

Iceland

Ensuring equal opportunities for students across socio-economic backgrounds

- Socio-economic status may significantly impact students' participation in education, particularly at levels of education that rely, in many countries, most heavily on private expenditure, such as early childhood education and care and tertiary education. This is less the case in Iceland: private sources accounted for 13% of total expenditure in pre-primary institutions, lower than the OECD average of 17%. At tertiary level, 8% of expenditure comes from private sources in Iceland, compared to 30% on average across OECD countries.
- Across most OECD countries, socio-economic status influences learning outcomes more than gender and immigrant status. In Iceland, the proportion of children from the bottom quartile of the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS) achieving at least PISA level 2 in reading in 2018 was 27% lower than that of children from the top ESCS quartile, a smaller share than the OECD average of 29%.
- Students from lower socio-economic background are more likely to enter upper secondary vocational programmes than general ones. In Iceland, students without any tertiary-educated parent represented 58% of entrants to upper secondary vocational programmes, compared to 45% among entrants to general programmes.
- International student mobility at the tertiary level has risen steadily reaching about 1 500 students in Iceland and representing 8% of tertiary students in 2019. The largest share of international tertiary students studying in Iceland comes from the United States. Students from low and lower-middle income countries are generally less likely to study abroad. In 2019, they represented 29% of international students in OECD countries, compared to 19% in Iceland.

Gender inequalities in education and outcomes

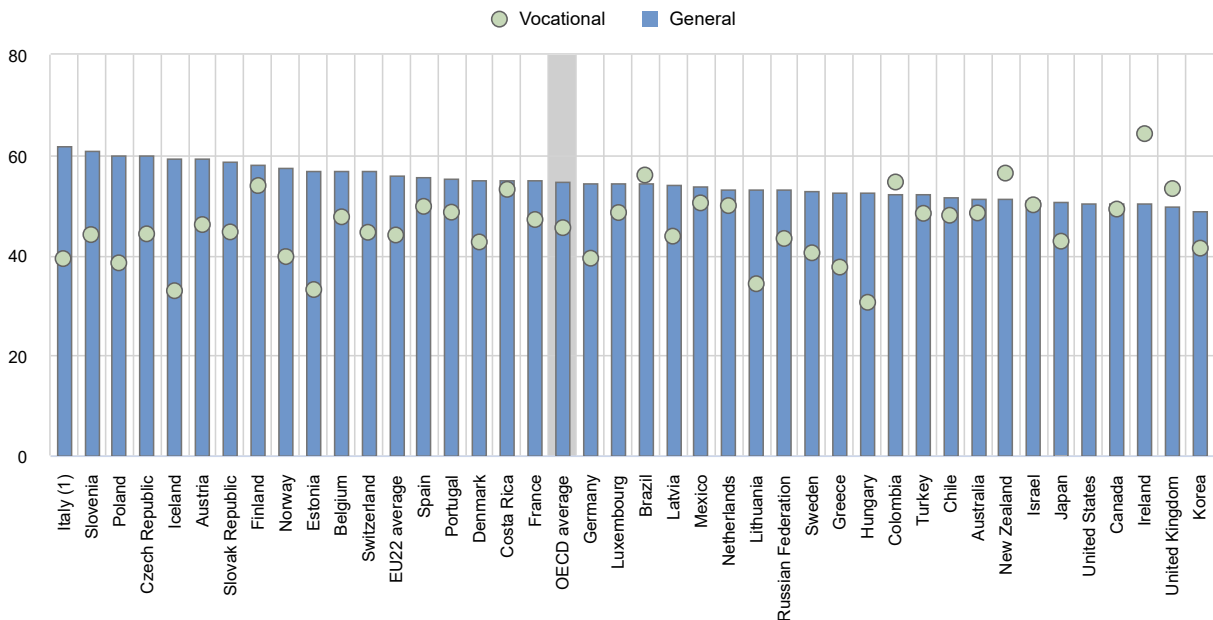
- Men are more likely than women to pursue a vocational track at upper secondary level in most OECD countries. This is also the case in Iceland, where 67% of upper secondary vocational graduates in 2019 were men (compared to the OECD average of 55%). Women are generally more likely to graduate from upper secondary general programmes. This is also the case in Iceland, where women represent 59% of graduates from upper secondary general programmes, compared to 55% on average across OECD countries (Figure 1).
- Tertiary education has been expanding in the last decades, and, in 2020, 25-34 year-old women were more likely than men to achieve tertiary education in all OECD countries. In Iceland, 47% of 25-34 year-old women had a tertiary qualification in 2020 compared to 31% of their male peers, while on average across OECD countries the shares were 52% among young women and 39% among young men.
- Gender differences in the distribution of tertiary entrants across fields of study are significant. Women tend to be under-represented in certain fields of science, technology, engineering and

