

Poland

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 Poland: private sources accounted for 16% of total expenditure in pre-primary institutions, slightly lower than the OECD average of 17%. At tertiary level, 20% of expenditure comes from private sources in Poland, 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 Poland, 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 19% lower than that of children from the top ESCS quartile, a smaller share than the OECD average of 29%.
- International student mobility at the tertiary level has risen steadily reaching about 55 200 students in Poland and representing 4% of tertiary students in 2019. The largest share of international tertiary students studying in Poland comes from Ukraine. 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 59% in Poland.
- Large differences in educational attainment may lead to starker earnings inequality in many countries. In Poland, all 25-64 year-old adults with below upper secondary attainment earned more than half the median earning in 2019, compared to 73% on average across OECD countries.

Gender inequalities in education and outcomes

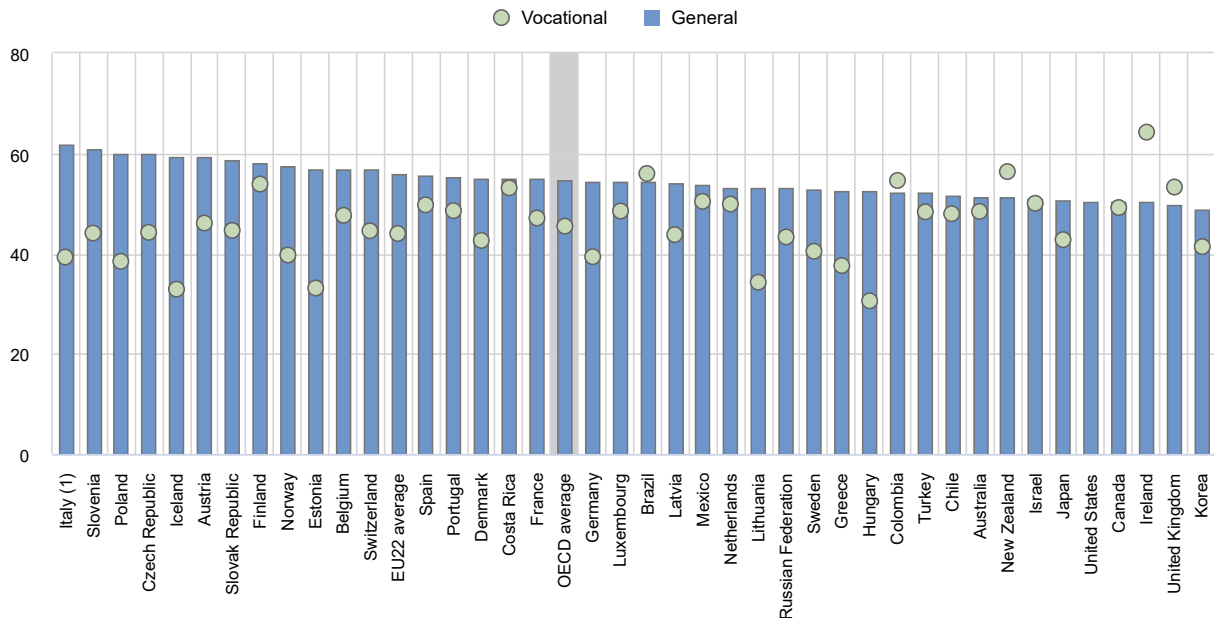
- In Poland, 1.3% of students in lower secondary and 3.8% in upper secondary initial education repeated a grade in 2019, compared to 1.9% and 3% respectively on average across OECD countries. Boys are more likely to repeat a grade at lower secondary initial education than girls. In Poland, 66% of repeaters at lower secondary level were boys, higher than the OECD average of 61%. At upper secondary level, the share of boys repeating a grade in Poland increases to 68%, compared to 57% on average across OECD countries.
- 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 Poland, where 62% 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 Poland, where women represent 60% 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 Poland, 53% of

