

Education system

Israel

described and compared with
the Dutch system

This document provides information about the education system of Israel. We explain the Dutch equivalent of the most common qualifications from Israel for the purpose of admission to Dutch higher education.

Disclaimer

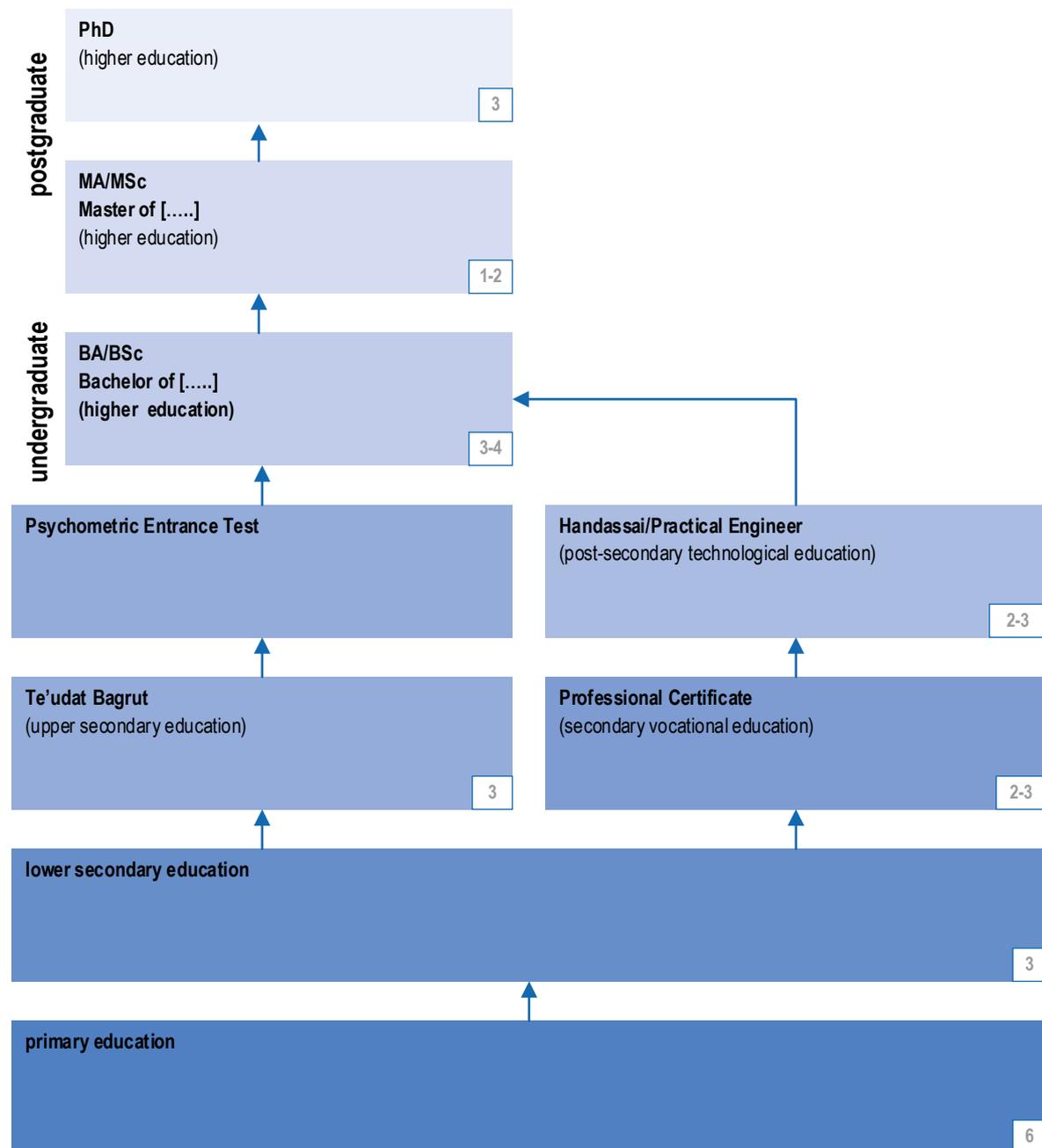
We assemble the information for these descriptions of education systems with the greatest care. However, we cannot be held responsible for the consequences of errors or incomplete information in this document.



With the exception of images and illustrations, the content of this publication is subject to the Creative Commons Name NonCommercial 3.0 Unported licence. Visit www.nuffic.nl/en/home/copyright for more information on the reuse of this publication.

