted that in what salary payments are concerned, PBC budgeted institutions are subject to statutory
restrictions according to which it is not possible to pay bonuses or salary components that have not been
approved by the Ministry of Finance. Special authorizations relating to salaries are made through the PBC.

Generally, senior faculty members participating in the tenure track in higher education institutions are staff members occupied with teaching and research. The ratio between teaching and research varies and depends on the type of institution – college or university.

4.2.1 Planning Policy

Over the course of the previous decade, the number of senior faculty members in Israeli HEIs declined significantly due to the reduced number of tenure track positions and ‘brain-drain’. Consequently, the number of part-time teachers who instruct core courses increased, the student-faculty ratio increased significantly, the average age of faculty members increased, the number of teaching assistants decreased significantly (leading to reduced tutoring hours), and a considerable load was placed on some faculty members who supervise advanced students (hindering those students' training and research).

As part of the multiyear plan for the higher education system for 2010/11–2015/16, a target was set for the student-faculty ratio for universities and colleges. On average, this target is 21.5 students per faculty member at the universities and 35 students per faculty member at the colleges. This reflected the need to recruit approximately 2,000 new senior faculty members in total in the coming years, of which about 1,600 were to be recruited as senior faculty members in universities (800 to replace retiring faculty and 800 as new faculty) and about 400 to be recruited as senior faculty members in colleges.

The PBC’s Teaching Component of the budgeting model for the publicly budgeted universities and academic colleges was historically based on a multiplication formula of student numbers, rates by field, and a graduation efficiency factor. Thus, in effect, this component did not reflect the specific policy objectives of the higher education system as determined by the PBC. In 2010/11, as part of a major update to the budgeting model, a new parameter was introduced to the budgeting model, which measures, for each HEI, the degree to which the current student-faculty ratio complies with the targets of the higher education system. This parameter represents a major index of improving the student-faculty ratio as part of the system’s objectives regarding the quality of teaching, and the recruitment of young outstanding faculty members to the HEIs.

The progress of each HEI is measured annually relative to its predetermined target for the multiyear plan. The normative teaching budget of the HEI, calculated according to the number of students and normative rates, is multiplied by a factor calculated by a formula that reflects the distance of the institution from its student to faculty ratio target. Thus, as the HEI approaches its target, it receives a greater proportion of its normative teaching budget, up to 100% of its normative budget when it reaches the predefined target.

As of 2014, the number of senior faculty members is approximately 4,650 members in universities and approximately 2,000 members in colleges.

I-CORE: Israeli Centres of Research Excellence

In order to increase the number of academic faculty members, an additional policy initiative decided by the PBC is the Israeli Centres for Research Excellence (I-CORE). One of the program’s main objectives is to promote the returning of excellent researchers back to Israel, as a central mean of fortifying the research capabilities and the academic faculty of the HEIs. Each scientist who joins an I-CORE receives generous research and equipment grants, and is exposed to the leading network of scientists in his/her field in Israel. Within the program, 88 scientists joined the research faculty in Israeli institutions, almost 90% of whom arrived following a research or a post-doctorate period in one of the top 50 institutions in their field.
4.2.2 Entry to the Profession

Appointments are made by the institutions through their academic bodies, on the basis of accepted academic criteria in a manner compatible with their academic freedom. CHE and PBC do not set criteria for recruitment, appointment or promotion.

4.2.3 Professional Status

Senior academic faculty are not considered to be civil servants in Israel. The conditions of their employment are determined through collective bargaining agreements, institutional regulations, and PBC and the Ministry of Finance policies.

4.2.4 Salaries

In non-budgeted HEIs, wage levels are not fixed.

In budgeted HEIs, salaries are paid to senior faculty members according to salary tables and salary guidelines set by the PBC and the Director of Salaries at the Ministry of Finance. There are detailed wage tables organized by seniority and rank, as well as rules for salary bonuses awarded for excellence, dedicating time to the institution, winning research grants, and special duties, etc.

In both universities and colleges there are collective agreements that regulate payments and other rights such as social benefits, etc.

4.2.5 Working Time and Holidays

PBC/CHE does not establish details concerning academic requirements of faculty members, the ratio between teaching and research and the scope of activities to be devoted to each, or to additional activities. All these elements are determined by the individual institutions. It should be noted that there is a directive regarding teaching duties which range from between 6-8 hours a week in universities and 10-12 hours a week in colleges. A staff member is not required to report his attendance or hours of work, and therefore beyond the duty to teach there is no reliable measure of the time spent on activities ancillary to teaching and research.

