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A. GENERAL

This is the first publication of the Central Bureau of Statistics to focus on external matriculation exams. The publication was commissioned by the Ministry of Education, and the data relate to 2003. Previous CBS publications on the topic were also commissioned by the Ministry of Education, and all of them dealt with internal matriculation examinations, which are conducted as part of the school framework¹.

A matriculation certificate is the key to a person's social and economic future. It is a prerequisite for acceptance to continuing education in institutions of higher education and in other post-secondary institutions. Moreover, it is a prerequisite for employment in a growing number of workplaces. In the internal framework, matriculation exams are the final, culminating stage of secondary school studies. Pupils who do not receive an internal matriculation certificate (i.e., those who dropped out of school at an early stage or completed secondary school but were not entitled to a matriculation certificate) can make up the matriculation exams through a **second chance** framework.

There are three main second chance frameworks in Israel:

1. **Internal testing at a later date**, which is administered through the pupil's secondary school.
2. **Pre-academic preparatory courses**, which help pupils complete missing material and prepare them for matriculation exams and psychometric university entrance exams, in order to improve their chances of acceptance to higher education institutions.

¹ See additional CBS publications on matriculation examinations:

Twelfth Grade Pupils, Examinees, and Entitled to Matriculation Certificates 1988/89, Special Publication 907, Jerusalem 1992 (Hebrew).

Twelfth Grade Pupils of the 1993/94 School Year who Sat for Matriculation and Completion Examinations in 1994 and are Entitled to a Certificate, by Localities, Special Publication 1064, Jerusalem 1997 (Hebrew only).

Twelfth Grade Pupils, Matriculation Examinees and Entitled to a Certificate, by Locality of Residence, 1996, Special Publication 1115, Jerusalem, 1999.

Twelfth Grade Pupils, Matriculation Examinees and Entitled to a Certificate, by Locality of Residence, 1998, Special Publication 1169, Jerusalem 2002.

Twelfth Grade Pupils, Matriculation Examinees and Entitled to a Certificate, by Locality of Residence 2002-2003, Special Publication 1233, Jerusalem 2005.

Pupils who Took Matriculation and Final Exams and Are Entitled to Certificates, 1990/91, Special Publication 983, Jerusalem 1994 (Hebrew).

Pupils who Took Matriculation and Final Exams and Are Entitled to Certificates, 1993/94, Special Publication 1045, Jerusalem 1997 (Hebrew).

Pupils who Took Matriculation and Final Exams and Are Entitled to Certificates, 1995/1996, Special Publication 1129, Jerusalem 2000.

Matriculation Examinees in the Technological Track 2003. Current Statistics 2/2006.

3. **External matriculation exams.**

The publication focuses on the following topics:

1. The activities of the external system, and its yearly contribution to the overall database of examinees entitled to a matriculation certificate (quantitative measure).
2. Population groups that take advantage of the second chance offered by the external framework.
3. Achievements of external examinees who are entitled to a matriculation certificate, and comparison with the achievements of internal examinees (qualitative measure).
4. The relative achievements of external examinees who have not yet received a matriculation certificate, by number of examination credits they have accumulated.

Some of the data on the external system are presented in this publication in comparison with the data on the internal system. Therefore, the population groups of the external examinees and those eligible for a matriculation certificate are presented by education sector, using terms accepted in the education system:

Hebrew education refers to persons in the Jewish population (Jews and Others)

Arab education refers to persons in the Arab population (see also Definitions and Explanations section).

B. THE TARGET POPULATION OF THE EXTERNAL FRAMEWORK

The external system of matriculation exams is open to **anyone aged 16 and over who is not enrolled** in an **internal** secondary school. Pupils enrolled in a school that does not prepare pupils for matriculation exams or final exams administered by the Ministry of Education can register for external matriculation exams by opening an external examinee file, on the condition that they have obtained written consent to do this from the principal of the school.

Examinees who graduate from an internal secondary school without completing all of the exams required for entitlement to a matriculation certificate can register for external matriculation exams by opening an examinee file and completing the matriculation certificate in the external framework. These examinees are entitled to include in their external examinee file any internal matriculation exams that they passed.

The possibility of completing matriculation exams gradually over a period of years is one of the main characteristics of the external system, and an external examinee file remains active

for seven years after the last exam. The current publication deals only with those who were **active in 2003**, i.e., who **took at least one test** in the Winter or Summer of that year.

