

Higher Education in Israel – Selected Data over the Academic Year 2011/12

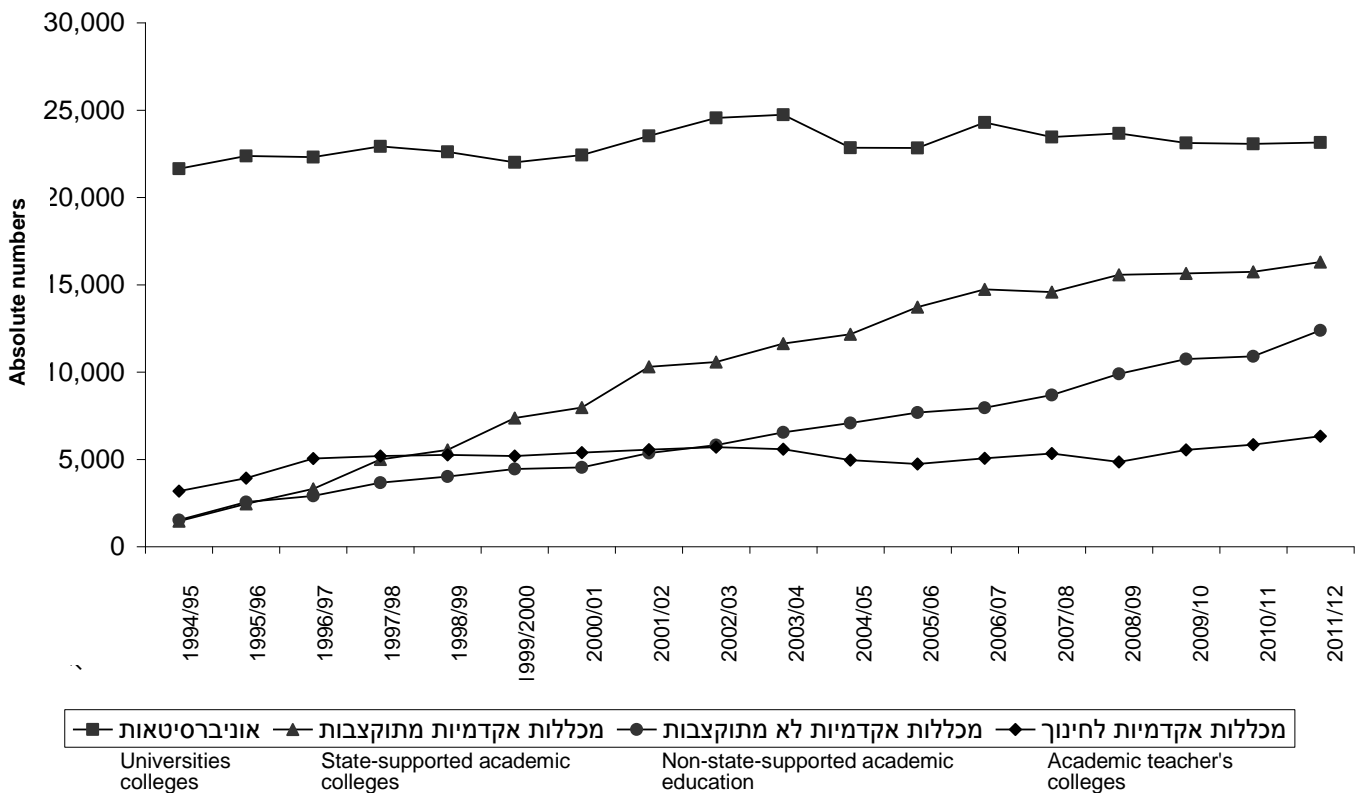
Translated from a report by the Central Bureau of Statistics

- **In the 2011/12 academic year**, the number of new (first-year) bachelor's students remained stable in universities but increased significantly in colleges. The population of master's students grew in all the academic frameworks and especially in colleges.
- **The most common fields of study in Israel** are, among bachelor's students, the humanities and social sciences; among master's students – the humanities as well as business and management sciences; and among doctorate students – the natural sciences and mathematics.
- **Women in Israel** were a majority among those studying for each of the degrees: 56.1% for a bachelor's degree, 59.8% for a master's degree and 52.4% for a doctorate.
- **Architecture and urban construction as well as medicine** were the academic subjects in highest demand among candidates relative to the supply of available places.
- Among new bachelor's students, the highest average psychometric grade was achieved by those studying medicine – 742 points (medical studies take place only in the universities).
- The lowest average psychometric grade in universities was recorded among new students studying towards a multi-disciplinary degree in the social sciences (447 points), and in colleges – among those studying education (377 points).
- Sixty percent of young people in Israel are expected to begin studies towards a bachelor's degree in the course of their life. The difference in rates between women and men was significant (66% versus 53%).