4.2.6 Promotion, Advancement

Senior staff members can move between HEIs or stay in the same institution and in both cases advance from the rank of lecturer to that of full professor. Another path to promotion is obtaining appointments to various positions in the institution such as head of a Faculty, Vice President, or President.

4.2.7 Retirement and Pensions

According to State law, the mandatory age of retirement for both men and women is 67. In universities the age of retirement is October 1 of the year after which the staff member has reached the age of 68. Some colleges have adopted the university practice although others continue to employs staff members even after the age of retirement.

In Israel there is a statutory obligation as well as an obligation under the collective bargaining agreements to make pension contributions both from the employee’s salary and from the employer’s allocations. The amounts are accrued in a pension fund and upon retirement, the staff member receives a pension based on the amounts accumulated in the fund. This type of pension is called a “cumulative pension” (it should be noted that in the past, Israel applied a “budgetary pension” under which the retiring employee was entitled to a pension amounting to 70% of his salary regardless of the amount contributed, if any, over the years. In the early 2000s this arrangement was terminated and new employees were hired under accrued
4.3 Continuing Professional Development for Academic Staff Working in Higher Education

4.3.1 Organisational Aspects

Earmarked annual budgets are provided to the HEIs to finance continuing professional development activities for senior academic faculty. Faculty members, as part of their collective agreements, are entitled to apply for funding from this budget, in order to finance their participation in conferences and other professional development activities. In general, these activities are research oriented. However, they are not limited to research alone. Incentives for Participation in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Activities

In addition to the budget provided to senior academic faculty discussed in question 4.3.1, faculty members are entitled to paid training leaves for professional development, including extended professional development periods in the budgeted colleges and sabbaticals in the universities.

5 Management and Other Education Staff for Higher Education

5.1 Requirements for Appointment

The Council has procedures for defining the composition, authority and work arrangements of the bodies managing higher education institutions; these are designed to ensure academic and administrative independence as well as appropriate academic standards, pursuant to Section 15 of the Council for Higher Education Law.

In accordance with these procedures, the administrative structure of the institutions of higher education in Israel includes:

- **Administrative institutions** – Board of Trustees and Executive Committee;
- **Academic institutions** – President, Vice President for Academic Affairs (in most institutions), Senate or Supreme Academic Council; and
- **Audit institutions** – Accountant, Audit Committee and Internal Auditor.

The **Board of Trustees** is the highest authority of an institution and is made up of individuals who have an interest in developing and advancing the institution.

The **Executive Committee** is responsible for determining institutional policy, defining strategy and overseeing the management of the institution's affairs and assets. One of the Executive Committee’s functions is to appoint the President.

The **Senate or Academic Council** is the supreme academic body and is responsible for determining, planning and advancing academic and research objectives and maintaining academic standards. Decisions of the Senate entailing financial expenditure must be approved by the Executive Committee.

The **President** is the head of the institution and is accountable to the General Assembly and the Executive Committee for the management, standards and quality of the institution. In accordance with Council for Higher Education directives, the President must hold the title of ‘professor’.

The **Rector / Vice President for Academic Affairs** reports to the President and is in charge of all the institution's academic affairs. This official also receives the reports of the **Deans**, who are in charge of the academic and administrative management of the various faculties / departments.

5.2 Conditions of Service

The senior administration of HEIs is employed on special contracts that provide additional salary for their
positions. The minimum number of hours they are required to dedicate to their position are determined by
the PBC.

6 Quality Assurance in Higher Education

6.1 Responsible Bodies

In 2003, CHE decided to establish a system for assessing and assuring quality at HE institutions in Israel
in order to preserve and foster standards as an essential national and academic priority.

The Quality Assessment and Assurance Division (QAD) is responsible for operating the system, by
forming work plans for the system, coordinating information obtained from the institutions, recruiting
members for the external evaluation committees, running the committees and submitting reports to the
Council for Higher Education.

External evaluation committees include 6-8 experts in the field undergoing evaluation. 1-2 of the experts
must be Israeli citizens, the others (including the committee chair) are appointed from leading institutions
around the world.

The members are chosen after a long process which includes several stages:

Every institution undergoing evaluation may propose optional members whom they regard as suitable to
serve on the evaluation committee. Potential members may also be proposed by people in industry,
stakeholders in the field, etc.

The head of QAD together with two of the Division’s subcommittee members decide on a list of members
who they consider suitable for the task, according to rank, field of expertise, experience in evaluation
committees and resume.

