

Welcome to Israel

Education system consists of three tiers: primary education (grades 1-6, approx. ages 6–12), middle school (grades 7-9, approx. ages 12–15) and high school (grades 10-12, approx. ages 15–18). Compulsory education takes place from kindergarten through to 12th grade. The school year begins on September 1, ending for elementary school pupils on 30 June, and for middle school and high school pupils on 20 June.

Israeli schools are divided into several tracks: state (*Mamlachti*), state-religious (*Mamlachti dati*), Independent (חרדי *Haredi*) schools (חינוך עצמאי *Hinuch Atsmai*) and the Arab. There are also private schools which reflect the philosophies of specific groups of parents (Democratic Schools) or that are based on the curriculum of a foreign country (e.g. The American International School in Israel). The majority of Israeli children attend state schools. State-religious schools, catering to youngsters from the Orthodox sector (mainly Religious Zionist/Modern Orthodox), offer intensive Jewish studies programs, and emphasize tradition and observance. The Chinuch Atzmai schools focus almost entirely on Torah study and offer very little in terms of secular subjects. Schools in the Arab sector teach in Arabic and offer a curriculum that emphasizes Arab history, religion and culture.





High schools in Israel prepare students for the Israeli matriculation exams (*bagrut*). These are exams covering various academic disciplines, which are studied in units (*yehidot limud*) of one to five on an ascending scale of difficulty. Students with a passing mark on the mandatory matriculation subjects (Hebrew language, English language, mathematics, scripture, history, state studies and literature), who have been tested on at least 21 units, and passed at least one 5-unit exam, receive a full matriculation certificate. In 2006/7, 74.4% of Israeli 12th graders took the bagrut exams while only 46.3% were eligible for a matriculation certificate. In the Arab and Druze sectors, the figures were 35.6% and 43.7% respectively.

A Bagrut certificate and Bagrut scores often determine acceptance into elite military units, admission to academic institutions, and job prospects.



After high education, students are generally conscripted into the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), but may request a postponement of the conscription date to study at a pre-service Mechina, or in a college or university. Those who study in a university at this stage generally do so under a program called *atuda*, where the tuition for their bachelor's degree is paid for by the army. They are however obliged to sign a contract with the army extending their service by 2–3 years. Universities generally require a certain amount of bagrut matriculation units (as well as a certain grade average) and a good grade in the Psychometric Entrance Test, which is similar in many respects to the American SAT. All of Israel's nine public universities, and some of its colleges, are subsidized by the state, and students pay only a small part of the actual cost of tuition.



Thank you for attention