General

Over the past two decades, higher education in Israel has been undergoing a process of expansion. In 1989/90, Israel had 21 institutions offering academic degrees, in which a total of 88,800 students were enrolled. In 2011/12, there were 70 institutions with 306,600 students (including 47,900 studying in the Open University). During this period, the student population grew by an annual average of 5.8%. This growth was mainly the result of the opening of academic colleges in the 1990s and early 2000s. In 2011/12 the slow rate of growth in the number of new bachelor's students continued: in the universities their number remained stable, while in the state-supported academic colleges there was a moderate increase in the number of these students. In contrast, academic teacher's colleges recorded a significant rise in the number of new bachelor's students (8.1%), while the non-state-supported academic colleges registered the most significant increase (13.6%).

Graph 1: First-Year First-Degree Students by Educational Framework, 1994/95-2011/12



Out of 258,700 students attending universities, academic colleges and academic teacher's colleges in 2011/12, 75% (194,100) were bachelor's students (including 58,100 new students), 20.4% (52,700) were master's students, 4.1% (10,600) were doctorate students, and the rest studied towards a certificate (e.g.: teaching certificate, translator's certificate). The number of new bachelor's students rose by 4.7%, after remaining level in 2010/11. The number of master's students in 2011/12 rose by 3.8% (a moderate rise compared to the previous year's increase of 7.5%), while the number of doctorate students was unchanged from the year before.

It is interesting to note that in 2008/9, the proportion of master's students out of the total number of students was 18.6%, while in 2011/12 – three years later – their proportion rose to 20.4%. Concurrently, the proportion of bachelor's students declined in this period from 76.5% to 75%.

During 2011/12, 125,500 students were enrolled in universities (only 0.4% more than in 2010/11), 101,800 students were enrolled in academic colleges (5.3% more than in 2010/11) – of which 57,300 in state-supported colleges and 44,500 in non-state-supported colleges – and 31,300 students were enrolled in academic teacher's colleges (up 4.4% from 2010/11).

In addition, 47,900 students studied in the academic track of the Open University¹, 44,400 towards a bachelor's degree and the rest towards a master's degree or an academic certificate.

¹ The Open University is unique in Israel's academic landscape. It has an open admissions policy for undergraduate studies, without any admission requirements, and students can take single courses or pursue a full program of study towards a bachelor's degree. Open University students are not required to enroll in a faculty or department, but only for courses. Anyone registering for a course is considered a student, and the student body includes both those studying towards a degree and those not interested in a degree. For this reason the Open University is mentioned separately.

Higher education in Israel is mostly public: only 14.1% of students attend private academic institutions, in contrast to South Korea and Japan (slightly more than 75%) and the United States (29.1%), while the average rate in OECD countries is 15.5%².

As of 2010, the percentage of young people in Israel who are expected to begin studies towards a bachelor's degree during their life was 60% – significantly higher than in 2000 (48%) and slightly below the average rate of entry into higher education in the OECD (62%)³. In 2010, there were gaps between women and men expected to begin studies towards a bachelor's degree, in favor of women (66% women versus 53% men)⁴.

Students by fields of study

In 2011/12 the most common fields of study among new bachelor's students were the social sciences (24%) and the humanities (23.2%), accounting for 47.2% of all academic students in that year. For the sake of comparison, in 1999/2000 the percentage of students in the humanities was higher, with nearly a third of new bachelor's students enrolling in this field (30.9%), compared to a fifth who enrolled in the social sciences in that year (19.6%). In 2011/12 the most common field of study among master's students was the humanities (29.1%), followed by business and management sciences (22%). Among doctorate students, 38.4% studied natural sciences and mathematics, while slightly less than a quarter studied the humanities (24.8%).

Table 1: Students by Academic Degree and Field of Study – 1999/2000-2011/12

	Bachelor's degree				Master's degree		Doctorate	
	Total		Of which: new students		1999/2000	2011/12	1999/2000	2011/12
	1999/2000	2011/12	1999/2000	2011/12				
	Percentage							
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Humanities	35.0	25.5	30.9	23.2	26.7	29.1	28.3	24.8
Social sciences	18.1	21.7	19.6	24.0	20.5	17.4	12.9	13.8
Business and management sciences	5.9	12.3	6.0	13.9	21.8	22.0	1.9	2.4
Law	7.5	8.5	6.6	8.1	2.8	5.3	1.4	2.2
Medicine and paramedical studies	5.0	5.5	5.0	5.7	9.1	10.6	4.5	7.1
Natural sciences and mathematics	12.7	9.2	15.0	10.2	9.4	8.2	40.0	38.4
Agriculture	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.6	1.4	1.1	3.4	2.6
Engineering and architecture	15.2	16.9	16.2	14.3	8.4	6.3	7.7	8.6

² EAG 2012, table C1.5, C2.1, p. 334.