After contacting and forming a committee, final authorization for the composition of the committee is given
by the CHE.

Cooperation with foreign national and international bodies for quality assurance is ensured through CHE's
membership in the following international agencies: CHEA, INQAAHE, ENQA, EUA and the ENIC-NARIC
forum.

6.2 Approaches and Methods for Quality Assurance

The QAD's process for quality assurance is based on the ESG's general guidelines.

Study programs at all academic levels in a particular field undergo quality assessment once every 6-8
years. This is the period of time considered necessary for the institutions to implement the
recommendations made by the evaluation committee and examine their effect on the
department/students.

Evaluation committees are requested to try and form a list of standards criteria for the evaluated field.

In general, the process of quality assessment and assurance consists of five principal components:

- The institution and academic unit of the evaluated program undergo an intensive self-
evaluation process: The institutions submit a self-evaluation report prepared in accordance with
the Council's recommendations and guidelines. This report constitutes the basis for the external
evaluation committee's work, and describes, among other things, the strengths and weaknesses
of the academic unit and the program being examined.

- Evaluation by an external committee appointed by CHE: The committee is composed of senior
academic figures in the evaluated field selected from leading institutions in Israel and abroad; the
majority of its members are not Israeli. A senior non-Israeli academic figure is appointed as
The committee examines the self-evaluation reports and performs on-site visits to the institutions. During these visits, the committee meets with various stakeholders, including the institution's management, senior and junior faculty, and students at all levels (6-8 in each meeting, 45 minutes per session) and tours the institution. In the event that a member of the committee is also a faculty member at an evaluated institution, s/he does not take part in the discussions and evaluation of that institution.

- The committee submits the final reports for each of the evaluated study programs, as well as a general report regarding the state of the examined fields of study in Israel. The recommendations and comments of the committee (both in the individual and general reports) refer to each of the topics under examination in order to facilitate the eventual monitoring of their implementation. The recommendations are divided according to the level of necessity: Important, Desirable, and Essential. The reports are conveyed to the institutions for their feedback and thereafter are submitted to CHE.

- Discussion and decisions by CHE, in light of the reports and the institutions’ responses. The final reports are published as well as CHE’s decisions.

- Monitoring implementation of CHE's decisions: the evaluated institutions are required to submit follow-up reports to the CHE, which are reviewed by an external expert – usually one of the evaluation committee members. The expert's opinion is reported in CHE committee meetings, according to the context. All CHE decisions are published on CHE's website.

Concerning the aspects and topics which are examined, the quality assessment process is carried out by the institutions according to guidelines formed and updated by QAD each year. This online questionnaire includes the following aspects:

- **Goals and aims:** The goals and aims of the academic unit and study program including the ways in which they are determined, examined and modified when necessary.

- **The study program, its content, structure and scope:** To what extent the content, structure and scope of the study program reflect its goals, the distribution of studies throughout the academic year, the organization and content of the courses, the process of renewing and updating content, adaptation to the designated purposes and goals, the involvement of non-academic bodies in the study program's activities, etc.

- **Teaching and learning outcomes:** Teaching and learning methods, evaluation and improvement of teaching, lecture attendance, methods of evaluating student achievements (learning outcomes) and the mechanisms for examining the reliability and validity of those methods, the use of information technologies, etc.

- **Students:** Admission, passing and graduation requirements; drop-out rates, transmission of relevant information to students, counselling, academic assistance, employment counselling, contact with graduates, etc.

- **Human Resources:** The teaching staff - profile of the teaching staff, their areas of specialization and skills, tenure and promotion procedures, policies concerning the recruitment and absorption of teaching staff, the position of head of the study program; technical and administrative staff, etc.

- **Infrastructure:** Administration, buildings and classrooms, laboratories, computer rooms, libraries, the level of equipment and its quantitative suitability, etc.

- **Research:** Sources of funding, publications, patents, research students, research infrastructure, research cooperation, keeping up-to-date etc.

- **Self-evaluation process:** The extent to which the institution performs self-evaluation on a regular basis, the appointment of a senior staff member to deal with self-evaluation, conclusions regarding the self-
evaluation process and its results, the existence of a mechanism for dealing with problematic issues highlighted by the self-evaluation activity, accessibility of the results of the self-evaluation process to the public, etc.

In cases of second rounds of evaluation of the field, the self-evaluation report includes a chapter regarding the implementation of recommendations made in the previous round of evaluation.

