COUNTRY NOTE

OECD

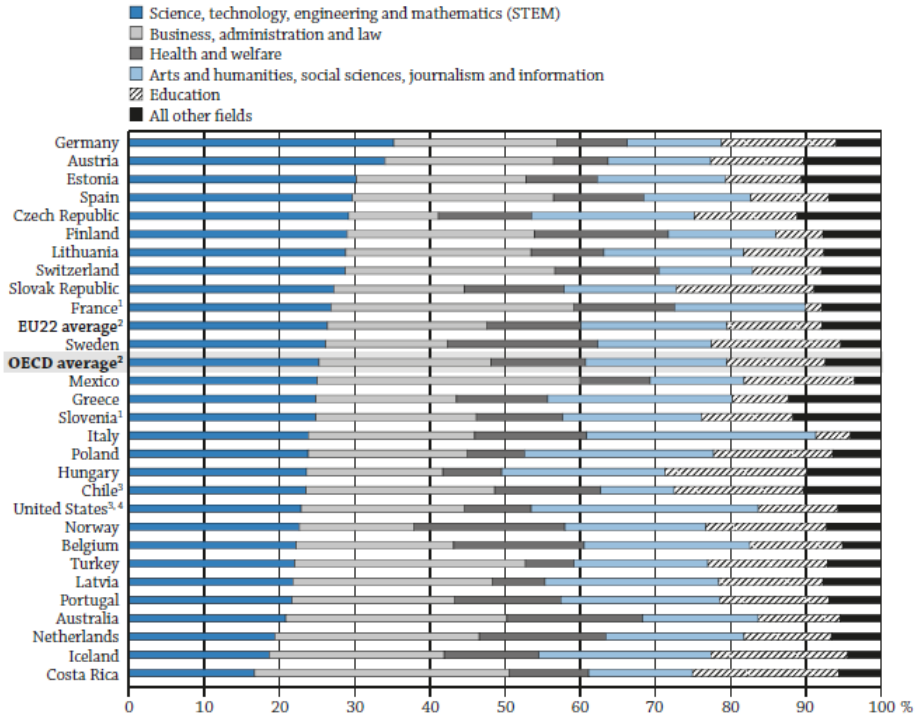
EDUCATION AT A GLANCE 2017

Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators is the authoritative source for information on the state of education around the world. It provides data on the structure, finances and performance of education systems in the 35 OECD countries and a number of partner countries.

Costa Rica

- **Business, administration and law (34%) and education (19%) are the top fields of study in Costa Rica**, together accounting for more than half of tertiary-educated adults, 17 percentage points higher than the OECD average. Science-related fields are less attractive: only 17% of tertiary graduates have degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields, compared to 25% on average across OECD countries.
- **Costa Ricans are attaining higher levels of education than in the past**. The share of 25-34 year-olds without an upper secondary qualification fell from 68% to 50% between 2000 and 2016. Over the same period, the share of 25-34 year-olds who attained tertiary education increased from 18% to 29%.
- Reaching higher levels of education pays off in Costa Rica. **As in many OECD countries, Costa Rican adults with tertiary degrees have better employment prospects than their less educated peers**: 81% of tertiary-educated 25-64 year-olds are employed, considerably more than those with below upper secondary education attainment (62%). **Tertiary graduates also earn more than twice** as much as adults who have only obtained an upper secondary education.

Figure 1. Fields of study among tertiary-educated 25-64 year-olds (2016)



Note: Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) comprise the ISCED-F 2013 fields of natural sciences, mathematics and statistics, information and communication technologies, and engineering, manufacturing and construction.
1. The age group refers to 25-34 year-olds.
2. The OECD and EU22 averages exclude France and Slovenia.
3. Year of reference differs from 2016. Refer to the source table for more details.
4. Data refer to bachelor's degree fields, even for those with additional tertiary degrees.
Countries are ranked in descending order of the field of STEM.
Source: OECD (2017), Table A1.3. See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm).
StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933556938