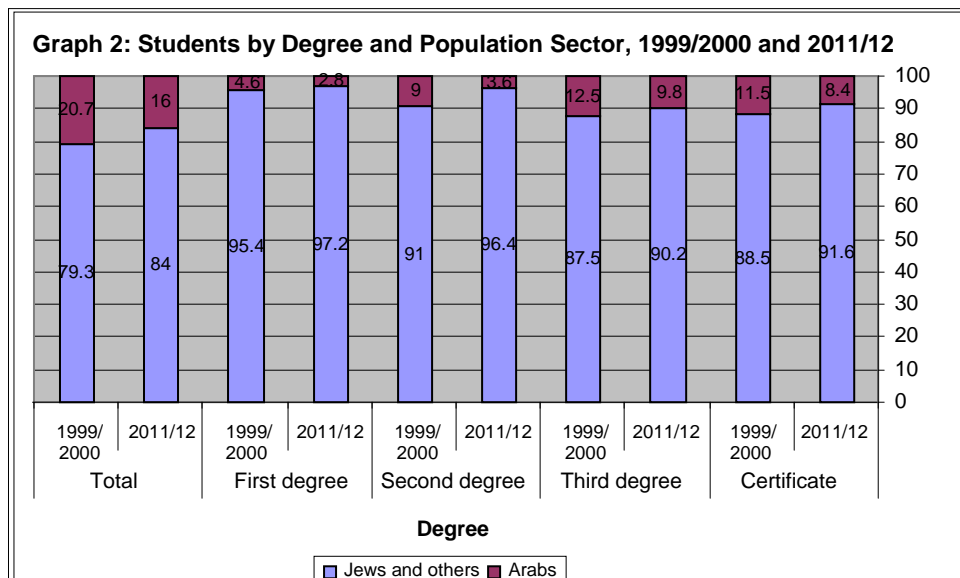
³ The OECD forecasts regarding entry into higher education relate to the 18-21 age group, in all the OECD countries except Israel, where the forecasts relate to the 22-24 age group due to the obligatory military service. For statistical data see: EAG 2012, table CE.3, C2.3, p. 357.

⁴ EAG 2012, table C3.2, C2.3, p. 356.

Students by gender and population sector

Among students attending academic institutions in Israel in 2011/12, 56.2% were women, who constituted a majority of those studying towards all degrees: 56.1% for a bachelor's degree, 52.4% for a master's degree and 71.9% for a doctorate.

Out of a total of 258,700 students attending universities, academic colleges and academic teacher's colleges in 2011/12, 11.5% (29,300) were Arabs. For the sake of comparison, in the year before (2010/11) the percentage of Arab students stood at 11% and in 1999/2000 at 8.4%. In 2011/12, a higher proportion of Arab students studied towards a bachelor's degree or an academic certificate (12.5% and 20.7%, respectively) than towards advanced degrees (master's – 9%, bachelor's – 4.6%).



Subjects in highest demand and admission requirements

Among candidates for a bachelor's degree in universities, general medicine as well as architecture and urban construction were the most preferred, with the highest demand relative to the supply of available places. Out of approximately every four candidates who enrolled with these subjects as their first choice, one candidate was accepted. Dentistry, emergency medicine and physiotherapy were also in high demand – out of approximately every three candidates who enrolled with these subjects as their first choice, one candidate was accepted. In contrast, in the religious sciences, general social sciences, librarianship, Jewish history, Jewish philosophy, pedagogic counseling and plant protection almost all the candidates were accepted.

In the academic colleges, industrial design was the subject in highest demand relative to the number of available places. For each candidate accepted for studies in industrial design, architecture and urban construction, fashion design, physiotherapy or visual communications, there were at least three other candidates who applied for these subjects. In contrast, in plastics engineering, civil engineering and zoology almost every candidate who enrolled was accepted (a ratio of 1.1 candidates to every accepted student).

In the state-supported colleges, out of more than 5,000 candidates who applied for law studies some 70% were accepted. In the non-state-supported colleges, there were 175 candidates for law studies, but less than 50% were accepted. In state-supported universities, out of 2,000 candidates for law studies only half were accepted.

The differences in demand and admission requirements between the universities and the non-state-supported colleges are reflected in the average psychometric grade of new bachelor's students. For example, in law, the average **psychometric grade** of university students was 685 points, compared to 536 points for students in non-state-supported colleges. Ninety point four percent of university students had previously taken a psychometric exam, compared to 70.5% of students in academic teacher's colleges, 69.3% of students in state-supported colleges and only 54.6% of students in non-state-supported colleges.

The university subject with the highest average psychometric grade was general medicine (742 points). In the academic colleges, the subject with the highest average psychometric grade was communication disorders (666 points).

The lowest average grade was recorded among students studying for a multi-disciplinary degree in the social sciences (447 points) and those studying education (377 points).

Table 2: Average Psychometric Grade among New Bachelor's Students in Selected Subjects, 2011/12⁵

	Universities	Academic colleges		Academic teacher's colleges
		State-supported	Non-state supported	
General medicine	742			
Combined philosophy with economics and political science	723			
Biomedical engineering	702	613		
Medical sciences	701			
Communication disorders	696	666	616	
Electrical engineering	694	567		
Physics	687			
Law	685	594	536	
Computer sciences	684	591	588	
Business administration	678	547	536	
Economics	671	551	556	
Education	588	521	377	510
General humanities	509	379		
Multi-disciplinary bachelor's degree in social sciences	447	474		

⁵ The highest grade in all individual tests. The grade is calibrated and is on a scale of 200-800 points, with a standard deviation of 100 points.