7 Educational Support and Guidance

7.1 Support Measures for Learners in Higher Education

7.1.1 Definition of the Target Group(s)

The Planning and Budgeting Committee has defined the following populations as target groups entitled to special access and/or support programs by the PBC:

1. Arab society
2. The ultra-Orthodox sector
3. Students with physical disabilities (increasing accessibility)
4. Students with learning disabilities
5. The geographical periphery in Israel

7.1.2 Specific Support Measures

The following programs have been created to provide support and access to the target groups defined as disadvantaged:

1) Plan to expand access to higher education for Arab society

Additional funding is available to support Arab students in academic institutions: in light of the complexity and importance of the issue, the PBC has set several preconditions which institutions must meet in order to receive budgetary aid:

i. The appointment of a senior staff member to oversee the issue in each of the budgeted institutions who will be responsible to the President or Rector.

ii. Translation into Arabic of the relevant portion of the internet sites of the budgeted institutions.

iii. The establishment of an institutional steering committee on the issue, chaired by a representative of the institution’s administration.

Another measure to expand access for the targeted population consists in adapting preparatory pre-academic tracks to the needs of Arab students through a special assistance program for preparatory courses funded by the PBC, a budget dedicated to marketing the institutions’ preparatory courses and providing scholarships to outstanding students who will continue to undergraduate studies. As a result of the program 7 additional unique preparatory courses have been opened for Arab society, so that in total, support programs are offered for 29 unique and combined preparatory courses. Prior to the implementation of the program, approximately 600 Arab students were enrolled in the course, whereas today over 1,200 students attend the preparatory courses conducted by the budgeted institutions.

Support for Arab undergraduate students is also offered with particular focus on the first year, in order to encourage qualitative integration in studies, while reducing dropout rates, dragging out studies and switching classes. As part of this project, PBC has allocated funds to budgeted institutions in order to provide social support, academic support and personal counselling, improve study skills and language
proficiency, etc. Institutions have been given flexibility in using the budget in accordance with recognized needs, subject however to oversight by the steering committee. All the relevant budgeted institutions participate in the program. One way in which the PBC assesses the effectiveness of the program is by considering the percentage of transition from Year 1 to Year 2 in each institution, and this element is also a factor in the budgeting model of the program.

In addition, there are several other programs which each institution can conduct as part of the first degree, namely:

**“One Step Ahead”:** in order to facilitate the initial encounter between students from the Arab sector and academic life, the Hebrew language and Israeli culture, the “One Step Ahead” program is implemented in institutions. The program, carried out about two months before the opening of undergraduate studies, reinforces language proficiency and study skills, provides academic orientation, and more.

**Dialogue programs:** during “Operation Protective Edge”, 2014 of the Israeli-Gaza conflict considerable tension arose between Jewish and Arab students, and therefore in order to improve the level of understanding and mutual respect between the Arab and Jewish students on campus, a special budget has been allocated for the benefit of activities focusing on dialogue. Through such activities the PBC hopes to create a more pleasant atmosphere around the campuses, and encourage understanding and mutual respect between students.

Providing scholarships for outstanding Arab students at all stages of graduate degrees; within this framework, scholarships are awarded to Master’s degree students, doctoral students and post-doctoral fellows. In addition, grants are given for the purpose of integrating outstanding Arab academic staff members.

As part of this program two merit scholarships designated for Arab society were added in 2013-14: a scholarship for a Master’s research degree and a postdoctoral scholarship for scholarship recipients who carry out advanced studies in leading institutions abroad. This has completed the sequence of scholarships for outstanding students who come from the Arab sector, where the above scholarships join the doctoral students scholarships and the Maaf scholarships (as of 2015 in collaboration with the “Rothschild Foundation”) to integrate outstanding Arab academic staff members. Despite the steady rise in the number of graduate students, during the first years in which the above scholarships were distributed, they attracted a relatively small number of candidates and currently efforts are being made, in conjunction with the academic institutions, to increase the number of applicants.

**Transfer of knowledge between institutions** by the forum of program directors and coordinators established in cooperation with the Van Leer Institute. The forum acts as a collaborative body of knowledge for the PBC, the institutions and the public, which enables them to learn from successes and improve the implementation of existing plans within the institutions for the benefit of Arab society. In each session, different key themes are discussed; institutions with extensive knowledge and experience in those subjects present the programs which they conduct and share their experiences with the people in the field. This forum makes it possible to share learning and improve the solutions given to students at all institutions. To date, eight sessions have been held.