25-34 year-old women had a tertiary qualification in 2020 compared to 33% 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 Poland, women represented 36% of new entrants in engineering, manufacturing and construction programmes and 15% in information and communication technologies. In contrast, they represented 83% of new entrants to the field of education, a sector traditionally dominated by women. In Poland, men represent 24% of teachers across all levels of education, compared to 30% on average across OECD countries.
- Young women are less likely to be employed than young men, particularly those with lower levels of education. Only 23% of 25-34 year-old women with below upper secondary attainment were employed in 2020 compared to 59% of men in Poland. This gender difference is larger than the average across OECD countries, where 43% of women and 69% of men with below upper secondary attainment are employed.
- In nearly all OECD countries and at all levels of educational attainment, 25-64 year-old women earn less than their male peers: their earnings correspond to 76%-78% of men's earnings on average across OECD countries. This proportion varies more across educational attainment levels within countries than on average across OECD countries. Compared to other education levels, women with tertiary education in Poland have the lowest earnings relative to men with a similar education level, earning 71% as much, while those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education earn 79% as much.
- 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 Poland, 26% of women participated in formal and/or non-formal education and training in 2016, compared to 25% of men. Family reasons were reported as barriers to participation in formal and/or non-formal education and training by 41% of women compared to 23% 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).

Education and migration background

- The likelihood of being employed increases with the level of educational attainment, but foreign-born adults with tertiary attainment generally have lower employment prospects than their native-born peers. On average across OECD countries, 86% of native-born tertiary-educated adults are employed compared to 79% for foreign-born tertiary-educated adults. In Poland, among tertiary-educated adults, 89% of native-born adults and 84% of foreign-born adults are employed.
- Foreign-born young adults (15-29 year-olds) are also more likely to be neither employed nor in education or training (NEET) than native-born young adults. On average across OECD countries, 18.8% of foreign-born and 13.7% of native-born adults are NEET. In Poland, the difference is 3 percentage points (16.4% compared to 13.4%).

Cross-regional disparities in education

- National level data often hide important regional inequalities in children's access and participation to education. In general, inequalities across regions tend to widen at non-compulsory levels of education. For example, in the majority of countries, the variation in enrolment rate of 3-5 year-olds is often greater than the variation among 6-14 year-olds. This is not the case in Poland, where the enrolment rate of 3-5 year-olds varies from 85% in the region of Pomerania to 93% in the region of Swietokrzyskie whereas the enrolment of 6-14 year-olds varies from 92% to 100% across regions. Similarly, the enrolment rate of 15-19 year-olds varies from 80% to 100% in Poland.

- Tertiary attainment may vary significantly within a country. In Poland, the share of 25-64 year-old adults with tertiary education varies from 24% in the region of Warmian-Masuria to 57% in the region of Warsaw capital region, one of the highest regional variations across OECD countries with available data.
- On average across OECD and partner countries with subnational data on labour-force status, there is more regional variation in employment rates among those with below upper secondary education (17 percentage points) than for those with tertiary education (8 percentage points). In Poland, there is a difference of 14 percentage points in the employment rate of adults with below upper secondary education between different regions of the country compared to 5 percentage points for tertiary-educated adults.
- The proportion of young people who are NEET shows significant subnational as well as national variation across OECD and partner countries. In Poland, the difference in the share of 18-24 year-old NEETs between regions with the highest and lowest value is 12 percentage points, compared to 11 percentage points on average across OECD countries.

