

Indicator B5. How many students complete tertiary education?

Highlights

- On average across countries with true cohort data (data following individual students), 39% of full-time students who enter a bachelor's programme graduate within the theoretical duration of the programme. The average completion rate after three additional years increases to 68%.
- In all countries with data, women have higher completion rates than men in bachelor's programmes. The largest gender gap for completion within the programme's theoretical duration is 24 percentage points in Finland.
- On average, 12% of students who enter a bachelor's programme full time leave tertiary education before the beginning of their second year of study. The share of students who have left without graduating increases to 21% by the end of the programme's theoretical duration and to 23% three years later.

Context

Tertiary completion rates can indicate the efficiency of tertiary education systems, as they show what proportion of the students who enter a tertiary programme ultimately graduate from it. However, low completion rates do not necessarily imply an inadequate tertiary system, as students may leave a programme for a variety of reasons. They may realise that they have chosen a subject or educational programme that is not a good fit for them, or they may find attractive employment opportunities before completing the programme. In some educational systems, it may also be common for students to enrol without intending to graduate from a specific programme, but rather to pursue a few courses as part of lifelong learning or upskilling such as in the Flemish Community of Belgium (De Wit, Verhoeven and Broucker, 2019^[1]).

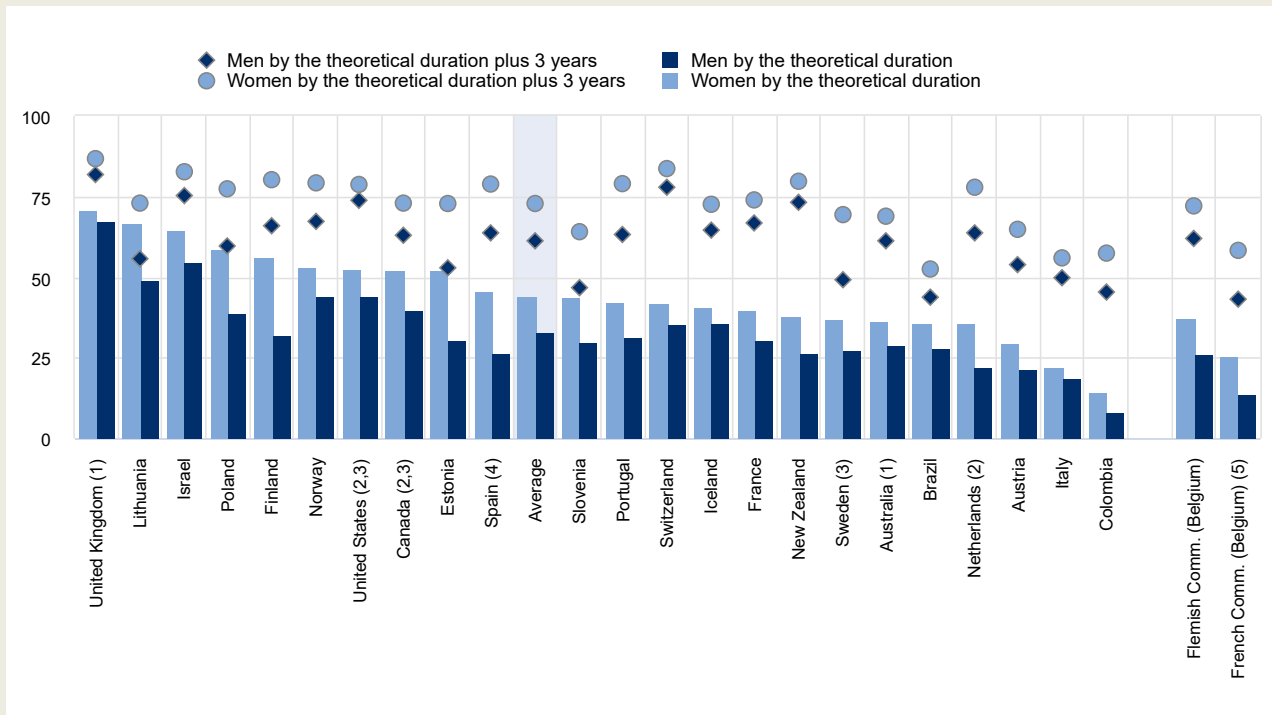
A variety of factors can influence completion rates, including students' prior educational background and social and economic characteristics. This indicator analyses the completion rate of tertiary students by gender, level of education and field of study, as well as considering the different routes they take through tertiary education.

Completion of a programme may be defined differently across countries. This indicator focuses on full-time students and two timeframes for completion: 1) the share of students who graduate from any tertiary programme within the theoretical duration of the programme they entered; and 2) the share of students who graduate within three years after the end of the theoretical duration. The difference between these timeframes can shed light on the extent to which students graduate "on time" (within the amount of time expected given the theoretical duration of the programme) or after a delay. This indicator also examines the share of students who transfer between tertiary levels or leave the education system without graduating.

Other findings

- On average across countries and other participants with available data, 44% of students who entered a short-cycle tertiary programme graduated from a tertiary programme by the end of the theoretical duration of the programme they entered. In comparison, 51% of students who entered a master's long first degree graduated from any tertiary programme by the end of the theoretical duration of their programme.
- In some countries, it is not unusual for students to transfer to different tertiary levels during their studies. In France, 11% of students who had entered a bachelor's programme transferred to a short-cycle tertiary programme and 3% transferred to a master's long first degree by the beginning of their second year of study.

Figure B5.1. Completion rate of full-time students who entered a bachelor's or equivalent level, by gender and timeframe (2020)
 In per cent; true cohort data only




Note: True cohort (individual-level data) and cross cohort (aggregate data) completion rates are not comparable with each other. Please refer to *Methodology* section for an explanation of the true cohort and cross cohort methodologies. The year of reference for the data (2020) corresponds to the graduation year three years after the theoretical duration of the programme. The reference year for the entrance cohort changes depending on the duration of programmes.

1. Data refer only to programmes with a theoretical duration of three, four or five years in Australia. Only programmes with a theoretical duration of three or four years are included for the United Kingdom.
2. Year of reference differs from 2020: 2019 in Canada and the Netherlands; 2017 in the United States.
3. Data are provided for the theoretical duration plus one year in Canada and plus two years for programmes in the United States (not three years). Data are provided for the theoretical duration plus one semester (not the theoretical duration) in Sweden.
4. Data on bachelor's level or equivalent programmes refer to higher education provided in universities only.
5. Data refer only to the *hautes écoles* (HE) and the *écoles des arts* (ESA), representing about 60% of entrants to bachelor's or equivalent programmes.

Countries and other participants are ranked in descending order of the share of women who graduated by the theoretical duration.

Source: OECD (2022), Table B5.1. See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

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Note

Completion, graduation and attainment rates are three different measures. Completion rates, as covered in this indicator, describe the percentage of students who enter a tertiary programme and who graduate from it a given number of years later. Graduation rates represent the estimated percentage of people from a certain age cohort who are expected to graduate at some point during their lifetime. They measure the number of graduates from a level of education relative to the country's population (*Education at a Glance Database*). Attainment rates measure the percentage of a population that has reached a certain level of education (see Indicator A1). They represent the relationship between all graduates (of the given year and previous years) and the total population.

This indicator only covers full-time students. On average across OECD countries, about 21% of tertiary students are enrolled part time (see Indicator B1). The theoretical duration of tertiary programmes may vary across countries. Therefore, despite having the same reference year for graduates (2020 unless specified otherwise), the year used for entry cohorts will differ depending on the duration of the programmes.

The two timeframes this indicator uses to measure students' status are: 1) by the end of the theoretical duration of the programme in which they entered; and 2) by three years after the end of the theoretical duration of the programme.

Analysis

This indicator presents completion rates calculated using true cohort data. True cohort completion rates correspond to the share of students from a specific entry cohort who graduate within a particular timeframe. This is the preferred methodology for analysing completion rates, but only countries with longitudinal surveys or registers are able to provide such information. Panel data may be available in the form of an individual student registry (a system including unique personal identification numbers for students) or a cohort of students used to conduct a longitudinal survey. Data in this indicator refer to completion by the end of the theoretical duration of programmes and the period three years later.

Completion rates can also be calculated using cross cohort data although the results are not comparable with true cohort completion rates. Box B5.1 describes the methodology used to calculate cross cohort completion rates and presents the relevant findings for the 10 countries that submitted cross cohort data.

