

## **Absorption of Senior Israeli and Foreign Researchers in Israeli Universities**

This study, conducted at the request of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, focuses on senior Israeli and foreign researchers who have chosen to join Israeli universities as Associate or Full Professors. The research provides an up-to-date overview of these researchers in Israel, including their research interests, reasons for coming to Israel, their integration into Israeli universities, and strategies to promote this process.

The research was conducted between August 2019 and May 2020. The research team interviewed over 60 senior academic staff members from various universities in Israel, including the Technion, the Weizmann Institute, Bar Ilan, Ariel, Tel Aviv, Ben Gurion, Haifa, and the Hebrew Universities. Additionally, extensive searches were conducted in open-source and bibliometric databases to gather information on the researchers' scientific areas of interest and their academic career paths.

A total of 101 senior academic staff members were identified as being absorbed into Israeli universities as Associate or Full Professors. Most of them were either Israelis returning to their home country or new immigrants, primarily from North America (USA or Canada). Approximately two-thirds of the researchers were affiliated with exact or natural sciences and technological fields, while one-third were affiliated with humanities or social sciences. Around half of them had previously been visiting professors or on sabbatical in Israel. Moreover, 70% of the participants had completed at least one of their academic degrees in Israel. Nearly 50% of the researchers included in the study, maintained positions abroad in addition to their affiliation with an Israeli institution.

Most of the returning Israelis and new immigrants cited personal reasons as their main motivations for moving to Israel, such as a sense of belonging, family considerations, Zionism, social factors, and more. Others mentioned professional and career-related reasons, such as outstanding Israeli academic research and facilities, for their move.

According to the academic researchers, some of the advantages of relocating to Israel include the innovative atmosphere, the relative ease of establishing new collaborations, exceptional and creative students, and the opportunity to introduce new research fields. However, they also encountered obstacles such as teaching in Hebrew, the academic compensation model, adapting to academic administrative requirements, and facilitating the integration of their families in Israel.

Based on the research findings, this report provides recommendations for facilitating the absorption process of senior academic staff transitioning from universities abroad to Israeli institutions.