C. MAIN FINDINGS

1. General

- a. In 2003, 14,600 external examinees took at least one matriculation exam. That year, 1,980 of them completed their matriculation requirements and received a matriculation certificate. About two-thirds of the entitled examinees (68%) received a matriculation certificate that meets university entrance requirements and were potential candidates for continuing studies.
- b. During the decade between 1993 and 2003, external examinees comprised 3.5% to 5% of all examinees entitled to a matriculation certificate each year. In 2003, the relative weight of external examinees reached 3.5% of all examinees entitled to a matriculation certificate, and 3% of all entitled examinees with a matriculation certificate that meets university entrance requirements.
- c. The vast majority of examinees who took advantage of the second chance offered by the external system were in the **Hebrew education sector**. Only 10% of the examinees and 4% of those entitled to an external matriculation certificate in 2003 were in the **Arab education sector**.

Other population groups that took advantage of the second chance to take matriculation exams and increase their relative proportion among all those entitled to a matriculation certificate were: males (in both the Hebrew and Arab education sectors); examinees of Asian-African origin in the **Hebrew education sector**; and Moslems in the **Arab education sector**.

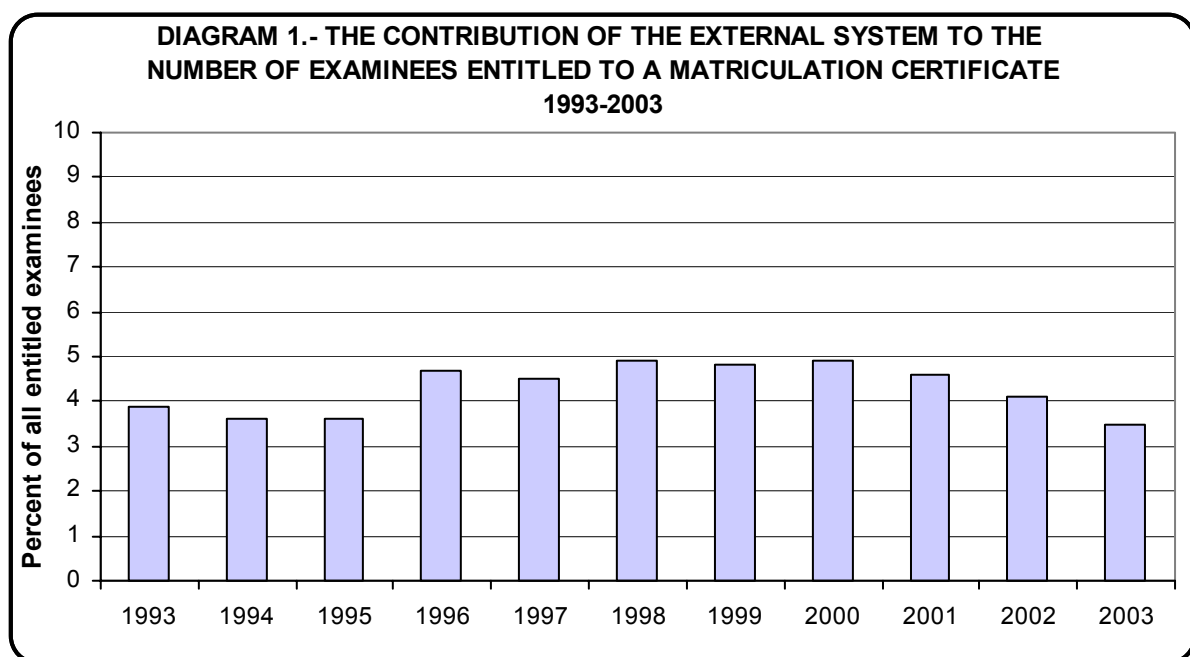
In addition, the findings indicate that a substantial number of external examinees in the Hebrew education sector were young. The average age of those entitled to an external matriculation certificate in Hebrew education was 24, whereas the average age of those entitled to an external matriculation certificate in Arab education was 29.

- d. In 2003, 68% of the entitled **external** examinees versus 81% of the entitled **internal** examinees received a matriculation certificate that meets university entrance requirements. The discrepancy between the level of the certificates received by entitled external and internal examinees was smaller in the Hebrew education sector (69.5% versus 84%, respectively), than in the Arab education sector (21% versus 61%, respectively).