Completion rate by level of education at entry

Students starting bachelor's or equivalent programmes display a wide variation in completion rates within the theoretical duration across countries and other participants, ranging from 21% or less in Colombia, the French Community of Belgium and Italy to 61% or more in Israel and the United Kingdom. The completion rate after three additional years increases for all countries, but it tends to increase more where the completion rate by the theoretical duration was lower. The completion rate within the three additional years increases by 40 percentage points or more in Colombia, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Switzerland, all countries where completion rates by the theoretical duration of programmes were below the average for countries with available data. As a result, completion rates after three additional years vary less across countries, ranging from 49% in Brazil to 85% in the United Kingdom (Table B5.1).

A variety of institutional factors and country-specific characteristics can help explain the different levels of “delayed” graduation across countries. For example, in some countries it is common for students to take remedial or prerequisite courses prior to beginning the official curriculum (Campbell and Wescott, 2019^[2]; Büchele, 2020^[3]). In some of these countries, such as the United States, remedial courses are included as part of the time spent in tertiary education (Chen, 2016^[4]). In other countries, such as Norway, students are only considered to have started a given level of education after they have completed any remedial courses, thereby not affecting the completion rate.

A large difference in completion rates three years after the end of the theoretical duration of a programme is not necessarily a negative outcome. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, for example, higher education institutions are required to offer flexible learning pathways for all programmes (OECD, 2019^[5]). Students are required to take a certain number of credits to graduate, but the years of study, even if full time, may not be consecutive. This type of flexible system tends to increase the number of students who do not graduate “on time”, but could benefit students in many other ways. In countries and other participants that provide relatively broad access to tertiary education, as is the case in the Flemish Community of Belgium, flexibility may be particularly important, giving students more time to meet the standards set by their educational institution.

Only 13 countries have true cohort data available for short-cycle tertiary programmes and, as with bachelor's programmes, completion rates at this level vary widely. In the United States, only about 12% of students who enter a full-time short-cycle programme full time graduate from any tertiary programme within the theoretical duration of two years, due in part to intentional fluidity between short-cycle tertiary and bachelor's programmes. In New Zealand, 65% of students graduate within this timeframe. As with bachelor's programmes, completion rates increase in all countries after three additional years, but especially in those with lower rates within the theoretical duration. The completion rate doubles in Colombia (from 21% to 43%) and more than triples in Israel (from 16% to 52%) and the United States (12% to 43%) (Table B5.1).

In most countries, the completion rate of students who enter short-cycle tertiary education is higher than for bachelor's students by the end of their programme's theoretical duration, with only five countries having a lower rate. The difference is greatest in Israel, where the completion rate of bachelor's programmes is 45 percentage points higher than for short-cycle tertiary programmes (Table B5.1). In order to put these differences into context, however, it is important to understand the share of students enrolled in each tertiary level. Austria, for example, is the only OECD country where more first-time entrants to tertiary education enrol in short-cycle programmes than in bachelor's programmes (see Indicator B4). Furthermore, bachelor's completion rates tend to be higher than short-cycle tertiary rates three additional years after the end of the theoretical duration of programmes. Only four countries have higher completion rates for short-cycle tertiary students than bachelor's students three years after the theoretical duration of their programme ended (Table B5.1).

Master's long first degree programmes have a longer theoretical duration than bachelor's programmes, and completion rates within that timeframe tend to be higher. In 7 out of the 10 countries with available data, completion rates were higher for these master's students than for those doing bachelor's degrees by the theoretical end of their programmes. Completion rates three years on were higher in all countries for students who entered master's long first degrees, ranging from 62% in Austria to 87% in Spain (Table B5.1). This may be due to the selection processes for entry to master's long first degree programmes, as well as students' own self-selection, given the greater complexity of the course content. In France, for example, master's long first degrees include engineering programmes, whose admissions process involves a competitive entrance examination, for which most students undertake two years of preparatory study (*classes préparatoires aux grandes écoles*).

In recent years, many countries have implemented a variety of policies aimed at increasing tertiary completion rates. A common approach is to make the financing of institutions conditional to some extent on student completion rates. In Estonia, for example, 20% of the funding for higher education institutions is performance-based and takes into account the share of students who graduate within specified timeframes as a key criterion (OECD, 2019^[6]). There are similar conditional funding mechanisms in Finland, Israel and Lithuania. In other countries, completion rates are taken into account in the financing provided directly to students. In Norway, for example, students may have up to 40% of their student loans converted into grants if they progress through their studies without delays and meet the relevant income and residence requirements (Eurydice, 2021^[7]). Since the academic year 2019/20, students in Norway have also been obliged to complete their overall degree in order to receive the full loan-to-grant conversion. In Brazil, specific financing has been provided to institutions in the past in order to help ensure that students from disadvantaged backgrounds complete their degree without excessive delays, but funding for these programmes have recently diminished for budget reasons, especially following the onset of the pandemic.

Other policies focus on helping students make better choices about their field of study, thereby reducing the number of cases where students transfer to other courses or leave tertiary education entirely due to a lack of fit with their original programme. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, for example, a study guidance tool called the "Columbus" has been established for use in secondary schools to guide students' choices about what to study in higher education (see Annex 3). In the United Kingdom, all government-backed careers information has been gathered onto the National Careers Service website to clarify the careers landscape for young adults and help them find the education programmes with the right fit (Department for Education, 2021^[8]).

Some countries adjusted their tertiary graduation criteria at the end of the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years (or 2020 and 2021 for countries where the academic year is the calendar year) due to the COVID-19 pandemic (see Annex 3). In Austria, adjustments were made for short-cycle tertiary programmes by granting a number of concessions for the final examinations in higher technical and vocational colleges, such as reducing the written part of the examination, making oral exams voluntary and abolishing the need to present a "pre-scientific paper". In Luxembourg, the pandemic meant internships for short-cycle tertiary hospitality management degrees had to be cancelled, and were not taken into account for students' final qualification. Instead, they had to analyse and write about a case study, in order to achieve their learning outcomes. Norway and New Zealand introduced online remote exams, and Norway converted the grading scale to passed/not passed for many exams.

Box B5.1. Cross cohort completion rates

The cross cohort method is used to calculate completion rates in countries where true cohort data are not available. This method only requires the number of new entrants to a given education level and the number of graduates from the same level N years later, where N corresponds to the theoretical duration of the programme. Assuming constant student flows (constant increases or decreases in the number of students entering a given education level over these years), cross cohort completion rates are closer to true cohort completion rates over longer timeframes. This is because cross cohort completion rates take into account all graduates in a given academic year, regardless of the time it has taken them to graduate.

However, cross cohort completion rates still tend to be considerably higher than true cohort completion rates and any comparison between the two methodologies should be avoided – see Table B5.a in *Education at a Glance 2019* (OECD, 2019^[9]). Instances where completion rates are over 100% in some countries, such as Hungary, Ireland and Mexico, illustrate the difference. Since true cohort data follow the progress of individuals from the same entry cohort, it is impossible for completion rates to exceed 100%. When they exceed this value in cross cohort data, this may be due to fluctuations

in student flows, but it may also be the result of specific policies affecting entrance or completion. For example, completion rates in Hungary were over 200% in 2020 due to a government decree resulting from the COVID-19 crisis, which exceptionally allowed students to graduate without taking a foreign language examination if they had passed their other examination requirements.

Table B5.a. Cross cohort completion rates of full-time tertiary students, by level of education and gender (2020)

Cross cohort only

	Theoretical duration of programmes	Entered a short-cycle tertiary programme			Entered a bachelor's (or equivalent level) programme			Entered a master's long first degree programme				
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total		
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)		
OECD Countries												
Greece	a	a	a	a	4 - 6	53	68	60	a	a	a	a
Hungary	2	72	126	103	3 - 4	201	258	231	5 - 6	186	158	169
Ireland	1	102	112	107	3 - 4	89	96	93	a	a	a	a
Japan	2	86	89	88	4	91	95	93	6	94	93	93
Korea	2 - 3	80	80	80	4	92	95	94	a	a	a	a
Latvia	2 - 3	60	57	58	3 - 4	47	50	48	m	m	m	m
Luxembourg	2 - 3	45	45	45	2 - 4	61	73	67	a	a	a	a
Mexico	2	56	63	59	4	61	71	66	2	100	103	102
Slovak Republic	2 - 3	79	77	78	3 - 4	55	71	64	5 - 6	85	86	86
Türkiye	2	68	79	74	4	84	87	86	5 - 6	93	105	99
Other participants												
Flemish Comm. (Belgium)	m	m	m	m	3	76	91	84	m	m	m	m
French Comm. (Belgium)	a	a	a	a	3	63	76	70	a	a	a	a
Average		72	81	77		82	95	89		112	109	110

Note: Completion rates based on true cohort (individual-level) and cross cohort (aggregate) data are not comparable with each other. See *Definitions* and *Methodology* sections for more information. Please note that the year of reference for the data (2020) corresponds to a period three years after the theoretical end of the programme (2017). The reference year for students' entry to study may differ depending on the duration of their programme.

