

**TO WHAT LEVEL HAVE ADULTS STUDIED?**

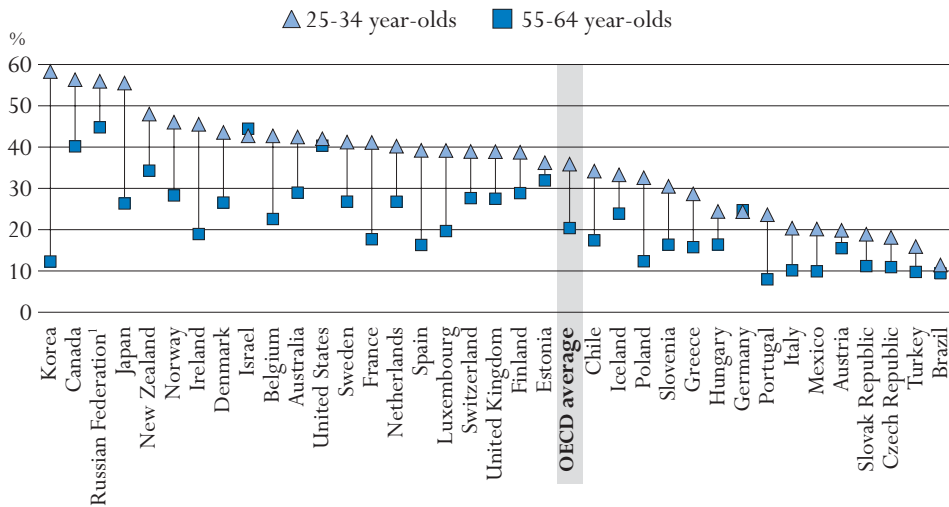
This indicator profiles the educational attainment of the adult population as captured through formal educational qualifications. As such, it provides a proxy for the knowledge and skills available to national economies and societies. To gauge the evolution of available skills, trend data on growth in the number of people with different levels of educational attainment are part of the analysis.

*Key results*

**Chart A1.1. Population that has attained tertiary education (2008)**

*This chart compares the population aged 25 to 34 with tertiary education to the population aged 55 to 64 with tertiary education in 2008, in percentage, by age group.*

Tertiary attainment levels have increased considerably over the past 30 years. In almost all countries, 25-34 year-olds have higher tertiary attainment levels than the generation about to leave the labour market (55-64 year-olds). On average across OECD countries, 35% of the younger cohort has completed tertiary education, compared with 20% of the oldest cohort. The expansion of the tertiary sector has put Japan and Korea in the top group together with Canada and the partner country the Russian Federation, with over 50% of the younger cohort with tertiary education.



1. Year of reference 2002.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the percentage of 25-34 year-olds who have attained tertiary education.

Source: OECD, Table A1.3a. See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010)).

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### Other highlights of this indicator

- The big change in the educational attainment of the adult population over the past decade has been at the low and high ends of the attainment distribution. On average across OECD countries, 29% now have only primary or lower secondary levels of education, 44% have upper secondary education and 28% have a tertiary qualification.
- Upper secondary education has become the norm among younger cohorts in almost all OECD countries. On average across OECD countries, the proportion of 25-34 year-olds with at least upper secondary education is 22 percentage points higher than that of 55-64 year-olds. The change has been particularly dramatic in Belgium, Chile, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Portugal and Spain, all of which have seen an increase in upper secondary attainment of 30 percentage points or more.
- If current tertiary attainment rates among 25-34 year-olds are maintained, Ireland, Japan and Korea will increase the proportion of the total population (25-64 years old) with tertiary attainment compared to the OECD average while Austria, Germany and the partner country Brazil will fall further behind.
- With the exception of Denmark, Iceland, Mexico and Turkey, the number of individuals available to the labour market with below secondary education decreased between 1998 and 2008, and in some countries substantially so.
- Together, Japan and the United States have 48% of all tertiary-educated individuals among OECD countries owing to the size of their population and overall high tertiary attainment levels. The rapid expansion of higher education has moved Korea into fourth place (representing 5% of the total OECD 200 million people with tertiary education).

## Policy context

A continuously well-educated and well-trained population is essential for the social and economic well-being of countries. Education plays a key role in providing individuals with the knowledge, skills and competences needed to participate effectively in society and in the economy. It also contributes to the expansion of scientific and cultural knowledge. Educational attainment is a commonly used proxy for the stock of human capital, that is, the skills available in the population and the labour force.

The stock of human capital varies substantially among countries, depending on their industry structure and general level of economic development. Technological innovations have been a factor affecting work systems, and higher levels of education and training have in many instances been a prerequisite for the adoption of new technologies. Some countries have had the advantage of a large pool of more highly educated individuals for several decades. This first-mover advantage has likely influenced the development of high-technology and high-skills industries in these countries.

The demand for skills changes constantly. Following a decline in manual labour over previous decades, more recent declines have been in basic cognitive tasks which can now be computerised. However, recent trends also show sharp increases in demand for tasks requiring complex communication and involve interaction among individuals and groups to obtain, persuade and process information, while acknowledging implications for action. Similarly, there has been increase in demand for advanced analytical skills outside “rule-based” structures. These trends generally favour a more educated labour force and the demand for education is thus increasing at a rapid pace in many countries.

It is important not only to examine overall attainment levels but also how these have evolved over time in order to gain an idea of the current and future supply of skills in the labour market. While the current economic downturn increases the speed of change it will also increase incentives for individuals to invest in education, as worsening labour market prospects lower the opportunity costs of education, such as earnings foregone while studying.