mathematics (STEM) across most OECD countries. On average, 26% of new entrants in engineering, manufacturing and construction and 20% in information and communication technologies were women in 2019. In Iceland, women represented 39% of new entrants in engineering, manufacturing and construction programmes and 22% in information and communication technologies. In contrast, they represented 78% of new entrants to the field of education, a sector traditionally dominated by women.

- Young women are less likely to be employed than young men, particularly those with lower levels of education. Only 73% of 25-34 year-old women with below upper secondary attainment were employed in 2020 compared to 79% of men in Iceland. This gender difference is smaller than the average across OECD countries, where 43% of women and 69% of men with below upper secondary attainment are employed.

Figure 1. Share of women among upper secondary graduates, by programme orientation (2019)

In per cent



1. Includes post-secondary non-tertiary level.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the share of women in general programmes.

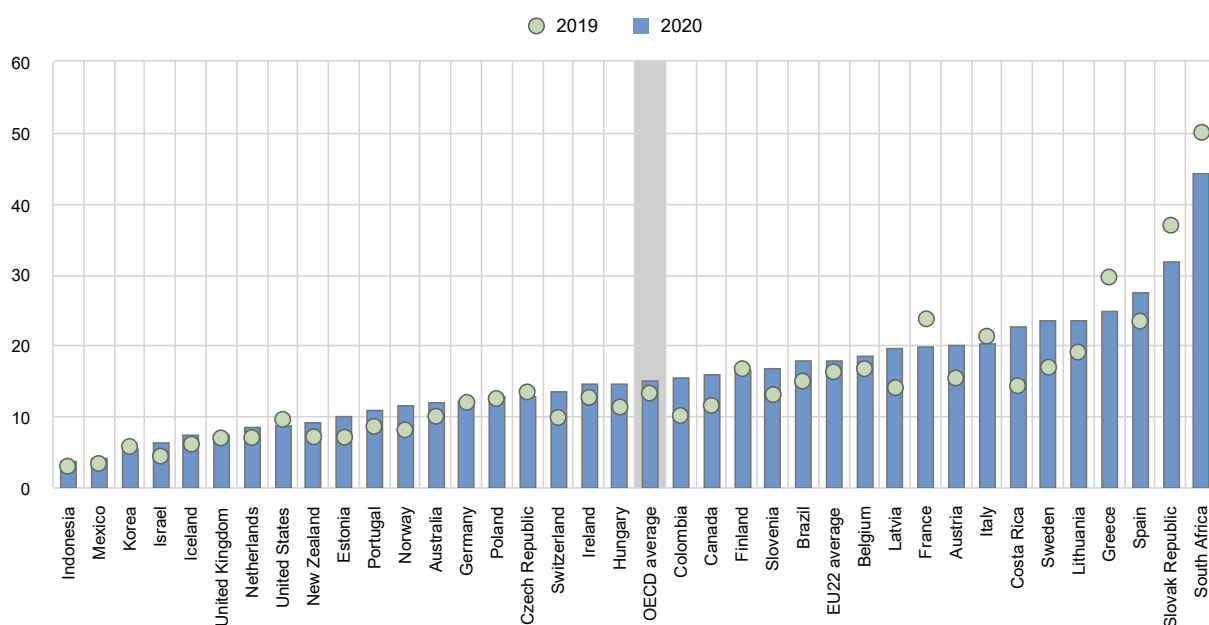
Source: OECD (2021). Table B3.1. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterB.pdf).

