



אוניברסיטת בן-גוריון בנגב  
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

The Ben-Gurion Research Institute  
for the Study of Israel & Zionism

## **The Israel Studies International Program – ISIP**

### **Rules and Regulations for the MA Degree in Israel Studies at The Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel & Zionism**

2013-14

#### **1. Introduction**

The Israel Studies International MA Program (henceforth, “the “International Program”) is held at the Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism (henceforth, “the Institute”) and is aimed at students interested in furthering their knowledge of Israel studies and developing their research abilities.

#### **2. Definitions**

##### **2.1 “MA Student”:**

A student who has been accepted into the MA program for the purpose of obtaining an MA degree in Israel studies.

##### **2.2 “Lecturer”:**

A faculty member or someone who has been certified by the Committee on Research Students of the Ben-Gurion Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism (“Committee on Research Students.” See definition in item 2.8 below.) to teach in the International Program.

### 2.3 “Supervisor”:

A regular faculty member with the rank of lecturer or above in a recognized academic institution who supervises the student in the preparation of his or her research plan and the writing of his or her thesis. The Teaching Committee of the International Program (henceforth, “Teaching Committee”. See definition in item 2.9 below.) appoints the supervisor with the knowledge of the Committee on Research Students. Those who are not regular faculty members of the Institute may not serve as supervisors without an appointed co-supervisor from the Institute.

### 2.4 “Additional Supervisor”:

A regular faculty member of a recognized institution whose appointment has been approved by the Teaching Committee with the knowledge of the Committee on Research Students.

### 2.5 “Research Advisor”:

The Teaching Committee, with the recommendation of the supervisor and the knowledge of the Committee on Research Students, may appoint a research advisor or research advisors to the student. Such an appointment may be made at any stage of the research process. The research advisor will advise the student on subjects connected to his or her research. Faculty members of recognized academic and research institutions or well-known experts in the field may be appointed as research advisors.

### 2.6 “Reader”:

A regular faculty member with the rank of lecturer or above from a recognized academic institution who has accepted the offer of the Teaching Committee to serve in this position. The Teaching Committee may appoint an additional reader with the knowledge of the Committee on Research Students.

2.7 “The Steering Committee of the Israel Studies International MA Program”

(henceforth, “the Steering Committee”):

the uppermost academic authority of the International Program.

The Steering Committee members are senior faculty members from well-known academic institutions in Israel and abroad.

2.8 “The Committee on Research Students of the Ben-Gurion Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism” (henceforth, the Committee on Research Students):

The Committee on Research Students oversees training and teaching procedures on behalf of the Steering Committee.

2.9 “The Teaching Committee of the Ben-Gurion Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism” (henceforth, the Teaching Committee):

The Teaching Committee oversees the continuous management of the program.

2.10 “Examiner”:

A faculty member of a recognized academic institution whom the Teaching Committee has recommended appointing as an examiner in the student’s final examination.

2.11 “Curriculum”:

The curriculum for the degree “MA in Israel Studies” that was determined by the Teaching Committee and approved by the Committee on Research Students.

2.12 “List of Requirements”:

The list of required courses and papers that was determined for the student by his/her advisor or supervisor and approved by the Teaching Committee as the list of requirements for the MA degree.

2.13 “Thesis”:

A thesis written in accordance with the structure and terminology accepted in the professional literature.

2.14 “Thesis Examination”:

An examination that takes place after the submission of the thesis and is based on the research presented in the thesis.

2.15 “Final Examination”:

An examination that takes place following the fulfillment of all the course requirements of a student in the General (non-thesis) Track of the International Program (henceforth “General Track”)

2.16 “Grades”:

The student’s achievements in examinations and papers, according to the evaluation of his or her lecturers, examiners, and readers.

**3. The Organizational Structure of the Program**

3.1 Committee on Research Students

3.1.1 Committee Composition:

The Committee on Research Students is composed of members of the Institute from the Steering Committee and the head of the MA Program will serve as its chair.