Source: OECD (2022). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf). Please refer to the *Reader's Guide* for information concerning symbols for missing data and abbreviations.

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Cross cohort completion rates range from 48% in Latvia to 231% in Hungary. At short-cycle tertiary level, completion rates range from 45% in Luxembourg to 100% or more in Hungary and Ireland. The difference in completion rates between bachelor's and short-cycle programmes varies across countries. In Luxembourg, completion at short-cycle tertiary level is more than 20 percentage points lower than at bachelor's level. The opposite is true in Ireland and the Slovak Republic, where the completion rate of short-cycle tertiary programmes is 14 percentage points higher than that of bachelor's programmes (Table B5.a).

Completion rate by gender

In every country and other participants with available data, women in bachelor's programmes have higher completion rates than men. On average across countries with true cohort data, 44% of female entrants and 33% of male entrants to bachelor's programmes graduate within the theoretical duration. The average gap remains similar after allowing three additional years, as the completion rate increases to 73% among women and 61% among men (Figure B5.1).

Some countries have a narrower gender gap than others. The difference in the completion rates between women and men within the theoretical duration is below 7 percentage points in Colombia, Iceland, Italy, Switzerland and the United Kingdom for students in bachelor's programmes, but over 20 percentage points in Estonia and Finland. In 19 out of 23 participants with

available data, the gender gap in completion rates of bachelor's students did not change greatly after three years following the theoretical end of programmes, with differences of less than 5 percentage points. Of the remaining countries, the gender gap widened in Colombia, Portugal and Sweden after three additional years, but it narrowed in Finland (Table B5.1).

Some of the gender differences in completion rates may be due to national policies on military or alternative service that affect men and women differently. For example, in Finland, all male citizens between the ages of 18 and 60 are obliged to perform military service (obligatory military service for men is performed usually at the age of 19-20 years), but female citizens only undertake such service on a voluntary basis. This may help to explain why a larger share of women (56%) entering bachelor's programmes complete their studies by the end of their theoretical duration than men (32%), and why the gender difference in completion rates falls from 24 to 14 percentage points for the longer timeframe (Figure B5.1). In Estonia too, military service is only compulsory for men and women's completion rates (52%) are considerably higher than those of men (31%) by the end of the theoretical duration of programmes. However, the difference in completion rates by gender does not change much in the three years that follow, suggesting that the fulfilment of conscription requirements is not the primary reason why women are more likely to complete their programme (Figure B5.1).

Differences in the completion rates of men and women may also be partly explained by the different returns to tertiary education by gender. Employment rates are higher for adults with tertiary education than those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment for both men and women. However, employment rates for men with tertiary education are only 5 percentage points higher on average across OECD countries than for those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education, whereas the difference was 15 percentage points for women (see Indicator A3). The average private rate of return for each USD invested in tertiary education also tends to be slightly higher for women than for men (see Indicator A5 in *Education at a Glance 2021* (OECD, 2021_[10])). In Estonia and Sweden, where women's completion rates are 20 percentage points higher than men's by the theoretical duration of programmes plus three years, women gain far greater private financial benefits from attaining tertiary education than men for their private costs. The average private financial benefit for each USD invested in tertiary education is around USD 5 for a man and USD 9 for a woman in Estonia, while it is around USD 3 for a man and USD 6 for a woman in Sweden (OECD, 2021_[10]).

Pathways through tertiary education

In addition to students' completion rates, it is important to examine their different paths through tertiary education. This helps understand the flexibility and effectiveness of education systems. It can also shed light on the other group of students – those who have not graduated. Are they still in education? Have they transferred to a different tertiary level? Or have they left the system without graduating?

After the first year of study

Examining students' status right after their first year of study can be very helpful to understanding what happens during their first contact with tertiary education. This could reflect, among other things, the effectiveness of any student orientation or their preparedness for tertiary education. On average across countries with available data, 12% of students who entered a bachelor's programme were no longer enrolled in any tertiary programme by their second year of study, about 2% had transferred to another tertiary level and 86% were still enrolled in the same or another bachelor's programme (Table B5.2).

In some countries, students may commonly enter one tertiary level but graduate from a different level. A large share of such transfers between tertiary levels tends to take place very soon after students have entered a programme. In France, for example, 11% of students who entered a bachelor's programme had transferred to a short-cycle programme and 3% had transferred to a long first degree by the beginning of their second year of study (Table B5.2).

The share of students who are no longer enrolled after their first year of studies ranges from 5% in the United States to 20% or more in Colombia, Iceland and the French Community of Belgium. Large shares of students leaving after just one year can be particularly concerning given that the share of students who leave the system without graduating tends to increase considerably with time. Indeed, by three years after the end of theoretical duration of the programme the share of such students has nearly doubled – and even tripled in some cases – in most countries with available data (Table B5.2).

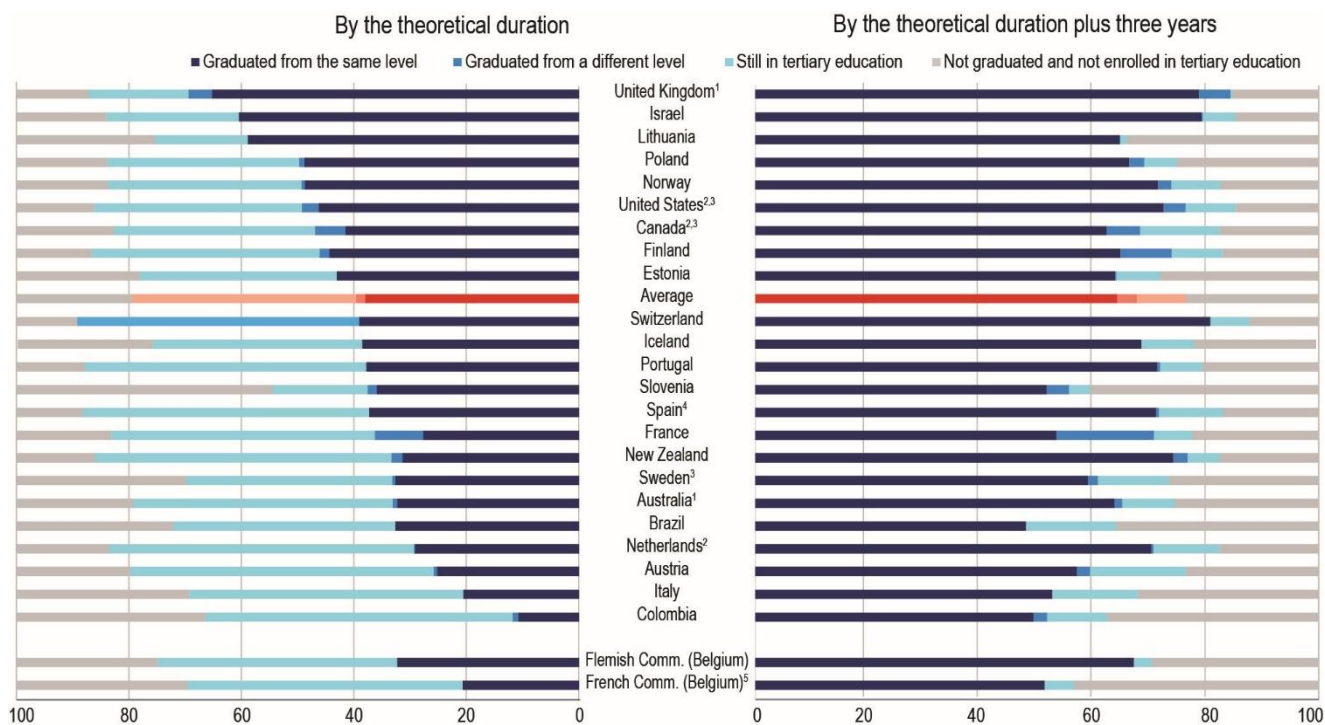
After the theoretical end of the programme and beyond

On average across countries and other participants with available data, 38% of students who entered a bachelor's programme graduated from that or another bachelor's programme by the end of the theoretical duration. About 1% had transferred and

graduated instead from a short-cycle tertiary programme, 40% were still in tertiary education (even if at a different level) and 21% had not graduated and were no longer enrolled in any tertiary programme. The picture evolves considerably over the three years that follow, as many of those who were still in education either graduate or leave the system. Three years after the theoretical duration of the programme, on average, 65% of students have graduated from a bachelor's programme, 2% have graduated from a short-cycle tertiary programme and 1% from a master's long first degree programme. Some 9% are still in education and 23% are no longer enrolled (Figure B5.2 and Table B5.2).