COVID-19: 18 months into the pandemic

- The impact of the pandemic on the economy has raised concerns about the prospects of young adults, especially those leaving education earlier than others. In Iceland, the unemployment rate among 25-34 year-olds with below upper secondary attainment was 7.4% in 2020, an increase of 1 percentage point from the previous year. In comparison, the average youth unemployment rate of 15.1% in 2020 across OECD countries represented an increase of 2 percentage points from 2019 (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Trends in unemployment rates of 25-34 year-olds with below upper secondary attainment (2019 and 2020)

In per cent



Compare your country: <https://www.compareyourcountry.org/education-at-a-glance-2021/en/2/3044+3045+3046/trend//OAVG>

Countries are ranked in ascending order of the unemployment rate of 25-34 year-olds with below upper secondary attainment in 2020.

Source: OECD (2021), Table A3.3. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterA.pdf).

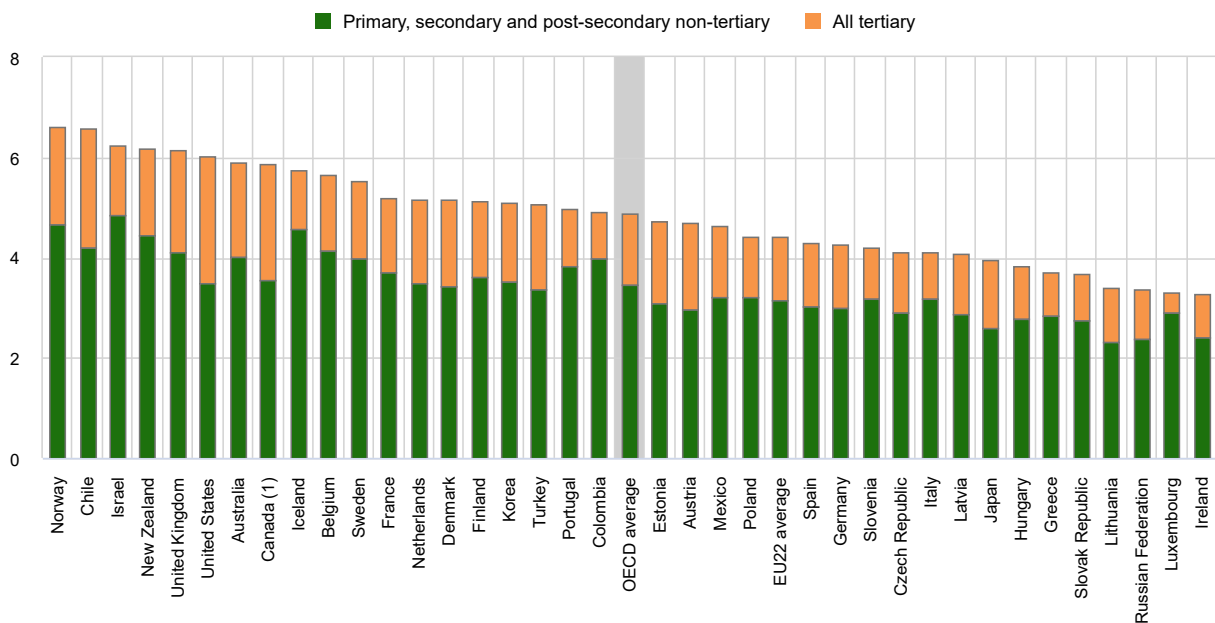
Investing in education

- Annual expenditure per student on educational institutions provides an indication of the investment countries make on each student. After accounting for public-to-private transfers, public expenditure on primary to tertiary educational institutions per full-time student in Iceland was USD 14 061 in 2018 (in equivalent USD converted using PPPs for GDP) compared to USD 10 000 on average across OECD countries.
- The provision of education across public and private institutions influences the allocation of resources between levels of education and types of institution. In 2018, Iceland spent USD 14 593 per student at primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education, USD 4 139 higher than the OECD average of USD 10 454. At tertiary level, Iceland invested USD 15 675 per student, USD 1 390 less than the OECD average. Expenditure per student on public educational institutions is higher than on private institutions on average across OECD countries. This is also the case in Iceland, where total expenditure on primary to tertiary public institutions amounts to USD 15 331 per student, compared to USD 10 580 on private institutions.
- Between 2012 and 2018, expenditure per student from primary to tertiary education increased at an average annual growth rate of 1.6% across OECD countries. In Iceland, expenditure on educational institutions grew at an average annual rate of 4.3%, while the number of students fell on average by 0.2% per year over this period. This resulted in an average annual growth rate of 4.6% in expenditure per student over this period.