- e. Most of the entitled external examinees who meet university entrance requirements can pursue continuing studies in the humanities and social sciences, but not in scientific fields. This is due to the small number of external examinees who took exams at an enhanced level in scientific subjects: about one-fourth (24%) of the entitled external examinees versus 60% of the internal examinees took exams at an enhanced level in at least one scientific subject.
- f. The average amount of time required for the 2003 recipients to complete requirements for a matriculation certificate was 3.0 years: 3.1 years on the average for entitled examinees in Hebrew education, versus 2.4 years for entitled examinees in Arab education.
- g. Over half of the active examinees in 2003 who had not yet completed their matriculation requirements (57%) accumulated 1-2 tests to their credit, and another quarter (25%) accumulated 3 or more tests. However, 18% of the active examinees in 2003 had not yet accumulated even one test to their credit.

2. Scope of Activity in the External Framework

Data from the last decade indicate that external examinees comprised 3.5% to 5% of all examinees entitled to a matriculation certificate each year¹ (Diagram 1). In 2003, the relative weight of entitled external examinees amounted to 3.5% out of 56,400 examinees entitled to a matriculation certificate.



¹ All entitled examinees in the internal and external framework.

Between 1993 and 2003, 498,500 people were added to the general database of internal and external examinees entitled to a matriculation certificate. Of those, 21,600 (4.3% of all entitled examinees) received an external matriculation certificate.

In the decade between 1993 and 2003, the number of examinees entitled to a matriculation certificate increased by 64%. This increase resulted from the rise in the number of persons belonging to the relevant cohorts of the population (due to natural increase and due to the major influx of immigrants in the 1990s), as well as from the Ministry of Education's efforts to increase the number of examinees entitled to a matriculation certificate.

The increase in entitled internal examinees was substantially higher than the increase in entitled external examinees: 64% versus 47%, respectively (Table A).

**Table A: Entitled Internal and External Examinees,
by Year of Receiving Matriculation Certificate
1993-2003**

Year of receiving matriculation certificate	Total	Framework	
		Internal	External
Absolute numbers			
1993-2003 – Total	498,464	476,906	21,558
Thereof:			
1993	34,418	33,069	1,349
2003	56,358	54,378	1,980
Percentages			
1993-2003 – Total	100.0	95.7	4.3
Thereof:			
1993	100.0	96.1	3.9
2003	100.0	96.5	3.5
Annual rate of growth in the number of entitled examinees 1993-2003	63.7	64.4	46.8

3. The Population of the External Framework

Sector

The data indicate that the vast majority of examinees who take advantage of the second chance offered by the external system are in the **Hebrew education sector**. In 2003, the proportion of examinees in the **Hebrew education sector** reached 90% of all external examinees who took at least one matriculation exam, whereas the proportion of the **Arab education sector** examinees was only 10%. The discrepancy between the two populations with regard to participation in the external matriculation framework was particularly significant among those who were entitled to a matriculation certificate: 96% of the entitled examinees

and 99% of the entitled examinees who met university entrance requirements were in the **Hebrew education sector**.

Table B: External Examinees and Entitled External Examinees, by Sector

	Examinees who took at least one exam	Entitled examinees		
		Total	Thereof: Met university entrance requirements	
	Absolute Numbers			
Total	14,613	1,980	1,342	1,342
	Percentages			Percentage of entitled examinees in each cell
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	67.8
Hebrew education	90.4	96.5	98.9	69.5
Arab education	9.6	3.5	1.1	21.4

Age

External examinees and those entitled to a matriculation certificate in the **Hebrew education sector** are young, mostly between the ages of 16 and 25. The main group was between 21 and 25 years of age, i.e., following completion of military service, and nearly half of the **active examinees** in 2003 (46%) were in that group.

An even more significant proportion of the **entitled** external examinees are young, and the percentage of those who are between 16 and 25 years of age reached 71%. Consequently, the average age of external examinees entitled to a matriculation certificate in the Hebrew education sector was 24, whereas the average age of active examinees was 26.

Evidently, the young age of the external examinees and those entitled to a matriculation certificate is related to the admissions policy of universities: applicants aged 30 and over who lack a matriculation certificate can be accepted to university on the basis of psychometric test scores.