Figure B5.2. Status of full-time bachelor's students, by timeframe (2020)

In per cent



Note: The year of reference for the data (2020) corresponds to the graduation year three years after the theoretical end of the programme. The reference year for the entrance cohort changes depending on the duration of programmes.

1. Data refer only to programmes with a theoretical duration of three, four or five years in Australia. Only programmes with a theoretical duration of three or four years are included for the United Kingdom.

2. Year of reference differs from 2020: 2019 in Canada and the Netherlands; 2017 in the United States.


3. Data are provided for the theoretical duration plus one year in Canada and plus two years in the United States (not three years). Data are provided for the theoretical duration plus one semester (not the theoretical duration) in Sweden.

4. Data on bachelor's level or equivalent programmes refer to higher education provided in universities only.

5. Data refer only to the hautes écoles (HE) and the écoles des arts (ESA), representing about 60% of entrants to bachelor's or equivalent programmes.

Countries and other participants are ranked in descending order of the share of students who graduated by the theoretical duration.

Source: OECD (2022), Table B5.2. See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

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High transfer rates between tertiary levels can help to explain some delays in graduation. Delays might be expected if there are difficulties in transferring credits, or if students transfer to a programme with a longer theoretical duration (students' status is always measured against their original programme's theoretical duration). Transfer rates among students who enter bachelor's programmes are among the highest in France, where about 16% graduate from a short-cycle tertiary programme and 1% graduate from a long first degree within the theoretical duration of the original programmes plus three years (Table B5.2).

The overall evolution in students' status between the end of the theoretical duration of programmes and three years later differs across countries. Completion rates increase by over 40 percentage points in the Netherlands, New Zealand and Switzerland, compared to only 6 percentage points in Lithuania. There are also differences in what happens to students who

were still in education by the end of the theoretical duration of the programme. In both Switzerland and Portugal, for example, 50% of students were still in education by the end of the theoretical duration of the programme and 7% of students were still in education three years later. However, in Switzerland, the completion rate increased by 42 percentage points within these three years and the share of students who had left tertiary education without graduating stayed relatively stable. In Portugal, the completion rate increased by 34 percentage points but the share of students who had left tertiary education also rose by 8 percentage points (Table B5.2).

Delayed completion, or even non-completion, can be costly to both governments and individuals. The cost of tertiary education is high, and students and governments may not reap the full benefits until the degree is completed. Data show that individuals with a tertiary qualification tend to have higher earnings and higher employment rates, which in turn translate into higher taxes and higher social contributions for the government (see Indicator A5 in *Education at a Glance 2021* (OECD, 2021_[10])). Nevertheless, delaying graduation or dropping out are not necessarily symptoms of student or institutional failure. In some countries, the labour market recognises the partial completion of tertiary degrees, either formally or informally, which may encourage students to work part time (and potentially delay graduation) or to drop out and join the labour market full time. Students may also “stop out” – temporarily withdrawing from tertiary education before re-enrolling to complete their studies (Box B5.2)

Completion by type of institution

In most OECD countries, higher education is offered in both public and private institutions (see Indicator B1). In public institutions, a public agency has overall control over the general policies and activities of the institution including staff appointments. Private institutions may be managed by non-governmental organisations or by a governing board, most of whose members are not selected by a public agency. However, there can be significant differences in the ways in which private institutions are regulated, managed and funded (UNESCO-UIS/OECD/Eurostat, 2021_[11]). In the United Kingdom, for example, all higher education institutions are private but receive most of their funding from the government; however, these types of government-dependent institutions do not exist in many OECD countries, although significant shares of students may attend higher education in a private institution (see Indicator B1).

Most private higher education institutions function on a not-for-profit basis, so surplus revenue cannot be paid to their owners (OECD, 2019_[5]). However, there have been increasing numbers of for-profit private institutions emerging in some OECD countries (Shah and Sid Nair, 2013_[12]). Some research suggests that for-profit institutions may be more responsive to market demand through their ability to adapt their programme offerings to meet students’ and employers’ needs (Gilpin, Saunders and Stoddard, 2015_[13]); however, they have also been criticised for being focused on financial gain at the expense of students’ educational outcomes (Hodgman, 2018_[14]).

Completion rates can be one way to compare educational outcomes by type of institution. On average, a greater share of students who entered a bachelor’s programme in a private institution (45%) graduated within the theoretical duration of their programme than those who entered a public institution (38%). The differences in completion rates were particularly pronounced in some countries, such as New Zealand, where the completion rate of students who entered private institutions was more than double that of students from public institutions, and Austria, where it was more than five times as high. In only 5 out of 20 OECD countries and other participants with available data were completion rates by the theoretical duration higher in public institutions than in private ones (Figure B5.3).

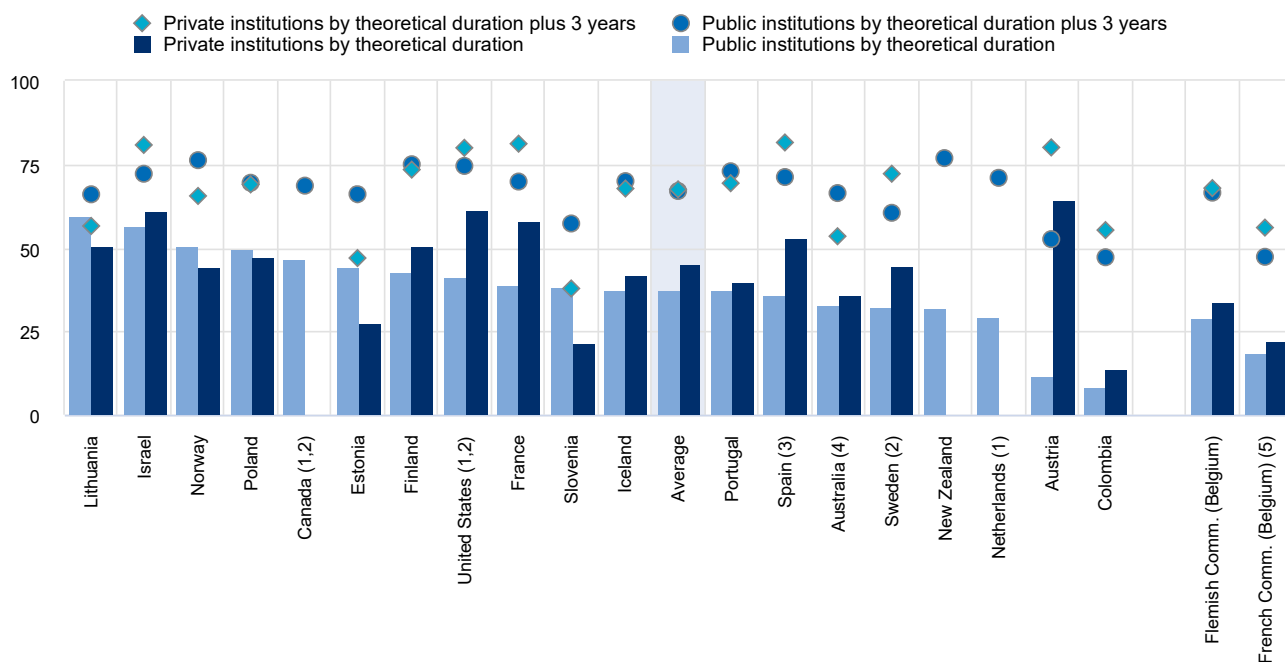
When considering completion rates over the longer timeframe, these differences by type of institution on entry decreased in about half of the countries with available data. Three years after the theoretical end of their bachelor’s programme, completion rates went from being higher for students who entered private institutions to higher for students who entered public ones in Australia, Finland, Iceland and Portugal. There were no countries in which completion rates were higher for students who entered public institutions by the end of the theoretical duration of their programme, but higher for students from private institutions three years later (Table B5.3).

A variety of factors may contribute to differences in completion rates between public and private institutions. In Austria, differences may be partially explained by differences in the organisation of teaching and learning. Students attending private universities, as well as universities of applied sciences, tend to rate the quality of teaching and the structure of their courses more positively than students in public institutions, and survey data also suggest that they experience a higher intensity of study on average than students enrolled in public universities (Zucha, Zaussinger and Unger, 2020_[15]; Unger et al., 2020_[16]). Further to this, entry to many fields of study in public institutions does not require sitting an admissions exam (OECD/European Union, 2019_[17]).

