

Japan

Highlights

- **Women are less likely to participate in adult learning** than men in Japan: In 2012, 35% of them participated in formal and non-formal education and training compared to 48% of men.
- **More than seven out of ten pre-primary children in Japan enrol in private institutions.** Private sources accounted for 48% of total expenditure in pre-primary institutions in 2018, the highest share across OECD countries and more than double the OECD average of 17%. However, since October 2019, free early childhood education and care is a universal legal entitlement for children age 3 to 5.
- Japan reported **increasing the fiscal year education budget** for primary and lower secondary general education in both 2020 and 2021 to support the educational response to COVID-19. The funds were used to ensure learning continuity during the pandemic, particularly for the most disadvantaged, and to recruit additional teachers.
- Japan is among the bottom quarter of countries that spends the **lowest level of education expenditure as a share of GDP across OECD countries.** In 2018, Japan spent 4% of GDP on primary to tertiary educational institutions, compared to 4.9% on average across OECD countries.
- Although the number of teaching hours is lower, **teachers in Japan work slightly longer hours than on average across OECD countries.** At the lower secondary level, teachers spend 36% of their statutory working time teaching, compared to 46% on average.

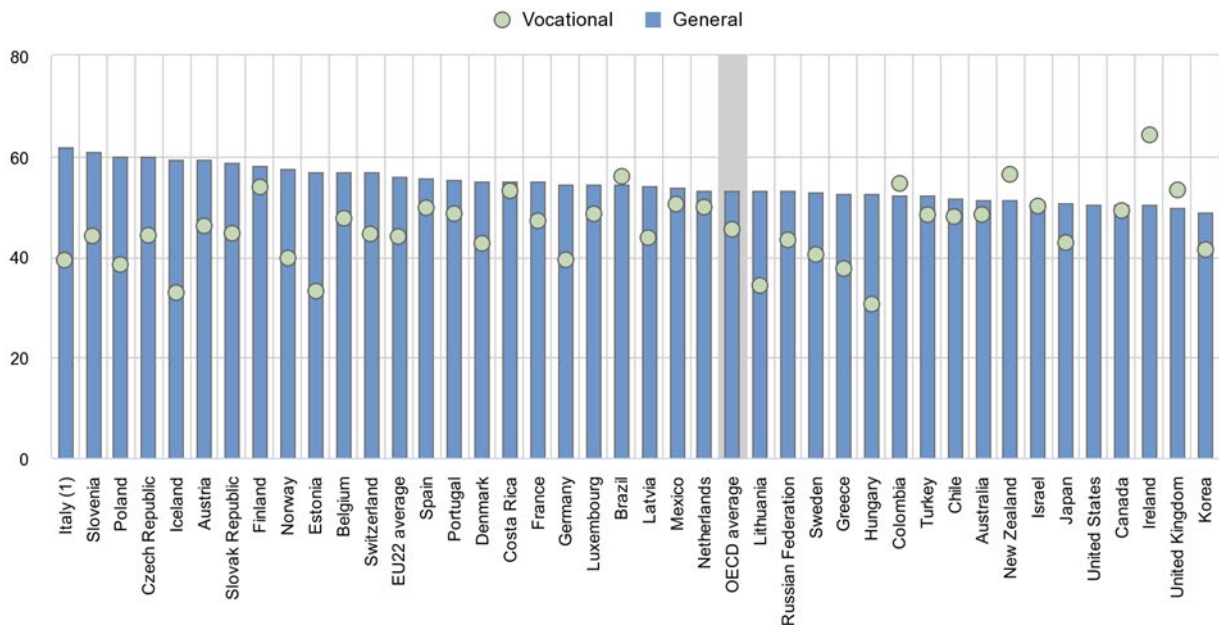
Gender inequalities in education and outcomes

- Men are more likely than women to pursue a vocational track in most OECD countries. This is also the case in Japan, where 57% of upper secondary vocational graduates in 2019 were men (compared to 55% on average across OECD countries). Women are generally more likely to graduate from upper secondary general programmes. This is also the case in Japan, where women represent 51% of graduates, 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 Japan, 64% of 25-34 year-old women had a tertiary qualification in 2019 compared to 59% 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. In 2019, women represented 16% of new tertiary entrants to the field of engineering, manufacturing and construction degrees in Japan, the lowest share among all OECD countries. In contrast, they represented 71% of new entrants to the field of education a sector traditionally dominated by women in almost all OECD countries.