- Among OECD countries, Iceland spent the ninth highest proportion of its GDP on primary to tertiary educational institutions. In 2018, Iceland spent on average 5.8% of GDP on primary to tertiary educational institutions, which is 0.9 percentage points higher than the OECD average. Across levels of education, Iceland devoted a higher share of GDP than the OECD average at non-tertiary levels and a lower share at tertiary level (Figure 3).
- Compensation of teachers and other staff employed in educational institutions represents the largest share of current expenditure from primary to tertiary education. In 2018, Iceland allocated 75% of its current expenditure to staff compensation, compared to 74% on average across OECD countries. Staff compensation tends to make up a smaller share of current expenditure on tertiary institutions due to the higher costs of facilities and equipment at this level. In Iceland, staff compensation represents 81% of current expenditure on tertiary institutions compared to 73% at non-tertiary levels. On average across OECD countries, the share is 68% at tertiary level and 77% at non-tertiary level.

Figure 3. Total expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (2018)

In per cent



Compare your country: <https://www.compareyourcountry.org/education-at-a-glance-2021/en/5/3059+3060+3061+3062+3063+3064/default>

1. Primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education includes pre-primary programmes.

Countries are ranked in descending order of total expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP.

Source: OECD (2021), Table C2.1. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterC.pdf).

Working conditions of school teachers

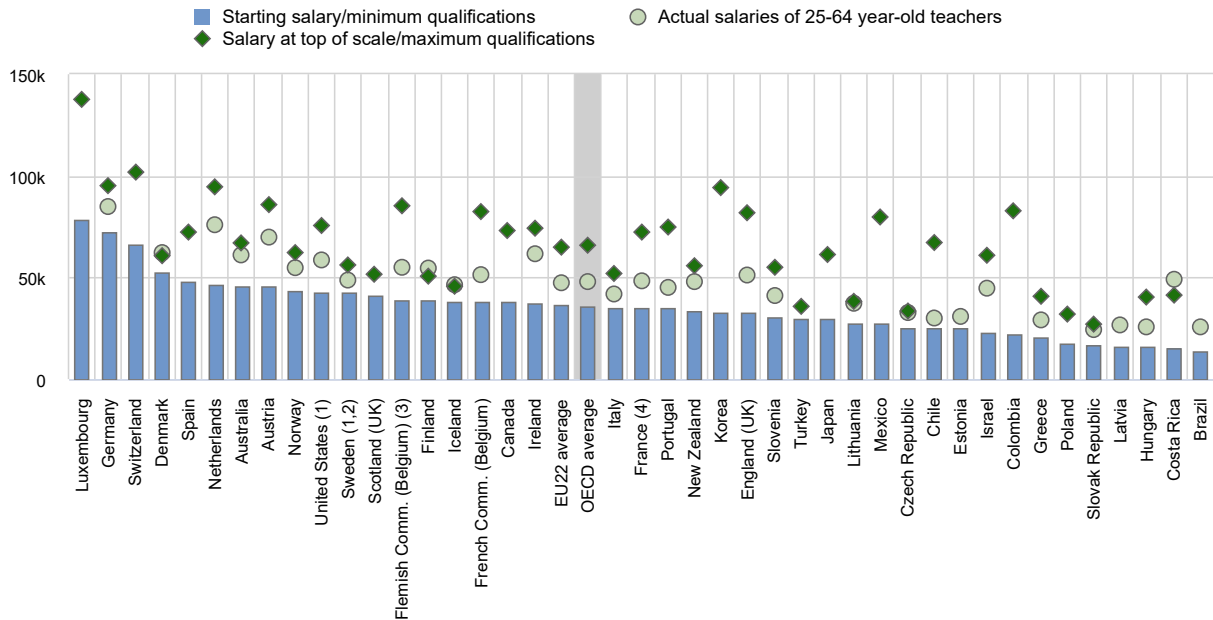
- The salaries of school staff, and in particular teachers and school heads, represent the largest single expenditure in formal education. Their salary levels also have an impact on the attractiveness of the teaching profession. In most OECD countries and economies, statutory salaries of teachers (and school heads) in public educational institutions increase with the level of