**A special treatment for specific groups requiring more comprehensive solutions** due to wide societal gaps, relative to other sectors in Arab society:

A. **Bedouin society in the south:** “Gateway to Academy” pilot. Bedouin society in the south of the country suffers from many difficulties including very low representation in higher education. Increasing integration in the higher education system necessitates special treatment. After a lengthy process to identify solutions capable of significantly expanding the representation and success of Bedouin society in higher education, a decision was made to operate a unique pilot project for members of the Bedouin community which would allow an examination of broader tools
down the line. As part of this pilot, Sapir College initiated a four-year program that provides very broad academic, social and economic support throughout the range of disciplines taught at the college such as social work, law, economics, computer science, engineering and more.

B. East Jerusalem – most of the residents of East Jerusalem do not study within the Israeli educational system and therefore, without the Israeli matriculation exams, it is difficult to be accepted for higher education in the country. As part of Government Decision 1775, additional solutions have been offered to students from East Jerusalem within the framework of the pre-academic preparatory programs to make up for the lack of Israeli matriculation exams.

The PBC has contracted the Brookdale Institute to examine the implementation of the program to expand Arab students’ access in institutions, with an emphasis on the solutions offered at the undergraduate level; this followed earlier research conducted by the Brookdale Institute to examine the preparatory course pilot (conducted in 2012).

2) Program to Increase Access for the Ultra-Orthodox Sector

Currently, there are approximately 12,000 ultra-orthodox students in the Higher Education system in Israel.

In recent years, the CHE/PBC has invested significant efforts in order to increase the ultra-orthodox community’s access to Higher Education. The Ultra-Orthodox community in Israel faces both pedagogical and cultural difficulties which hinders its integration into regular Higher Education campuses. In order to assist with the process of integration, designated academic frameworks were established under the responsibility of recognized academic Higher Education Institutions throughout the country and in various fields of study. These frameworks offer Bachelor’s programs, whereas advanced degrees are offered as part of the regular programs taught at Israeli Higher Education Institutions.

In addition, in light of the economic gap of the ultra-orthodox community, a special program offering scholarships and loans was established.

3) Assistance Program for People with Learning Disabilities

The aim of the program is to support higher education institutions implementing special programs to assist students with learning disabilities. The model provides an incentive to institutions to invest in a wider range of forms of support: accommodations in methods of test-taking, orientation days for students and faculty, tutoring by students, treatment by experts, workshops and professional personnel.

4) Accessibility for People with Physical Disabilities

The aim of the program is to enable citizens with disabilities to obtain optimal access to higher education by removing physical barriers that exist in academic campuses. Accordingly, within PBC’s designated budget, NIS 90 million (approximately 21 million Euro) was allocated from 2013 to 2016 for the benefit of physical and sensory adjustments for disabled people in all the budgeted institutions of the PBC. These activities include building ramps, lifts, modification of existing elevators, installation of special audio systems and signage accessible to different populations. Criteria for allocations between the institutions are proportionate and based on objective data of the premises at any institution (including consideration of old institutions, which were built before 1972) and the number of students.

5) Expanding access to higher education in the periphery

The “Achievements Program” was established in 2002 in order to expand access to higher education among residents of the periphery, as a collaborative effort between the Council for Higher Education, the Gruss Fund, the Rothschild-Caesarea Foundation, the Aluma organization and local authorities. The program operates in 31 centres in the periphery and in about 20 centres in Arab localities. During the year, achievements coordinators provide services to more than 20,000 young people in all the
communities taking part in the program. The program helps more than 3,000 new students each year to join the ranks of academia and pre-academic programs.

7.2 Guidance and Counselling in Higher Education

7.2.1 Academic Guidance

HEIs generally provide academic counselling to students at the level of the faculty or department. Academic counsellors for the different programs and degree cycles are appointed within the departments. In addition, the Dean of Students at the different HEIs assists students in solving problems that they encounter during their studies.

7.2.2 Psychological Counselling

Psychological counselling is available to students, staff and members of the community at HEIs, usually through the Psychological Services Unit of the Dean of Students. Students can receive group or private therapy at significantly subsidized rates. The counselling is aimed to assist students in dealing with psychological or psychiatric issues, stress caused by their studies, fear of testing, and other related psychological issues.

7.2.3 Career Guidance

Over the years, HEIs in Israel have created centres in which they provide guidance to students regarding their future career possibilities and conduct workshops for creating CVs, job interviews, etc. There is currently no national funding or special programs to promote the creation of career centres in HEIs, except in the case of the Arab population, where HEIs receive special budgets to provide career counselling to these students.