3.1.2 Roles of the Committee on Research Students

3.1.2.1 Approval of new tracks in the International Program and changes in existing tracks

3.1.2.2 Approval of cooperative projects with recognized academic research institutions in Israel and abroad

3.1.2.3 Approval of extensions of the period of a student's study beyond the period specified in item 5.1 below. The Committee on Research Students also has the authority to make decisions regarding the cessation of a student's studies.

3.1.2.4 Approval of the readers recommended by the Teaching Committee.

3.1.2.5 Approval of decisions of the Teaching Committee regarding eligibility for the MA degree, including the grade "in accordance with the requirements of the degree," and the honors "cum laude" and "summa cum laude" and passing these decisions on to the University Senate for approval through the head of the Institute.

## 3.2 The Teaching Committee

### 3.2.1 Committee Composition:

The head of the International Program will appoint up to three committee members from among the faculty members of the Institute and will serve as chair of the Teaching Committee. The Institute's coordinator for student affairs will serve as secretary.

### 3.2.2 Roles of the Teaching Committee

3.2.2.1 To determine the conditions of acceptance of the International Program.

3.2.2.2 To prepare an annual study schedule.

3.2.2.3 To appoint readers for research proposals and theses, to evaluate their opinions, and to pass them on to the Committee on Research Students.

3.2.2.4 To choose candidates for MA degree studies

3.2.2.5 To confirm that a supervisor is appointed to each student in the Research Track who has completed his or

her course requirements in the first semester, and to inform the secretary of the Committee on Research Students of the appointment.

3.2.2.6 To approve thesis proposals and extensions for thesis proposal submission in accordance with the regulations of the International Program.

3.2.2.7 To choose an alternate supervisor in cases where the original supervisor cannot continue.

3.2.2.8 To approve the supervisor's recommendation to appoint an advisor to a student (see item 2.5). The advisor may serve as a thesis reader or as an examiner in the student's final examination.

3.2.2.9 To approve changes in thesis topics and to inform the Committee on Research Students of such changes.

3.2.2.10 To choose the examiners for the thesis examination and informing the Committee on Research Students of these choices.

3.2.2.11 To confirm that the thesis is submitted and other degree requirements are fulfilled satisfactorily.

3.2.2.12 To send the annual list of courses and information on new courses offered in the International Program to the Committee on Research Students.

3.2.2.13 To take all the necessary steps to ensure that studies proceed in the proper manner

3.2.2.14 To receive approval from the Committee on Research Students for any deviation from the regulations of the International Program that appear in this document.

### 3.3 Research Students' Office (henceforth "the office")

### 3.3.1 Roles of the Office

3.3.1.1 Academic administration for MA studies.

3.3.1.2 Coordinating and connecting between the various committees of the Institute.

3.3.1.3 Carrying out the decisions of the various committees.

3.3.1.4 Preparing the minutes of the meetings of the Teaching Committee and the Committee on Research Students.

3.3.1.5 MA student administration

## 4. Registration and Conditions of Acceptance into the Program

### 4.1 Conditions of Acceptance

4.1.1 The Teaching Committee will accept students whose undergraduate GPA is 80 or above, according to one of the following possibilities:

- 1) The student has an average of 80 or above in the specific field in which he or she wishes to pursue MA studies.
- 2) The student has a weighted average of 80 or above in all of his or her undergraduate subjects.

4.1.2 Candidates must submit an official document that attests to their knowledge of the English language. Israeli students must have successfully completed Advanced Level 2 English. Foreign students must pass the TOEFL or provide a document that attests to sufficient academic experience in the English language.

4.1.3 The Teaching Committee may raise the minimum grade for acceptance with the approval of the Committee on Research Students.

4.1.4 The Teaching Committee may determine additional conditions of acceptance with the approval of the Committee on Research Students.

4.1.5 Students who have begun MA studies at a recognized academic institution in Israel or abroad and wish to transfer to the International Program are required to go through the same application process as other candidates.

## 4.2 Student Status

Students will be accepted to the International Program in one of the following categories:

### 4.2.1 Regular Student Status

A regular student is one who holds a bachelor's degree from a recognized academic institution and fulfills the entrance requirements of the International Program. Acceptance is conditional upon a list of requirements presented to the student in his or her letter of acceptance.

