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A NATIONAL PRIORITY

Israel’s most precious resource is the ingenuity of its people. It is home to a highly educated population, as well as numerous world-renowned academic institutions.

Education is a deeply ingrained value for Israelis and a national priority for the country

Israel ranks third among OECD countries for the percent of its population that has attained higher education and it ranks fifth for its total expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP. Israel boasts a high literacy level of 97.8% of citizens above the age of 15.

In the face of the country’s scarce natural resources, this investment in human capital has played a critical role, fostering an education system that has propelled the country into rapid growth. While many Israelis enroll in colleges and universities, some pursue vocational training, as institutions offer hundreds of adult education classes and workshops.

Bilingual Schooling
Both Hebrew-language and Arabic-language schooling is offered in Israel, which follow parallel curriculums. There are also several bilingual schools in Israel, including the school Hand in Hand which instructs students in both Hebrew and Arabic.

Diving into Hebrew
Immigrants to Israel from all over the world can join a free Ulpan program – an intensive and immersive Hebrew language course that helps them integrate into their new home. The program not only provides students with a working knowledge of conversational Hebrew, it also introduces them to Israeli culture and society.
A Highly Educated Population
Attainment of higher education; percent in age group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>25-34 year-olds</th>
<th>35-44 year-olds</th>
<th>45-54 year-olds</th>
<th>55-64 year-olds</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD average</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
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Learning through the Ages
Education has been one of the fundamental values of Judaism; from Biblical times, to the days of the great scholar Maimonides in the Middle Ages, and to the centers of Jewish learning in Tiberius and Safed in the Land of Israel during the 16th century. By the time the State of Israel was established in 1948, a fully functioning modern education system had already been put in place by the Jewish communities of Pre-State Israel in the 20th century.
The Israeli education system reflects the country’s diversity

It includes state schools, which are attended by the majority of pupils; state religious schools, which emphasize Jewish studies, observance and tradition; Arab and Druze schools, which offer instruction in Arabic and a particular focus on Arab or Druze history, religion, and culture; and private schools, which operate under various auspices, including democratic and anthroposophic schools.

The Israeli school curriculum prepares children to become responsible members of a democratic, pluralistic and tolerant society comprised of people from different ethnic, religious, cultural and political backgrounds. It combines general studies with civic values, communication skills and knowledge of one’s heritage and world cultures. Math, English language, analytical and critical thinking skills are particularly emphasized.

Education is compulsory for Israeli children and schooling from kindergarten to high school is provided free of charge. Students who successfully pass Israel’s high school matriculation examinations are also awarded a certificate that serves as a prerequisite for acceptance into institutions of higher education.

Girls in STEM

The non-profit ‘Cracking the Glass Ceiling’ helps girls in middle school and high school, particularly in areas that are socioeconomically disadvantaged, to excel in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects. The program gives girls the additional training, mentorship, motivation, and most importantly, the ambition and confidence needed to succeed. The comprehensive, 5-year program has successfully opened a world of professional opportunity for young women in Israel who may have otherwise not considered STEM fields.

Education for the Gifted

Israel established the Division for Gifted and Outstanding Students to initiate and develop educational programs, including classes for gifted students, gifted centers, academic acceleration, remote learning, early university entrance programs and other frameworks for outstanding students.
International High School

EMIS, the Eastern Mediterranean International School in central Israel, unites teenagers from all over the world, including Israel, the West Bank, Russia, Germany, Cambodia, China, New Zealand, Yemen, Brazil, Afghanistan, Venezuela and more. Students grow immensely in the boarding environment, and work towards an International Baccalaureate. Significant scholarship funding is available through Israel’s Ministry of Education.

Enrollment rates in Israel and the OECD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Israel</th>
<th>OECD Average</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-14</td>
<td>97.8%</td>
<td>95.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>94%</td>
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</table>
Israel is a world leader in devising special-education curricula, both at the governmental and non-governmental levels. Special education in Israel is a fast-growing field that is enshrined by legislation and enhanced by innovation; its guiding principle is that all people can and should be helped to reach their personal potential through programs that tailor to their individual needs.

