



תנועת בני עקיבא העולמית
WORLD BNEI AKIVA

H A C H S H A R A 2 0 1 3

Live Israel. Learn Israel. Love Israel.

MTA

LIMMUD

Welcome to the world of Hachshara!

Bnei Akiva inspires and empowers Jewish youth with a deep commitment to the Jewish people, the Land of Israel and the Torah. Its members strive to live lives of Torah va'Avodah, combining Torah learning and observance with active contribution to the Jewish people and society.

For more than 80 years, our Hachshara programmes have played a part in shaping and training the future leaders of Bnei Akiva and Jewish communities around the world.

Your gap year is when you can devote specific time to Jewish learning, and Hachshara is designed to help you make the most of that time. And you'll find that being on Hachshara is a learning experience itself – you'll find out more about Israel, pick up Ivrit and grow as a person.

Our team

Bnei Akiva has a highly qualified administrative and educational staff in Israel, looking after the programmes and participants on a daily basis.

- Qualified resident leaders (madrichim) – among them, Israelis on their second year of National Service – accompany our groups, guiding and advising them throughout their year in Israel.
- The programme co-ordinator (rakaz) is responsible for the logistical and educational implementation of the programme. He visits the group regularly and maintains close contact with the madrichim.
- Our groups are also cared for by educational mentors, a young family who look after the welfare needs of those on Hachshara. As experienced graduates of Bnei Akiva, they help to guide our participants individually so that they gain the most out of their year.



MTA

You'll have a year of learning Torah in some of the best learning centres that Israel has to offer.

During the times when you are not at Yeshiva or Midrasha, we'll provide a varied schedule of activities letting you really live and feel the pulse of the Land of Israel.

Various volunteer options, together with seminars about current Jewish and Israeli issues, will complement the educational goals of MTA.

You'll be more independent than you've ever been in your life, yet you can relax in the knowledge that your needs are being looked after.



MTA AT A GLANCE

January	Opening Seminar
February	Yeshiva/Midrasha
March	Kibbutz and Zionism Seminar
April	Pesach Break Northern Tiyl
May	Yeshiva/Midrasha
June	
July	Girls: Volunteering Shoah Seminar Journey to Poland
August	Yeshiva/Midrasha
September	Eilat Tiyl Succot Break Leadership Seminar
October	Yeshiva/Midrasha
November	
December	Closing Seminar

This timetable is a guide to the programme elements and lengths and is subject to change.



Midreshet Harova

is located in the heart of the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City, and is one of Israel's leading seminaries. The

Midrasha offers an ideal setting for students to achieve spiritual and intellectual growth in a religious Zionist framework. The open intellectual environment, combined with the wide variety of teachers, is particularly attractive to the creative student interested in exploring a range of ideas and approaches.

www.harova.org



Midreshet Yeud

in Jerusalem is ideal for girls who are equally motivated to learn Torah and to grow spiritually through giving.

There are classes three days a week, studying texts and discussing contemporary issues, complemented by two days of giving back to Israeli society, volunteering with a variety of chessed organisations. These include hospitals, homes for the disabled, schools and soup kitchens.

www.midreshet-yeud.org.il



Yeshivat Eretz Hatzvi

is in the Katamon neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and places emphasis on teaching the skills to enable students to

become independent in their studies. Featuring prominently in the schedule are Gemara, Tanach, Halacha and Machshava classes. While the curriculum is devoted to Limmudei Kodesh, the Yeshiva is sensitive to issues that students face during their growth process in Israel, and that they will encounter in their subsequent university years.

