

READER'S GUIDE

■ Coverage of the statistics

Although a lack of data still limits the scope of the indicators in many countries, the coverage extends, in principle, to the entire national education system (within the national territory), regardless of who owns or sponsors the institutions concerned and regardless of how education is delivered. With one exception (described below), all types of students and all age groups are included: children (including students with special needs), adults, nationals, foreigners, and students in open-distance learning, in special education programmes or in educational programmes organised by ministries other than the Ministry of Education, provided that the main aim of the programme is to broaden or deepen an individual's knowledge. However, children below the age of three are only included if they participate in programmes that typically cater to children who are at least two years old. Vocational and technical training in the workplace, with the exception of combined school- and work-based programmes that are explicitly deemed to be part of the education system, are not included in the basic education expenditure and enrolment data.

Educational activities classified as “adult” or “non-regular” are covered, provided that the activities involve the same or similar content as “regular” education studies, or that the programmes of which they are a part lead to qualifications similar to those awarded in regular educational programmes. Courses for adults that are primarily for general interest, personal enrichment, leisure or recreation are excluded (except in the indicator on adult learning, C6).

■ Country coverage

This publication features data on education from the 34 OECD member countries, two non-OECD countries that participate in the OECD Indicators of Education Systems programme (INES), namely Brazil and the Russian Federation, and the other G20 countries that do not participate in INES (Argentina, China, India, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and South Africa). When data for these latter six countries are available, data sources are specified below the tables and charts.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

■ Calculation of international means

For many indicators, an OECD average is presented; for some, an OECD total is shown.

The **OECD average** is calculated as the unweighted mean of the data values of all OECD countries for which data are available or can be estimated. The OECD average therefore refers to an average of data values at the level of the national systems and can be used to answer the question of how an indicator value for a given country compares with the value for a typical or average country. It does not take into account the absolute size of the education system in each country.

The **OECD total** is calculated as a weighted mean of the data values of all OECD countries for which data are available or can be estimated. It reflects the value for a given indicator when the OECD area is considered as a whole. This approach is taken for the purpose of comparing, for example, expenditure charts for individual countries with those of the entire OECD area for which valid data are available, with this area considered as a single entity.

Both the OECD average and the OECD total can be significantly affected by missing data. Given the relatively small number of countries, no statistical methods are used to compensate for this. In cases where a category is not applicable (code “a”) in a country or where the data value is negligible (code “n”) for the corresponding calculation, the value zero is imputed for the purpose of calculating OECD averages. In cases where both the numerator and the denominator of a ratio are not applicable (code “a”) for a certain country, this country is not included in the OECD average.

For financial tables using 1995, 2000 and 2005 data, both the OECD average and OECD total are calculated for countries providing 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2009 data. This allows comparison of the OECD average and OECD total over time with no distortion due to the exclusion of certain countries in the different years.

For many indicators, an EU21 average is also presented. It is calculated as the unweighted mean of the data values of the 21 OECD countries that are members of the European Union for which data are available or can be estimated. These 21 countries are Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, the Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

For some indicators, a G20 average is presented. The G20 average is calculated as the unweighted mean of the data values of all G20 countries for which data are available or can be estimated (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States; the European Union is the 20th member of the G20 but is not included in the calculation). The G20 average is not computed if the data for China or India are not available.

■ Classification of levels of education

The classification of the levels of education is based on the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 1997). ISCED 1997 has been recently revised and the new International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011) was formally adopted in November 2011. This new classification should be implemented in data collection in May 2014. ISCED 97 is an instrument for compiling statistics on education internationally and distinguishes among six levels of education.

Term used in this publication	ISCED classification (and subcategories)
<p>Pre-primary education The first stage of organised instruction designed to introduce very young children to the school atmosphere. Minimum entry age of 3.</p>	ISCED 0
<p>Primary education Designed to provide a sound basic education in reading, writing and mathematics and a basic understanding of some other subjects. Entry age: between 5 and 7. Duration: six years.</p>	ISCED 1
<p>Lower secondary education Completes provision of basic education, usually in a more subject-oriented way with more specialist teachers. Entry follows six years of primary education; duration is three years. In some countries, the end of this level marks the end of compulsory education.</p>	ISCED 2 (subcategories: 2A prepares students for continuing academic education, leading to 3A; 2B has stronger vocational focus, leading to 3B; 2C offers preparation of entering workforce)
<p>Upper secondary education Stronger subject specialisation than at lower secondary level, with teachers usually more qualified. Students typically expected to have completed nine years of education or lower secondary schooling before entry and are generally 15 or 16 years old.</p>	ISCED 3 (subcategories: 3A prepares students for university-level education at level 5A; 3B for entry to vocationally oriented tertiary education at level 5B; 3C prepares students for workforce or for post-secondary non-tertiary education at level ISCED 4)