The Special Education Law 1988 marked a turning point in the provision of special education services to children and adolescents with special needs. It obliges the state to provide free special needs education from ages 3 to 21, to advance and develop the skills and abilities of disabled children, improve their physical, mental, psychological and behavioral performance, and convey knowledge, habits and social behavior that will support them in becoming a part of broader society.

Placement in regular schools is the preferred option and inclusive programs are available for free in all cities,

drawing on children's similarities, while making accommodations for their differences; indeed, 60% of children with special needs are members of mainstream public education systems. Key to this inclusive approach is a system for early diagnosis.

There are more than 50 organizations in Israel that empower individuals who are visually or hearing impaired, who have autism, developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, physical impairments, mental health concerns or other special needs.
Did you Know?
Across Israel, youth with special needs bond with their peers in a variety of sports camps, art programs and excursions. For example, the non-profit organization LOTEM runs unique outdoor programs that bring nature closer to some 30,000 children and adults with a range of disabilities, while Shlava runs with numerous music, dance drama and other programs that support individuals with special needs.

School for Hospitalized Children
From north to south, hospitalized children are able to keep up with schoolwork with unique in-hospital learning programs that are fully accredited under the Ministry of Education. For example, the Saban Pediatric Center of Soroka Hospital in Be’er Sheva allows hospitalized children to continue their studies through the School for Sick Kids program, which helps more than 12,000 children ages 3 to 12 every year.

A Scientific Approach
Israeli hi-tech entrepreneurs are a driving force in developing innovative solutions to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities across the world. State-of-the-art Israeli technologies include a revolutionary pea-sized telescope implant that improves eyesight in patients with macular degeneration (AMD). Other startups have engineered voice-operated smartphones for paraplegic individuals, and an exoskeleton for paraplegics that allows individuals to walk upright and interact on eye level with others.
Higher education plays a pivotal role in the economic and social development of the country. Indeed, several world-renowned institutions pre-date statehood (1948), including the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design (1906); the Technion - Israel Institute of Technology (1912); the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1918); and the Weizmann Institute of Science (1934).

Israel is home to 66 institutions of higher education: Seven research universities, one open university, 23 teacher-training colleges, 21 academic colleges and 14 private colleges. According to the 2016 QS World University Rankings, all seven of Israel’s universities rank by subject in the top 100 in the world.

Israel's student body comes from across the diverse population spectrum, and 22% of the adult population aged 25-64 have a bachelor’s degree, above the OECD average of 15%.

There is a great deal of academic collaboration between Israel and other countries including those in Asia, Europe and the Americas. Israel participates in the European Erasmus+ student exchange program, and, recently, Israeli institutions have greatly expanded their level of cooperation in the field of clean energy, health and other global issues with counterparts in the United States, India and China.
Arab Students

Israeli universities have become bastions of coexistence. For example, over 21 percent of the undergraduates at the Technion are Arabs, up from 11 percent in 2001. This is roughly the same proportion of Arabs as in Israel’s overall population.

Tackling Waste with Synthetic Biology

Students at Ben Gurion University in the Negev Desert in southern Israel are developing new ways to tackle plastic waste, as part of the international iGEM Competition in Synthetic Biology. The Plasticure team seeks to break down plastic that contaminates much of planet using protein and genetic engineering, while harnessing the renewable energy generated in the process.

Women in Academia

More than half of Israeli students are women:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree</th>
<th>Master’s Degree</th>
<th>Doctoral Studies</th>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
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The campus of Hebrew University in Jerusalem
STUDY ABROAD IN ISRAEL

For those who want to work hard and play hard, Israel is a fascinating place to study. Israel has become one of the most attractive destinations for study abroad programs, thanks to its exceptional educational system, rich and diverse culture, and active social life.

Israel welcomes international students from across continents at its many universities and colleges, offering hundreds of English-language undergraduate degrees, graduate programs, student exchange programs and internships. Some of the most popular fields of study include neuroscience, engineering and mathematics, as well as entrepreneurship, business administration, international relations, Hebrew, Arabic, and Middle East studies.