www.yehatzvi.org

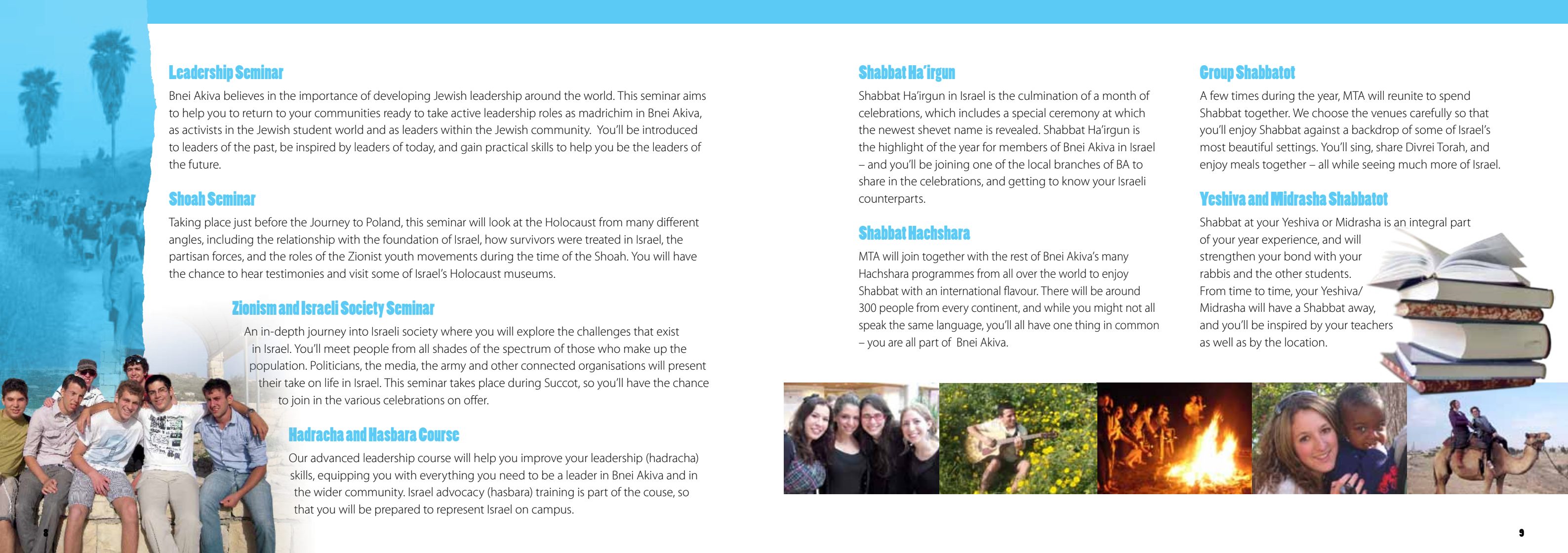


Yeshivat Har Etzion

is the largest of the Hesder Yeshivot, where Israeli students combine their army service with yeshiva study in a five-year programme. The intense

study of Gemara is the central focus of learning, while other areas of study, including Tanach, Machshevet Yisrael and Halacha, are integral parts of the programme as well. The overall goal of the yeshiva is to foster within each student a love of Hashem and a lifelong commitment to Talmud Torah, Am Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael.

www.haretzion.org



Leadership Seminar

Bnei Akiva believes in the importance of developing Jewish leadership around the world. This seminar aims to help you to return to your communities ready to take active leadership roles as madrichim in Bnei Akiva, as activists in the Jewish student world and as leaders within the Jewish community. You'll be introduced to leaders of the past, be inspired by leaders of today, and gain practical skills to help you be the leaders of the future.

Shoah Seminar

Taking place just before the Journey to Poland, this seminar will look at the Holocaust from many different angles, including the relationship with the foundation of Israel, how survivors were treated in Israel, the partisan forces, and the roles of the Zionist youth movements during the time of the Shoah. You will have the chance to hear testimonies and visit some of Israel's Holocaust museums.

Zionism and Israeli Society Seminar

An in-depth journey into Israeli society where you will explore the challenges that exist in Israel. You'll meet people from all shades of the spectrum of those who make up the population. Politicians, the media, the army and other connected organisations will present their take on life in Israel. This seminar takes place during Succot, so you'll have the chance to join in the various celebrations on offer.

Hadracha and Hasbara Course

Our advanced leadership course will help you improve your leadership (hadracha) skills, equipping you with everything you need to be a leader in Bnei Akiva and in the wider community. Israel advocacy (hasbara) training is part of the course, so that you will be prepared to represent Israel on campus.

Shabbat Ha'irgun

Shabbat Ha'irgun in Israel is the culmination of a month of celebrations, which includes a special ceremony at which the newest shevet name is revealed. Shabbat Ha'irgun is the highlight of the year for members of Bnei Akiva in Israel – and you'll be joining one of the local branches of BA to share in the celebrations, and getting to know your Israeli counterparts.

Shabbat Hachshara

MTA will join together with the rest of Bnei Akiva's many Hachshara programmes from all over the world to enjoy Shabbat with an international flavour. There will be around 300 people from every continent, and while you might not all speak the same language, you'll all have one thing in common – you are all part of Bnei Akiva.

Croup Shabbatot

A few times during the year, MTA will reunite to spend Shabbat together. We choose the venues carefully so that you'll enjoy Shabbat against a backdrop of some of Israel's most beautiful settings. You'll sing, share Divrei Torah, and enjoy meals together – all while seeing much more of Israel.