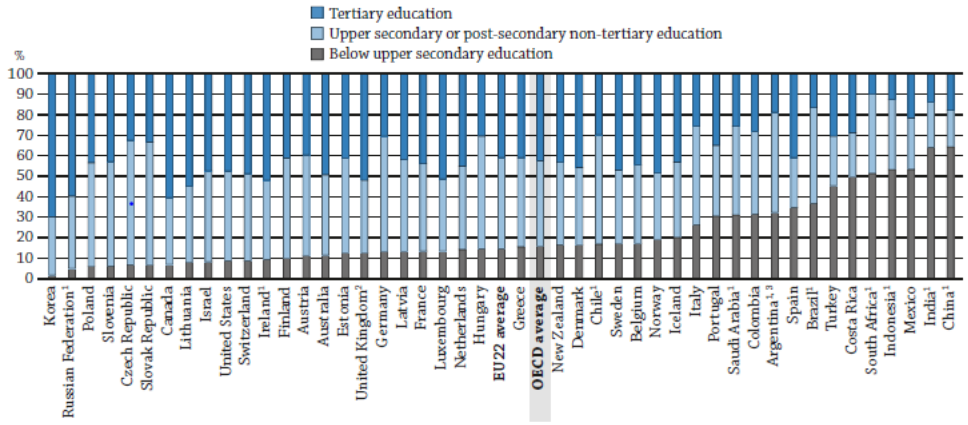
Science-related fields of study are less attractive to young adults

- Costa Rica has the lowest share of tertiary-educated 25-64 year-olds who studied STEM fields across OECD countries and partner economies with available data. Only 17% of people have degrees in STEM fields, compared to 25% on average for OECD countries (Figure 1).
- As of 2016, the two most popular fields of study among tertiary-educated adults in Costa Rica were business, administration and law (34%) and education (19%). These two fields of study represent more than 50% of the tertiary educatied people in Costa Rica, 17 percentage points higher than the OECD average.
- The employment rate for tertiary graduates in Costa Rica who studied information and communication technologies (ICT) is 91%, considerably higher than for tertiary graduates as a whole (81%). On the other hand, graduates from the field of education are less likely to be employed, with employment rates of 77%.

Costa Ricans are attaining higher levels of education than in the past

- Costa Rica has seen a significant fall in the number of young adults who have not attained an upper secondary education. The share of 25-34 year-olds with below upper secondary attainment dropped from 68% to 50% between 2000 and 2016. Despite this significant progress, it still means one in two young adults have not completed upper secondary education, a much larger share than the average across OECD countries (16%).
- The country has also experienced a large increase in the share of 25-34 year-olds who have attained tertiary education: from 18% in 2000 to 29% in 2016. Nevertheless, the current share of young adults with tertiary education in Costa Rica is considerably lower than the OECD average of 43% (Figure 2).
- As in other Latin American countries, the share of adults with advanced tertiary degrees is very small: only 2% of 25-34 year-olds in Costa Rica have attained a master's degree, compared to 12% across OECD countries.

Figure 2. Educational attainment of 25-34 year-olds (2016)



1. Year of reference differs from 2016. Refer to the source table for more details.
2. Data for upper secondary attainment include completion of a sufficient volume and standard of programmes that would be classified individually as completion of intermediate upper secondary programmes (16% of adults aged 25-64 are in this group).
3. Data should be used with caution. See *Methodology* section for more information.

Countries are ranked in ascending order of the percentage of 25-34 year-olds with below upper secondary education.

Source: OECD / ILO / UIS (2017), Education at a Glance Database, http://stats.oecd.org/. See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm).

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933556957

Tertiary education is rewarded in the Costa Rican labour market

- As in OECD countries, Costa Ricans with tertiary degrees have better employment prospects than their less educated peers. In Costa Rica, 81% of tertiary-educated 25-64 year-olds are employed, considerably more than those with below upper secondary education attainment (62%) and the overall employment rate for all educational levels of 68%.
- As in other OECD and Latin American countries, not only are tertiary graduates less likely to be unemployed, but they are also less likely to be inactive than their less educated counterparts. Only 12% of 25-34 year-olds with tertiary education are inactive, compared with 26% for those with below upper secondary education. In OECD

countries, the average inactivity rate of young adults with below upper secondary education is even higher at 30%.

- Higher levels of education also pay off with higher earnings in Costa Rica. As in other Latin American countries, tertiary graduates earn more than twice as much as adults who have obtained upper secondary education. In OECD countries, tertiary graduates earn on average 56% more than adults with upper secondary education.
- On the other hand, Costa Ricans who did not attain upper secondary education make just 72% of upper secondary graduates' earnings. Similarly, across OECD countries, individuals with below upper secondary education earn on average 78% of an upper secondary graduate's earnings.