- Japan is the only country where there are slightly more male teachers than female: In 2019, 52% of teachers across all levels of education were men compared to 30% on average across OECD countries. The gender gap in favour of men is particularly high at tertiary level, where 72% of them are male, and the highest share across all OECD countries. In contrast, almost all pre-primary teachers in Japan are women.
- On average across OECD countries with available data, 25-64 year-old women tend to participate slightly more in adult learning than men of the same age. In Japan, 35% of women participated in formal and/or non-formal education in 2012 compared to 48% of men. Family responsibilities were reported as barriers to lifelong learning by 30% of women compared to 5% of men.

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).

Ensuring equal opportunities for students across socio-economic backgrounds

- Socio-economic status may impact significantly students' participation in education, particularly at levels of education that rely most heavily on private expenditure, such as early childhood education and care and tertiary education. Private expenditure is particularly high in Japan in both these levels.
- More than seven out of ten pre-primary children in Japan enrol in private institutions. Private sources accounted for 48% of total expenditure in pre-primary institutions in 2018, the highest share across OECD countries and more than double the OECD average of 17%. Comprehensive public aids are provided to private ECEC institutions and households to secure access to affordable ECEC centres in Japan. In addition, to provide quality early childhood education and reduce the

financial burden on households, free early childhood education and care is a universal legal entitlement for children age 3 to 5 since October 2019.

- Annual tuition fees for bachelor programmes in public institutions in Japan are the fifth highest among OECD countries and economies with available data. National students were charged USD 5177 per year for a bachelor's degree in 2019/20 and the fee was similar for master's or doctoral programmes. However, more than three out of four bachelor students in Japan enrol in private institutions that charge up to 70% higher in annual tuition fees. To provide financial support, new needs-based scholarships have been implemented since April 2020 to enable students from low-income backgrounds to attend higher education.
- Across most OECD countries, socio-economic status influences learning outcomes more than gender and immigrant status. In Japan, 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 20% lower than that of children from the top ESCS quartile, compared to 29% lower on average across OECD countries.
- International and foreign student mobility at tertiary level has risen steadily reaching about 202 900 students in Japan and representing 5% of tertiary students in 2019. The largest share of international tertiary students studying in Japan, 45%, come from China. Students from lower-income countries are generally less likely to study abroad. In 2019, 29% of international students in OECD countries came from low and lower-middle income countries, compared to 37% in Japan.

COVID-19: 18 months into the pandemic

- The spread of COVID-19 has continued to impede access to in-person education in many countries around the world in 2021. By mid-May 2021, 37 OECD and partner countries had experienced periods of full school closure since the start of 2020. In Japan, nationwide school closures in primary to upper secondary level were mandatory from 2 March 2020 and lasted about 3 weeks (until the end of March 2020). Nationwide closures were not mandatory for upper secondary vocational and tertiary education institutions in Japan. Still, about 90% of respondents to a recent government survey of higher education institutions during the pandemic reported that they had postponed the start of the spring semester in 2020 due to the pandemic. In 2021, Japan was one of the few countries where all primary and secondary educational institutions (except for some vocational ones) remained fully open.
- The impact of COVID-19 and school closures on educational equity has been a concern for many countries. 30 out of the 36 OECD and partner countries surveyed, including Japan, declared that additional measures were taken to support the education of children who might face additional barriers to learning during the pandemic. About two-thirds of these countries, including Japan, stated that they had subsidised devices for students to help them access education.
- Countries have faced difficult decisions on how to best manage their resources to ensure that students can continue to access quality education in the safest possible conditions and to minimise disruption to learning. Before the pandemic, total public expenditure on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education in Japan reached 2.4% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2018, which was lower than the OECD average of 3.2%. About two-thirds of OECD and partner countries reported increases in the funding allocated to primary and secondary schools to help them cope with the crisis in 2020. Compared to the previous year, Japan reported an increase in the fiscal year education budget for primary and lower secondary general education in both 2020 and 2021.
- 20 OECD and partner countries, including Japan stated that the allocation of additional public funds to support the educational response to the pandemic was based on the number of students or

classes. At the same time, 13 countries of which Japan targeted additional funds at socio-economically disadvantaged students as a way to ensure that resources targeted those that needed them the most. For example, To support primary and secondary students' learning at home, equipment such as mobile routers were provided to households without internet connectivity and low-income households benefited from special additional payments to cover communication costs. At tertiary level, financial support was provided to students through additional funding for public scholarships and additional tuition fee waivers. The government continued to provide funding to cover operational costs in private ECEC settings even when the centres were closed due to COVID-19. Additional funds were also directed towards the recruitment of temporary teachers and/or other staff to support students in primary and secondary education. Additional funds were also directed towards the recruitment of temporary teachers and/or other staff to support students in primary and secondary education and to ensure access to distance learning.