<p>Post-secondary non-tertiary education Internationally, this level straddles the boundary between upper secondary and post-secondary education, even though it might be considered upper secondary or post-secondary in a national context. Programme content may not be significantly more advanced than that in upper secondary, but is not as advanced as that in tertiary programmes. Duration usually the equivalent of between six months and two years of full-time study. Students tend to be older than those enrolled in upper secondary education.</p>	<p>ISCED 4 (subcategories: 4A may prepare students for entry to tertiary education, both university level and vocationally oriented; 4B typically prepares students to enter the workforce)</p>
<p>Tertiary education</p>	<p>ISCED 5 (subcategories: 5A and 5B; see below)</p>
<p>Tertiary-type A education Largely theory-based programmes designed to provide sufficient qualifications for entry to advanced research programmes and professions with high skill requirements, such as medicine, dentistry or architecture. Duration at least three years full-time, though usually four or more years. These programmes are not exclusively offered at universities; and not all programmes nationally recognised as university programmes fulfil the criteria to be classified as tertiary-type A. Tertiary-type A programmes include second-degree programmes, such as the American master's degree.</p>	<p>ISCED 5A</p>
<p>Tertiary-type B education Programmes are typically shorter than those of tertiary-type A and focus on practical, technical or occupational skills for direct entry into the labour market, although some theoretical foundations may be covered in the respective programmes. They have a minimum duration of two years full-time equivalent at the tertiary level.</p>	<p>ISCED 5B</p>
<p>Advanced research programmes Programmes that lead directly to the award of an advanced research qualification, e.g. Ph.D. The theoretical duration of these programmes is three years, full-time, in most countries (for a cumulative total of at least seven years full-time equivalent at the tertiary level), although the actual enrolment time is typically longer. Programmes are devoted to advanced study and original research.</p>	<p>ISCED 6</p>

The glossary available at www.oecd.org/edu/eag2012 also describes these levels of education in detail, and Annex 1 shows the typical age of graduates of the main educational programmes, by ISCED level. Readers should note that the new ISCED 2011 classification will be reflected starting with the 2014 edition of *Education at a Glance*.

■ Symbols for missing data and abbreviations

These symbols and abbreviations are used in the tables and charts:

- a Data is not applicable because the category does not apply.
- c There are too few observations to provide reliable estimates (e.g. in PISA, there are fewer than 30 students or fewer than five schools with valid data). However, these statistics were included in the calculation of cross-country averages.
- m Data is not available.
- n Magnitude is either negligible or zero.
- S.E. Standard Error.
- w Data has been withdrawn at the request of the country concerned.
- x Data included in another category or column of the table (e.g. x(2) means that data are included in column 2 of the table).
- ~ Average is not comparable with other levels of education.

■ Further resources

The website www.oecd.org/edu/eag2012 is a rich source of information on the methods used to calculate the indicators, on the interpretation of the indicators in the respective national contexts, and on the data sources involved. The website also provides access to the data underlying the indicators and to a comprehensive glossary for technical terms used in this publication.

All post-production changes to this publication are listed at www.oecd.org/edu/eag2012.

The website www.pisa.oecd.org provides information on the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), on which many of the indicators in this publication are based.

Education at a Glance uses the OECD's *StatLinks* service. Below each table and chart in *Education at a Glance 2012* is a URL that leads to a corresponding Excel workbook containing the underlying data for the indicator. These URLs are stable and will remain unchanged over time. In addition, readers of the *Education at a Glance* e-book will be able to click directly on these links and the workbook will open in a separate window.

■ Codes used for territorial entities

These codes are used in certain charts. Country or territorial entity names are used in the text. Note that throughout the publication, the Flemish Community of Belgium and the French Community of Belgium may be referred to as “Belgium (Fl.)” and “Belgium (Fr.)”, respectively.

ARG Argentina	LUX Luxembourg
AUS Australia	MEX Mexico
AUT Austria	NLD Netherlands
BEL Belgium	NOR Norway
BFL Belgium (Flemish Community)	NZL New Zealand
BFR Belgium (French Community)	POL Poland
BRA Brazil	PRT Portugal
CAN Canada	RUS Russian Federation
CHE Switzerland	SAU Saudi Arabia
CHL Chile	SCO Scotland
CHN China	SVK Slovak Republic
CZE Czech Republic	SVN Slovenia
DEU Germany	SWE Sweden
DNK Denmark	TUR Turkey
ENG England	UKM United Kingdom
ESP Spain	USA United States
EST Estonia	ZAF South Africa
FIN Finland	
FRA France	
GRC Greece	
HUN Hungary	
IDN Indonesia	
IND India	
IRL Ireland	
ISL Iceland	
ISR Israel	
ITA Italy	
JPN Japan	
KOR Korea	



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