Some gaps in completion rates may be explained by differences in the programmes offered. In New Zealand, for example, private higher education provision was allowed to proliferate from 1989, when the public higher education sector was already well developed (Xiaoying and Abbott, 2008^[18]). Private higher education therefore expanded into niche areas of the market and private institutions tend to offer more specialised, professional courses, particularly in business and information and communication technologies (ICT). Vocationally motivated students, seeking very particular programmes, may be less likely to change course and more likely to complete their studies by the end of their theoretical duration.

Figure B5.3. Completion rates of full-time bachelor's students, by type of institution entered and timeframe (2020)

In per cent; true cohort data only



Note: The year of reference for the data (2020) corresponds to the graduation year three years after the theoretical end of the programme. The reference year for the entrance cohort changes depending on the duration of programmes.

1. Year of reference differs from 2020: 2019 in Canada and the Netherlands; 2017 in the United States.

2. Data are provided for the theoretical duration plus one year in Canada and plus two years in the United States (not three years). Data are provided for the theoretical duration plus one semester (not the theoretical duration) in Sweden.


3. Data on short-cycle programmes refer only to specific vocational training – advanced level programmes. Data on bachelor's level or equivalent programmes refer to higher education provided in universities only.

4. Data refer only to programmes with a theoretical duration of three, four or five years in Australia.

5. Data refer only to the hautes écoles (HE) and the écoles des arts (ESA), representing about 60% of entrants to bachelor's or equivalent programmes.

Countries and other participants are ranked in descending order of the share of entrants to bachelor's programmes in public institutions who graduated by the theoretical duration.

Source: OECD (2022), Table B5.3. See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

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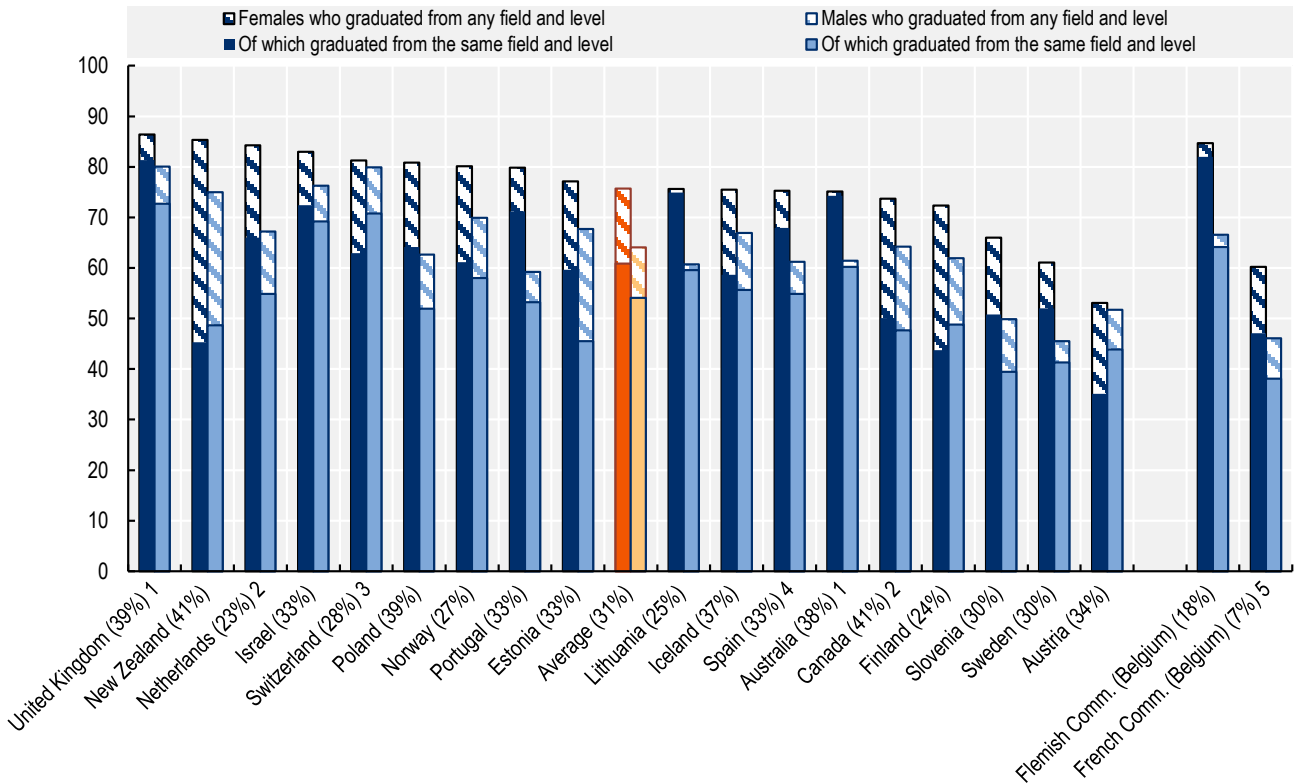
Completion by field of study

Completion rates also vary according to the field of study that students entered. For example, 80% of full-time bachelor's students who entered the field of health and welfare had graduated from some tertiary programme three years after the theoretical duration of their studies, compared to only 68% of students who entered a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programme on average in OECD participants with available data. The differences in completion rates

are more marked for particular fields, especially in some countries. In Sweden, the completion rate for students who entered health and welfare programmes was 31 percentage points higher than for students who entered STEM, but it was only 2 percentage points higher than for students who entered the field of education. In contrast, differences in completion rates were less than 5 percentage points among all three of these fields of study in New Zealand and the United Kingdom (Table B5.4).

Figure B5.4. Completion rates of full-time science, technology, engineering and mathematics bachelor's students, by field and level of graduation and gender (2020)

By the end of the theoretical duration of the programme plus three years; in per cent; true cohort data only



Note: The year of reference for the data (2020) corresponds to the graduation year three years after the theoretical end of the programme. The reference year for the entrance cohort changes depending on the duration of programmes. The share of students entering STEM fields who are women is shown in parentheses next to each country name"

1. Data refer only to programmes with a theoretical duration of three, four or five years in Australia. Only programmes with a theoretical duration of three or four years are included for the United Kingdom.

2. Year of reference differs from 2020: 2019 in Canada and the Netherlands. Timeframe of reference differs in Canada, where data are provided for the theoretical duration of the programme plus one year (not three years).

3. Data on graduation in the same field and level include students who graduated from a master's long first degree programme.

4. Data on graduation from any tertiary programme exclude graduation from short-cycle tertiary.

5. Data refer only to the *hautes écoles* (HE) and the *écoles des arts* (ESA), representing about 60% of entrants to bachelor's or equivalent programmes.

Countries and other participants are ranked in descending order of the share of women entering a STEM field who graduated by the theoretical duration plus three years from any field and tertiary level.

Source: OECD (2022), Table B5.4. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

StatLink <https://stat.link/12y4s3>

Differences between completion rates by field of study are related to the labour-market opportunities that are available to individuals in various professions. In some countries, like Lithuania, Norway and Sweden, demand for workers with relevant skills means that students who have partially completed programmes in certain fields – particularly ICT – may find employment without fully finishing their degree. On the other hand, professions in education and health and welfare are often regulated

and relevant qualifications are required to start work, meaning that students have a greater incentive to fully complete their studies (see Box B4.2 in Indicator B4).

Not all of the students who had graduated had done so within the same field or education level that they entered, although the degree to which students tend to change programme before graduation also differs by field of study. On average across OECD countries and other participants with available data, only 5% of students who entered health and welfare programmes graduated from another field of study or level. In contrast, this was the case for 8% of education students and 12% of STEM students (Table B5.4).

There were also gender differences in completion after a change in programme by field. In more than two-thirds of OECD participants, smaller shares of women than men who entered an education or health and welfare programme changed field or level before completing their studies (Table B5.4). After starting a STEM programme, however, larger shares of women changed field or level before graduating than men in 14 out of 19 OECD countries and other participants (Figure B5.4). In Austria, Finland, New Zealand and Switzerland, a greater share of male students than female students actually completed the bachelor's programme in the STEM field that they entered. However, larger shares of their female peers had completed a tertiary programme overall by the end of the theoretical duration of their programme plus three years, including those who had changed the field or education level of their course (Table B5.4).

Given that women are in the minority among new entrants to STEM fields of study (see Indicator B4), it is concerning to see larger shares of them changing programme or level before graduating than men in most contexts. Research suggests that this may be related to isolation, micro-aggressions and a male-dominated culture experienced by women studying in STEM (Ong, Smith and Ko, 2018^[19]; Blackburn, 2017^[20]). Women might experience less of a sense of belonging than men in STEM-related fields, which has been associated with a decreased likelihood of persisting in their programme (Lewis et al., 2017^[21]). To tackle such issues, several OECD members have taken measures to promote STEM in schools to counter gender stereotyping in STEM and advance women in STEM education and careers. In Australia, for example, the "Restoring the focus on STEM in schools" initiative was launched in 2015, which aimed to increase the number of girls and disadvantaged students in Summer Schools for STEM students as one of its key objects (OECD, 2017^[22]). Higher education institutions can also adapt their teaching methods and curricula, and implement mentoring programmes to support women during their studies to reduce attrition after students have started their courses (Do et al., 2021^[23]).