Yeshiva and Midrasha Shabbatot

Shabbat at your Yeshiva or Midrasha is an integral part of your year experience, and will strengthen your bond with your rabbis and the other students. From time to time, your Yeshiva/ Midrasha will have a Shabbat away, and you'll be inspired by your teachers as well as by the location.



Tiyulim

As well as various trips you'll take with your Yeshiva or Midrasha, you'll get to see the length and breadth of Israel with Bnei Akiva. On the Northern Tiyul we'll show you some of the most beautiful views in the country, and while you're stretching your legs, you'll also expand your educational horizons, learning about the land of our forefathers. Later in the year, our Eilat Tiyul will give you the opportunity to enjoy water sports, hike the land, and see how Ben Gurion's dream of making the desert bloom is coming true.

Sar-el Army Experience

Sar-el provides people from abroad with an opportunity to volunteer on an IDF base doing routine but important tasks. (Sar-el may not be available to the entire group.)

Kibbutz Experience and Seder Night

For two weeks before Pesach, you'll have an inside perspective on an alternative Israeli lifestyle. Working alongside kibbutz members, preparing for Pesach, you may share duties in the factories, kitchen, dining hall or childcare facilities.

This period culminates with the group Seder – a highlight of the year! You'll never forget Seder Night on Hachshara. Whilst you might feel a little homesick at the thought of being away from home for Yom Tov, you'll soon feel differently once it comes to the unique experience itself! You'll share stories, customs and songs from around the world.

Summer Volunteering

Some of the MTA participants will have the opportunity to run educational programmes and activities for underprivileged children and immigrants in the summer.

Journey to Poland

MTA participants have the special opportunity to visit Poland as part of their year on Hachshara. Starting and ending in Israel, the trip focuses on the experiences of Polish Jewry throughout its history. You'll explore the immense and beautiful Jewry of pre-war Poland, dating back 800 years, and you'll examine the years of the Holocaust by visiting Jewish ghettos, death and labour camps, and other significant sites. The trip is prepared meticulously by our educational team so that the experience is a meaningful one.



LIMMUD

On Limmud you'll spend significant time at Yeshiva or Midrasha, as well as the legendary Bnei Akiva experiences of Israel, including kibbutz, community volunteering, Marva and Magen David Adom.

A key element of Limmud is Machon, which includes seminars, Shabbatot and trips that feature guidance and leadership, Zionism and Jewish Identity, religion and state, Torah va'Avodah, and more.

Limmud will also enable you to grow Jewishly. You will come back with a clearer understanding of what it means to be Jewish for you, and the skills, drive and passion to develop your own Jewish identity.



LIMMUD AT A GLANCE

January	Opening Seminar
February	Yeshiva/Midrasha
March	Machon LeManhigut including Pesach break
April	Community Volunteering
May	
June	Machon LeManhigut Journey to Poland
July	
August	Magen David Adom or Marva Army Experience
September	
October	Kibbutz including Succot break
November	Yeshiva / Midrasha
December	Closing Seminar

This timetable is a guide to the programme elements and lengths and is subject to change.



Yeshiva and Midrasha

Education is at the heart of Bnei Akiva, and there will be learning programmes throughout the year. However, there is also a set period of time dedicated specifically to Jewish learning in a Yeshiva or Midrasha environment. These learning institutions will teach a religious Zionist and modern orthodox educational philosophy while studying all aspects of Torah.

We place importance on interaction with communities in Israel, and you will learn about critical and relevant issues of faith in modern times. You'll be guided throughout, and different levels will be catered for. To be a participant on Hachshara, you don't need prior knowledge in Jewish studies – you just need commitment to learn and to grow. We will equip you with Torah learning skills that will stay with you for life, and you'll soon feel at home in a Beit Midrash.

Community Volunteering

By volunteering in a community in need, you'll combine Bnei Akiva's principles of Torah and Avodah. You'll live and volunteer in a neighbourhood in one of Israel's socio-economically deprived areas where there is a real need for volunteers.

Living in apartments, and shopping, cleaning and cooking by yourselves, you will learn to be independent and gain important skills that you will use later in life. Volunteer placements – which take place in the mornings and afternoons – may include teaching English in local community centres, helping in soup kitchens, working with the elderly, and sports. Your time in the development town will be supplemented with a learning programme, an Ulpan (Hebrew language classes) and evening activities.

Through your experience, you will gain appreciation for the challenges facing the people of Israel today.

Kibbutz

From the early days of the State, kibbutzim had a sense of duty, serving as a pillar of strength for Zionism. The members lived under extreme conditions, while tilling the soil, draining the swamplands, and building a settlement. Today, Hachshara participants are viewed as valuable contributors to the kibbutz movement.