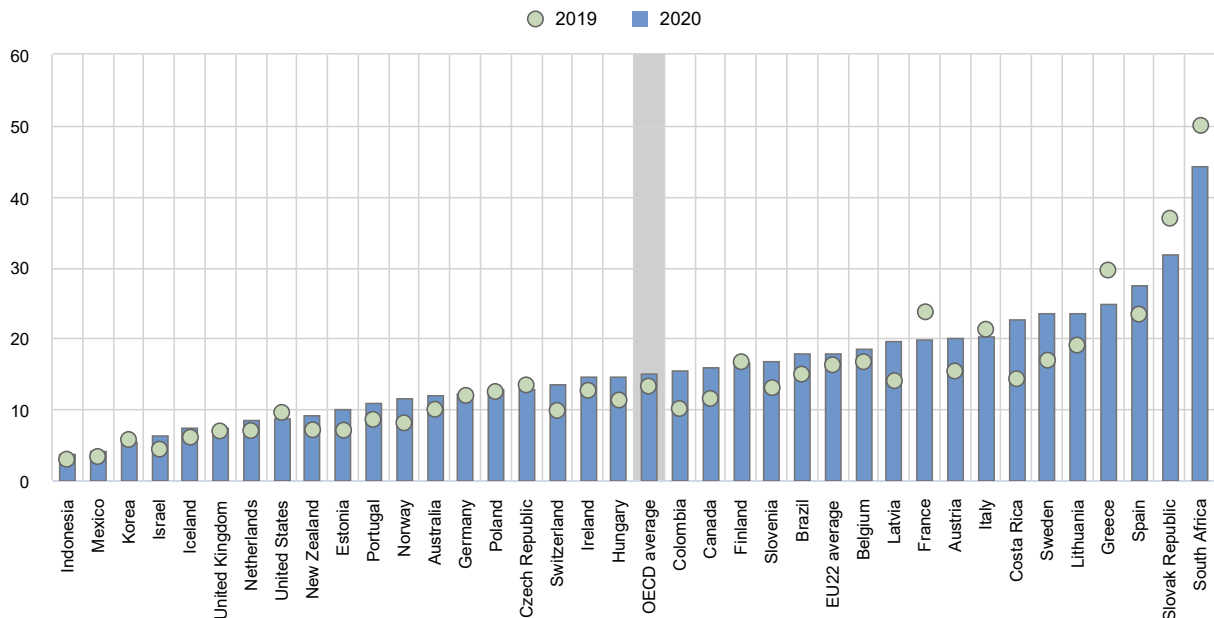
COVID-19: 18 months into the pandemic

- 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.
- The number of instructional days when schools were fully closed since the start of 2020 due to the pandemic (excluding school holidays, public holidays and weekends) varies significantly between countries and increases with the level of education. Poland follows this pattern. In Poland, pre-primary schools were fully closed for an average of 49 days between 1 January 2020 and 20 May 2021. Meanwhile primary schools closed for 98 days, lower secondary for 190 days and upper secondary general schools for 190 days. In comparison, respective closures were 55, 78, 92 and 101 days on average across the OECD.
- In many countries, schools did not fully close but remained open with reduced capacity. Schools at upper secondary (general) level in Poland for instance experienced 82 days of partial opening between January 2020 and May 2021, 78 of which occurred in 2020 and 4 in 2021. In total, this was higher than the number of days of partial opening in the OECD on average (57 days), where there were 27 days of partially open instruction in 2020, and 30 days in 2021. When adding both the number of days where schools were fully and partially closed, learning in upper secondary general education was disrupted by 272 days in Poland between January 2020 and May 2021.
- During periods of full school closure in 2020, 21 OECD and partner countries have opted to keep upper secondary general schools virtually open as a national level strategy, including Poland. However, in 4 countries, excluding Poland, each day of remote learning was not considered equivalent to a full day of in-person instruction. The way that online platforms have operated during school closures has varied between countries. In Poland, decisions on how online platforms should operate were made at the local level from pre-primary to tertiary education.
- 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 Poland, declared that additional measures were taken to support the education of children who might face additional barriers to learning during the pandemic. 22 of these countries, including Poland, stated that they had subsidised devices for students to help them access education. Measures to encourage disadvantaged or vulnerable students to return to school after closures were also implemented in 29 OECD and partner countries, including in Poland.

- 20 OECD and partner countries, including Poland, stated that the allocation of additional public funds to support the educational response to the pandemic in primary and secondary schools was based on the number of students or classes. At the same time, 16 countries targeted additional funds at socio-economically disadvantaged students as a way to ensure that resources targeted those that needed them the most, though this was not the case in Poland.
- Countries' approach to prioritise teachers in vaccination campaigns against COVID-19 has varied. In total, 19 OECD and partner countries, including Poland, have prioritised at least some teachers as part of the government's plans to vaccinate the population on a national level (as of 20 May 2021).
- 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 Poland, the unemployment rate among 25-34 year-olds with below upper secondary attainment was 12.8% in 2020, a similar rate as 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).
- At the same time, the number of adults participating in formal and/or non-formal education and training decreased by 27% on average in the OECD between the second quarter of 2019 and the second quarter of 2020 (i.e. during the peak of the first wave of COVID-19 in many OECD countries). In Poland, the participation of adults in formal and/or non-formal education and training in this period decreased by 37% in Poland.
- Despite the impact of the crisis on employment, the share of NEETs among 18-24 year-olds did not greatly increase in most OECD and partner countries during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. On average, the share of 18-24 year-old NEETs in OECD countries rose from 14.4% in 2019 to 16.1% in 2020. In Poland, the share of 18-24 year-old NEETs was 11.9% in 2019, which increased to 12.6% in 2020.

