



The National Institute for Testing and Evaluation (NITE) was established by the Association of University Heads in Israel for the purpose of developing and administering an array of tests that predict success in academic studies and are used for admissions to and placement of applicants in Israel's institutions of higher education.

NITE is a public, not-for-profit organization founded by the universities in Israel.

Background

The National Institute for Testing and Evaluation (NITE) was established in 1981 by decision of the Association of University Heads in Israel in order to centralize admissions testing for applicants to Israel's universities.

The establishment of NITE brought together the finest professionals in psychometrics and related fields, thus improving the quality and efficiency of university entrance examinations. The use of a uniform array of examinations serving all institutions of higher education also lessens the burden on those who apply to more than one institution.

Structure

NITE is a public, not-for-profit organization. It was founded by the following universities:

- The Technion – Israel Institute of Technology
- The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
- The Feinberg Graduate School of the Weizmann Institute of Science
- Tel Aviv University
- Bar-Ilan University
- The University of Haifa
- Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

NITE is supervised by a board of directors that includes representatives of these universities.

NITE's staff consists primarily of psychometricians and professionals in related fields, supported by computer experts and administrative personnel.

NITE's work is reviewed by a scientific council comprised of leading professionals from Israel and abroad who offer criticism and advice to ensure the highest possible level of performance.

Objectives

- Development and administration of a common, uniform array of tests for use in the admissions and placement process by Israel's institutions of higher education.
- Provision of assessment, selection, and placement services to other institutions.
- Development of placement and assessment tools for use in the field of education at all levels.
- Research on topics related to admissions and placement in institutions of higher education.
- Advancement of the fields of testing, measurement, and assessment in Israel.

The Testing Process

NITE develops the admissions tests used by Israel's universities and other institutions of higher education and administers these examinations to approximately 80,000 applicants a year. NITE is responsible for every stage of the testing process, which includes:

- Processing examinees; assigning test dates and locations according to examinees' preferences.
- Administering the tests throughout Israel and at several locations abroad.
- Screening applicants requesting special test accommodations because of physical or learning disabilities; adapting and administering examinations for those requiring accommodations.
- Scoring tests and equating scores on a uniform scale; reporting scores to examinees and educational institutions.

NITE's Tests

■ The Psychometric Entrance Test (PET)

Israel is one of many countries which use psychometric tests as part of the academic admissions process. The PET assesses a variety of skills that are essential for academic studies, thus facilitating the acceptance of university applicants most likely to succeed in their studies.

PET is administered several times a year throughout Israel, as well as in several locations abroad. The test is adapted and translated into several languages – Arabic, Russian, French, and Spanish – so that most applicants can take the test in their first language. There is also a combined English-Hebrew version of the test, in which selected words are translated into additional languages.

■ Proficiency Tests

In addition to the PET, NITE develops and administers proficiency and placement tests in a number of areas:

- **Hebrew and English proficiency tests** are used by the universities for admissions and for placement of applicants in language courses at the appropriate level.
- **The mathematics proficiency test** assesses knowledge of mathematics and mathematical reasoning skills.
- **Admissions and certification tests** are used for a variety of study programs and advanced degrees, including the master's degree in psychology and pre-academic preparatory programs.

■ Assessment of Special Skills and Non-Cognitive Factors

NITE has developed and continues to perfect tools for assessing the special skills required for specific fields of study or professions. These include:

- **Writing assessment** – assesses the academic writing ability of examinees in their first language.
- **Assessment Center** – evaluates medical school applicants using questionnaires and simulation stations, in order to assess relevant aspects of the applicants' personalities.

- **Standardized biographical questionnaires** – a uniform tool which can be used as an alternative to the personal interview.
- **Decision-making questionnaires** – evaluate examinees' ability to understand complex problems and to solve them intelligently.
- **A computerized test battery for the diagnosis of learning disabilities** – identifies learning disabilities in students and applicants to institutions of higher education.

■ Projects for Israel's School System

In addition to its ongoing activities, NITE produces customized tests and other assessment tools for the school system. These include a collection of performance assessment tasks in science, Hebrew, and English for primary schools and a nationwide assessment project providing feedback on academic performance at the school and classroom levels in several subjects.

NITE also assists in analyzing data from tests and surveys conducted in the school system.

Special Projects and Services

■ Computerized Adaptive Tests

NITE has developed computerized and adaptive tests for small special-needs populations. NITE offers a computerized adaptive version of the English proficiency test (AMIRAM) and a computerized adaptive version of the Psychometric Entrance Test for examinees with learning disabilities (MIFAM).

■ Internet-Based Tests

NITE has developed tests for online administration, such as the MEIMAD test for admission to the universities' pre-academic preparatory programs.

■ The Israeli Psychometric Association (ISPA)

NITE initiated the founding of the Israeli Psychometric Association in order to promote research and professional activity in educational measurement and assessment in Israel and to encourage information sharing and cooperation among professionals in the field.

International Activity

NITE is an active member of international organizations in the field of measurement and assessment, such as AERA, NCME, IAEA, ITC, and AEA-Europe.

NITE is also involved in international projects and provides consulting services to several countries.

Consultation and Professional Services

NITE's activities in the areas of academic measurement and assessment include running workshops and professional development programs, as well as developing and administering academic courses for a variety of institutions. NITE also provides consulting services, including the development of assessment tools, data analysis, and the interpretation of test results, to government agencies and to academic and other public institutions.

Ongoing Research

NITE places great emphasis on research in the fields of psychometrics, measurement, and assessment. Comprehensive studies of PET's validity and ability to predict academic success are conducted on an ongoing basis. Other aspects of PET that are studied include the test's appropriateness for particular examinee populations and the effect of preparatory courses on test scores.

Examinees are regularly asked to fill in a questionnaire regarding various aspects of the testing conditions. This feedback is incorporated into NITE's continuing research.

Publications and Information

The projects and research that NITE conducts or in which NITE participates are published in professional journals and research reports that are distributed to professional bodies and interested parties.

As a service to examinees, NITE offers information booklets in all the languages in which the PET is administered. They contain general information about the test, sample questions with explanations, and a practice test.

NITE also publishes actual tests, both online and in print, which help examinees prepare for the test and enable them to evaluate their abilities.

For more information:

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