

UKRAINIAN PUBLIC OPINION ON STANDARDIZED EXTERNAL TESTING 2008-2012

This information describes the results of public opinion research conducted from 2008 to 2012 (during March and December of 2008¹, March of 2010², March and September of 2011 and October of 2012³) by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation in all territorial-administrative units of Ukraine: 24 regions (oblasts), Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Kyiv and the city of Sevastopol. The standardized error does not exceed 2.2%.

The core questions are identical throughout all surveys with some variation on the secondary questions.

All surveys were conducted on a quota sample representative according to gender (male, female), age (18-29, 30-54, 55 years and older), education (below secondary, secondary, high school), type of residency (capital city, regional (oblast) centers, other towns, villages) and regions (oblasts) of Ukraine. The materials represent data in relation to all survey participants, as well as to “respondents only” for each question.

¹ Under the USETI MCC TCP Project (2007-2009).

² With assistance of the International Renaissance Foundation (www.irf.ua).

³ Under the USETI Alliance GDA Project (2010-2012). Award #AID-121-A-00-10-00702.

In your opinion how important is the issue of improving the quality of higher education?

	March 11'	September 11'	September 11' TG ⁴	October 12'	October 12' TG
I think this a priority issue	32.2	37.9	48.0	35.6	43.8
This issue is important, but there are issues of greater priority	42.5	36.2	37.3	45.3	42.9
I consider this issue to be secondary	17.4	17.9	9.6	14.2	9.3
Note sure	7.9	8.0	5.0	5.8	3.9

Since 2008 the primary criterion for the admissions to Higher Educational Institution (HEI) has been the results of standardized external testing. Do you support such a system of HEI admissions?

	December 08'	March 11'	March 11' TG	September 11'	September 11' TG	October 12'	October 12' TG
Strongly agree	14.6	17.0	24.5	21.5	29.0	13.8	19.2
Rather yes	27.3	28.9	32.8	28.9	34.8	35.6	42.8
Rather no	17.3	19.2	18.9	15.2	10.7	18.1	17.0
Strongly disagree	16.8	10.9	11.3	10.7	11.5	9.1	9.4
Not sure	24.1	24.1	12.6	23.7	14.0	23.4	11.6

In your opinion what is the most objective system of HEI admissions?

	March 11'	March 11' TG	September 11'	September 11' TG	October 12'	October 12' TG
Based on the results of entrance exams, that HEIs used to administer	28.8	25.8	26.2	26.1	26.8	23.6
Based on the SET results	24.0	32.1	23.2	33.2	27.6	35.7
Based on the SET results and GPA certificate	16.5	17.3	17.8	20.2	16.7	19.9
Based on the SET results, GPA certificate and entrance exams held by HEIs	10.2	11.3	12.0	13.8	11.5	11.3
Not sure	20.4	13.5	20.9	9.8	17.5	9.3

⁴ TG – “Target” group – are those whose children, their relatives’ children, their close friends’ children or themselves tried to enter a HEI based on standardized external testing results.

The percentage of TG in March, 2011 was 33.5%, in September, 2011 – 32.6, in 2012 – 39.0% of the total number of the sample.

In your opinion how common is corruption in the knowledge assessment of high school graduates?

During high school graduation exams

	March 10'	March 11'	<i>March 11' TG</i>	September 11'	<i>September 11' TG</i>	October 12'	<i>October 12' TG</i>
Very common	17.9	16.8	15.9	21.0	20.8	14.4	16.3
Rather common	25.5	26.0	30.7	28.6	31.5	36.8	38.5
Not very common	21.3	27.8	29.1	23.8	26.7	20.5	24.6
Not common at all	14.9	8.5	8.0	10.6	11.0	8.5	8.2
Not sure	21.4	20.8	16.3	16.1	10.1	19.7	11.5

During standardized external testing

	March 10'	March 11'	<i>March 11' TG</i>	September 11'	<i>September 11' TG</i>	October 12'	<i>October 12' TG</i>
Very common	9.2	10.2	8.8	9.4	7.2	6.8	7.4
Rather common	18.1	17.2	17.6	21.5	23.9	21.1	21.4
Not very common	24.4	23.8	26.6	25.6	33.2	25.0	31.1
Not common at all	15.5	13.3	17.1	12.0	14.9	12.0	14.6
Not sure	32.8	35.6	29.8	31.5	20.8	35.0	25.5

During entrance exams held by HEIs

	March 10'	March 11'	<i>March 11' TG</i>	September 11'	<i>September 11' TG</i>	October 12'	<i>October 12' TG</i>
Very common	32.8	36.3	33.9	38.7	47.5	33.9	36.6
Rather common	35.0	33.5	37.7	32.7	35.2	37.8	38.6
Not very common	8.4	10.6	9.6	9.2	8.9	8.7	8.7
Not common at all	2.6	1.6	2.0	2.9	2.8	2.0	2.2
Not sure	21.1	17.9	17.4	16.5	10.7	17.7	14.0

Do you agree with the following statements?