### 4.2.2 Special Student Status

#### 4.2.2.1 Special Status: Conditional

A student who has completed his or her undergraduate studies, but has not yet received all of his or her grades. The status of such students will change to "regular student" when they submit documentation confirming that they have completed their studies with the grades required by the International Program.

Students may study with this status for one academic year only. If the necessary documentation is not submitted at the end of the year, the student's studies will be discontinued.

#### 4.2.2.2 Special Status: Fulfilling Prerequisites

Students who are required to take at least two prerequisite courses in the first year of their studies, as determined by the Teaching Committee in the letter of acceptance.

#### 4.2.2.3 Special Status: Probation

A student whose undergraduate grades are lower than those required may be accepted to the International Program in special cases for one academic year only, in accordance with the recommendation of the Teaching Committee and the approval of the Committee on Research Students. At the end of the first semester or the first academic year, the Committee on Research Students will decide, with the recommendation of the Teaching Committee, whether to change the student's status to that of "Regular Student" in accordance with his or her academic achievements. The University is under no obligation to grant a student who is accepted with probationary status regular student status at the end of the academic year.

#### 4.2.2.4 Special Status: Fulfilling Prerequisites toward MA Degree Studies

Students who do not fulfill the entrance requirements and are required to take at least three prerequisite courses may be accepted as students fulfilling prerequisites toward MA studies.

At the same time, these students are allowed to take MA courses with the approval of the Teaching Committee. Students who successfully complete the prerequisite courses will be accepted as “regular students” at the end of the first academic year, with the approval of the MA Teaching Committee. The MA courses will be counted toward the MA degree. Studies in this framework will take place over the course of one year only.

#### 4.2.2.5 Special Status: Completing Thesis Writing

Students with an MA in the General (non-thesis) Track who decide they are interested in pursuing advanced studies will be required to write a thesis. If necessary, in accordance with the decision of the Teaching Committee, they will be required to take courses from the MA program. If these students fulfill the requirements for the Combined MA/Doctoral Track, they will be able to request to be admitted to it.

#### 4.2.2.6 Special Status: Non-Degree Student

Students who hold an MA who wish to take courses in the MA program. Such studies may continue up to one academic year only.

### 5. Duration of Studies

Students are required to complete their studies within two years. Students in the Research Track may submit their theses up to the end of the third year, with the approval of the Teaching Committee and the Committee on Research Students.

## **6. Curriculum**

6.1 The curriculum and requirements will be detailed in the acceptance letter.

6.2 Registration and academic consultation will take place prior to the start of the semester to determine the course roster for the coming semester. Announcements regarding dates for course registration will be sent by the office and appear on the program's Internet site.

6.3 If a student fails to register by the end of the add/drop period, the office will terminate his or her studies. In such cases, renewing studies will require the approval of the Teaching Committee.

6.4 Students are eligible to submit a written request for recognition of credits earned in an MA program in another recognized academic institution. Such a request must be accompanied by the appropriate documentation. Recognition of these credits will not exceed half of the total credits the student is required to accumulate toward the MA degree, and will be contingent upon the courses being comparable in terms of level and content to courses in the International Program. Students will be required to take a minimum of two seminars in the International Program.

6.5 For students with the status of "non-degree student" who are accepted into the International Program, the credits they earn will be recognized under the following conditions:

6.5.1 The course was taken in the past five years before the student was accepted into the MA program.

6.5.2 The course grade was at least 75.

6.5.3 The Teaching Committee approved recognition of the course.

6.6 In the final GPA of the MA degree, only courses studied at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev will be calculated.

6.7 Students must register for courses in every semester throughout their studies. If they have completed their course work and are conducting research, they will register for thesis writing.