The age distribution of external examinees and those entitled to a matriculation certificate in the **Arab education sector** is more balanced, and the share of the older age groups is larger. In 2003, for example, 41% of the examinees and 50% of those entitled to a matriculation certificate were in the 26-39 year age group. In contrast to the findings on examinees in the Hebrew education sector, the average age of examinees entitled to a matriculation certificate in the Arab education sector was higher than that of all examinees in that sector (29 versus 27, respectively).

Table C: External Examinees and Entitled External Examinees who Met University Entrance Requirements, by Sector and Age

	Total			Hebrew Education			Arab Education		
	Examinees	Entitled examinees	Entitled examinees who met university entrance requirements	Examinees	Entitled examinees	Entitled examinees who met university entrance requirements	Examinees	Entitled examinees	Entitled examinees who met university entrance requirements
Absolute numbers – total	14,613	1,980	1,340	13,204	1,910	1,327	1,395	70	15
	Percentages		Percentage in each cell	Percentages		Percentage in each cell	Percentages		Percentage in each cell
Total	100.0	100.0	67.7	100.0	100.0	69.5	100.0	100.0	21.4
Age									
Up to 20	22.8	14.7	62.5	22.5	14.8	63.2	25.8	11.4	..
21-25	43.6	55.3	70.0	45.6	56.3	70.2	25.5	28.6	(20.0)
26-29	16.7	25.3	68.9	16.6	25.5	70.0	17.4	21.4	..
30-39	8.5	4.0	53.7	6.9	3.1	66.7	23.4	28.6	(15.0)
40-49	5.4	0.6	41.7	5.2	0.3	..	7.2	8.6	..
50+	3.0	0.0	-	3.2	-	-	0.7	1.4	..
Average age	25.7	24.2	24.1	25.6	24.0	24.0	26.8	29.0	26.1

The Contribution of the External System to the Number of Examinees Entitled to a Matriculation Certificate in 2003, by Selected Characteristics

In 2003, the proportion of entitled external examinees was 3.5%, out of a total of 56,400 examinees entitled to a matriculation certificate; and 3% out of 45,200 examinees who were entitled to a matriculation certificate that meets university entrance requirements.

The contribution of the external system to the number of examinees entitled to a matriculation certificate was more substantial in the Hebrew education sector than in the Arab education sector (4% versus 1%, respectively). The discrepancy between the two sectors was even greater with regard to the contribution of the external system to the number of matriculation examinees who met university entrance requirements (3% versus 0.3%, respectively).

The contribution of the external system to the number of examinees entitled to a matriculation certificate was more significant for some of the groups that had relatively high dropout rates from the education system as well as relatively low rates of entitlement to a matriculation certificate^{1,2}.

Men – 4% of all entitled examinees, and of entitled examinees who met university entrance requirements.

Examinees of **Asian-African origin** – 6% of all entitled examinees, and 5% of those who met university entrance requirements in that population group.

Moslems – 1.1% of the entitled examinees in that group.

¹ See *Pupils in Grades VII-XII – Staying on Vs. Dropping Out, 2001/02*, Current Statistics 2/2004.

² See *Twelfth Grade Pupils, Matriculation Examinees and Entitled to a Certificate, by Locality of Residence 2002-2003*, Special Publication No. 1233, Jerusalem, 2005.

Table D: The Contribution of the External System to the Number of Entitled Examinees and the Number of Those who Met University Entrance Requirements in 2003, by Sector and Selected Characteristics

	Entitled examinees				Thereof: Met university entrance requirements			
	Total	Total	Framework		Total	Total	Framework	
			Internal	External			Internal	External
	Absolute Numbers	Percentages			Absolute Numbers	Percentages		
Grand Total	56,358	100.0	96.5	3.5	45,195	100.0	97.0	3.0
Sex								
Men	24,368	100.0	95.8	4.2	19,832	100.0	96.2	3.8
Women	31,988	100.0	97.0	3.0	25,361	100.0	97.7	2.3
Hebrew Education – Total	48,992	100.0	96.1	3.9	40,722	100.0	96.7	3.3
Sex								
Men	21,576	100.0	95.4	4.6	18,092	100.0	95.9	4.1
Women	27,414	100.0	96.7	3.3	22,628	100.0	97.4	2.6
Origin								
Israel	24,206	100.0	97.1	2.9	20,513	100.0	97.6	2.4
Asia-Africa	10,278	100.0	93.6	6.4	7,587	100.0	94.6	5.4
Europe-America	14,241	100.0	96.1	3.9	12,419	100.0	96.6	3.4
Arab Education – Total	7,366	100.0	99.0	1.0	4,473	100.0	99.7	0.3
Sex								
Men	2,792	100.0	98.9	1.1	1,740	100.0	99.5	0.5
Women	4,574	100.0	99.1	0.9	2,733	100.0	99.8	0.2
Religion								
Moslems	5,508	100.0	98.9	1.1	3,200	100.0	99.6	0.4
Christians	992	100.0	99.3	0.7	798	100.0	99.9	0.1
Druze	855	100.0	99.4	0.6	465	100.0	99.6	0.4