## Evidence and explanations

### Attainment levels in OECD countries

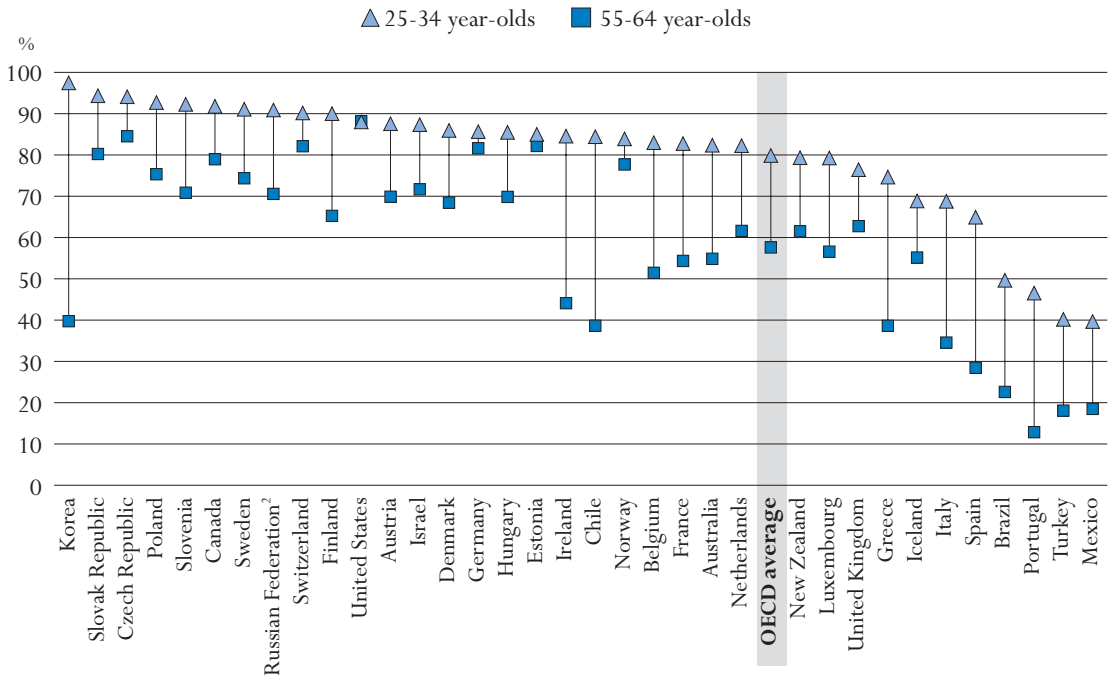
On average across OECD countries, less than one-third of adults (29%) have only primary or lower secondary education, 44% have upper secondary education and 28% have a tertiary level qualification. However, countries differ widely in the distribution of educational attainment across their populations (Table A1.1a).

### Upper secondary education

In 25 out of 30 OECD countries – as well as in the partner countries Estonia, Israel, the Russian Federation and Slovenia – 60% or more of the population aged 25 to 64 has completed at least upper secondary education. Some countries show a different profile, however. For instance, in Mexico, Portugal, Turkey and the partner country Brazil, two-thirds or more of the population aged 25 to 64 have not completed upper secondary education (Table A1.2a).

Overall, a comparison of the levels of educational attainment in younger and older age groups indicates marked progress with regard to attainment of upper secondary education, except in the United States, where there is minimal difference between age cohorts. (Chart A1.2).

**Chart A1.2. Population that has attained at least upper secondary education<sup>1</sup> (2008)**  
*Percentage, by age group*




1. Excluding ISCED 3C short programmes.

2. Year of reference 2002.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the percentage of 25-34 year-olds who have attained at least upper secondary education.

Source: OECD, Table A1.2a. See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/edu/eqg2010](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eqg2010)).

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On average across OECD countries, the proportion of 25-34 year-olds with at least upper secondary education is 22 percentage points higher than that of 55-64 year-olds. The change has been particularly dramatic in Belgium, Chile, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Portugal and Spain, all of which have seen an increase in upper secondary attainment of 30 percentage points or more.

In countries in which the adult population generally has a high level of educational attainment, differences among age groups are less pronounced (Table A1.2a). In the 12 OECD countries in which 80% or more of 25-64 year-olds have at least upper secondary education, the difference in the proportion of 25-34 year-olds and 55-64 year-olds with at least an upper secondary level is, on average, 12 percentage points.

In Germany and the United States, the proportion of the population with upper secondary education or more is almost the same for all age groups. For countries with more room for growth, the average gain in attainment between these age groups is typically large, but situations differ widely. In Norway, the difference between 25-34 year-olds and 55-64 year-olds is 6 percentage points; in Korea it is 57 percentage points.