Working with kibbutz members, you may share duties in the field, gardens, factories, kitchen, dining hall or childcare facilities. You'll be offered placements according to the work requirements of the kibbutz, and you'll live together in kibbutz housing, eating meals in the communal dining room. The group will also become involved in kibbutz social and communal activities such as Shabbat and holiday celebrations. You'll be "adopted" by an Israeli kibbutz family, enabling you to have a closer view of what kibbutz life means for the children and adults who reside there permanently.

Machon LeManhigut

World Bnei Akiva believes in the importance of developing Jewish leadership around the world, which is why we have our own centre of leadership – the Machon LeManhigut (Leadership Institute).

The Machon LeManhigut is committed to training, inspiring and enriching the Jewish leaders of tomorrow. Providing a broad range of stimulating classes, combined with exciting seminar days exploring Israeli society, you'll be nurtured into making life-defining decisions. The Machon will develop your understanding of key areas relating to Jewish life and the State of Israel.



Magen David Adom

Magen David Adom provides effective emergency first-aid treatment. You'll be part of this mission and gain valuable hands-on experience giving basic medical treatment while experiencing "real life" in Israel.

After completing a required training course, you'll volunteer alongside Israelis on ambulances at various MDA stations across the country. After successful completion of the course you will be a certified "First Responder", recognised through MDA Israel. Hachshara will be assigned stations based on the needs of MDA. The group may be split into various stations. Participants must be in good physical and mental health, and basic conversational Hebrew is required.

The work that you will do saves lives and has a lasting effect on Israeli society. It is highly rewarding and is ideal for people who enjoy working with, and helping others.

IMPORTANT: Before coming on Hachshara, participants wishing to volunteer for MDA should have had Hepatitis B vaccinations, and must bring the accompanying documentation.

Marva Army Experience

Marva is ideal for those who want to become familiar with Israel by experiencing the physical and emotional challenges of the country, its challenges and its people. Through hiking the land, living in field conditions, navigating deserts and hillsides and participating in seminars and lectures, you'll learn about the issues of the country.

The programme is based in the Southern Negev, but you'll spend time in various other parts of the country, including Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and the Galilee. The experience is conducted in easy Hebrew, and as participants come from all over the world, that becomes the common language of communication, allowing for significant improvement of Hebrew.

Marva is a physically demanding programme, and participants are expected to be in good physical condition and highly motivated. You will be required to have a personal interview prior to acceptance.

Marva may ask for a financial deposit, in exchange for the uniforms and equipment, which will be returned at the end of the programme.

Journey to Poland

Limmud participants have the special opportunity of visiting Poland as part of their year on Hachshara. Starting and ending in Israel, the trip focuses on the experiences of Polish Jewry throughout its history.

You'll explore the immense and beautiful Jewry of pre-war Poland, dating back 800 years, and you'll examine the years of the Holocaust by visiting Jewish ghettos, death and labour camps, and other significant sites. The trip is prepared meticulously by our educational team so that the experience is a meaningful one. Whilst in Israel, you'll prepare for your journey to Poland, and on your return, you'll deal with processing and concluding the many concepts and issues that the trip covered.





Your questions answered

Why Hachshara?

Hachshara is the Bnei Akiva programme! It sounds obvious, but you rely on Bnei Akiva to support and help you whilst in Israel and you can trust us to create a programme tailored to people from a Bnei Akiva background. Hachshara is geared towards what you, individually, want from your year in Israel and allows you the security and enjoyment of being part of a group sharing the same experiences.

Which programme should I go on?

It can be confusing deciding how to spend a gap year. You should weigh up what you're hoping to get out of your year and decide which programme best suits your aims. If you wish to discuss your options with us, or ask any questions, we're always happy to help.

Will I see my friends on other programmes?

Yes! There are times when the different Hachshara groups are together, even though your real group relationship will be with those on your own programme. You'll also have ample free time and free Shabbatot to make your own plans and arrange visits to those on other programmes.

What will I gain?

Hachshara will give you many amazing experiences and skills to draw on for the rest of your life.

Personally: You'll become more mature, more confident and more independent, and you'll gain experiences and skills that will enhance your CV.

Socially: You'll make many new friends from South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Israel and from all over the world.

Jewishly: You'll develop your Jewish Identity and gain knowledge about Jewish history, people, and culture.

Israel: You'll get to know the land of Israel and learn about the history and politics of the country.

What will the learning be like?

You've almost certainly never learnt in the way you will on Hachshara, but don't worry. First of all, most people will be in the same boat. Everybody has their own level – it's about finding your own level and being happy. As long as you are motivated and do as much as you can, you will be able to look back at your year with pride and with the knowledge that you realised your potential.