4. Entitled External Examinees Who Met University Entrance Requirements

The proportion of entitled examinees who met university entrance requirements provides an additional perspective on assessing the outputs of the external system.

University entrance requirements include 3 study units of mathematics, 4 study units of English, and one enhanced subject (at least 4 study units) in addition to English. Of the entitled examinees, 1,340 (two-thirds) met university entrance requirements and were potential candidates for higher education in universities.

Patterns found among the entitled examinees in the internal system were also found among those in the external system: the percentage of entitled examinees who met university entrance requirements in the **Hebrew education sector** was considerably higher than in the **Arab education sector** (69% versus 21%, respectively – see Table B). In the **Hebrew education sector**, the percentage of entitled examinees who met university entrance requirements was higher among those born in Israel and those of European-American origin than among those of Asian-African origin. Moreover, the higher the socio-economic level of the examinees' locality of residence, the larger the percentage of entitled matriculation examinees who met university entrance requirements.

The lowest percentages of entitled examinees who met university entrance requirements in the Hebrew education sector, were found in the youngest age group (up to age 20), and the highest percentages were found in the 21-29 year age group.

Of the men entitled to a matriculation certificate in the Hebrew and Arab education, 74% met university entrance requirements compared with 61% of the women.

Table E: Entitled External Examinees Who Met University Entrance Requirements, by Selected Characteristics

	Total		Thereof: Hebrew Education	
	Entitled to a matriculation certificate	Thereof: Met university entrance requirements	Entitled to a matriculation certificate	Thereof: Met university entrance requirements
	Absolute numbers	Percentage in each cell	Absolute numbers	Percentage in each cell
Total	1,980	67.8	1,910	69.5
Sex				
Men	1,022	74.0	992	75.3
Women	956	61.1	916	63.1
Age				
Thereof:				
Up to 20	291	62.5	283	63.2
21-25	1,093	70.0	1,073	70.9
26-29	501	68.9	486	70.0
30-39	80	53.7	60	66.7
Origin				
Israel			695	71.9
Asia-Africa			658	61.8
Europe-America			555	75.3
Socio-economic cluster of locality of residence				
1-2	66	37.9	45	46.7
3-4	450	58.0	412	62.4
5-6	451	68.7	449	68.8
7-8	763	71.8	758	71.6
9-10	26	84.6	26	84.6

5. Achievements of Entitled External Examinees

One of the main objectives of the matriculation certificate is to enable continuing education in institutions of higher education and other post-secondary institutions. Institutions of higher education consider an external matriculation certificate as equivalent to an internal one, and acceptance to academic institutions and to departments in high demand depends on the **achievements** of the individual who holds a matriculation certificate.

The achievements of entitled external examinees were examined in comparison with the achievements of internal examinees who **received a matriculation certificate in 2003**. Despite differences in the learning environment as well as in the ages and other background characteristics of participants in each framework, receipt of a matriculation certificate in 2003 was a type of common characteristic shared by both groups.

Entitled external and internal examinees were compared in terms of the following criteria:

- **Access to higher education**
- **Level of achievements in scientific subjects.**

Access to higher education was examined on the basis of the **percentage of entitled examinees who met university entrance requirements** in each of the two systems. The data indicate that in 2003, 68% of the entitled **external** examinees and 81% of the entitled **internal** examinees received a matriculation certificate at a level that **met university entrance requirements**. The gap in the level of matriculation certificates, as reflected in the percentage of external versus internal examinees who received a matriculation certificate that met university entrance requirements, was smaller among those in the Hebrew education sector than among their counterparts in the Arab education sector: 69.5% and 84%, respectively, in the Hebrew education sector versus 21% and 61%, respectively, in the Arab education sector.