Standardized external testing puts everyone in the same conditions

	March 10'	March 11'	<i>March 11' TG</i>	September 11'	<i>September 11' TG</i>	October 12'	<i>October 12' TG</i>
Strongly agree	20.5	19.0	26.0	16.0	20.8	14.2	18.3
Mostly agree	29.5	35.2	37.9	36.4	42.6	40.2	47.4
Mostly disagree	14.2	14.7	13.7	16.3	14.4	15.6	14.4
Strongly disagree	10.5	11.1	11.6	9.1	7.8	9.5	8.8
Not sure	25.3	19.9	10.8	22.3	14.5	20.5	11.2

Standardized external testing enabled gifted children to enter any HEI, even the most prestigious

	March 10'	March 11'	<i>March 11' TG</i>	September 11'	<i>September 11' TG</i>	October 12'	<i>October 12' TG</i>
Strongly agree	19.6	18.6	24.9	16.2	22.8	13.2	17.0
Mostly agree	28.1	33.6	34.8	33.3	38.4	35.3	40.9
Mostly disagree	13.9	14.3	14.9	15.6	15.0	17.7	18.5
Strongly disagree	11.0	12.3	13.4	11.8	10.4	11.3	11.2
Not sure	27.3	21.3	11.9	23.2	13.5	22.6	12.3

SET stimulates students not to hope for somebody's help but to study

	March 11'	<i>March 11' TG</i>	September 11'	<i>September 11' TG</i>	October 12'	<i>October 12' TG</i>
Strongly agree	22.4	31.8	19.0	25.4	17.9	21.4
Mostly agree	34.1	33.8	33.3	38.4	36.3	41.1
Mostly disagree	13.6	11.3	16.3	15.1	15.2	17.0
Strongly disagree	10.0	10.6	9.5	8.6	9.1	9.2
Not sure	19.9	13.1	21.9	12.5	21.4	11.3

Standardized external testing decreased the level of corruption in HEI admissions

	March 10'	March 11'	September 11'	<i>September 11' TG</i>	October 12'	<i>October 12' TG</i>
Strongly agree	16.3	12.0	13.2	<i>18.1</i>	10.1	<i>13.2</i>
Mostly agree	26.6	29.7	22.9	<i>29.8</i>	28.7	<i>32.8</i>
Mostly disagree	16.7	14.7	20.4	<i>14.4</i>	18.3	<i>19.8</i>
Strongly disagree	11.1	16.6	16.5	<i>16.2</i>	15.4	<i>14.6</i>
Not sure	29.3	17.0	27.0	<i>21.4</i>	27.5	<i>19.7</i>

Introduction of SET became a step towards fairness in the country

	March 10'	March 11'	<i>March 11' TG</i>	September 11'	<i>September 11' TG</i>	October 12'	<i>October 12' TG</i>
Strongly agree	14.2	11.6	<i>17.7</i>	11.6	<i>14.2</i>	9.6	<i>11.6</i>
Mostly agree	26.1	28.9	<i>29.8</i>	25.6	<i>32.1</i>	27.6	<i>32.1</i>
Mostly disagree	16.0	13.5	<i>15.2</i>	17.6	<i>16.7</i>	16.6	<i>17.9</i>
Strongly disagree	11.7	18.1	<i>18.2</i>	14.8	<i>12.8</i>	14.9	<i>15.5</i>
Not sure	32.0	27.9	<i>19.0</i>	30.3	<i>24.2</i>	31.2	<i>22.9</i>

Standardized external testing enables HEIs to select the best students

	March 11'	<i>March 11' TG</i>	September 11'	<i>September 11' TG</i>	October 12'	<i>October 12' TG</i>
Strongly agree	14.2	<i>18.8</i>	13.8	<i>17.7</i>	11.9	<i>14.7</i>
Mostly agree	32.3	<i>34.5</i>	30.3	<i>36.9</i>	32.3	<i>37.4</i>
Mostly disagree	13.3	<i>12.3</i>	15.2	<i>13.4</i>	17.0	<i>17.9</i>
Strongly disagree	12.4	<i>15.4</i>	11.9	<i>11.1</i>	10.0	<i>11.1</i>
Not sure	28.0	<i>19.0</i>	28.7	<i>20.8</i>	28.7	<i>19.0</i>