- International student mobility has been strongly affected by the harsh travel and entry restrictions into Japan during the pandemic. While international travel resumed after the fall of 2020, it came to a halt following the second declaration of a state of emergency in January 2021. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology-JAPAN (MEXT) continued to provide flexible measures for the payment of scholarships and requested universities to deploy online lectures and other distance learning methods to ensure learning opportunities for international students who faced challenges to travel to Japan as scheduled. It has also resumed support for Japanese students studying abroad through JASSO scholarships for degree-seeking students and for study abroad programs lasting one year (actual period of study: 9 months or more)..

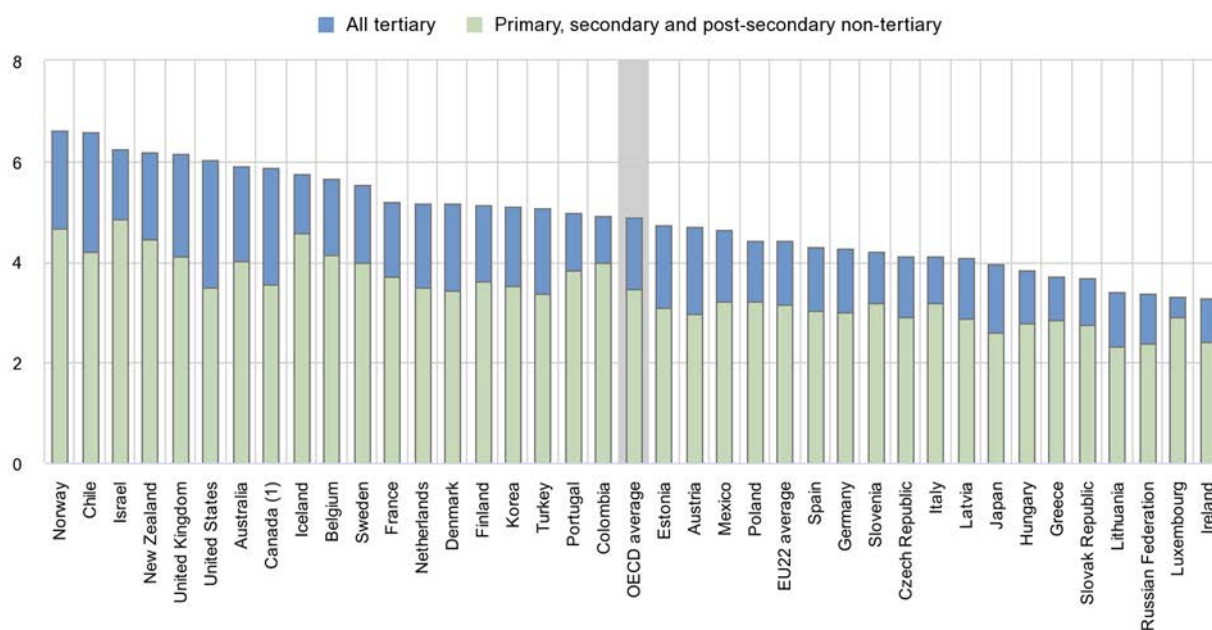
Investing in education

- Annual expenditure per student on educational institutions provides an indication of the investment countries make on each student. In 2018, expenditure on primary to tertiary educational institutions per full-time student in Japan was USD 12 194 compared to USD 11 680 on average across OECD countries.
- 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 Japan, expenditure on educational institutions fell at an average annual rate of 0.3%, while the number of students fell on average by 0.7% per year over this period. This resulted in an average annual growth rate of 0.3% in expenditure per student over this period.
- Japan is in the bottom quarter of OECD member and partner countries that spend the lowest proportion of its GDP on primary to tertiary educational institutions. In 2018, Japan spent 4% of GDP on primary to tertiary educational institutions, which is 0.9 percentage points lower than the OECD average. Across levels of education, Japan devoted a below-average share of GDP at non-tertiary levels and a similar share at tertiary level (Figure 2).
- Capital costs represent a higher-than-average share of expenditure on primary to tertiary institutions in Japan. At primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary level, capital costs account for 11% of total spending on educational institutions, 3 percentage points above the OECD average (8%). At the tertiary level, Japan devotes 11% of total expenditure on educational institutions on capital costs, on par with the OECD average.
- Compensation of teachers and other staff employed in educational institutions represents the largest share of current expenditure from primary to tertiary education. In 2018, Japan allocated 74% of its current expenditure to staff compensation, the same as the 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 Japan, staff compensation represents 57% of current expenditure on tertiary institutions compared to 82% at

non-tertiary levels. On average across OECD countries, the share is 68% at tertiary level and 77% at non-tertiary level.