Education is an investment priority for the Costa Rican government

- Expenditure on education is very high in Costa Rica. Of all the OECD countries and member economies it has the highest level of public expenditure on education as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), at 6.3%. The OECD average is 4.8%.
- Public expenditure on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education amounts to 4.8% of GDP, while tertiary institutions accounts for 1.6% of GDP. This compares to 3.4% and 1.3% of GDP respectively on average across OECD countries.

Nevertheless, investment per student is still significantly lower than in OECD countries. In purchasing power parity terms (PPP) Costa Rica's annual public expenditure on educational institutions per student from primary to tertiary is USD 4 520, whereas the OECD average is USD 9 245. Notably Costa Rica invests more per student than any other Latin American country with available data.

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Note regarding data from Israel

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

References

OECD (2017), *Education at a Glance 2017: OECD Indicators,* OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2017-en.

For more information on Education at a Glance 2017 and to access the full set of Indicators, visit www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm.

Updated data can be found on line at OECD.Stat as well as by following the StatLinks under the tables and charts in the publication http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-data-en.

Explore, compare and visualise more data and analysis using: Education GPS http://gpseducation.oecd.org/.

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Key Facts for Costa Rica in Education at a Glance 2017

Source	Main topics in *Education at a Glance*	Costa Rica		OECD average		G20 average	
	Fields of study						
	New entrants to tertiary education	**2015**					
		%	**% Women**	**%**	**% Women**	**%**	**% Women**
Table C3.1	Education	**	**	9%	78%	9%	72%
	Business, administration and law	**	**	23%	54%	23%	48%
	Engineering, manufacturing and construction	**	**	16%	24%	18%	23%
	Early childhood education						
	Expenditure on all early childhood educational institutions	**2014**					
Table C2.3	As a percentage of GDP	**		0.8%		**	
	Proportions of total expenditure from public sources	**		82%		**	
	Vocational education and training (VET)						
	Enrolment in upper secondary education, by programme orientation	**2015**					
		General	**Vocational**	**General**	**Vocational**	**General**	**Vocational**
Table C1.3	Enrolment rate among population aged 15-19 year-olds	22%	11%	37%	25%	38%	18%
	Tertiary education						
	Educational attainment of 25-64 year-olds	**2016**					
Table A1.1	Short-cycle tertiary	6%		8%		10%	
	Bachelor's or equivalent	15%		16%		16%	
	Master's or equivalent	2%		12%		9%	
	Doctoral or equivalent	**		1%		**	
	Employment rate of 25-64 year-olds, by educational attainment	**2016**					
Table A5.1	Short-cycle tertiary	74%		81%		**	
	Bachelor's or equivalent	82%		83%		**	
	Master's or equivalent	87%		87%		**	
	Doctoral or equivalent	**		91%		**	
	All tertiary levels of education	81%		84%		**	
	Financial investment in education						
	Annual expenditure per student, by level of education (in equivalent USD, using PPPs)	**2014**					
Table B1.1	Primary education	**		USD 8 733		**	
	Secondary education	**		USD 10 106		**	
	Tertiary (including R&D activities)	**		USD 16 143		**	
	Total expenditure on primary to tertiary educational institutions	**2014**					
Table B2.1	As a percentage of GDP	**		5.2%		**	
	Total public expenditure on primary to tertiary education	**2014**					
Table B4.1	As a percentage of total public expenditure	19.1%		11.3%		12.3%	
	Teachers						
	Share of female teachers in public and private institutions	**2015**					
Table D5.2	Primary education	79%		83%		76%	
	Upper secondary education	57%		59%		54%	
	Tertiary education	**		43%		42%	
	Ratio of students to teaching staff	**2015**					
Table D2.2	Primary education	13		15		19	
	Secondary education	14		13		16	
	Tertiary education	**		16		18	

The reference year is the year cited or the latest year for which data are available.
Refer to Annex 3 for country-specific notes and for more information on data presented in this key facts table (www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm).

** Please refer to the source table for details on this data.

Cut-off date for the data: 19 July 2017. Any updates on data can be found on line at http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-data-en