

Education at a Glance 2020

Introduction and background

Education at a Glance is a comprehensive source of information about education around the world. It provides data on the structure, finances and performance of schools across OECD countries and several partner economies. The 2020 edition has a focus on vocational education and training (VET), with many indicators analysing the participation and progression of students who follow this route.

Key points

The output of educational institutions and the impact of learning

- Across OECD countries, young adults (25-34) are better educated than they were a decade ago. The share of young adults without upper secondary education (equivalent to Key Stage 5 in the UK) has decreased from 20 per cent in 2009 to 15 per cent in 2019. However, the share of adults with a vocational qualification has decreased over the generations – from 72 per cent among 55-64 year olds to 66 per cent among 34-54 year olds.
- The share of the population who have completed tertiary education varies widely across OECD countries, from 24 per cent in Mexico to 70 per cent in Ireland and Korea.
- Across OECD countries, the share of young adults with tertiary education has increased by around 10 per cent between 2009 and 2019.
- Across all OECD countries, young women are more likely to complete tertiary education than young men (51% vs 39%).
- On average across OECD countries, 47 per cent of 18-24 year olds have left the education system. The share of young adults aged 20-24 not in education, employment or training is 15.2 per cent, one of the lowest figures since 2000.
- In most OECD countries, education is compulsory until the age of 16. On average across OECD countries, 86 per cent of 15-19 year olds are still in education.
- The average proportion of students with below Level 2 across the OECD countries is 20 per cent in reading, 23 per cent in mathematics and 21 per cent in science. The percentage of low performers (below Level 2) is around 5 per cent in Canada, Estonia and Finland but it is at least 30 per cent in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Turkey.
- The analysis compared the share of 15 year olds with a proficiency level below Level 2 in reading, mathematics and science with the share of NEETs (not in education, employment or training) and found that there is a relationship between the two.
- Across all OECD countries, higher educational attainment increases the likelihood of being employed. Statistics also highlight the value of vocational qualifications. Across OECD countries, among 25-34 year olds with upper secondary or post-secondary non tertiary attainment, the employment rate is roughly 10 percentage points higher for young adults with a vocational qualification *82%) than for those with a general qualification (72%).
- Greater educational attainment brings increasing rewards. On average, across OECD countries, full-time workers with upper secondary or post-secondary non tertiary education earn 23 per cent more than those without. Those with a tertiary degree earn 54 per cent more than those with upper secondary education, although this figure masks significant difference according to the field of study. The earnings advantage varies from less than 25 per cent in Norway and Sweden to around 100 per cent or more in Chile, Lithuania and Turkey. Across the OECD the 2 broad fields of study most associated with the highest earnings are engineering, manufacturing and construction and information and communication technologies.

Access to education, participation and progress

- The share of upper secondary students enrolled in vocational education and training (VET) averages 37 per cent among 15-19 year olds across OECD countries, and increases to 62 per cent of upper secondary students aged 20-24.
- Early childhood education has received increased policy attention across OECD countries in recent years. On average, across OECD countries in 2018, 26 per cent of

children under 3 were enrolled in early childhood education.

- If current entry patterns continue, it is estimated that 49 per cent of young adults will enter tertiary education for the first time before the age of 25 on average across OECD countries.
- At higher levels of education, 14 per cent of young adults are expected to enter master's or equivalent programmes before the age of 30, dropping to one per cent at doctoral level.
- Bachelor's or equivalent degrees are by far the most common across OECD countries. In 2018, 78 per cent of students earned a bachelor's degree, 18 per cent a short cycle tertiary diploma and 10 per cent a master's degree. In Austria, however, 49 per cent of first time graduates earned a short cycle tertiary diploma.
- Some countries have successfully adapted their tertiary level programmes to offer more flexibility. They have built more links between upper secondary and tertiary programmes and expanding the types of programmes available to tertiary students to include short cycle programmes or long cycle degrees at Master's level.
- There have been reforms in several countries to increase the uptake of short cycle tertiary programmes, mainly in the field of VET. In 2016, Chile opened 15 new centres for VET at tertiary level. Higher vocational education is going through considerable expansion in Sweden where the government is aiming for a 45 per cent increase in full time equivalent student places by 2022. England has sought to enhance apprenticeship training by placing the costs of funding in the hands of employers.
- The number of international and foreign tertiary students has grown by an average of 4.8 per cent between 1998 and 2018. In 2018, there were 3 international students or foreign students for each student studying abroad across OECD countries. In Australia, the UK, the United States and New Zealand, the ratio exceeded 10.1.

Financial resources invested in education

- The total expenditure on educational institutions per full time equivalent student is 11,200 USD. It varies widely across the OECD. Luxemburg has the highest (around 22,000 USD) and the countries with the lowest (under 5,000) are Turkey, Columbia and Mexico. The figure for the UK is just under 15,000 USD, although the UK has one of the highest proportions of private expenditure.
- Across the 28 countries for which data are available, VET programmes are often more expensive than general programmes.
- Between 2012 and 2017, expenditure per student on primary to tertiary educational institutions grew by an average of 1.3 per cent per year in OECD countries while the number of students remained stable. The average annual growth was positive in all countries except Canada, Mexico, Finland and Slovenia.
- On average, OECD countries spent the equivalent of 23 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita per student on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary educational institutions in 2017. At tertiary level, the figure rises to 36 per cent.

- In 2017, OECD countries spent an average of 4.9 per cent of their GDP on educational institutions from primary to tertiary levels. The UK figure was above 6 per cent. The countries with the lowest figures were Ireland, Lithuania and Luxembourg.
- Between 2015 and 2017, the proportion of GDP spent on educational institutions decreased by 1.2 per cent for non-tertiary institutions. There was a more significant decrease for tertiary institutions of 5.1 per cent.
- On average, across OECD countries, public funds account for a larger share of total spending at the primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary level (90%) than at the tertiary level (68%).
- The share of private spending on tertiary institutions is linked to the levels of fees charged to students. More than 60 per cent of total expenditure is privately sourced in Australia, the UK, Chile, Japan, Korea and the United States.
- Total public spending on primary to tertiary education as a percentage of total government expenditure averages 11 per cent across OECD countries. In the UK, it is 12 per cent.
- Public institutions charge no fees for bachelor's or equivalent programmes in almost one third of OECD countries. In a similar number of countries, fees are below 2,000 USD. England has the highest level of fees (12,000 USD).
- Among countries with data available, the average amount that students borrow ranges from 2,400 in Latvia to over 10,000 USD in England.

Time spent by students in the classroom

- In 2019, compulsory instruction time was 804 hours per year on average at primary school and 922 hours at lower secondary level. This has remained relatively stable since 2014.
- Teachers in OECD countries teach an average of 778 hours per year at primary level and 680 hours at upper secondary level.

Teacher pay

- Between 2000 and 2019, on average across OECD countries the statutory salaries of primary and secondary general teachers with more than 15 years of experience and prevalent qualifications increased by 2-3 per cent despite a fall after the 2008 recession.
- Teachers' salaries vary widely across OECD countries. For teachers with 15 years of experience and most prevalent qualifications, salaries are lowest in Hungary and the Slovak Republic (under 20,000 USD). The OECD average is around 50,000 USD. The figure for the UK is slightly above average.
- The biggest reductions in teacher salaries between 2000 and 2019 have been in France with a drop of 10 per cent, and Greece with a drop of 20 per cent. There were smaller declines in real terms in England (2%). Salaries increased by more than 30 per cent for primary and secondary teachers in Ireland and Israel.

The full document can be downloaded from:

https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2020_69096873-en#page391