Matriculation examinations are administered according to the number of study units in each subject, from the basic level which includes one study unit, to the enhanced level which includes four or more study units. Enhanced subjects are studied intensively, and are geared toward continued education in that field. The data indicate that most of the entitled external examinees who are accepted to higher education institutions can pursue continuing studies in the humanities and social sciences, but not in scientific fields. This is due to the small number of external examinees who took exams at an enhanced level in a scientific subject: about one-fourth (24%) of the entitled external examinees versus 60% of the entitled internal examinees took exams at an enhanced level in at least one scientific subject. Moreover, most of the entitled external examinees who took exams in enhanced scientific subjects were examined in only one scientific subject at an enhanced level, whereas about half of the entitled internal examinees who took exams in enhanced scientific subjects were examined in two or more scientific subjects at an enhanced level.

Comparison by subjects further reveals that the percentage of internal examinees who took examinations in mathematics at an enhanced level was twice as high as that of external examinees: 47% versus 23%, respectively. In other scientific subjects, the discrepancy was even greater.

Table F: Internal and External Examinees, by Achievements on Matriculation Exams

	Framework	
	Internal	External
Total – absolute numbers	54,378	1,980
	Percentage of all entitled examinees in the appropriate population	
Met university entrance requirements	80.6	67.8
Examined in at least one enhanced scientific subject – total (1)	59.7	24.2
Number of enhanced scientific subjects		
1	29.0	19.4
2	25.4	4.7
3+	5.3	0.1
Examined in mathematics at an enhanced level	47.5	23.3
Examined in physics at an enhanced level	14.2	4.3
Examined in chemistry at an enhanced level	9.9	0.6
Examined in biology at an enhanced level	19.2	0.8

(1) Includes only scientific subjects that were also offered in external exams: mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology; excludes computer sciences.

6. Entitled External Examinees in 2003, by the Period of Time Required for Completion of their Matriculation Certificate

The average period of time that entitled external matriculation examinees required to complete their matriculation in 2003 was 3.0 years: 3.1 years in the Hebrew education sector, versus 2.4 years in the Arab education sector.

Regarding examinees aged 21 and over, the shortest period of time required to complete the matriculation certification was found among examinees in the 26-29 year age group in the Hebrew education sector (average 1.7 years), and among examinees aged 21-25 in the Arab education sector (average 2.0 years). The longest period of time required to complete matriculation was among adults aged 30-39 (Table G).

Table G: Entitled Examinees in 2003, by Average Number of Years to Complete Matriculation and by Sector

	Total	Hebrew Education	Arab Education
Total	3.0	3.1	2.4
Sex			
Men	3.2	3.2	2.4
Women	2.9	2.9	2.5
Age at time of registration for external exams			
Thereof:			
21-25	2.1	2.1	2.0
26-29	1.8	1.7	2.5
30-39	2.6	2.5	2.8

7. Active Examinees in 2003 Who Had Not Yet Completed Matriculation Requirements, by Relative Achievements

The external system enables examinees to complete their matriculation certificate gradually, over a period of years. This characteristic is important, because external examinees complete their matriculation certificates at a relatively late stage of life and under conditions different from those of the internal system examinees. Consequently, those who register to open an external examinee file are distinguished from each other in terms of the date of registration, the number of exams accumulated to their credit, and the amount of time they require to complete their matriculation.

Two-thirds of the examinees in the Hebrew education sector and three-fourths of those in the Arab education sector who **took at least one matriculation exam in 2003** and had not yet received their certificate had opened an external matriculation examinee file in 2002-2003. However, about 10% of the active examinees in 2003 opened an external matriculation examinee file prior to 1999.

Table H: Active Examinees in 2003 who Have Not Yet Completed Their Matriculation Requirements, by Year of Registration and Sector

	Total	Year of Registration				
		Up to 1998	1999-2000	2001	2002	2003
Absolute numbers						
Total	12,619	1,233	1,162	1,672	4,340	4,212
Hebrew education	11,294	1,171	1,054	1,536	3,981	3,552
Arab education	1,325	62	108	136	359	660
Percentages						
Total	100.0	9.8	9.2	13.2	34.4	33.4
Hebrew education	100.0	10.4	9.3	13.6	35.3	31.4
Arab education	100.0	4.7	8.1	10.3	27.1	49.8

Over half of the active examinees in 2003 who had not completed their matriculation requirements (57%) accumulated 1-2 exams to their credit; another one-quarter (25%) accumulated 3 or more exams; of the last group, 5.5% had accumulated 5 or more exams to their credit and were at an advanced stage of completing their matriculation certificate requirements. However, 18% of the active examinees in 2003 had not yet accumulated even one exam to their credit (Table 8).

