

TERTIARY GRADUATION AND ENTRY RATES

Most students are today graduating from upper secondary programmes designed to provide access to tertiary education, leading to higher enrolments in tertiary programmes. Countries with high graduation rates at the tertiary level are also the ones most likely to be developing or maintaining a highly skilled labour force.

Definition

The tertiary graduation rate is the share of each age cohort that will complete tertiary-type A education based on current patterns of graduation; this indicator only includes first-time graduates, and provides a measure of the current output of the tertiary educational system. The tertiary entry rate is an estimate of the share of a youth cohort that will enter different types of tertiary education during their lifetime; it is computed as the sum of entry rates for students by single year of age. The two indicators inform about the rate at which countries produce advanced knowledge.

The data on tertiary education shown here refer to traditional university degrees, i.e. those associated with completion of “type A” tertiary courses. Excluded from these data are shorter and often vocationally oriented courses, which usually lead to direct labour market access (i.e. “type B” tertiary).

Overview

Based on current patterns of graduation, 39% of an age cohort in 2007 is estimated to complete tertiary education among the 22 OECD countries with comparable data. This share ranged from less than 20% in Greece to 45% or more in Ireland, Denmark, New Zealand, Finland, Poland, Australia and Iceland. On average, across OECD countries, tertiary graduation rates increased by 18 percentage points over the last twelve years. In virtually every country for which comparable data are available, these rates increased between 1995 and 2007, often quite substantially.

It is estimated that 56% of young adults in OECD countries will enter tertiary programmes during their lifetime, assuming that current patterns of entry continue. In Australia, Poland, New Zealand, the Slovak Republic, Iceland, Sweden and Finland 70% or more of young adults enter tertiary programmes. On average, in all OECD countries with comparable data, the share of young adults who entered tertiary programmes in 2007 is 9 percentage points higher than in 2000, and 19 percentage points higher than in 1995. Entry rates in tertiary education increased by more than 15 percentage points between 2000 and 2007 in the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, Australia, Israel and Korea.

Comparability

Graduation is measured by the sum of net graduation rates. For countries that are unable to provide information on net graduation, the data refer to gross graduation rates, i.e. the number of graduates, regardless of their age, divided by the population at the typical graduation age. The graduation rates for countries with a high proportion of international students (e.g. Australia and New Zealand) may be artificially inflated, as all international graduates are considered as first-time graduates, regardless of their previous education in other countries.

Entry rates correspond to the sum of net entry rates for all ages. The net entry rate for a specific age is obtained by dividing the number of first-time entrants to each type of tertiary education by the total population in the corresponding age group. The sum of net entry rates is calculated by adding the rates for each year of age.

Data on graduation and entry rates at tertiary level for the years 1995, 2000-2004 are based on a special survey carried out in January 2007 in OECD countries and four partner economies. The data for the years 2005-2007 are based on the UNESCO/OECD/Eurostat data collection on education statistics.

Sources

- OECD (2009), *Education at a Glance*, OECD, Paris.

Further information

Analytical publications

- OECD (2008), *Trends Shaping Education – 2008 Edition*, OECD, Paris.

Methodological publications

- OECD (2004), *OECD Handbook for Internationally Comparative Education Statistics: Concepts, Standards, Definitions and Classifications*, OECD, Paris.
- UIS, OECD and Eurostat (2009), *UOE Data Collection – 2009 Data Collection on Education Systems: Definitions, Explanations and Instructions*, OECD, Paris.

Web sites

- OECD Education at a Glance, www.oecd.org/edu/eag2009.