Education system Israel

Education system Israel



0 Duration of education

■ Evaluation chart

The left-hand column in the table below lists the most common foreign qualifications applicable to admission to higher education. The other columns show the Dutch equivalent along with the comparable levels in the Dutch and European qualifications frameworks.

Degree or qualification	Dutch equivalent and NLQF level		EQF level
Professional Certificate	MBO diploma (qualification level 2 or 3)	2/3	2/3
<i>Te'udat Bagrut</i>	HAVO or VWO diploma	4/4+	4
Practical Engineer/Handassai	Associate Degree or 2 years of HBO	5	5
Bachelor	WO or HBO bachelor's degree	6	6
Master	WO or HBO master's degree	7	7

NB

- The information provided in the table is a general recommendation from which no rights may be derived.
- NLQF = Dutch Qualifications Framework. EQF = European Qualifications Framework.
- The EQF/[NLQF level](#) is not so much a reflection of study load or content; rather, it is an indication of a person's knowledge and skills after having completed a certain programme of study.
- Information about Dutch equivalent qualifications can be found on our website: [the Dutch education system](#).
- [The Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market \(SBB\)](#), evaluates statements on foreign qualifications and training at VMBO and MBO level. The evaluation may vary if SBB evaluates the diploma for admission to VET schools or the labour market in the Netherlands.

■ Introduction

The State of Israel is a relatively young country that formed in 1948, following a declaration of independence that realised the long-standing desire to create a 'homeland for the Jewish people'. Israel is a parliamentary democracy with a president as head of state.

Israel is a country of immigrants, with inhabitants from over 80 countries. This has resulted in a variety of population groups, with great diversity in ethnic and cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs. Approximately 76% of the population are Jewish, 20% Arab (Muslims and Christians) and the remaining 4% are Druze, Christians and other groups.

The Israeli education system is governed by national laws that are implemented by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport. The most important legislation governing primary and secondary education dates from 1949 and 1953, and from 1958 for higher education. Since 1949, public education has been compulsory and free for children aged between 3 and 15 (until grade 10). A legislative change extending the age for compulsory education to the 11th and 12th year of secondary school is gradually being introduced. Educational legislation prohibits discrimination based on ethnic origin.

The national education system consists of 5 levels: pre-primary, primary, secondary, post-secondary and higher education. It is divided into 6 years of primary education (grades 1-6), 3 years of lower-secondary education (grades 7-9) and 3 years of upper-secondary education (grades 10-12). There are separate schools for the Jewish and Arab communities, however there are Arab pupils who attend Jewish schools. In Israel there is no clear distinction between academic education and higher professional education. Some programmes contain elements of both higher professional education and university education.

The language of education is either Hebrew or Arabic; the primary/secondary school year runs from the end of August until June, and the academic year from October until June.

■ Primary and secondary education

In general terms, primary and secondary education in Israel can be divided into 4 different school types. The school type will determine part of the curriculum, however all public schools financed by the Ministry of Education must provide the basic curriculum, supplemented by subjects that are relevant to the target group.

Public sector schools include:

- the secular schools, that offer the state-education curriculum in Hebrew as set by the Ministry of Education;
- the orthodox schools, that offer state-religious education in Hebrew, with greater attention devoted to religion and Jewish culture in combination with the national curriculum; and
- the Arab schools, that offer the state curriculum in Arabic, in combination with a greater focus on Arab history, culture and beliefs.

Most pupils attend schools in the state-education sector.

In addition to schools in the public sector, there are also independent schools that operate outside the national system but that are still accredited. These schools are attended by ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) Jews, and devote little time to secular education. According to a law from 1968, all schools in Israel must have a license to provide education.

Primary education

Primary education in Israel consists of a compulsory pre-primary period (kindergarten) for children aged 3-6, followed by 6 years of primary school (until age 12). Primary education is given in schools for the Jewish and Arab communities.

Secondary education

Secondary education is divided into 3 years of lower secondary (ages 12-15) and 3 years of upper secondary school (ages 15-18). Pupils in upper-secondary education can choose between 2 different pathways, or 'tracks': the general track and the technology track.

Lower secondary education

The 3 years of lower secondary education consist of general subjects, including Hebrew language and literature, English, Arabic, French, mathematics, science, history, geography, social studies, religious studies and physical education. Hebrew state-religious schools devote twice as much time to religion as state-education schools, and Arab schools teach both Hebrew and Arabic.