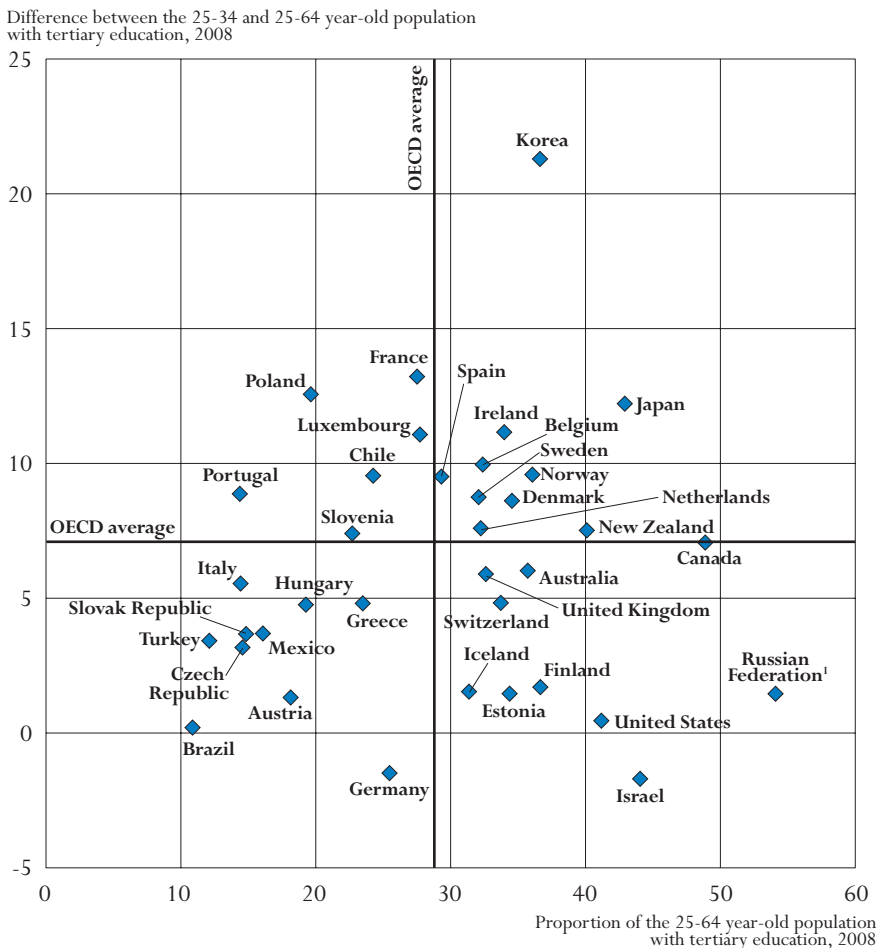
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Tertiary education

In almost all countries, 25-34 year-olds have higher tertiary attainment levels than the generation about to leave the labour market (55-64 year-olds). On average across OECD countries, 35% of the younger cohort has completed tertiary education, compared with 20% of the oldest cohort, while the average for the total population of 25-64 year-olds is 28%. The expansion of tertiary education differs substantially among countries. In Ireland, Japan and Korea there is a difference of 25 percentage points or more in tertiary attainment of the oldest and youngest age cohorts (Table A1.3a).

Chart A1.3 provides an overview of the influence that tertiary education among 25-34 year-olds will have on overall tertiary attainment (25-64 year-olds) if current levels among young individuals are maintained. The vertical axis shows the percentage change that attainment of the younger cohort will make to attainment in the total population and the horizontal axis shows current levels of tertiary attainment in countries.

Chart A1.3. Proportion of population with tertiary education and potential growth (2008)



1. Year of reference 2002.

Source: OECD, Table A1.3a. See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010)).

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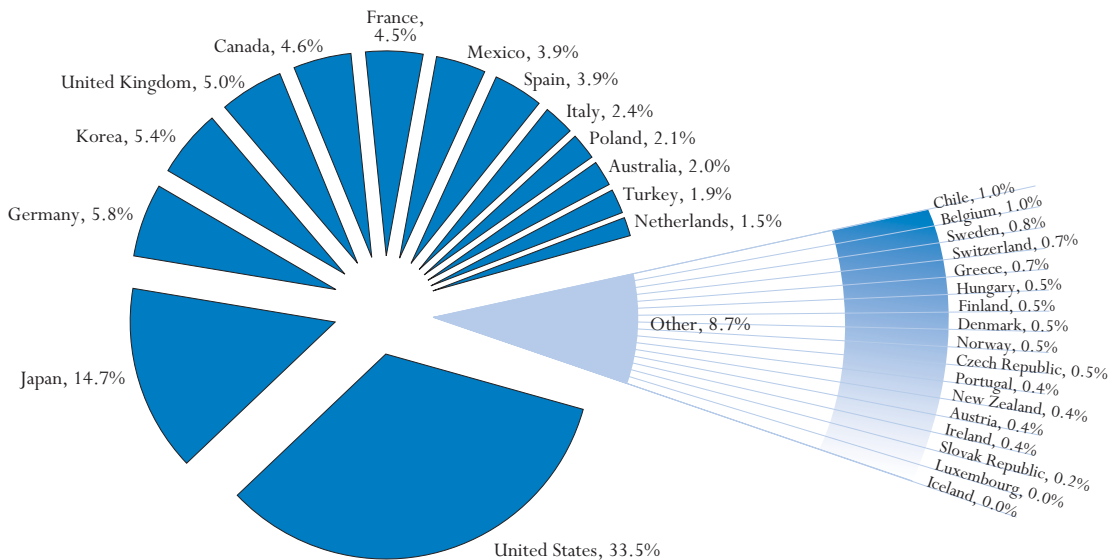


The upper right quadrant comprises countries which have high tertiary attainment levels and may increase their tertiary attainment advantage over time. Ireland, Japan and Korea belong to this category. The lower right corner of the chart includes countries with high attainment but which may be met by other OECD countries in the longer term. Finland, Iceland, the United States and the partner countries Estonia, Israel and the Russian Federation will find that an increasing number of countries pass or move closer to their levels of tertiary attainment in the coming years.

Some countries have lower tertiary attainment levels than the OECD average but will move towards a less disadvantaged position. Given the current attainment rates among 25-34 year-olds, France, Luxembourg and Poland will move above the OECD average on tertiary attainment in the coming years. Countries that will fall further behind are in the lower left corner of the chart; this disadvantage is particularly marked in Austria, Germany and the partner country Brazil. Tertiary graduation rates provide more recent data on potential evolution of attainment in the population (see Indicator A3).