General information



Security

The safety of the participants on Bnei Akiva programmes is our primary concern. We follow the security advice of the Security Department of the Jewish Agency, and run our activities in areas of Israel with their approval. Participants wishing to leave the bases on which the programme operates must notify the staff and receive permission. In the event of a change in the security situation, we will inform our participants by text message. Occasionally, as a precaution, we will ask the groups to “stay home”, rather than go out, even during free time.



Medical care and insurance

Medical services and insurance for illness and injury while in Israel on Hachshara are provided by our recommended medical insurance company. Treatment related to pre-existing conditions is not included in the coverage. Doctors affiliated with the plan are located throughout Israel and participants can easily arrange to see one, no matter where they are based at the time. Participants are advised to take out “personal effects insurance” and we’ll be happy to send you the details from our recommended insurers.



Visa extension

When participants arrive in Israel they will be issued with a three-month tourist visa. World Bnei Akiva will make the arrangements to extend this visa into a year-long visa. This visa allows the participants to volunteer in Israel and to stay in the country legally for up to a year; it does not affect their status as citizens of their home country or their rights if they were to make Aliyah at a later date. Any cost for extending the visa must be paid for by the participant. Two passport photos may also be required. If participants leave the country during the programme and then return, it is possible that their visa will be cancelled and it will then be their responsibility to apply again for a new extension visa.



Special diets and allergies

If you require a special diet or have a severe allergy that may necessitate extra attention, please state this in a letter to the programme co-ordinator. Bnei Akiva will make every effort to cater for your needs, although this may not always be possible. You must check with the Finance Manager if you will need to add a payment to cover the cost of these dietary needs.



Bedding and towels

Bedding, sheets and pillows are provided for some parts of the year, but each participant should bring a set with too. A sleeping bag and towels are necessary. There are organisations who can supply bedding and towels to you in Israel, which can save you space in your luggage allowance.



Laundry

Laundry for certain parts of the year will be provided free of charge, for example Kibbutz. During other periods, laundry will be organised, but the participants will have to pay, at a cost of around 25-40 shekels for a large load.



Pocket money

On Hachshara all necessary expenses are covered: food, accommodation and transport. However it is necessary for participants to come with a certain budget in order to cover other expenditure: personal entertainment, travel to and from free weekends, all holiday (chofesh) periods of the programme, workbooks, hebrew study books and Jewish books that they may need for their studies. It is the participant’s decision how much money they bring. We recommend that around 150 – 200 shekels a week is ample for a participant on our programmes.



Mobile phones

We advise that you participate in our recommended mobile phone provider, which has a competitive plan enabling you to call your friends on Hachshara for free. The plan also lets our staff reach all of our students immediately and simultaneously in all circumstances. Please see the up-to-date information sheet and order form that will be distributed around two months prior to the start of Hachshara.



Damage deposit

A damage deposit of USD \$100 (or equivalent in any currency) in cash must be handed in at the start of the year, which will be returned if no damage has been caused.



Application details

Application process

Apply online at www.hachshara.org. This website will also have the latest information about our programmes. Once you have begun the application process, you can sign in as many times as you like to continue the application. A medical form, which has been signed and stamped by a doctor, must accompany the application. Your local Rosh Israel Programs will guide you through this and all other relevant parts of the application process

Cost

The cost of Hachshara includes tuition, accommodation, medical insurance, and group transportation.

The payment plan will be discussed in private meetings with a representative of World Bnei Akiva.

Interview

After we receive your application, you'll be invited for an interview with a representative of World Bnei Akiva and/or the yeshiva or midrasha. Your interview allows them to get to know you a bit better and assess your suitability for Hachshara. It will also give you the opportunity to ask them any specific questions you may have.

Masa

Hachshara is a Masa-recognised programme. Masa is a joint project of the Government of Israel and the Jewish Agency for Israel. Registering for Masa at www.masaisrael.org is a requirement for all Hachshara participants. Visa approvals and other benefits may only be provided to those who have completed their Masa registration.

Please await instructions from your local Rosh Israel Programs before registering with Masa

Bursaries

Masa has a Scholarship Fund that will give assistance based on financial need. Please read the information carefully and apply at www.masaisrael.org.

There are also various trust funds in your community. For details of these, and of the bursaries available from Bnei Akiva, please speak in confidence to your local Bnei Akiva representative.

University applications

The value of gap year activities is widely documented and most universities will allow you to apply for deferred entry. It is a good idea to include details of your proposed gap year in your personal statement to support your application.

All information in this booklet is subject to change.





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