## 7. **Courses of Study and Study Tracks**

### 7.1 Study Tracks

The Program has two study tracks:

#### 7.1.1 Research Track

This track is aimed at students who are interested in improving their research abilities, broadening their academic education, and expanding their professional expertise. The scope of studies in this track is 28 credit hours for course work and 8 credit hours for the thesis. Prerequisite courses are not included in the framework of credit hours. Students in the Research Track will complete their studies by writing a thesis and defending it in an examination. Students in this track are required to submit two seminar papers.

#### 7.1.2 General Track

This track is aimed at students interested in broadening their academic education and expanding their knowledge in the professional field or field of study that it addresses. Students in this track are required to take 36 course credits and are exempted from writing a thesis. They will be required to submit three seminar papers and take a final examination.

### 7.1.3 Transferring from the General Track to the Research Track

Conditional upon the approval of the Teaching Committee. Students must have an average of at least 85 at the end of the first year of studies.

### 7.1.4 Transferring from the Research Track to the General Track

A student who received a scholarship from the Institute will be required to return it if he or she moves from the Research Track to the General Track.

## **8. Grade Requirements of the Program**

8.1 Passing from semester to semester is conditional upon achieving a weighted GPA of at least 80.

### 8.2 Passing a Course

8.2.1 A passing grade in any course is at least 65.

8.2.2 If a student fails a required course twice, his or her studies will be terminated.

### 8.3 Termination of Studies

The Teaching Committee, with the approval of the Committee on Research Students, may terminate the studies of a student who has not fulfilled the study requirements or the conditions detailed in the letter of acceptance (list of requirements).

#### 8.4 Composition of the Final Course Grade

8.4.1 The lecturer is required to prepare a syllabus for each course in which the components of the final grade are detailed. The syllabus will be published for the students and submitted to the office to be posted on the Internet site of the International Program.

#### 8.5 Composition of the Final MA Degree Grade

The components of the final grade of the MA degree will be as follows:

##### 8.5.1 In the Research Track:

Courses: 45%

Thesis: 55% (80% reader's grades and  
20% defending thesis)

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100%

##### 8.5.2 In the General Track

Courses: 75%

Final Examination 25%

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100%

8.5.3 In calculating of the weight of seminar papers in the final average, two points beyond the credit value of the course will be added for each seminar paper.

## **9. Leave of Absence from Studies**

9.1 Students who wish to request a leave of absence from their studies will submit a written request to the Teaching Committee and provide details regarding the request. Students in the Research Track must attach a recommendation from their supervisor. The recommendation of the Teaching Committee will be passed on to the Committee on Research Students.

9.2 If a student does not return at the end of the leave of absence, his or her studies will be terminated. In such cases, students who wish to return to studies at a later date, will be required to register again through the Registration and Admission Unit of the University.

9.3 An approved leave of absence is not taken into account in the number of years of study.

## **10. Examination Procedure**

10.1 MA students are eligible to be tested on one test date only. Failing a course (required or elective) requires the student to re-register for it.

## **14. Final Examination**

14.1 Students in the General Track must take a written final examination.

14.2 The Teaching Committee determines the date and structure of the examination.

14.3 A passing grade on the final examination is at least 75.

14.4 A student who fails the examination, that is, who receives a grade of less than 75, will be allowed to take the examination at another time with the approval of the Teaching Committee and the knowledge of the Committee on Research Students.

14.5 In the General Track, the Teaching Committee will set two examination dates during the academic year and the office will publicize them ahead of time, at the start of the academic year.

14.6 The Teaching Committee will set the date of the final examination on the thesis at the end of the thesis-reading process.

## **15. MA Diploma in Israel Studies**

15.1 An MA diploma will be awarded to students who complete the requirements (with a degree average of at least 75) and receive the approval of the University Senate for their eligibility for the MA degree according to the recommendation of the Committee on Research Students.

### **15.2 Honors on the Diploma**

Honors will be awarded at the end of the MA studies according to the distribution of grades of all the students completing an MA degree in the International Program in a given year.

The honors for the student's achievements in his or her MA studies will be noted on the diploma. The honors will be as follows:

"With highest honors"

"With honors"

"In accordance with the requirements of the degree"

The University determines the requirements for each honor.