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

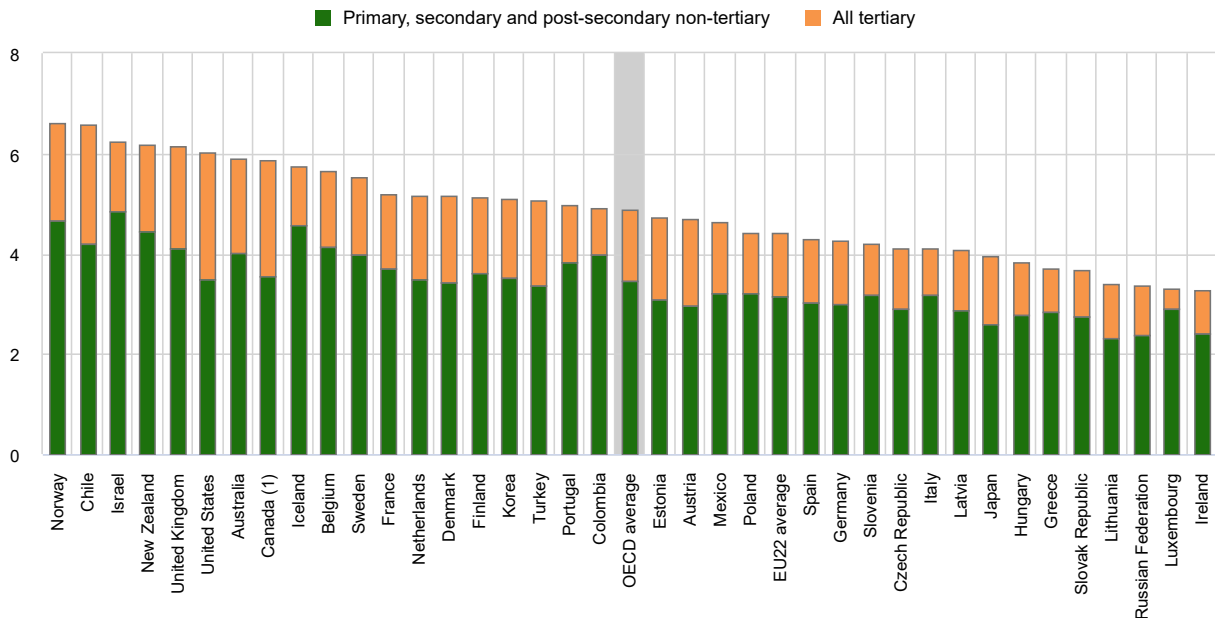
- Annual expenditure per student on educational institutions provides an indication of the investment countries make on each student. After accounting for public-to-private transfers, public expenditure on primary to tertiary educational institutions per full-time student in Poland was USD 7 606 in 2018 (in equivalent USD converted using PPPs for GDP) compared to USD 10 000 on average across OECD countries.
- Expenditure on core educational services such as instruction and teaching make up the largest share of education expenditure. However, ancillary services (such as student welfare) and research and development (R&D) activities also influence the level of expenditure per student. In primary to tertiary education, 90% of institutions' expenditure per student is devoted to core educational services in Poland (compared to 89% on average across OECD countries). This share is generally lower at the tertiary level due to expenditure on research and development, including in Poland where 72% of total expenditure is devoted to core educational services.
- The provision of education across public and private institutions influences the allocation of resources between levels of education and types of institution. In 2018, Poland spent USD 8 344 per student at primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education, USD 2 110 lower than the OECD average of USD 10 454. At tertiary level, Poland invested USD 11 192 per student, USD 5 873 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

Poland, where total expenditure on primary to tertiary public institutions amounts to USD 9 136 per student, compared to USD 7 730 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 Poland, expenditure on educational institutions grew at an average annual rate of 2.3%, while the number of students fell on average by 1.3% per year over this period. This resulted in an average annual growth rate of 3.6% in expenditure per student over this period.
- The share of national wealth devoted to educational institutions is lower in Poland than on average among OECD countries. In 2018, Poland spent 4.4% of its GDP on primary to tertiary educational institutions, which is 0.5 percentage points lower than the OECD average. Across levels of education, Poland devoted a lower share of GDP than the OECD average at both non-tertiary and tertiary levels (Figure 3).
- The share of capital costs on total expenditure on educational institutions is similar to the OECD average at primary to tertiary level in Poland. At primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary level, capital costs account for 8% of total spending on educational institutions, similar to the OECD average (8%). At the tertiary level, capital costs represent 12%, slightly higher than the average across OECD countries of 11%.
- Compensation of teachers and other staff employed in educational institutions represents the largest share of current expenditure from primary to tertiary education. In 2018, Poland allocated 76% 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 Poland, staff compensation represents 75% of current expenditure on tertiary institutions compared to 76% 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