After completing grade 9, pupils continue on to one of the two upper-secondary education tracks. The type of upper secondary education attended by pupils is determined in part by their results from grades 7-9. No diploma is issued at the end of grade 9.

Upper secondary education

In principle, the 2 upper secondary education tracks are offered by all public-sector schools (secular state-education schools, state-religious schools and Arab schools). Regardless of the track chosen, all pupils must satisfy the requirements of the core curriculum, the general components of which are set by the Ministry of Education.

However, grades 10-12 offer more space for additional and specialist subjects outside the core curriculum, depending on students' ambitions and aptitude.

General and technology tracks

The main difference between the curricula of the general and technology tracks is the amount of time spent on general and technology subjects, respectively. Both tracks prepare students for their final exams, and for admission to tertiary education. At the end of grade 12, most pupils take the final exam, called the *Bagrut*, which tests the knowledge accumulated throughout the whole of secondary school, and is designed and assessed by the Ministry of Education. The *Bagrut* is mandatory for admission to higher education.

The level of *Bagrut* exams is expressed in terms of units, with a range from 1 (least difficult) to 5 (most difficult). Every unit represents 90 hours of class time. Pupils take examinations in a number of compulsory core subjects, as well as in an elective or electives.

The compulsory core subjects are listed below, as well as the minimum number of units per subject:

Civics	2 units
Bible. ¹	2 units
Hebrew or Arabic Literature	2 units
Hebrew or Arabic Grammar	2 units
History	2 units
English	3 units
Mathematics	3 units
 Total compulsory units:	 16 units

¹ This is the minimum number of units in state-education schools; the number is higher in state-religious schools. In Arab schools this subject is replaced by Islamic studies.

In addition to these compulsory subjects, pupils must take exams in at least 1 compulsory elective subject worth 5 units, which is usually relevant to the pupil's intended tertiary study programme. The list of approximately 40 elective subjects includes both academic and technical subjects. The academic subjects include: geography, physics, chemistry, biology, computer science, French language and social studies. The technical subjects include accountancy, architecture, management and economics, tourism, visual arts, electrical/mechanical/civil engineering, and microbiology.

In addition to the compulsory core subjects and the compulsory elective subject, pupils may also complete final exams in additional elective subjects. To pass their exams, pupils must achieve a satisfactory grade in at least 21 units, with at least one 5-unit subject.

To be admitted into higher education, pupils will not only have to obtain more than 21 units, but relevant subjects also demand that they complete more units per subject than is stated above. For admission to an academic degree, for example, pupils must take English at a level of 4 units, and mathematics at level 4 or 5.

In addition to the *Bagrut* subjects that are externally examined, pupils can also complete exams in one or more subjects that are assessed by the school itself. Physical education is the most common school-assessed subject, however depending on the subjects offered by individual schools, virtually all of the 40 academic and technical subjects may be school-assessed.

The final *Bagrut* diploma is issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, and comprises a single document listing the subjects in which exams were taken externally, as well as the units and grades per subject. School-assessed subjects (if applicable) are listed on a separate page containing the same information. In English, the *Bagrut* is usually called a 'matriculation exam', 'diploma' or 'certificate'.

In terms of level, the *Te'udat Bagrut* is comparable to a HAVO or VWO diploma, depending on the curriculum and the number of units taken in individual subjects.

Secondary vocational education

Secondary vocational education and training in Israel takes place at industrial schools and is regulated by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labour. Pupils can begin this type of programme in grade 9 or 10 and continue until graduation in grade 12. Training programmes are available for the occupations of electrician, auto mechanic, cook, hair stylists and computer technicians and practical experience is an important part of the curriculum.

Upon completion of the programme, the Professional Certificate is awarded and most graduates enter the work force.

In terms of level, the *Professional Certificate* is comparable to an MBO diploma at qualification level 2 or 3, depending on the curriculum and the duration of the study programme.

Pupils at some schools offering secondary vocational education can prepare for *Bagrut* examinations by including a sufficient number of academic subjects in their curriculum.

Pupils who do not qualify to sit the *Bagrut* exams but who successfully complete 7 units in 3 academic subjects (mathematics, English and language) and 7 units in technical subjects, qualify for admission to *Practical Engineering / Handassai* programmes.