8 Mobility and internalisation in Higher Education

8.1 Student Mobility

In Israel, Erasmus+ is the only current programme at national level that provides funding for students to study overseas. Through Erasmus+, Israeli students can participate in the International Credit Mobility scheme which enables students to study abroad for between 3 to 12 months and is open to students at all academic levels. Higher Education Institutions in Israel sign inter-institutional agreements with European institutions, which have received funding for mobility and, based on these agreements, the HEIs select students to participate in the programme. Recognition of students' qualifications is a requirement under the programme and the HEIs are responsible for recognising and validating their studies. Some HEIs in Israel have their own mobility programmes but these are not regulated by the national authorities.

8.2 Academic Staff Mobility

Israeli national policy does not currently focus on staff mobility in higher education. Consequently, national policy goals have not been defined in this area. Staff in Israeli Higher Education Institutions is eligible to participate in overseas exchanges through the Erasmus+ programme and/or the Marie Skłodowska Curie action of the Horizon 2020 programme. Erasmus+ provides funding for academic and administrative staff to participate in mobility for the purposes of teaching or training. The duration of the mobility ranges from 5 days to 2 months. The Higher Education Institutions in Israel and Europe implement this mobility on the basis of inter-institutional
agreements and determine the number and types of mobility. Costs of travel and accommodation are provided for the participants. This programme was only recently launched in Israel and therefore no exact data is available regarding the number of staff who have participated or the impact of the programme. However, funding has been provided for 438 Israeli staff members to travel to European institutions during 2016-2017.

Marie Skłodowska Curie provides funding for researchers to pursue advanced research projects in or in collaboration with institutions from other countries. Mobility periods within these projects range from one month to three years. The staff group targeted depends on the specific project, however, in general doctoral candidates, researchers and academic staff is eligible to participate. Participants receive funding based on the length and type of program, with longer programs providing salary agreements and social security arrangements. Recognition is not obligatory, however the programme aims to provide opportunities and funding to the top researchers in the field and as such the assumption is that their participation will assist them in developing their careers. The programme is organised, coordinated and funded by the European Union. 758 Israeli researchers received funding under the Framework Programme (2007-2013).

8.3 Other Dimensions of Internationalisation in Higher Education

8.3.1 European, Global and Intercultural Dimension in Curriculum Development

No national policies have been created aimed at including European, global or intercultural dimensions in curricula.

8.3.2 Partnerships and Networks

Israel joined the European Union’s TEMPUS programme in 2008 and participated until its completion in 2013. More than half of Israel’s Higher Education Institutions took part in TEMPUS partnership projects and as a result, bolstered their cooperation with education institutions abroad. Israel continues to participate in the Erasmus+ programme as a Partner Country and Israeli HEIs collaborate with Europe and other countries through the Capacity Building in Higher Education action.

8.4 Bilateral Agreements and Worldwide Cooperation

8.4.1 Bilateral Agreements

The Israel Council for Higher Education has entered into a number of bilateral agreements to support international cooperation in the field of higher education. These include:

a) Agreement with the China Scholarship Council signed in January 2015 to provide scholarships for Chinese students to study in Israel for Master Degrees or to pursue short-term summer programs.

b) Agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Italian Ministry of Education signed in September 2015 to provide scholarships for Israeli and Italian researchers to undertake a research project of up to four months duration. On the Israeli side, the agreement will be carried out within the framework of the Israeli Centres of Research Excellence (I-CORE) program, and on the Italian side it will be implemented through Italian universities and research centres.

In addition, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs has entered cultural agreements with a number of countries through which scholarships are provided for foreign students and post-doctoral researchers to study in Israel. Cultural agreements have been signed with the following countries: Argentina, Austria, Belarus, Bulgaria, Canada (Quebec Province), China, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic,
Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Korea, Lithuania, Latvia, Mexico, Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Republic of Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also reached specific scholarship arrangements with the following countries: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, India, Great Britain, Finland, France, Luxembourg, Japan, Norway, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Russia.

Two different types of scholarships are offered to foreign students and post-doctoral researchers:

a. Summer Hebrew language courses (Ulpan)
b. One academic year or research studies.