D. POPULATION

The data in this publication relate to **external matriculation examinees** who were active in 2003, i.e., they took at least one matriculation examination that year.

By way of comparison with the internal matriculation system, the publication includes data relating to **entitled internal matriculation examinees** from the 2002/03 cohort.

E. METHOD AND SOURCES OF DATA

1. The survey is based on linking of file records to identity numbers.
2. a. The source of data on **external examinees and those entitled to a matriculation certificate in 2003** was the **2003 file of external matriculation examinees and those entitled to an external matriculation certificate**. The file was produced by the Central Bureau of Statistics on the basis of data from the 2003 external matriculation examinations file, which was received from the Ministry of Education and included data from the Winter and Summer examinations held that year. After filling in data copied from the Population Register and students files, the final examinees file included the identity number of each examinee, data on their examinations, and personal data copied from the Population Register.

- b. The source of data on **internal entitled examinees** was the **file of internal matriculation examinees and those entitled to an internal matriculation certificate in 2003**. The file was produced at the Central Bureau of Statistics based on data from the 2003 Internal Matriculation and Final Examinations File, which were obtained from the Ministry of Education. The file included all exams taken in the Winter and Summer of that year.

For every examinee, personal data and data on the characteristics of the examinee's school were copied from the files of the Ministry of Education. Additional personal data were obtained from the Population Register. Thus, the final file included the identity numbers of every examinee, data on the exams taken, and various other personal and institutional data.

F. DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

External matriculation examinees – persons with an external examinee file who took at least one matriculation examination (Summer or Winter 2003), regardless of the examination results.

Entitled to an external matriculation certificate – persons with an external examinee file who completed their matriculation examinations and satisfied all of the requirements that entitled them to a matriculation certificate in 2003.

University entrance requirements – include three study units in mathematics, four study units in English, and one enhanced subject (at least four units) besides English.

Study units earned by the examinee (Table 8) – the data in the publication include only those subjects for which the examinee received a passing score of 55 and over.

Population Group and Sector

Because some of the data on the external system are presented in this publication in comparison with data on the internal system, the population groups of external examinees and those entitled to a matriculation certificate are also presented by **sector**, which is the accepted terminology in the education system:

Hebrew education includes everyone belonging to the Jewish population (Jews and Others).

Arab education includes everyone belonging to the Arab population.

Jews and Others – **Jews** are defined by their religion, whereas "**others**" include non-Arab Christians and those unclassified by religion in the Ministry of the Interior, who are usually family members of Jewish immigrants.

Arabs – by religion: Moslems, Christian-Arabs, and Druze.

Origin – Persons born in Israel were classified by their **father's continent of birth**. The category "Israel" therefore refers only to Israeli-born persons whose fathers were also born in Israel.

Socio-economic cluster of the local authority – based on the socio-economic index of local authorities developed by the Central Bureau of Statistics¹. This index reflects the socio-economic level of each local authority based on an analysis of selected demographic, social and economic variables.

Based on cluster analysis, local authorities are allocated to clusters, which are as homogeneous as possible with respect to their socio-economic index. Accordingly, two authorities belonging to the same cluster will be similar to each other, and two authorities belonging to different clusters will be different from each other.

In the original classification, local authorities were allocated to 10 clusters: the first cluster consisted of authorities with the lowest values on the socio-economic index, and the tenth cluster consisted of authorities with the highest values on this index. In this publication, pairs of adjacent clusters were combined so that localities of residence are presented according to five categories of clusters.

In evaluating the data, it should be borne in mind that the socio-economic index and the clusters were prepared for local authorities only. This includes municipalities and local councils, but does not include regional councils. Therefore, about 1,340 **examinees** and 220 **entitled examinees** living in regional councils are not included in the data presenting this variable.

In this publication, **socio-economic clusters** are presented according to the 2001 classification of localities.

¹ See Central Bureau of Statistics, *Characterization and Classification of Local Authorities by the Socio-Economic Level of the Population, 2001*, Special Publication 1222, Jerusalem, 2004.