■ Admission to higher education

Access to higher education requires a *Bagrut*. However, this diploma only fulfils the basic requirements. To be admitted, students must obtain many more than 21 units, with a minimum of 4 units in certain subjects (including English and mathematics). In addition to their *Bagrut*, Israeli students must also complete what is called a *Psychometric Entrance Test (PET)*. The PET is primarily an aptitude test, and consists of multiple-choice questions and a written task. It is divided into 3 sections: verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and English. The purpose of this test is to predict individual students' chances of success in higher education. The test can be taken in Hebrew, Arabic, English, Russian, French or Spanish. In combination with the results of the *Bagrut*, the PET results are used by higher education institutions to select students.

Many students do not commence higher education until after their civil service (3 years for men and 2 years for women). Because of this civil service requirement, Israeli students in higher education are generally older than their counterparts in other countries.

■ Higher education

Higher education in Israel is the responsibility of the Council for Higher Education, or CHE. Higher education includes both undergraduate and graduate programmes, and is provided by institutions that are divided into 4 categories by the CHE: universities (9 in total), academic institutions (36), academic colleges for education (23) and academic programmes in colleges under the academic

auspices of universities (4). The term 'academic' is legally protected in Israel, and may only be used by CHE-accredited institutions.

Education provided by technological colleges (see under [University education](#) and [Higher professional education](#)) falls under post-secondary education in Israel and does not culminate in an academic degree.

Universities consist of multiple faculties and offer programmes in the humanities, social sciences, law, technical sciences, the natural sciences, educational studies, business studies and healthcare. Academic institutions vary from single-discipline schools for technical education or the arts, to multidisciplinary institutions with a limited number of different faculties. Academic programs in colleges under the academic auspices of universities that fall under the responsibility of the Bar-Ilan University are available in several disciplines. Depending on the institution, all study programmes ultimately confer the degree of Bachelor, Master or PhD. Hebrew is the language of education in all higher education institutions, however some also offer programmes in other languages.

■ University education

In principle, institutions in all 4 of the above categories can offer academic education and higher professional education. Most programmes offered by universities count as academic programmes, however it is also possible to complete studies in areas such as social work and the paramedic fields (physiotherapy, nursing, etc.) at a university. With the exception of the Open University of Israel and the Ariel University of Samaria (which only offer bachelor's and master's programmes) only universities may confer the degree of PhD. Academic institutions may confer the degrees of Bachelor and Master.

Bachelor's degree (BA/BSc)

Bachelor's programmes provided by higher education institutions in Israel last for 3-4 years, depending on the specialisation and the institution. Students specialise in their major starting from their first year, and during their studies they take few subjects that are not related to it. Research methodologies may form part of a bachelor's degree. At the end of their programme they are awarded a *Bachelor of Arts* or a *Bachelor of Science*. However, there are many other types of bachelor's degree that indicate the field in which the degree was obtained, such as *Bachelor of Laws*, *Bachelor of Nursing*, *Bachelor of Education*. The bachelor's degree grants access in Israel to master's programmes.

In terms of level, the *Bachelor* is comparable to a WO or HBO bachelor's degree, depending on the specialisation.

Master's degree (MA/MSc)

Master's programmes offered by Israeli universities vary in length from 1-2 years. In some cases, students can choose between graduation with or without a final thesis. At the end of their programme they are awarded a *Master of Arts* or a *Master of Science*. However there are many other types of master's that specify the field in which the degree was obtained, such as *Master of Laws*, *Master of Nursing*, *Master of Education*. The master's degree grants access in Israel to PhD programmes.

In terms of level, the *Master* is comparable to a WO or HBO master's degree, depending on the specialisation.

PhD

PhDs mainly consist of conducting research and writing a dissertation, however in many cases PhD students dedicate some of their time to taking classes. A PhD issued by an Israeli university is usually comparable to the Dutch qualification of *doctor*.

■ **Higher professional education**

Practical Engineer/*Handassai*

The type of professional education in Israel that most closely resembles the Dutch HBO in terms of level and learning outcomes is called 'post-secondary technological education'. It falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Economics and is offered at 73 technological colleges.

Study programmes are available in 25 – primarily technical – disciplines, such as civil engineering, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering as well as interior design and visual communication. These programmes take 2-3 years to complete depending on the specialisation, and lead to the title of *Practical Engineer* or *Handassai*. In principle, graduates from post-secondary technological education may be admitted to a bachelor's programme at a higher education institution, possibly with some exemptions. The number of exemptions will be determined by the relevant higher education institution.