Chart A1.4 presents shares of countries among the almost 200 million OECD 25-64 year-old population with tertiary education. While there have been significant changes in attainment levels in many OECD countries in the past decades, large countries with high educational attainment still dominate the landscape.

**Chart A1.4. Countries' share in the total OECD 25-64 year-old population with tertiary education, in percentage (2008)**



Source: OECD. Table A1.3a. See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010)).  
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Together, Japan and the United States have 48% of all tertiary-educated individuals owing to the size of their populations and overall high tertiary attainment. Both countries enjoyed high tertiary attainment levels before most other countries had started to expand their higher education systems. The only countries with attainment levels at or above 40% among the 45-54 year-old population

are Canada, Japan and the United States (Table A1.3a). The high educational level of the work force at an early date not only affects overall attainment levels, it also gave these countries a head start in many high-skill areas. This first-mover advantage is likely to have been particularly important for innovations and adaptation of new technologies.

However, the expansion of tertiary education in many countries has narrowed their advantage in terms both of overall attainment levels and the sheer number of individuals with tertiary education. The rapid expansion of higher education has moved Korea into fourth place with 5% of the total OECD share of tertiary-educated individuals, after Germany with 6%, Japan with 15% and the United States with 33.5%. Canada, France and the United Kingdom each have 5% of tertiary-educated individuals, followed by Mexico and Spain.

### **Trends in attainment rates in OECD countries**

Measurements of improvements in attainment levels across age cohorts provide a rough picture of the evolution of human capital in different countries. Trends in attainment levels provide a more nuanced picture, enabling examination of how attainment levels have evolved over time. Trends will in some circumstances reveal slight differences from the analysis of attainment levels by age cohorts, because attainment levels are not evenly distributed within an age cohort.

Attainment levels have also risen because 25-64 year-old adults have acquired higher qualifications after completing initial education. Furthermore, in some countries immigration can have a big impact on attainment levels over time.

Trends in attainment gains over time thus provide a complementary picture of the changes in human capital available to the economy and society. Table A1.4 presents trends in the educational attainment of the adult population (25-64 year-olds). In 1998, on average across OECD countries, 37% of the population had not completed upper secondary education, 42% had completed upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education, and another 21% had completed tertiary education.

Over the past decade, these figures have changed quite dramatically owing to efforts to raise the educational level of the population. The proportion of the adult population with below upper secondary education has fallen to 29%, the proportion with tertiary attainment has risen to 28%, while the proportion with upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education has remained almost unchanged at 44%.

The principal changes in the educational attainment of the adult population over the past decade have thus been at the low and high ends of the skill distribution. Average annual growth in tertiary attainment levels has exceeded 5% in Italy, Poland and Portugal – countries in which overall levels of tertiary attainment were low at the beginning of the decade. The proportion of the population with below upper secondary education decreased by 5% or more per year in Hungary, Poland and the Slovak Republic. Only Spain has seen growth rates above 5% for upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary attainment (Table A1.4).

### **Trends in the total number of people with different educational attainment in OECD countries**

The actual output of the education system may, in many instances, diverge quite substantially from what appears in measures of attainment levels because of demographic changes (population growth).

Table A1.5 provides estimates of the average annual growth of the total number of individuals in the adult population at different educational levels between 1998 and 2008.

The number of individuals with tertiary education available to the labour market has increased by an average of 4.6% per year across OECD countries. Some of this growth is due to the retirement of individuals in older age cohorts with lower levels of tertiary attainment. Nevertheless, the total investment in human capital and the overall change in the supply of highly educated individuals during this period is impressive.

Average annual growth of the adult population with upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education has been substantially lower than that of the adult population with tertiary education. This is because many individuals had already achieved this level of education. The total number of individuals who have not completed upper secondary education has decreased by an average of 2.1% per year during this period. With the exception of Denmark, Iceland, Mexico and Turkey, the number of individuals with below secondary education available to the labour market decreased between 1998 and 2008, and in some countries substantially so.

This indicator describes the supply side by examining educational attainment across OECD countries. The demand side is explored in labour-market indicators on employment and unemployment (see Indicator A6), earnings (see Indicator A7), incentives to invest in education (see Indicator A8), and transition from school to work (see Indicator C3).

### Definitions and methodologies


Data on population and educational attainment are taken from OECD and Eurostat databases, which are compiled from National Labour Force Surveys. See Annex 3 ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010)) for national sources.

Attainment profiles are based on the percentage of the population aged 25 to 64 that has completed a specified level of education. The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-97) is used to define the levels of education. See Annex 3 ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010)) for a description of the mapping of ISCED-97 education programmes and attainment levels for each country.

Successful completion of upper secondary education means the achievement of upper secondary programmes type A, B or C, which are of a similar length; completion of type C programmes (labour market destination) of significantly shorter duration are not classified as upper secondary attainment.

### Further references

The following additional material relevant to this indicator is available on line at:

**StatLink**  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932310092>

- *Table A1.1b. Educational attainment: Male population (2008)*
- *Table A1.1c. Educational attainment: Female population (2008)*
- *Table A1.2b. Population of males with at least upper secondary education (2008)*
- *Table A1.2c. Population of females with at least upper secondary education (2008)*
- *Table A1.3b. Male population with tertiary education (2008)*
- *Table A1.3c. Female population with tertiary education (2008)*



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Table A1.1a.  
**Educational attainment: Adult population (2008)**  
 Distribution of the 25-64 year-old population, by highest level of education attained