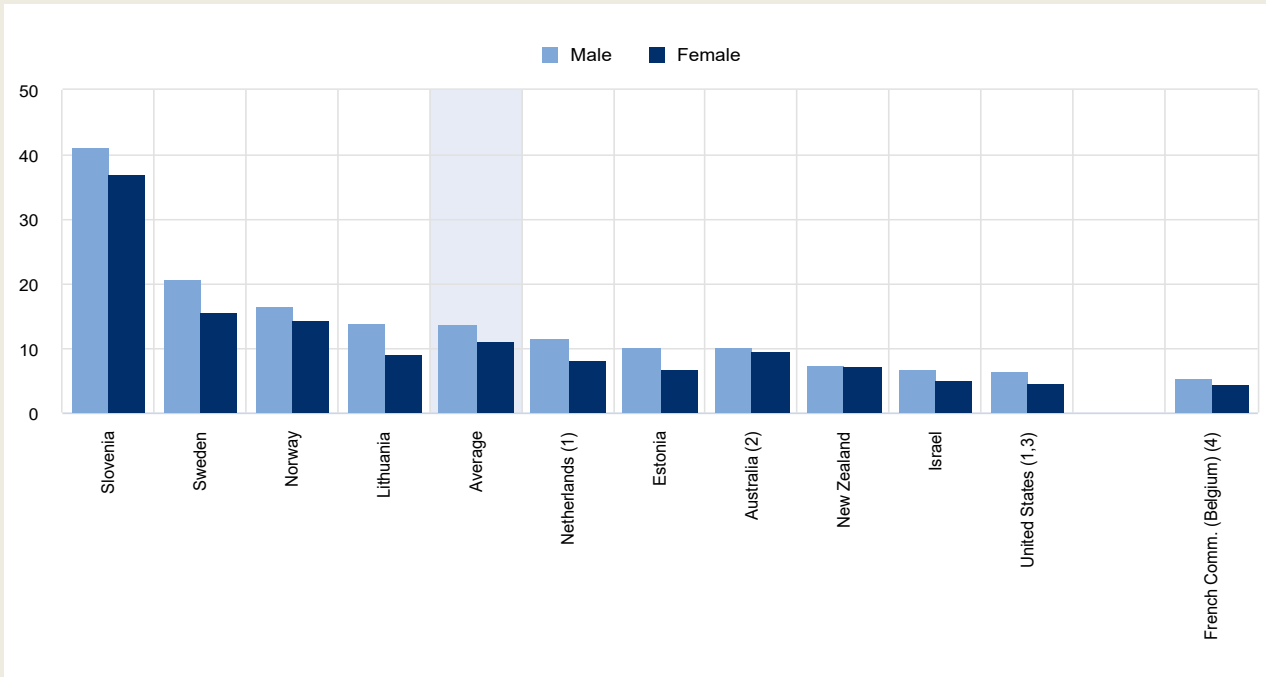
Box B5.2. Experiences of stop-out

"Stop-out" behaviour refers to re-enrolment or re-entry to a tertiary programme after a temporary period of withdrawal from higher education. As noted above, the share of students who complete tertiary education – and the share who do not – can be of interest to policy makers in assessing the efficiency of higher education programmes and providers, particularly in fields and countries where there is no recognition of partial degree completion in the labour market. In this context, an examination of stop-out behaviour can be helpful in understanding how well the education system is able to re-engage students and adapt to their evolving needs.

Figure B5.5 shows the share of bachelor's students who spent at least one year out of education as a share of those who had either graduated or were still in tertiary education by the theoretical duration of the programme plus three years. It shows that there are considerable differences between countries and other participants in terms of the share of students re-entering tertiary education after withdrawing for some time. In the French Community of Belgium, Israel, New Zealand and the United States, the share of students who had experienced a period of stop-out was less than 10% for both men and women. In contrast, nearly 40% of students in Slovenia had experienced such a stop-out. In all cases, men are more likely to have experienced a period of stop-out than women, although in some countries and participants the difference is very small. Among OECD participants with available data, 14% of male bachelor's students had experienced a period of temporary withdrawal from tertiary education on average, while the same was true for 11% for female students.

Figure B5.5. Share of full-time bachelor’s students who spent at least one year out of education and graduated or re-enrolled by theoretical duration plus three years, by gender (2020)

In per cent; true cohort data only



Note: Countries may identify years spent out of education differently. Further details can be found in Annex 3. The year of reference for the data (2020) corresponds to the graduation year three years after the theoretical end of the programme. The reference year for the entrance cohort changes depending on the duration of programmes.

1. Year of reference differs from 2020: 2019 in the Netherlands; 2017 in the United States.

2. Data refers only to programmes with a theoretical duration of 3, 4, or 5 years in Australia.

3. Data are provided for the theoretical duration plus two years for programmes in the United States (not three years).

4. Data refers only to the *hautes écoles* (HE) and the *écoles des arts* (ESA), representing about 60% of entrants to bachelor's or equivalent programmes.

Countries and other participants are ranked in descending order of the share of male students who left tertiary education but re-enrolled or graduated by the theoretical duration plus 3 years.

Source: OECD (2022), Table B5.1. See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

StatLink  <https://stat.link/9pomuy>

There are a multitude of reasons why students may choose to leave their tertiary education programme, whether temporarily or permanently. It may be for personal reasons, work or financial reasons, or dissatisfaction with their programme or institution (UPCEA/StraighterLine, 2021^[24]). Local labour-market conditions can also have an influence on students' likelihood of completing their studies, depending on unemployment rates and students' perceptions of the expected returns from completing their degree (Aina et al., 2018^[25]). Some system-level policies may also facilitate periods of temporary withdrawal from tertiary education. For example, in Slovenia, students are able to keep their student status for an extra year after the end of their studies, during which time they may retake some assessments, get a student job or remain inactive (Farcnik, Domadenik Muren and Franca, 2021^[26]). In Sweden, students may take freestanding courses, combining multiple options to attain a bachelor's or master's degree, and pause their studies without losing credits when they decide to re-enter their programme (Carlhed Ydhag, 2020^[27]). These policies help to explain why there are relatively high shares of students with stop-out experiences in these two countries, and why there has been a decrease in the share of bachelor's students reported as having left tertiary education without graduating in the three years following the theoretical end of programmes (Table B5.2).

Definitions

The **true cohort** method requires following an entry cohort through a specific timeframe, which in the case of this survey corresponds to the theoretical duration of the programme and the theoretical duration plus three years. Only countries with longitudinal surveys or student registers are able to provide such information.

The **cross cohort** method only requires the number of new entrants to a given ISCED level and the number of graduates N years later, where N corresponds to the theoretical duration of the programme.

Full-time students in this indicator refer to students who entered the given tertiary programme with full-time status. They may have switched status during their studies.

The **theoretical duration** of programmes is the regulatory or common-practice time it takes a full-time student to complete a level of education.

Methodology

For countries that submitted data using the true cohort method, it is possible to calculate two different completion rates (described below) which are computed for two different timeframes (theoretical duration N and three years later, N+3):

- completion rate of students who graduate at the same ISCED level which they entered: number of graduates in a given calendar year and ISCED level divided by the number of entrants to that same ISCED level N/N+3 calendar years before
- completion rate of students who graduate at any tertiary ISCED level: the sum of graduates from all tertiary ISCED levels in a given calendar year who entered a given ISCED level N/N+3 calendar years before.

Countries that submitted true cohort data either used first-time entrants to tertiary education (which considers only students who entered tertiary education for the first time) or new entrants to the tertiary level (which considers all first-time entrants to each tertiary level, regardless of whether they have pursued a different tertiary level before). Please see Annex 3 for the list of countries using each methodology (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

For cross cohort data, only one completion rate is calculated: the number of graduates in a given calendar year and ISCED level divided by the number of entrants to that same ISCED level N calendar years before.

If countries offer programmes of different theoretical durations within the same ISCED level, the completion rate of each programme is weighted by the number of new entrants to each programme.