Lastly, in 1956 the governments of the United States and Israel established The United States–Israel Educational Foundation (USIEF) to administer the Fulbright Program in Israel. The Foundation is funded by the United States and Israeli governments and is governed by a bi-national Board of Directors. The Foundation aims to promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and Israel by means of student and faculty exchanges at the highest possible level of academic excellence. The foundation works through the following channels:

- The Fulbright Grant Program
- The Fulbright Seminar for Advanced Studies
- USIEF Lecturer Program
- Alumni Activities

8.4.2 Cooperation and Participation in Worldwide Programmes and Organisations

As a member country of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Israeli Council for Higher Education takes part in the OECD Higher Education Programme. In this capacity, Israel participates in the forum in which education professionals can exchange experiences and benefit from shared reflection, thought and analysis, in order to address issues of concern.

Israel joined the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1949, and is active in its educational activities, including projects relating to higher education.

The Council for Higher Education's Quality Assurance Division is also a member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). Through this organization, the Council shares best practices in quality assurance with other Quality Assurance Agencies throughout the world. In addition, the Quality Assurance Division cooperates with the Quality Assurance Networks in Europe and the United States.

9 On-going reforms and Policy developments

9.1 Overall national education strategy and key objectives

In Israel, all matters concerning higher education are governed by the Council for Higher Education (CHE), which operates independently from the Ministry of Education. The policy for the higher education system in Israel is derived through the objectives created in the five-year plans of the Planning and Budgeting Committee.

9.2 Overview of the education reform process and drivers

The Council for Higher Education and Planning and Budgeting Committee are the two central actors in advancing higher education policy and creating reforms. As described, above, the CHE creates policy on issues related to academic issues and is responsible, among other things, for approving the
establishment of Higher Education Institutes (HEI), accrediting new degrees and academic programs and the quality assurance of existing programs.

The PBC is responsible for all matters relating to the budget allocations and approvals for Israel's accredited HEIs. In line with its five year plans, the PBC advances higher education reforms and funds programs established to implement the policy and reforms adopted by the CHE/PBC.

9.3 National reforms in Higher Education

In 2010 a new multiannual plan for the Israeli higher education system for the years 2010/11-2015/16 was agreed upon and signed between the PBC and the Israeli Ministry of Finance. The multiannual plan embodies several reforms in various areas, and has been accorded high national priority, as almost every sector in which Israel enjoys a relative advantage in effect or in force is directly concerned with both the quality of human capital and the quality of research generated by the higher education institutions.

The multiannual plan focuses on three main aspects:

- Promoting scientific research excellence
- Improving the quality of teaching and the human capital
- Increasing the accessibility of the higher education system to specific sectors.

These goals are pursued to address national needs of the labour market and the economy.

In order to achieve these objectives, it was decided that the PBC would continue to work towards improving the quality of research and teaching in the universities and academic colleges, primarily through the following measures:

- Updating the existing budgetary model, mainly by emphasizing the relative advantages of the individual institutions of higher education in quality and competitive research, and creating incentives to encourage the recruitment of young outstanding academic staff (including reducing "Brain Drain");
- Providing incentives to improve the quality of teaching in the academic colleges, among other things, by awarding extra remuneration to outstanding academic staff and reducing the teaching workload of staff members who conduct research;
- Increasing funding of competitive research grants, mainly through a substantial increase in the amount of funding and size of grants awarded by the Israeli Science Foundation, in order to promote collaboration between researchers from different institutes;
- Strengthening the independence of the Quality Assessment Division of CHE;
- Establishing the Israeli Centres of Research Excellence (I-CORE) program, endorsed by the Israeli government. The program's vision is to fundamentally strengthen the long term positioning of Israel's academic research and its stature among leading researchers in Israel and abroad.

In addition, it was decided that the PBC would initiate detailed programs with the aim of increasing the accessibility of the Israeli higher education system to the Arab and ultra-orthodox sectors, in order to address the barriers that inhibit their integration in the higher education system.

This was made possible by developing a holistic and all-encompassing program for the Arab population, spanning the entire spectrum of education from high school, through pre-academic preparatory programs, through all academic degrees and all the way up to academic staff recruitment programs. Special scholarship programs were funded by the PBC, the government and various philanthropic sources and organizations.

In the ultra-orthodox sector, special platforms were established by the HEIs in order to make it possible for ultra-religious students to study in higher education, attain an academic degree and integrate in the Israeli work force. In addition, over 10 academic frameworks were designated specifically for the ultra-
orthodox sector. These frameworks (MAHARs) are operated alongside and under the full supervision of the HEIs, and include a wide range of programs and degrees. Furthermore, as a complementary step, the PBC established a scholarship and tuition loan program for Ultra-Orthodox students, in which some 2,000 students have participated as of 2015. Between 2010 and 2016 the budget of Israeli higher education grew by approximately 3 billion NIS (~700 million Euro), an increase of 44%. Most of the budget increase during these years was designated for the recruitment of academic staff (an increase of 54%), increasing accessibility to higher education for specific populations (an increase of roughly 250%), and research funding (an increase of 43%).