Figure 2. Total expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (2018)

In per cent



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 primary and general lower and upper secondary levels in 2020. In Japan, maximum salaries were 105% to 110% higher than minimum salaries at each level of education (Figure 3). 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 qualifications¹ increased by 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 Japan, teachers' salaries at these levels decreased

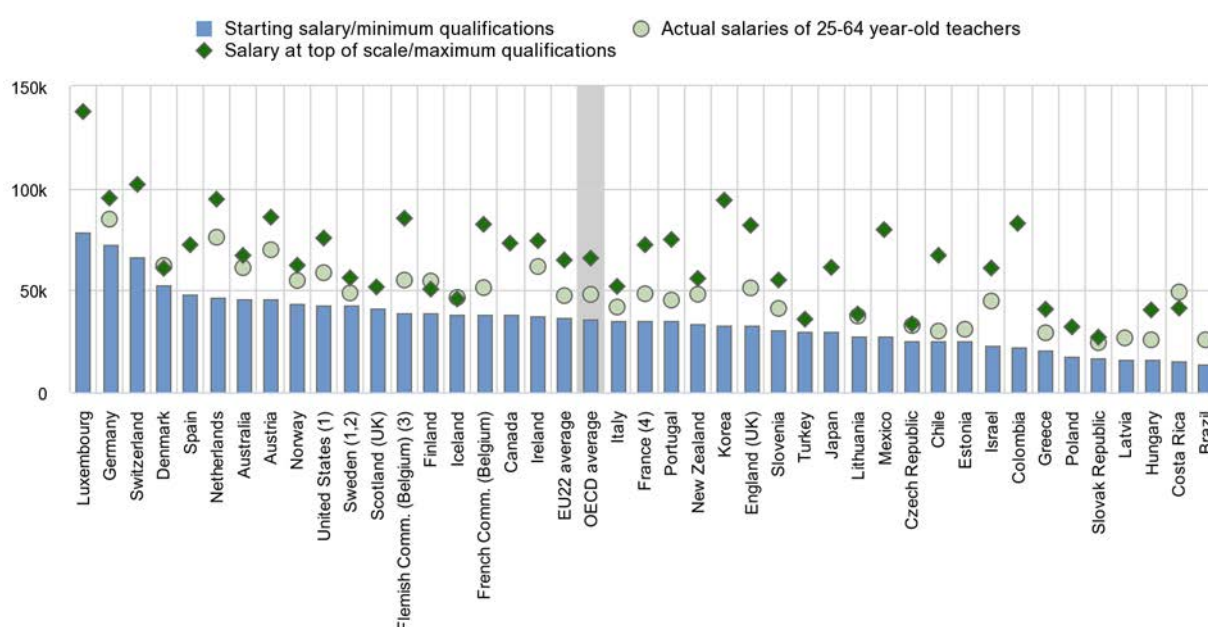
¹ In equivalent USD converted using PPPs for private consumption

by 8% over this period, mainly due to a revision of the salary system for all public officers, including teachers.

- The average number of teaching hours per year required of a typical teacher in public educational institutions in OECD countries tends to decrease as the level of education increases: it ranged from 791 hours at primary level to 723 hours at lower secondary level (general programmes) and 685 hours at upper secondary level (general programmes) in 2020. In Japan, teachers are required to teach 747 hours per year at primary level, 615 hours at lower secondary level (general programmes) and 511 hours at upper secondary level (general programmes).

Figure 3. 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



Note: Actual salaries include bonuses and allowances.

- Actual base salaries.
- Salaries at the top of the scale and the minimum qualifications, instead of the maximum qualifications.
- Salaries at the top of the scale and the most prevalent qualifications, instead of the maximum qualifications.
- 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).

- Although the number of teaching hours is lower, teachers in Japan work slightly longer hours than on average across OECD countries. During their working time, teachers also perform various other tasks related to education, such as lesson planning and preparation, marking students' work and communicating or co-operating with parents or guardians. At the lower secondary level, teachers in Japan spend 36% of their statutory working time on teaching, compared to 46% on average among countries with available data.

- In primary and secondary education, about 35% of teachers on average across OECD countries will reach retirement age in the next decade, while the size of the school-age population is projected to increase in some countries, putting many governments under pressure to recruit and train new teachers. In 2019, 29% of primary teachers in Japan were at least 50 years old, which was lower than the OECD average of 33%. On average across OECD countries, the proportion of teachers aged at least 50 years old increases with higher levels of education taught, to 36% in lower secondary education and 40% in upper secondary education. In Japan, this proportion varies from 31% at lower secondary level to 39% at upper secondary level.

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. Also, regional disparities tend to be higher when more subnational entities are used in the analysis.

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<https://gpseducation.oecd.org/>

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

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/1426642c-en>

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