Please see the *OECD Handbook for Internationally Comparative Education Statistics 2018* (OECD, 2018^[28]) for more information and Annex 3 for country-specific notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

Source

Data on completion rates refer to the academic year 2019/2020 and were collected through a special survey undertaken in 2021. Data for some countries may have a different reference year, please refer to Annex 3 for country-specific notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf). Countries submitted data using either the true cohort or cross cohort methodology.

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Indicator B5 Tables

Tables Indicator B5. How many students complete tertiary education?

Table B5.1	Completion rate of full-time students by level of education, timeframe, and gender (2020)
Table B5.2	Status of full-time bachelor's students at various timeframes after entry (2020)
Table B5.3	Completion rates of full-time students who entered a bachelor's or equivalent level by type of institution upon entry, gender and timeframe (2020)
Table B5.4	Completion rates of full-time bachelor's students by gender in selected fields of study at the theoretical duration plus three years (2020)

StatLink  <https://stat.link/7nhldy>

Cut-off date for the data: 17 June 2022. Any updates on data can be found on line at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-data-en>. More breakdowns can also be found at <http://stats.oecd.org/>, Education at a Glance Database.

Table B5.1. Completion rates of full-time students, by level of education, timeframe

True cohort only

	Panel A						Panel B						Panel C								
	Completion rates of students who entered a bachelor's (or equivalent) programme and completed any tertiary level						Completion rates of students who entered a short-cycle tertiary programme and completed any tertiary level						Completion rates of students who entered a master's long first degree programme and completed any tertiary level								
	Theoretical duration of programmes	By the end of the theoretical duration of the programme			By the end of the theoretical duration of the programme plus three years			Theoretical duration of programmes	By the end of the theoretical duration of the programme			By the end of the theoretical duration of the programme plus three years			Theoretical duration of programmes	By the end of the theoretical duration of the programme			By the end of the theoretical duration of the programme plus three years		
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)		(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)		(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	
OECD and partners																					
Countries																					
Australia ¹	3-5	29	36	33	61	69	66	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	
Austria	3	21	29	26	54	65	60	2	56	64	60	78	84	81	6	33	41	38	57	66	62
Brazil	4-5	28	36	33	44	52	49	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Canada ^{2,3}	4	40	52	47	63	73	69	2	29	37	34	47	58	53	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Colombia	5	9	14	12	45	57	52	2-3	22	21	21	43	43	43	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Estonia	3-4	31	52	43	53	73	64	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	5-6	27	57	43	59	80	70
Finland	4	32	56	46	66	80	74	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
France	3	31	40	36	67	74	71	2	59	70	64	76	83	79	5	57	59	58	m	m	m
Iceland	3-4	36	41	39	64	73	69	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Israel	3-4	55	65	61	75	83	80	1-3	15	19	16	50	57	52	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Italy	3	19	22	21	50	56	53	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Lithuania	3-4	49	67	59	56	73	65	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	5-6	63	77	72	71	81	78
Netherlands ²	3-4	22	36	29	64	78	71	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
New Zealand	3	27	38	33	73	80	77	2	59	69	65	69	75	73	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Norway	3-4	44	53	49	67	79	74	2	58	33	50	64	49	59	5-6	37	46	42	80	87	84
Poland	3-4	39	58	50	60	77	69	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	2-5	39	53	48	69	79	75
Portugal	3	32	43	38	63	79	72	2	47	62	52	58	71	63	5	59	74	67	79	89	84
Slovenia	4-5	30	44	38	47	64	56	3	15	19	17	28	36	31	6-7	36	43	41	73	84	81
Spain ⁴	4	27	46	37	64	79	72	2	51	63	57	71	79	75	5-6	52	61	58	82	90	87
Sweden ³	3	28	37	33	49	69	61	2	58	71	64	66	78	72	4-5	34	43	38	64	78	71
Switzerland	3	36	42	39	78	84	81	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
United Kingdom ¹	3-4	67	71	69	82	87	85	2	58	65	62	73	80	77	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
United States ^{2,3}	4	45	53	49	74	79	77	2	13	11	12	42	43	43	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Other Participants																					
Flemish Comm. (Belgium)	3	26	37	32	62	72	68	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
French Comm. (Belgium) ⁵	3-4	14	26	21	43	58	52	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Average		33	44	39	61	73	68		41	46	44	59	64	62		44	56	51	70	82	77

Note: Completion rates based on true cohort (individual-level) and cross cohort (aggregate) data are not comparable with each other. See *Definitions and Methodology* sections for more information. Please note that the year of reference for the data (2020) corresponds to a period three years after the theoretical end of the programme (2017). The reference year for students' entry to study may differ depending on the duration of their programme.

1. Data on bachelor's and equivalent programmes refer only to those with a theoretical duration of three, four or five years in Australia. Only bachelor's programmes with a theoretical duration of three or four years are included for the United Kingdom.

2. Year of reference differs from 2020: 2019 in Canada and the Netherlands; 2017 for bachelor's programmes and 2016 for short-cycle tertiary programmes in the United States.

3. Timeframes of reference differ. Data are provided for the theoretical duration of the programme plus one year in Canada and plus two years for bachelor's programmes in the United States (not three years). Data are provided for the theoretical duration of the programme plus one semester (not the theoretical duration) in Sweden.

4. Data on short-cycle programmes refer only to specific vocational training – advanced level programmes. Data on bachelor's or equivalent programmes refer to higher education provided in universities only.

5. Data refer only to the *hautes écoles* (HE) and the *écoles des arts* (ESA), representing about 60% of entrants to bachelor's or equivalent programmes.

Source: OECD (2022). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

Please refer to the *Reader's Guide* for information concerning symbols for missing data and abbreviations.

Table B5.2. Status of full-time bachelor's students at various timeframes after entry (2020)

True cohort only

	By the beginning of the second year of study				By the end of the theoretical duration of the programme					By the end of the theoretical duration of the programme plus three years				
	Still enrolled in bachelor's (or equivalent programme)	Transferred to:		Not enrolled in tertiary education ¹	Graduated from:			Still in tertiary education	Not graduated and not enrolled in tertiary education	Graduated from:			Still in tertiary education	Not graduated and not enrolled in tertiary education
		Short-cycle tertiary	Master's long first degree		Bachelor's or equivalent	Short-cycle tertiary	Master's long first degree			Bachelor's or equivalent	Short-cycle tertiary	Master's long first degree		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Countries														
OECD and partners														
Australia ²	84	2 ^d	x(2)	15	32	1 ^d	x(6)	46	21	64	1 ^d	x(11)	9	25
Austria	85	1	2	13	25	0	0	54	20	58	1	1	17	23
Brazil	89	0	a	11	33	0	a	39	28	49	0	a	16	36
Canada ^{3,4}	84	1	a	14	42	5	a	36	17	63	6	a	14	17
Colombia	73	1	x(4)	26 ^d	11	1	x(9)	55	34 ^d	50	2	x(14)	11	37 ^d
Estonia	86	a	1	14	43	a	0	35	22	64	a	0	8	28
Finland	91	a	1	8	44	a	2	41	13	65	a	9	9	17
France	70	11	3	17	28	9	0	47	17	54	16	1	7	22
Iceland	79	0	0	20	39	0	0	37	24	69	0	0	9	21
Israel	92	0	a	8	60	0	a	23	16	79	0	a	6	15
Italy	86	0	0	14	21	0	0	49	31	53	0	0	15	32
Lithuania	90	a	1	9	59	a	0	16	25	65	a	0	1	34
Netherlands ³	88	0	a	11	29	0	a	54	16	71	0	a	12	17
New Zealand	90	1	a	9	31	2	a	53	14	74	2	a	6	17
Norway	86	0	2	12	49	0	1	34	16	72	0	2	9	17
Poland	85	0	0	15	49	0	1	34	16	67	0	3	6	25
Portugal	90	0	1	8	38	0	0	50	12	72	0	0	7	20
Slovenia	77	5	0	18	36	2	0	17	45	52	4	0	4	40
Spain ⁵	93	x(4)	1	7 ^d	37	x(9)	0	51	12 ^d	71	x(14)	1	11	17 ^d
Sweden ⁴	87	0	1	11	33	0	0	37	30	59	0	1	12	26
Switzerland	92 ^d	0	x(1)	8	39 ^d	0	x(5)	50	11	81	0	x(10)	7	12
United Kingdom ²	91	0	0	9	65	4	0	18	13	79	6	0	0	15
United States ^{3,4}	92	3	a	5	46	3	a	37	14	73	4	a	9	15
Other participants														
Flemish Comm. (Belgium)	87	0	0	13	32	0	0	43	25	68	0	0	3	29
French Comm. (Belgium) ⁶	80	a	a	20	21	a	a	49	30	52	a	a	5	43
Average	86	1	1	12	38	1	0	40	21	65	2	1	9	23

Note: Completion rates based on true cohort (individual-level) and cross cohort (aggregate) data are not comparable with each other. See *Definitions* and *Methodology* sections for more information. Please note that the year of reference for the data (2020) corresponds to a period three years after the theoretical end of the programme (2017). The reference year for students' entry to study may differ depending on the duration of their programme.