9.3.1 2015

**Gender Equality in Higher Education**

The Committee for the Advancement and Representation of Women in Higher Education was established at the end of 2013, acknowledging the importance of promoting women in higher education. The committee includes representatives from both CHE/PBC and the National Council for the Promotion of Women in Science and Technology of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Space, and is headed by the President of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities; the goal of the Committee is to engage in the most comprehensive and systematic reform possible.

The Committee’s recommendations focus on three elements: directing women towards academic research, recruiting women as senior academic staff and promoting them to higher positions among academic staff. The resolutions passed by the CHE/PBC make up only a small part of the reform, which is led primarily by the aforementioned National Council for the Promotion of Women in Science and Technology. These resolutions are designed to raise awareness of gender issues both within the framework of the higher education system as a whole and at the level of each HEI, and include a systematic review of the existing guidelines in the institutions in connection with gender equality (accreditation, quality assurance, scholarship terms and conditions, etc.), guidelines for publishing data, discussion and examination of institutional policy in regard to gender, providing incentives for HEIs to actively promote women and the expansion of post-doctoral fellowships for women.

**Transfer of Teacher Training Colleges to the PBC**

At the end of 2011, the CHE/PBC and the Ministry of Finance signed an agreement in which it was decided that all 21 teacher training colleges that had previously been under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education would gradually be transferred to the responsibility of the PBC. This move was decided in light of various committees’ recommendations, and was designed to allow the teacher training colleges to operate under complete academic freedom in the same way as the universities and academic colleges of Israel.

The roadmap for the complete transfer of responsibility for the planning and budgeting of the entire academic system of teacher training from the Ministry of Education to the PBC was approved by the CHE, following the PBC’s recommendations, in February of 2015. As a first step, it was also decided that two teacher training colleges would be transferred to the responsibility of the PBC during the 2015/16 academic year.

9.3.2 2014

During 2014 the PBC and CHE decided to establish a permanent steering committee for the humanities in higher education to be run in collaboration with the Van-Leer Institute and the Yad Hanadiv Foundation. The committee is responsible for coordinating the various initiatives proposed by the PBC and CHE that relate to the humanities, and for outlining policy and modes of action to deal with the challenges faced by humanities faculties in Israel.
9.3.3  2013

In 2012/13, CHE and PBC began implementing a comprehensive program to promote academic relations with China and India, and to strengthen Israel's academic stature in the world. Since then, academic collaboration with these countries has improved considerably, and by 2013/14 approximately 400 additional students and post-doctorate fellows had enrolled in all the institutions of higher education in Israel. The program consists of four channels of operation: collaborative research grants, post-doctoral fellowships for students from China and India, encouraging recruitment of bachelor and Master degree students from China and India and a summer course in Israel for outstanding students from these countries.

10  Legislation

- Council for Higher Education Law, 1958
- Government Resolution No. 666 Regarding the Planning and Budgeting Committee
- Council for Higher Education Rules (Recognition of Institutions), 1964
- Council for Higher Education Rules (Authorization of Institution to Confer a Recognized Degree), 1964
- Council for Higher Education Rules (Recognized Degrees), 1964
- Council for Higher Education Rules (Permit to Open and Operate and Institution of Higher Education 1972
- Council for Higher Education Rules (Revocation of Recognition of Recognized Institution), 1988
- Council for Higher Education Rules (Manner of Advertising a Licensed Institution), 1999
- Council for Higher Education Regulations (Budget) - 1975
- Council for Higher Education Regulations (Coordination Regarding Acceptance and Appointment of Employees, 1975
- Council for Higher Education Regulations (Payment of Benefit and Reimbursement to Council Members, 2012
- Council for Higher Education Regulations (Fees) - 2012
- Student Rights Law, 2007
- Student Rights Regulation (Linkage of Registration Fee), 2010
- Student Rights Rules (Adjustments for Fertility Treatments, Pregnancy, Childbirth, Adoption or Receipt of Child for Custody or Foster Care), 2012
- Student Rights Rules (Adjustments for Students Performing Reserve Duty), 2012
- Acceptance of Discharged Soldiers Regulations (Fund for Promotion of Higher Education Studies), 2011
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