education they teach, and also with experience. On average, statutory salaries of teachers with maximum qualifications at the top of their salary scales (maximum salaries) were between 86% and 91% higher than those of teachers with the minimum qualifications at the start of their career (minimum salaries) at pre-primary (ISCED 02), primary and general lower and upper secondary levels in 2020. In Iceland, maximum salaries were 19% to 21% higher than minimum salaries at each level of education (Figure 4). However, most teachers were paid between these minimum and maximum salaries.

- Between 2005 and 2020, the statutory salaries of teachers with 15 years of experience and the most prevalent qualifications increased (at constant prices) by 2% to 3% at primary and general lower and upper secondary levels, on average across OECD countries with data for all reference years, despite a decrease of salaries following the 2008 financial crisis. In Iceland, teachers' salaries at these levels increased by 9%-14%.
- Teachers' actual salaries reflect their statutory salaries and additional work-related payments. Average actual salaries also depend on the characteristics of the teaching population such as their age, level of experience and qualification level. In Iceland, teachers' average actual salaries (after conversion to USD using PPPs for private consumption) amount to USD 42 265 at the pre-primary level (ISCED 02), USD 46 497 at the primary level, USD 46 497 at the general lower secondary level and USD 62 337 at the general upper secondary level. On average across OECD countries, teachers' average actual salaries were USD 40 707, USD 45 687, USD 47 988 and USD 51 749 at the pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary level respectively (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Lower secondary teachers' average actual salaries compared to the statutory starting and top of the scale salaries (2020)

Annual statutory salaries of teachers in public institutions, in equivalent USD converted using PPPs



Compare your country: <https://www.compareyourcountry.org/education-at-a-glance-2021/en/7/all/default>

Note: Actual salaries include bonuses and allowances.

1. Actual base salaries.
2. Salaries at the top of the scale and the minimum qualifications, instead of the maximum qualifications.
3. Salaries at the top of the scale and the most prevalent qualifications, instead of the maximum qualifications.
4. Includes the average of fixed bonuses for overtime hours.

Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of starting salaries for lower secondary teachers with the minimum qualifications.

Source: OECD (2021), Table D3.3 and Education at a Glance Database, <http://stats.oecd.org>. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterD.pdf).

References

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More information

For more information on Education at a Glance 2021 and to access the full set of Indicators, see: <https://doi.org/10.1787/b35a14e5-en>

For more information on the methodology used during the data collection for each indicator, the references to the sources and the specific notes for each country, see Annex 3 (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3.pdf).

For general information on the methodology, please refer to the OECD Handbook for Internationally Comparative Education Statistics: Concepts, Standards, Definitions and Classifications (<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264304444-en>).

Updated data can be found on line at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-data-en> and by following the StatLinks  under the tables and charts in the publication.

Data on subnational regions for selected indicators are available in the *OECD Regional Statistics* (database) (OECD, 2021). When interpreting the results on subnational entities, readers should take into account that the population size of subnational entities can vary widely within countries. For example, regional variation in enrolment may be influenced by students attending school in a different region from their area of residence, particularly at higher levels of education. Also, regional disparities tend to be higher when more subnational entities are used in the analysis.

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The data on educational responses during COVID-19 were collected and processed by the OECD based on the Survey on Joint National Responses to COVID-19 School Closures, a collaborative effort conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS); the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the World Bank; and the OECD.

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From:
Education at a Glance 2021
OECD Indicators

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/b35a14e5-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2021), "Iceland", in *Education at a Glance 2021: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9ef9b706-en>

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