	Pre- primary and primary education	Lower secondary education	ISCED 3C (short programme)	Upper secondary education		Post- secondary non- tertiary education	Tertiary education			All levels of education	
				ISCED 3C (long programme)/3B	ISCED 3A		Type B	Type A	Advanced research programmes		
											(1)
<b>OECD countries</b>											
Australia	8	22	x(5)	x(5)	30	4	10	26	x(8)	100	
Austria	x(2)	17	2	48	6	10	7	11	x(8)	100	
Belgium	13	17	a	11	24	2	16	16	1	100	
Canada	4	9	a	x(5)	26	12	24	25	x(8)	100	
Chile	29	3	x(5)	12	32	a	8	16	x(8)	100	
Czech Republic	n	9	a	40	36	a	x(8)	14	x(8)	100	
Denmark	n	23	2	37	6	n	7	25	1	100	
Finland	9	10	a	a	44	1	15	20	1	100	
France	12	18	a	31	12	n	11	16	1	100	
Germany	3	11	a	50	3	7	9	15	1	100	
Greece	25	11	3	3	26	8	7	16	n	100	
Hungary	2	19	a	30	28	2	n	18	n	100	
Iceland	2	28	6	12	11	10	3	27	1	100	
Ireland	14	17	n	x(5)	25	11	12	22	n	100	
Italy	14	32	1	7	31	1	n	14	n	100	
Japan	x(5)	x(5)	x(5)	x(5)	57	a	19	24	x(8)	100	
Korea	10	11	a	x(5)	43	a	11	26	x(8)	100	
Luxembourg	17	9	7	17	20	3	8	18	2	100	
Mexico	46	21	a	6	11	a	1	15	x(8)	100	
Netherlands	7	20	x(4)	16	22	3	2	29	1	100	
New Zealand	x(2)	21	7	12	9	11	15	25	x(8)	100	
Norway	n	19	a	31	11	3	2	33	1	100	
Poland	x(2)	13	a	33	31	4	x(8)	20	x(8)	100	
Portugal	54	18	x(5)	x(5)	13	1	x(8)	13	1	100	
Slovak Republic	1	9	x(4)	35	40	x(5)	1	14	n	100	
Spain	21	27	a	8	14	n	9	19	1	100	
Sweden	5	10	a	x(5)	47	6	9	23	x(8)	100	
Switzerland	3	8	1	45	6	3	10	20	3	100	
Turkey	59	11	a	8	10	a	x(8)	12	x(8)	100	
United Kingdom	n	13	17	30	7	n	9	23	1	100	
United States	4	7	x(5)	x(5)	48	x(5)	10	30	1	100	
	<i>Below upper secondary education</i>			<i>Upper secondary level of education</i>			<i>Tertiary level of education</i>				
<i>OECD average</i>	29			44			28				
<i>EU19 average</i>	28			47			25				
<b>Partner countries</b>											
Brazil	46	15	x(5)	x(5)	28	a	x(8)	11	x(8)	100	
Estonia	1	11	a	4	44	6	12	22	n	100	
Israel	11	8	a	10	28	a	15	28	1	100	
Russian Federation <sup>1</sup>	3	8	x(4)	16	18	x(4)	34	20	n	100	
Slovenia	2	16	a	28	32	a	11	10	2	100	

Note: Due to discrepancies in the data, averages have not been calculated for each column individually.

1. Year of reference 2002.

Source: OECD. See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010)).

Please refer to the Reader's Guide for information concerning the symbols replacing missing data.


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Table A1.2a.  
Population with at least upper secondary education<sup>1</sup> (2008)


Percentage, by age group

	Age group				
	25-64	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<b>OECD countries</b>					
Australia	70	82	73	66	55
Austria	81	88	85	79	71
Belgium	70	83	77	64	52
Canada	87	92	90	86	80
Chile	68	85	74	65	39
Czech Republic	91	94	94	90	85
Denmark	75	85	80	69	63
Finland	81	90	88	82	66
France	70	83	77	64	55
Germany	85	86	87	86	82
Greece	61	75	69	56	39
Hungary	80	86	83	78	70
Iceland	64	69	68	61	56
Ireland	69	85	75	62	45
Italy	53	69	57	49	35
Korea	79	98	93	68	40
Luxembourg	68	79	70	63	57
Mexico	34	40	36	30	19
Netherlands	73	82	77	71	62
New Zealand	72	79	74	71	62
Norway	81	84	82	78	78
Poland	87	93	91	87	76
Portugal	28	47	29	20	13
Slovak Republic	90	94	93	88	81
Spain	51	65	57	45	29
Sweden	85	91	90	84	75
Switzerland	87	90	88	85	83
Turkey	30	40	27	24	19
United Kingdom	70	77	70	67	63
United States	89	88	89	89	89
<i>OECD average</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>58</i>
<i>EU19 average</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>82</i>	<i>76</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>59</i>
<b>Partner countries</b>					
Brazil	39	50	40	33	23
Estonia	88	85	93	92	83
Israel	81	87	84	77	72
Russian Federation <sup>2</sup>	88	91	94	89	71
Slovenia	82	92	85	78	71

1. Excluding ISCED 3C short programmes.

2. Year of reference 2002.

Source: OECD. See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010)).

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932310092>

A corrigendum has been issued for this page. See: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/43/33/46131885.pdf>

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Table A1. 3a.

## Population with tertiary education (2008)

 Percentage of the population that has attained tertiary-type B education or tertiary-type A and advanced research programmes, by age group  
 Column 16 refers to absolute numbers in thousands.