In your opinion what are the major shortcomings of admissions based on SET results? (multiple responses)

	March 11'	<i>March 11' TG</i>	September 11'	<i>September 11' TG</i>	October 12'	<i>October 12' TG</i>
Insufficient preparation of school graduates to testing	36.6	<i>41.7</i>	32.8	<i>32.2</i>	43.2	<i>32.9</i>
Imperfect test quality	31.3	<i>34.8</i>	30.9	<i>37.0</i>	44.8	<i>30.4</i>
No confidence that testing is fair and all the procedures are strictly adhered to	31.2	<i>31.1</i>	25.0	<i>29.7</i>	34.1	<i>33.5</i>
There were too many people exempt from testing (those having privileges, etc.).	12.4	<i>16.0</i>	13.1	<i>17.0</i>	12.4	<i>8.1</i>
Poor organization of HEI admission commissions work	11.2	<i>10.8</i>	9.8	<i>10.9</i>	10.6	<i>7.8</i>

	March 11'	March 11' TG	September 11'	September 11' TG	October 12'	October 12' TG
Unclear system of final admission	17.6	19.5	16.9	20.9	18.2	14.7
No guarantee that SET certificates were not falsified	16.4	18.4	17.1	19.1	17.4	24.9
Documents certifying candidates' privileges were falsified	9.4	11.1	10.4	11.6	10.0	13.6
SET decreases students' motivation to study certain subjects (those not tested)	12.8	15.9	14.3	16.8	17.1	13.0
No serious disadvantages	3.4	4.8	6.3	7.8	6.9	8.8
Other (what?)_____	0.9	1.2	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.5
Not sure	16.8	9.9	18.1	8.0	4.2	12.3

In your opinion what should be done to improve the system of HEI admission based on SET results?

	March 08'	March 11'	March 11' TG	September 11'	September 11' TG	October 12'	October 12' TG
To make SET compulsory condition for admission to HEI regardless of secondary school graduation year*						14.8	19.2
To limit the validity of SET certificates to three years						10.8	13.5
Better prepare students for testing at schools	43.4	51.2	55.3	45.2	52.1	45.1	51.1
HEIs should inform candidates about their admissions rules in advance	28.8	33.4	39.2	28.0	33.7	25.5	29.8
Public control during all stages of SET administration should be increased	20.3	22.2	20.0	23.6	27.8	19.5	19.9
HEI admission commissions should verify candidates' documents more thoroughly (SET certificates, privileges certificates, etc.)	17.1	18.0	20.2	20.3	22.7	19.2	19.2
HEIs should make their admission systems public and clear	27.3	34.8	41.1	34.0	39.7	28.7	32.0
Those violating admissions conditions should be responsible for these violations	23.9	19.5	23.5	22.8	25.0	18.3	17.5
Other	3.3	1.0	0.7	1.0	1.4	1.0	1.2
Not sure	16.5	14.6	10.6	16.9	8.3	13.6	8.5

Do you have children?

	March 11'	September 11'	October 12'
Yes	71.7	71.7	71.6
No	28.3	28.3	28.4

Have you, your children or children of your relatives or close friends taken standardized external tests?

	March 11'	September 11'	October 12'
Yes	33.5	32.6	39.0
No	59.9	54.1	50.5
Not sure	6.6	13.3	10.5

**The National HEI Admissions rules, as amended by the Ministry of Education and Science in 2010, give persons who have graduated secondary school in 2007 or before (prior to mandatory SET) a choice between SET and in house HEI admissions exams.*

Are you (or your friends who took SET) satisfied with the way it was administered?

	March 10'	March 11'	September 11'	October 12'
Completely satisfied	25.8	17.7	19.0	14.9
Mostly satisfied	43.8	40.5	43.3	49.6
Mostly dissatisfied	10.2	20.6	17.4	16.4
Completely dissatisfied	11.0	7.6	8.6	5.1
Not sure	9.2	13.6	11.8	14.0

In general have you, your children or children of your relatives or close friends managed to enter a HEI you/they wanted to?

	December 08'	March 11'	September 11'	October 12'
Admitted to their first choice school	49.6	42.9	52.4	50.0
Admitted not to their first choice, but a good choice nonetheless	29.4	30.1	29.7	37.9
Entered just any HEI	14.1	16.2	9.5	10.9
Did not manage to enter	4.1	5.8	4.1	5.6
Not sure, don't know	2.8	5.0	4.3	4.5

If you, your children or children of your relatives or close friends did not manage to enter the HEI they wanted, why did that happen?