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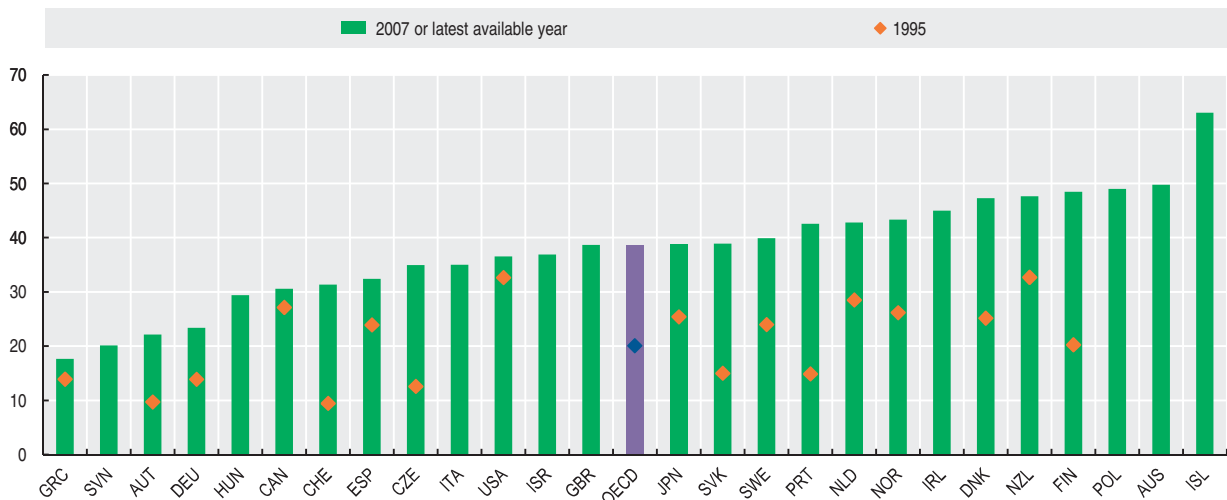
Tertiary graduation rates and tertiary entry rates (Tertiary type-A level)

	Tertiary graduation rates							Tertiary entry rates						
	Sum of graduation rates for single year of age							Sum of net entry rates for single year of age						
	1995	2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	1995	2000	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Australia	..	36	50	51	50	50	..	..	59	68	70	82	84	86
Austria	10	15	19	20	20	21	22	27	34	34	37	37	40	42
Belgium	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	33	34	33	29	30
Canada	27	27	28	29	35	31	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Czech Republic	13	14	17	20	25	29	35	..	25	33	38	41	50	54
Denmark	25	37	43	44	46	45	47	40	52	57	55	57	59	57
Finland	20	41	48	47	48	48	48	39	71	73	73	73	76	71
Germany	14	18	18	19	20	21	23	26	30	36	37	36	35	34
Greece	14	15	20	24	25	20	18	15	30	35	35	43	49	43
Hungary	..	..	..	29	36	30	29	..	64	69	68	68	66	63
Iceland	..	33	45	51	56	63	63	..	66	83	79	74	78	73
Ireland	..	30	37	39	38	39	45	..	32	41	44	45	40	44
Italy	..	19	..	36	41	39	35	..	39	54	55	56	55	53
Japan	25	29	34	35	36	39	39	31	40	43	42	44	45	46
Korea	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	41	45	47	49	51	59	61
Mexico	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	27	29	30	30	31	32
Netherlands	29	35	38	40	42	43	43	44	53	52	56	59	58	60
New Zealand	33	50	49	50	51	52	48	83	95	107	86	79	72	76
Norway	26	37	39	45	41	43	43	59	67	75	72	76	67	66
Poland	..	34	44	45	45	47	49	36	65	70	71	76	78	78
Portugal	15	23	33	32	32	33	43	..	..	..	..	..	53	64
Slovak Republic	15	..	25	28	30	35	39	28	37	40	47	59	68	74
Spain	24	30	32	33	33	33	32	..	47	46	44	43	43	41
Sweden	24	28	35	37	38	41	40	57	67	80	79	76	76	73
Switzerland	9	12	22	26	27	30	31	17	29	38	38	37	38	39
Turkey	6	9	11	11	11	15	..	18	21	23	26	27	31	29
United Kingdom	..	37	38	39	39	39	39	..	47	48	52	51	57	55
United States	33	34	32	33	34	36	37	..	43	63	63	64	64	65
OECD average	20	28	33	35	36	37	39	37	47	53	53	55	56	56
Brazil	..	10	15	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Chile	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	33	34	48	43	41
Estonia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	55	41	39
Israel	..	..	31	32	35	36	37	..	32	41	44	55	56	57
Russian Federation	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	67	65	66
Slovenia	..	..	..	..	18	21	20	..	..	..	..	40	46	50

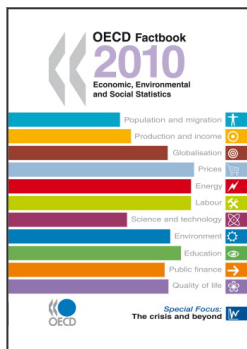
StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/826088613422>

Tertiary-type A graduation rates

Percentage of tertiary-type A graduates to the population at the typical age of graduation



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/821522348872>



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