	Tertiary-type B education					Tertiary-type A and advanced research programmes					Total tertiary					25-64 in thousands	
	25-64	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	25-64	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	25-64	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)		(16)
<b>OECD countries</b>																	
Australia	10	10	11	11	10	26	32	27	23	19	36	42	38	33	28	3 913	
Austria	7	6	8	8	7	11	13	12	9	8	18	19	19	18	15	828	
Belgium	16	20	17	15	12	16	23	18	14	10	32	42	35	29	22	1 866	
Canada	24	26	26	23	19	25	30	28	21	21	49	56	54	44	40	8 922	
Chile	8	11	11	7	3	16	22	14	13	14	24	34	24	20	17	1 964	
Czech Republic	x(11)	x(12)	x(13)	x(14)	x(15)	14	18	14	15	11	14	18	14	15	11	880	
Denmark	7	8	8	7	5	27	35	29	25	21	34	43	37	32	26	998	
Finland	15	5	20	19	15	22	33	24	17	14	37	38	44	37	29	1 052	
France	11	17	13	9	6	16	24	18	12	12	27	41	31	20	17	8 814	
Germany	9	6	9	10	9	16	17	17	16	15	25	24	27	26	24	11 315	
Greece	7	10	8	5	3	17	19	19	16	13	23	28	27	22	15	1 425	
Hungary	n	1	n	n	n	19	23	19	17	16	19	24	19	17	16	1 069	
Iceland	3	2	4	4	3	28	31	32	26	21	31	33	36	30	24	51	
Ireland	12	14	13	10	7	22	31	23	17	12	34	45	37	27	19	792	
Italy	n	n	1	n	n	14	20	15	12	10	14	20	15	12	10	4 754	
Japan	19	24	23	18	10	24	31	26	25	16	43	55	48	43	26	28 790	
Korea	11	23	11	4	1	26	35	32	19	11	37	58	43	23	12	10 470	
Luxembourg	8	11	7	7	6	20	28	22	15	13	28	39	28	22	19	73	
Mexico	1	1	1	1	1	15	19	15	14	9	16	20	16	15	10	7 675	
Netherlands	2	2	3	2	2	30	38	30	28	24	32	40	33	31	26	2 871	
New Zealand	15	14	14	16	16	25	34	26	22	18	40	48	40	38	34	839	
Norway	2	2	2	3	3	34	44	36	29	25	36	46	38	32	28	894	
Poland	x(11)	x(12)	x(13)	x(14)	x(15)	20	32	19	13	12	20	32	19	13	12	4 082	
Portugal	x(11)	x(12)	x(13)	x(14)	x(15)	14	23	15	10	8	14	23	15	10	8	847	
Slovak Republic	1	1	1	1	1	14	18	13	13	10	15	18	14	14	11	451	
Spain	9	13	11	7	4	20	26	22	17	12	29	39	33	24	16	7 663	
Sweden	9	8	8	9	9	23	32	24	19	18	32	41	33	28	26	1 541	
Switzerland	10	10	11	11	9	23	29	25	21	18	34	38	36	31	27	1 433	
Turkey	x(11)	x(12)	x(13)	x(14)	x(15)	12	15	11	10	9	12	15	11	10	9	3 754	
United Kingdom	9	8	10	10	9	24	31	23	20	19	33	38	33	30	27	9 844	
United States	10	9	10	10	9	32	32	33	30	31	41	42	43	40	40	65 569	
<b>OECD average</b>	9	10	10	9	7	21	27	22	18	15	28	35	29	25	20		
<b>OECD total (in thousands)</b>																195 438	
<b>EU19 average</b>	9	9	9	9	7	20	26	21	17	14	27	34	26	22	18		
<b>Partner countries</b>																	
Brazil	x(11)	x(12)	x(13)	x(14)	x(15)	11	11	12	11	9	11	11	12	11	9		
Estonia	12	12	12	12	11	22	23	23	22	21	34	36	35	35	32		
Israel	15	13	16	16	17	29	29	30	28	28	44	42	46	44	44		
Russian Federation <sup>1</sup>	33	34	37	34	26	21	21	21	20	19	54	55	58	54	44		
Slovenia	11	12	11	11	9	12	18	12	9	7	23	30	24	20	16		

1. Year of reference 2002.

 Source: OECD. See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010)).

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Table A1.4.  
Trends in educational attainment: 25-64 year-old population (1997-2008)  
Percentage, by educational level