	December 08'	March 11'	September 11'	October 12'
Didn't have enough knowledge	21.2	15.6	22.6	23.7
The procedure of admission was unclear		-	-	17.6
There were too many applicants with the specific appointments from state agencies	13.6	21.9	18.9	7.6
SET system has many imperfections and does not reveal true abilities and knowledge	25.1	24.3	20.8	10.0
Too many applicants of privileged categories		-	-	7.4
Other (what?) _____	5.0	2.4	4.1	1.5
Don't know, not sure	35.1	35.8	33.6	32.2

If you, your children or children of your relatives or close friends managed to enter a HEI, what form of education are you in: state funded or contract (i.e. pay out of pocket with own funds)?

	December 08'	March 11'	September 11'	October 12'
Mostly state funded	26.6	25.5	35.1	22.3
Some in state funded, other in contract	33.2	32.5	32.7	33.9
Mostly contract	32.1	33.6	19.4	25.0
Don't know	8.1	8.4	12.8	18.7

Should privileges for certain categories of HEI applicants be preserved?

	March 11'	September 11'	September 11' TG	October 12'	October 12' TG
Privileges should be established as current laws provide	53.9	51.9	47.7	51.7	52.4
Privileges in admissions should be replaced by targeted assistance to socially unprotected groups	19.3	20.7	23.9	21.7	19.2
There shouldn't be any privileges for anyone	12.4	14.5	11.4	14.2	11.0
Not sure	14.7	12.9	11.4	12.5	17.4

If you think that certain categories of school-leavers may have privileges in HEI admission, what are they?

	December 08'	March 11'	September 11'	<i>September 11' TG</i>	October 12'	<i>October 12' TG</i>
Orphans	64.8	69.4	70.6	71.2	74.2	78.8
Those who suffered from the Chernobyl disaster	31.2	25.9	27.3	28.6	26.1	27.5
Children from lowest income households	43.5	43.1	39.1	39.9	44.0	45.0
Winners of subject Olympiads/academic contests	26.8	29.6	28.5	30.0	31.3	29.5
School-leavers from rural schools	21.1	14.1	13.8	8.7	18.0	14.1
Children with special needs (visually/hearing impaired)	38.1	45.7	42.9	48.4	48.4	49.9
(School) Medalists	19.5	25.1	21.2	20.8	24.8	24.8
Children of miners		-	-		9.7	11.6
Other	2.4	2.3	1.2	2.0	1.3	1.7
Not sure	19.0	13.3	12.4	9.5	11.9	8.3

Should the students of HEI preparatory courses have certain admission privileges at these HEIs?

	March 11'	September 11'	<i>September 11' TG</i>	October 12'	<i>October 12' TG</i>
Yes	37.4	30.8	34.3	33.8	35.3
No	38.6	43.7	47.0	43.2	45.2
Not sure	24.0	25.5	18.7	22.9	19.5

Since 2010 during the HEI admissions campaign the secondary school GPA was added to the SET as the second admission criterion. Do you support such an innovation?

	March 11'	September 11'	<i>September 11' TG</i>	October 12'	<i>October 12' TG</i>
Yes, fully support	33.0	34.5	34.5	37.5	32.5
Generally support, but the points for GPA should be fewer than for the SET	25.9	24.4	25.6	28.3	21.4
Do not support, admissions should be based only on SET results	16.7	15.1	19.9	19.5	17.4
Not sure	24.4	26.0	16.8	14.8	28.7

What is your attitude to the idea that HEI admissions should be based not only on SET results and secondary school GPA but also on an entrance exam administered by HEIs?

	March 11'	<i>March 11' TG</i>	September 11'	<i>September 11' TG</i>	October 12'	<i>October 12' TG</i>
Positive, this will enable HEIs to better select their students	24.5	22.4	27.9	25.3	26.8	26.5
Negative, because this will lead to corruption during HEI admissions	45.7	51.1	43.3	51.8	44.6	51.9
Not sure	29.8	26.5	28.9	22.9	28.6	21.6

In your opinion what factor should be final and most important in HEI admissions?

	March 11'	<i>March 11' TG</i>	September 11'	<i>September 11' TG</i>	October 12'	<i>October 12' TG</i>
SET results	40.7	54.5	38.0	49.2	34.3	46.4
Secondary school GPA	16.5	17.0	13.5	12.0	10.6	10.4
Scores obtained for entrance exams administered by HEIs	25.7	20.7	18.9	15.4	27.2	20.5
Motivational essay (Statement of purpose)	2.6	2.6	2.7	3.1	3.5	5.4
Results of interview run by HEIs	6.8	6.8	5.3	5.1	6.7	5.5
Other	1.2	2.5	0.7	0.6	1.4	1.2
Not sure	17.6	10.4	20.9	14.6	16.3	10.5