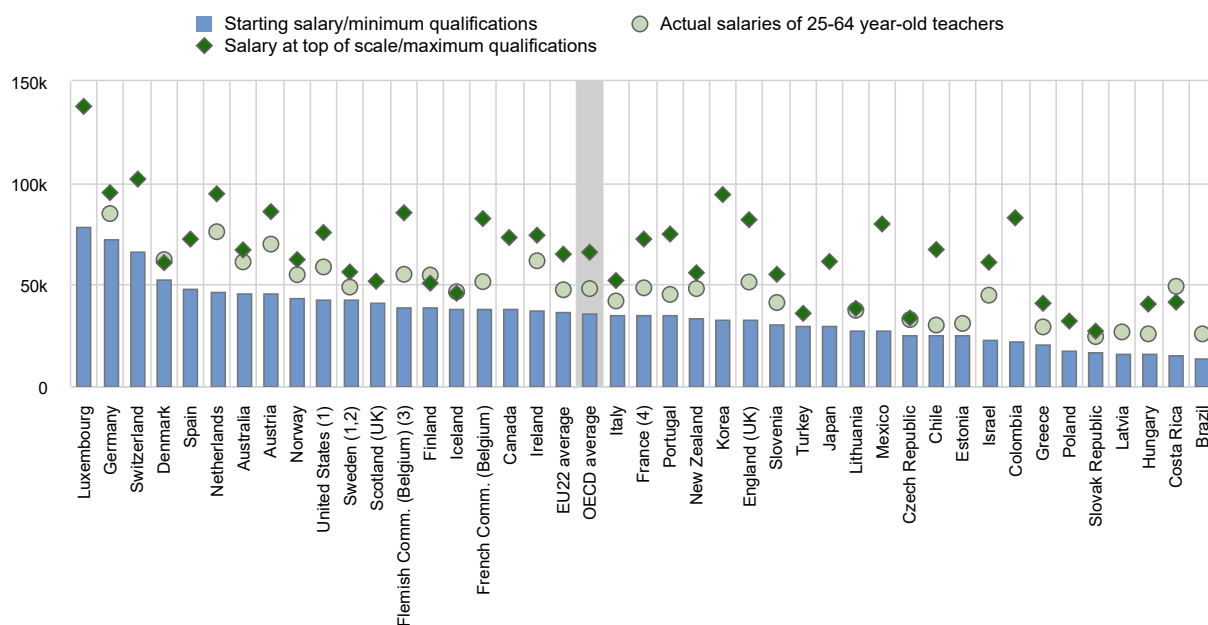
- The salaries of school staff, and in particular teachers and school heads, represent the largest single expenditure in formal education. Their salary levels also have an impact on the attractiveness of the teaching profession. In most OECD countries and economies, statutory salaries of teachers (and 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 Poland, maximum salaries were 70% to 85% higher than minimum salaries at each level of education (Figure 4).
- 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 Poland, teachers' salaries at these levels increased by 41%.
- 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 989 hours at pre-primary level (ISCED 02), to 791 hours at primary level, 723 hours at lower

secondary level (general programmes) and 685 hours at upper secondary level (general programmes) in 2020. In Poland, teachers teach 1 075 hours per year at pre-primary level, 604 hours per year at primary level, 483 hours at lower secondary level (general programmes) and 478 hours at upper secondary level (general programmes).

- During their working time, teachers also perform various tasks other than teaching itself 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 Poland spend 34% of their statutory working time on teaching, compared to 44% on average among countries with available data.
- In primary and secondary education, about 35% of teachers are at least 50 years old on average across OECD countries and may 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, 36% of primary teachers in Poland were at least 50 years old, which was higher 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 Poland, this proportion varies from 32% at lower secondary level to 37% at upper secondary level.

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).

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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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<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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