		1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2008-1998 Average annual growth rate in the proportion
OECD countries	<b>Australia</b>													
	Below upper secondary	47	44	43	41	41	39	38	36	35	33	32	30	-3.7
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	29	31	31	31	30	30	31	33	33	34	34	34	1.1
	Tertiary education	24	25	27	27	29	31	31	31	32	33	34	36	3.4
<b>Austria</b>	Below upper secondary	26	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	20	20	19	-3.0
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	63	61	61	62	63	64	64	62	63	63	63	63	0.4
	Tertiary education	11	14	14	14	14	15	15	18	18	18	18	18	2.8
<b>Belgium</b>	Below upper secondary	45	43	43	41	41	39	38	36	34	33	32	30	-3.5
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	30	31	31	31	32	33	33	34	35	35	36	37	1.7
	Tertiary education	25	25	27	27	28	28	29	30	31	32	32	32	2.5
<b>Canada</b>	Below upper secondary	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	16	15	14	13	13	-4.9
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	40	40	40	41	40	40	40	40	39	39	38	38	-0.6
	Tertiary education	37	38	39	40	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	2.5
<b>Chile</b>	Below upper secondary	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	32	32	
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	47	46	
	Tertiary education	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	21	22	
<b>Czech Republic</b>	Below upper secondary	15	15	14	14	14	12	14	11	10	10	9	9	-4.7
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	74	75	75	75	75	76	74	77	77	77	77	76	0.2
	Tertiary education	11	10	11	11	11	12	12	12	13	14	14	14	3.4
<b>Denmark</b>	Below upper secondary	m	21	20	21	19	19	19	19	19	18	25	22	-1.9
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	m	53	53	52	52	52	49	48	47	47	43	43	-2.1
	Tertiary education	m	25	27	26	28	30	32	33	34	35	32	34	3.1
<b>Finland</b>	Below upper secondary	32	31	28	27	26	25	24	22	21	20	19	19	-4.8
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	39	39	40	41	42	42	43	43	44	44	44	44	1.4
	Tertiary education	29	30	31	32	32	33	33	34	35	35	36	37	2.0
<b>France</b>	Below upper secondary	41	39	38	37	36	35	35	34	33	33	31	30	-2.6
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	39	40	40	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	42	43	0.6
	Tertiary education	20	21	21	22	23	24	24	24	25	26	27	27	2.9
<b>Germany</b>	Below upper secondary	17	16	19	18	17	17	17	16	17	17	16	15	-1.0
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	61	61	58	58	59	60	59	59	59	59	60	60	-0.1
	Tertiary education	23	23	23	23	23	23	24	25	25	24	24	25	1.0
<b>Greece</b>	Below upper secondary	56	54	52	51	50	48	47	44	43	41	40	39	-3.2
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	29	29	30	32	32	33	34	35	36	37	37	38	2.5
	Tertiary education	16	17	17	18	18	19	19	21	21	22	23	23	3.4
<b>Hungary</b>	Below upper secondary	37	37	33	31	30	29	26	25	24	22	21	20	-5.8
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	51	50	54	55	56	57	59	59	59	60	61	61	1.9
	Tertiary education	12	13	14	14	14	14	15	17	17	18	18	19	3.8
<b>Iceland</b>	Below upper secondary	44	45	44	45	43	41	40	39	37	37	36	36	-2.2
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	35	34	34	32	32	33	31	32	32	34	34	33	-0.5
	Tertiary education	21	21	22	23	25	26	29	29	31	30	30	31	4.1
<b>Ireland</b>	Below upper secondary	50	49	45	54	45	40	38	37	35	34	32	31	-4.6
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	27	30	35	28	32	35	35	35	35	35	35	36	1.6
	Tertiary education	23	21	20	19	24	25	26	28	29	31	32	34	4.9

Note: See Annex 3 for breaks in time series.

Source: OECD. See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010)).

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Table A1.4. (continued – 1)  
Trends in educational attainment: 25–64 year-old population (1997–2008)


Percentage, by educational level

		1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2008–1998 Average annual growth rate in the proportion
OECD countries	<b>Italy</b>													
	Below upper secondary	m	59	58	58	57	56	52	51	50	49	48	47	-2.4
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	m	32	33	33	33	34	38	37	38	38	39	39	1.9
	Tertiary education	m	9	9	9	10	10	10	12	12	13	14	14	5.3
<b>Japan</b>	Below upper secondary	20	20	19	17	17	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	49	49	49	49	49	63	63	61	60	60	59	57	1.5
	Tertiary education	31	31	32	34	34	37	37	39	40	40	41	43	3.4
<b>Korea</b>	Below upper secondary	38	34	33	32	30	29	27	26	24	23	22	21	-4.7
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	42	44	44	44	45	45	44	44	44	44	43	43	-0.3
	Tertiary education	20	22	23	24	25	26	29	30	32	33	35	37	5.0
<b>Luxembourg</b>	Below upper secondary	m	m	44	44	47	38	41	37	34	34	34	32	-3.1
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	m	m	38	38	35	43	45	40	39	42	39	40	0.7
	Tertiary education	m	m	18	18	18	19	14	24	27	24	27	28	4.2
<b>Mexico</b>	Below upper secondary	72	72	73	71	70	70	70	69	66	65	67	66	-0.8
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	15	15	14	14	15	15	14	15	20	21	17	18	1.9
	Tertiary education	13	13	13	15	15	15	16	17	13	14	16	16	1.8
<b>Netherlands</b>	Below upper secondary	m	36	45	35	35	32	31	29	28	28	27	27	-2.9
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	m	40	32	41	42	43	42	41	42	42	42	41	0.3
	Tertiary education	m	24	23	23	23	25	28	30	30	30	31	32	2.9
<b>New Zealand</b>	Below upper secondary	40	39	38	37	36	34	33	33	32	31	29	28	-3.2
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	33	34	33	34	36	35	35	32	29	31	30	32	-0.5
	Tertiary education	27	28	28	29	29	30	32	35	39	38	41	40	3.8
<b>Norway</b>	Below upper secondary	17	15	15	15	14	14	13	12	23	21	21	19	-1.6
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	57	57	57	57	55	55	56	56	45	46	45	45	0.0
	Tertiary education	26	27	28	28	30	31	31	32	33	33	34	36	1.0
<b>Poland</b>	Below upper secondary	23	22	22	20	19	19	17	16	15	14	14	13	-5.1
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	67	67	67	69	69	69	68	68	68	68	68	68	0.0
	Tertiary education	10	11	11	11	12	13	14	16	17	18	19	20	6.1
<b>Portugal</b>	Below upper secondary	m	82	81	81	80	79	77	75	74	72	73	72	-1.3
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	m	10	10	11	11	11	12	13	14	14	14	14	3.9
	Tertiary education	m	8	9	9	9	9	11	13	13	13	14	14	5.6
<b>Slovak Republic</b>	Below upper secondary	21	20	18	16	15	14	13	13	12	11	11	10	-6.5
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	68	70	72	73	74	75	75	74	74	74	75	75	0.7
	Tertiary education	10	10	10	10	11	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	3.7
<b>Spain</b>	Below upper secondary	69	67	65	62	60	59	57	55	51	50	49	49	-3.1
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	13	13	14	16	16	17	18	19	21	21	22	22	5.2
	Tertiary education	19	20	21	23	24	24	25	26	28	28	29	29	4.0
<b>Sweden</b>	Below upper secondary	25	24	23	22	19	18	18	17	16	16	15	15	-4.6
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	48	48	48	47	49	49	49	48	54	54	53	53	1.0
	Tertiary education	28	28	29	30	32	33	33	35	30	31	31	32	1.3
<b>Switzerland</b>	Below upper secondary	16	16	16	16	15	15	15	15	15	15	14	13	-2.1
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	61	61	60	60	59	60	58	57	56	56	55	53	-1.3
	Tertiary education	22	23	24	24	25	25	27	28	29	30	31	34	3.9

Note: See Annex 3 for breaks in time series.