Students often learn beyond the classroom, with field work and excursions across the country; others dive into cutting-edge research, enjoying close mentorship and the opportunity to study alongside some of the best professionals in their field, including several Nobel Laureates.

Academic Collaboration

Israeli academic institutions have formed partnerships and joint ventures with numerous counterparts across the world. Tel Aviv University, for example, jointly runs an executive MBA program with Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management. It also runs the joint $300 million XIN research center focused on nanotechnologies with Beijing’s Tsinghua University.

Long-Term Study

For those looking for long-term study in Israel, there are several English-language programs offered at Israeli universities and colleges, including full academic degrees, at undergraduate and graduate levels, in a variety of fields. The prestigious Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya (IDC) is home to, in addition to its Israeli students, some 2,000 international students from 86 countries, completing degrees varying from government to economics, computer science and communications.
Scholarships for International Students

Tens of thousands of students from abroad study in Israel each year. Within the framework of Cultural Agreements, Israel offers scholarships to students from the following countries:

- **America**: Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Mexico.
- **Europe**: Austria, Belarus, Croatia, Lithuania, Poland, Belgium, Norway, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Russia, Finland, Great Britain, Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, Republic of Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, France, Luxembourg, Latvia, Denmark, Germany, Turkey.
- **Asia**: China, India, Japan, Korea.

International Buddies

Many Israeli universities run social programs to immerse international students in the local scene. One example of such an initiative is the ‘buddy system’ at Bar Ilan University in central Israel, a student-to-student program that unites Israeli and international students through trips, lectures, parties, volunteer work and more.
Israel has a long tradition of scientific research and excellence. Twelve Israelis have been awarded Nobel prizes (eight in the sciences and economics), in a country of just 8.5 million people. Israel has the highest number of engineers per capita, and ranks third in the number of companies it has listed on NASDAQ.

Most of the world’s leading high-tech companies, including Intel, Google and Microsoft, have established research and development centers in Israel. Some 500 new start-ups are established every year, many making major breakthroughs in areas such as nanotechnology, cyber, big data and medicine. Some of the best-known technologies developed in Israel and used by people around the world every day include the USB key and microprocessors.

Israel is a popular choice for major international research. For example, Israeli and US institutions collaborate through the US-Israel Binational Science Foundation (BSF) which supports collaborative research in a wide range of basic and applied scientific fields. In 2012, India and Israel signed a $50 million Academic Research Pact to support collaboration in sciences, IT, technology, the humanities and agriculture.

Neuroscience Hub
Tel Aviv University (TAU) is Israel’s leading center for neuroscience, pioneering new understandings of and treatments for neurological disorders. TAU has more drug candidates for Alzheimer’s disease in the pipeline than any other university in the world, and has developed six new drugs and therapies to treat ALS, insomnia, blindness and schizophrenia. Recently, TAU researchers were recognized for their exceptional work on the Human Brain Project, one of the most ambitious global brain-mapping initiatives to date.
A Population of Scientists

Israel has the highest number of scientists per capita in the world

Scientists per 10,000 employees:

- Israel: 140
- USA: 85
- Japan: 100
- France: 90

Applying Research to Industry

How does cutting edge research transform into commercial products? To help faculty and students access the business world, many universities in Israel operate a “technology transfer office” (TTO) which serves as a liaison between academia and industry. TTOs help academics navigate patents, licenses, and financial and legal matters. About 150 new technologies are licensed from Israeli universities and research institutions each year. Yissum at the Hebrew University and T3 at the Technion are ranked among the top 10 technology transfer companies worldwide in terms of revenue.

Nobel Prizes in Chemistry

In 2013, Arieh Warshel and Michael Levitt became the fifth and sixth Israelis to be awarded a Nobel prize in Chemistry in under a decade. Previous winners of this most prestigious award were Dan Shechtman (2011), Ada Yonath (2009), Aaron Ciechanover (2004) and Avram Hershko (2004).
FACTS ABOUT ISRAEL

The People
The Land
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The Quest for Peace
Democracy

Education
Economy
Innovation
Caring for the Environment
Israel in the International Community
Sharing for a Better World
Israel and the Jewish World
Culture
Lifestyle
Visiting Israel