A *Bagrut* diploma grants entry to technological colleges, but is not required. In principle, students with a satisfactory grade in mathematics (3 units), English (3 units) and Hebrew (2 units) may also be admitted. Students with a Professional Certificate who successfully complete 7 units in 3 academic subjects (mathematics, English and language) and 7 units in technical subjects, also qualify for admission.

In terms of level, the *Practical Engineer/Handassai qualification* is comparable to an Associate Degree or 2 years of higher professional education (HBO).

■ Assessment systems

Grading systems

Secondary education (i.e. the *Bagrut* grade list) uses the following grading system:

Letter grade	Numerical grade		Description
A	95-100	10	Outstanding
A-	85-94	9	Very Good
B	75-84	8	Good
C	65-74	7	Above Average
D	55-64	6	Average
E	45-54	5	Below average
F	05-44	4	Unsatisfactory

The assessment systems used in higher education may be expressed in numbers, descriptions or letters. Grading systems can differ between institutions, and the system used for bachelor's and master's programmes within a single institution can also vary. Most grading systems run from 60 to 100, with 60 being the lowest possible satisfactory grade. When issuing a Record of Studies, most higher education institutions also provide explanatory notes on the grading system used.

Some examples:

Tel Aviv University/Open University	
95-100	Excellent
85-94	Very Good
75-84	Good
65-74	Fairly good
60-64	Fair
60	Lowest passing grade

Education system Israel

University of Haifa	
95-100	A+
85-94	A
75-84	B
65-74	C
51-64	D
0-50	Fail

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev: bachelor	
95-100	Excellent
85-94	Very Good
75-84	Good
65-74	Fair
56-64	Pass
0-55	Fail
56	Passing grade

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev: master	
95-100	A+
85-94	A
75-84	B
65-74	C
0-64	D
65	Passing grade

Course credit systemSecondary education

The level of *Bagrut* exams is expressed in terms of units, with a range from 1 (least difficult) to 5 (most difficult). Every unit represents 90 hours of class time.

Higher education

Israel has no standardised system of course credits. Institutions are free to use their own systems, which can even differ between faculties. In many cases, university transcripts state the number of required credits and/or the number of credits per subject, without explaining the study load they represent.

■ Bologna process

According to the information on the Council for Higher Education website, Israel supports the principles of the Bologna Process, but is not eligible to participate because it has not signed the European Cultural Convention. Israel monitors the developments in the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) as an external stakeholder, and distributes relevant information thereon among higher education institutions.

■ Quality assurance and accreditation

The Council for Higher Education (CHE) is the main organisation responsible for higher education in Israel, with specific tasks that are regulated by higher education legislation.

The CHE's responsibilities are:

- granting approval to open a higher education institution;
- accrediting higher education institutions;
- withdrawing accreditation from higher education institutions;
- granting approval to accredited institutions to issue academic degrees;
- granting educational institutions approval to use the legally protected terms of 'university', 'academic college', etc. in their titles; and
- submitting proposals to the government concerning the development and improvement of higher education in Israel.

In 2003, the CHE started work on a quality assurance system to monitor quality in individual education programmes.

■ International treaties

Israel signed the Lisbon Convention in 1997, and ratified it in 2007.

■ Diploma Supplement

A Diploma Supplement is issued by a growing number of educational institutions in Israel.

■ Composition of file

Bagrut

The *Bagrut* diploma consists of a certificate with the list of externally examined final subjects on the front, grades and units on the back, as well as a separate list of school-assessed subjects, grades and units (if applicable). The document in Hebrew has a standardised, national format, with the State of Israel coat of arms

at the top. As well as the document in the original language, students must also present a sworn English translation. The format of most English translations is less standard, however the text 'State of Israel/Ministry of Education' is at the top. Information on the official, sworn translation is often provided. A complete file will consist of the diploma in Hebrew and a sworn translation.

Higher education

A file supplied by a higher education institution usually consists of an English transcript, including subjects, grades and credits. The diploma/degree certificate is usually not provided, however the graduation date and the name of the grade obtained are always stated on the overview of subjects, if applicable.

■ **Overview of higher education institutions**

The [website of the Council for Higher Education](#) (CHE) contains search engine that can be used to look up accredited higher education institutions.

■ **Useful links**

- [Website of the Israeli Ministry of Education](#), which is also the ENIC-NARIC.
- [Israeli Ministry of Education website](#) in English.
- [Website of the Council for Higher Education](#) in English.