1. The columns for "not enrolled in tertiary education" or "not graduated and not enrolled in tertiary education" may include students who left the country before graduation.
2. Data on bachelor's and equivalent programmes refer only to those with a theoretical duration of three, four or five years in Australia. Only bachelor's programmes with a theoretical duration of three or four years are included for the United Kingdom.
3. Year of reference differs from 2020: 2019 in Canada and the Netherlands; 2017 in the United States.
4. Timeframes of reference differ. Data are provided for the theoretical duration of the programme plus one year in Canada and plus two years in the United States (not three years). Data are provided for the theoretical duration of the programme plus one semester (not the theoretical duration) in Sweden.
5. Data on short-cycle programmes refer only to specific vocational training – advanced level programmes. Data on bachelor's level or equivalent programmes refer to higher education provided in universities only.
6. Data refer only to the *hautes écoles* (HE) and the *écoles des arts* (ESA), representing about 60% of entrants to bachelor's or equivalent programmes.

Source: OECD (2022). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf). Please refer to the *Reader's Guide* for information concerning symbols for missing data and abbreviations.

Table B5.3. Completion rates of full-time students who entered a bachelor's (or equivalent level) programme, by type of institution upon entry, timeframe and gender (2020)

True cohort only

	Share of students entering public institutions	Public institutions						Private institutions					
		By the end of the theoretical duration of the programme			By the end of the theoretical duration of the programme plus three years			By the end of the theoretical duration of the programme			By the end of the theoretical duration of the programme plus three years		
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	
OECD													
Countries													
Australia ¹	93	29	36	33	62	70	66	35	37	36	50	56	53
Austria	73	8	15	12	46	57	53	57	71	64	74	85	80
Canada ^{2,3}	100	40	52	47	63	73	69	m	m	m	m	m	m
Colombia	37	7	10	9	42	52	47	10	16	14	48	60	55
Estonia	91	32	53	45	55	74	66	19	35	28	36	57	47
Finland	58	31	52	43	67	81	75	34	62	51	65	80	73
France	98	32	43	39	67	72	70	58	59	58	88	77	81
Iceland	73	32	41	38	65	73	70	43	41	42	64	72	68
Israel	13	40	61	57	59	76	72	56	65	61	76	84	81
Italy	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Lithuania	91	50	68	60	57	74	66	39	59	51	45	64	56
Netherlands ²	100	22	36	29	64	78	71	m	m	m	m	m	m
New Zealand	97	26	37	32	73	79	77	67	75	72	75	85	81
Norway	80	46	54	51	70	81	76	37	49	44	56	72	65
Poland	95	39	59	50	60	77	69	36	56	47	57	77	69
Portugal	80	30	43	37	64	80	73	36	43	40	62	75	69
Slovenia	94	31	45	39	48	66	57	16	25	22	29	43	38
Spain ⁴	92	25	45	36	63	78	71	43	61	53	75	87	82
Sweden ³	93	27	36	32	48	69	60	37	51	45	63	80	72
Switzerland	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
United Kingdom ¹	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
United States ^{2,3}	62	37	45	42	72	77	75	57	65	62	77	82	80
Other participants													
Flemish Comm. (Belgium)	42	24	34	29	61	71	67	28	39	34	62	72	68
French Comm. (Belgium) ⁵	47	13	23	19	39	54	47	15	28	22	47	62	56
Average		30	43	38	60	72	67	39	50	45	61	72	67

Note: Completion rates based on true cohort (individual-level) and cross cohort (aggregate) data are not comparable with each other. See *Definitions* and *Methodology* sections for more information. Please note that the year of reference for the data (2020) corresponds to a period three years after the theoretical end of the programme (2017). The reference year for students' entry to study may differ depending on the duration of their programme.

1. Data on bachelor's and equivalent programmes refer only to those with a theoretical duration of three, four or five years in Australia. Only bachelor's programmes with a theoretical duration of three or four years are included for the United Kingdom.

2. Year of reference differs from 2020: 2019 in Canada and the Netherlands; 2017 in the United States.

3. Timeframes of reference differ. Data are provided for the theoretical duration of the programme plus one year in Canada and plus two years in the United States (not three years). Data are provided for the theoretical duration of the programme plus one semester (not the theoretical duration) in Sweden.

4. Data on short-cycle programmes refer only to specific vocational training – advanced level programmes. Data on bachelor's level or equivalent programmes refer to higher education provided in universities only.

5. Data refer only to the *hautes écoles* (HE) and the *écoles des arts* (ESA), representing about 60% of entrants to bachelor's or equivalent programmes.

Source: OECD (2022). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

Please refer to the *Reader's Guide* for information concerning symbols for missing data and abbreviations.


StatLink  <https://stat.link/g2hfot>

Table B5.4. Completion rates of full-time bachelor’s students by the end of theoretical duration of their programme plus three years, by selected fields of study and gender (2020)

True cohort only

	Share of female STEM entrants	Graduated from any tertiary programme after entering a bachelor's programme in the field of:						Graduated from tertiary education in the same field and level after entering a bachelor's programme in the field of:					
		Education		STEM		Health and welfare		Education		STEM		Health and welfare	
		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
OECD Countries													
Australia ¹	38	49	58	61	75	62	70	47	56	60	74	61	69
Austria	34	57	72	52	53	88	91	51	65	44	35	88	90
Canada ^{2,3}	41	73	82	64	74	75	84	61	69	48	50	52	70
Colombia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Estonia	33	47	74	68	77	61	80	35	73	46	60	57	78
Finland	24	78	88	62	72	73	82	47	55	49	44	68	76
France	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Iceland ¹	37	59	67	67	76	81	80	57	62	56	59	73	69
Israel	33	62	77	76	83	87	91	54	71	69	72	86	89
Italy	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Lithuania	25	44	75	61	76	62	77	44	74	60	75	61	77
Netherlands ²	23	48	71	67	84	62	76	35	59	55	66	52	69
New Zealand	41	64	79	75	85	68	77	51	71	49	45	56	67
Norway	27	71	83	70	80	74	86	62	73	58	61	67	81
Poland	39	53	78	63	81	66	85	44	69	52	64	59	77
Portugal	33	56	81	59	80	76	88	46	77	53	71	71	86
Slovenia	30	63	83	50	66	58	75	49	76	39	51	51	71
Spain ⁴	33	76	89	61	75	84	91	73	88	55	68	78	86
Sweden	30	63	81	46	61	67	83	56	74	41	52	63	80
Switzerland ⁵	28	76	90	80	81	82	86	72	87	71	63	74	81
United Kingdom ¹	39	83	88	80	86	85	87	76	83	73	81	78	82
United States ^{2,3}	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Other participants													
Flemish Comm. (Belgium)	18	43	65	67	85	60	73	40	63	64	82	57	72
French Comm. (Belgium) ⁶	7	37	57	46	60	44	60	28	48	38	47	37	53
Average	31	61	78	64	76	72	82	52	70	54	61	65	77

Note: STEM refers to the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Data on completion rates for other fields (Columns 19 to 66), as well as total men and women (Columns 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, and 18), are available for consultation on line (see StatLink below). Completion rates based on true cohort (individual-level) and cross cohort (aggregate) data are not comparable with each other. See *Definitions* and *Methodology* sections for more information. Please note that the year of reference for the data (2020) corresponds to a period three years after the theoretical end of the programme (2017). The reference year for students' entry to study may differ depending on the duration of their programme.

1. Data on bachelor's and equivalent programmes refer only to those with a theoretical duration of three, four or five years in Australia. Only bachelor's programmes with a theoretical duration of three years are included for Iceland, and three or four years are included for the United Kingdom.
2. Year of reference differs from 2020: 2019 in Canada and the Netherlands; 2017 in the United States.
3. Timeframes of reference differ. Data are provided for the theoretical duration of the programme plus one year in Canada and plus two years in the United States (not three years).
4. Data on graduation from any tertiary programme exclude graduation from short-cycle tertiary.
5. Data on graduation in the same field and level include students who graduated from a master's long first degree programme.
6. Data refer only to the *hautes écoles* (HE) and the *écoles des arts* (ESA), representing about 60% of entrants to bachelor's or equivalent programmes.

Source: OECD (2022). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf). Please refer to the *Reader's Guide* for information concerning symbols for missing data and abbreviations.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/tc8z5y>



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