Source: OECD. See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010)).

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Table A1.4. (continued – 2)  
Trends in educational attainment: 25-64 year-old population (1997-2008)  
Percentage, by educational level

		1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2008-1998 Average annual growth rate in the proportion		
OECD countries	Turkey	Below upper secondary	79	78	78	77	76	75	74	74	73	72	70	70	-1.1	
		Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	13	14	14	15	15	16	17	17	18	18	18	18	18	2.4
		Tertiary education	8	7	8	8	8	9	10	9	10	10	11	12	12	4.9
	United Kingdom	Below upper secondary	41	40	38	37	37	36	35	34	33	32	32	30	30	-2.7
		Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	37	36	37	37	37	37	37	37	37	38	37	37	37	0.2
		Tertiary education	23	24	25	26	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	33	3.2
	United States	Below upper secondary	14	14	13	13	12	13	12	12	12	12	12	11	11	-1.8
		Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	52	52	51	51	50	49	49	49	49	48	48	48	48	-0.8
		Tertiary education	34	35	36	36	37	38	38	39	39	39	39	40	41	1.7
	OECD average	Below upper secondary	36	37	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	30	29	29	-3.2
		Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	43	42	42	42	43	44	44	44	44	44	44	44	44	0.8
		Tertiary education	21	21	21	22	23	23	24	26	26	27	27	28	28	3.4
EU19 average	Below upper secondary	37	39	39	38	37	35	34	33	32	31	31	30	30	-3.1	
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	43	42	42	42	43	44	44	44	44	45	44	45	45	1.3	
	Tertiary education	21	20	21	21	22	22	23	24	25	25	25	26	26	3.2	
Partner countries	Brazil	Below upper secondary	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	63	61		
		Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	27	28		
		Tertiary education	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	10	11		
	Estonia	Below upper secondary	m	m	m	m	m	12	12	11	11	12	11	12		
		Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	m	m	m	m	m	57	58	57	56	55	56	54		
		Tertiary education	m	m	m	m	m	30	31	31	33	33	33	34		
	Israel	Below upper secondary	m	m	m	m	m	20	18	21	21	20	20	19		
		Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	m	m	m	m	m	38	39	34	33	34	37	37		
		Tertiary education	m	m	m	m	m	42	43	45	46	46	44	44		
	Slovenia	Below upper secondary	m	m	m	m	m	23	22	20	20	18	18	18		
		Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	m	m	m	m	m	62	60	61	60	60	60	59		
		Tertiary education	m	m	m	m	m	15	18	19	20	21	22	23		

Note: See Annex 3 for breaks in time series.

Source: OECD. See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010)).

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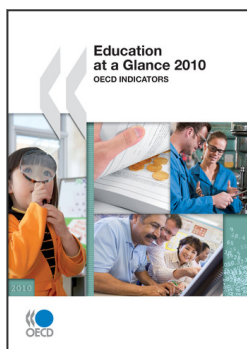
Table A1.5.  
Annual average growth in the 25-64 year-old population between 1998 and 2008  
Percentage, by level of education

	Below upper secondary	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	Tertiary education	All levels of education
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
OECD countries				
Australia	-2.5	2.3	4.7	1.2
Austria	-2.6	0.9	3.3	0.5
Belgium	-2.9	2.3	3.1	0.6
Canada	-3.6	0.7	3.8	1.3
Czech Republic	-3.6	1.3	4.5	1.1
Denmark	0.5	-2.0	3.2	0.3
Finland	-4.5	1.7	2.3	0.3
France	-2.0	1.2	3.6	0.6
Germany	-1.1	-0.2	0.9	-0.5
Greece	-2.3	3.5	4.4	1.0
Hungary	-5.2	2.5	4.5	0.6
Iceland	0.0	1.7	6.4	2.3
Ireland	-2.0	4.4	7.7	3.1
Italy	-1.9	2.5	5.8	0.5
Japan		1.2	3.1	-0.3
Korea	-3.4	1.0	6.4	1.4
Luxembourg <sup>1</sup>	-1.8	2.6	6.5	1.2
Mexico	1.4	4.2	4.0	2.2
Netherlands	-2.6	0.5	3.1	0.3
New Zealand	-2.2	0.5	4.9	1.3
Poland	-4.5	0.7	6.8	0.7
Portugal	-0.3	5.0	6.7	1.1
Slovak Republic	-5.4	1.9	4.9	1.2
Spain	-0.5	8.1	6.9	2.7
Sweden	-4.1	1.5	1.8	0.5
Switzerland	-1.3	-0.6	4.7	0.7
Turkey	1.4	5.1	7.6	2.6
United Kingdom	-2.3	0.7	3.6	0.4
United States	-0.5	0.5	3.0	1.3
<i>OECD average</i>	<i>-2.1</i>	<i>1.9</i>	<i>4.6</i>	<i>1.0</i>

1. Annual average growth in the 25-64 year-old population between 1999 and 2008.

Source: OECD. See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010)).

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