

## 4. THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

### How much are teachers paid?

- Salaries for lower secondary teachers with at least 15 years' experience range from less than USD 15 000 in Hungary, Indonesia and the Slovak Republic to more than USD 100 000 in Luxembourg.
- For both primary and secondary education, salaries at the top of the scale are on average around 64% higher than starting salaries.
- Salaries in primary and secondary education have grown in real terms since 2000 in almost all OECD countries, with the biggest rises in the Czech Republic, Estonia, and Turkey.

#### Significance

This spread shows the starting, mid-career and maximum statutory salaries of teachers in public primary and secondary education. Since teachers' salaries are the largest single cost in education, teacher compensation is a critical consideration for policy makers seeking to maintain both the quality of teaching and a balanced education budget.

#### Findings

In most OECD countries, teachers' salaries rise with the level of education they teach. For example, in Belgium, Indonesia, Luxembourg and Poland, the salary of an upper secondary teacher with at least 15 years of experience is at least 25% higher than that of a primary teacher with the same amount of experience. In Chile, Iceland, Japan, Korea and Turkey, there is less than a 5% difference between upper secondary and primary school teachers' salaries; and in Australia, England, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Scotland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia, both primary and secondary school teachers received the same salary. Salaries at the top of the scale are on average around 64% higher than starting salaries for both primary and secondary education, although this differential largely varies among countries in line with the number of years it takes to progress through the scale. For example, in the Czech Republic and in Greece, salaries at the top of the scale are 50% higher than starting salaries, and teachers in both countries must work 32 (the Czech Republic) or 33 years (Greece) to reach the top salary.

To get a sense of the relative value of teachers' salaries within countries, a number of comparisons are useful, such as in terms of GDP per capita (see Chart D3.3 in *Education at a Glance 2011*). They can also be compared with the earnings of other tertiary graduates. Salaries for teachers with 15 years of experience in lower secondary education are nearly 27% higher than the average earnings of workers with tertiary education in Spain. By contrast, they are below 60% of the latter in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland and the Slovak Republic.

#### Trends

Between 2000 and 2009, teachers' salaries increased in real terms in most countries. The largest increases – of well over 50% – were seen in the Czech Republic, Estonia and Turkey, although these countries still have low real and relative salaries. The only exceptions to this trend were Australia, France, Japan and Switzerland.

#### Definitions

Data are from the 2010 OECD-INES Survey on Teachers and the Curriculum and refer to the 2008-09 school year. Gross teachers' salaries were converted using GDP and purchasing power parities (PPPs) exchange rate data from the OECD National Accounts database. Starting salaries refer to the average scheduled gross salary per year for a fully qualified full-time teacher. Earnings for workers with tertiary education are average earnings for full-time, full-year workers aged between 25 and 64 and with education at ISCED 5A/5B/6. Data presented here offer a simplified illustration of international comparisons in teacher compensation. Large differences in taxation, social benefits and allowances and additional payments for teachers as well as variations in teaching time, workloads and the use of part-time teachers must also be taken into account in making international comparisons of teachers' benefits. It is thus important to exercise caution in interpreting comparisons of teachers' salaries.

Information on data for Israel:  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

#### Going further

For additional material, notes and a full explanation of sourcing and methodologies, see *Education at a Glance 2011* (Indicator D3).

Areas covered include:

- Teachers' salaries and trends.
- Additional payments for teachers.

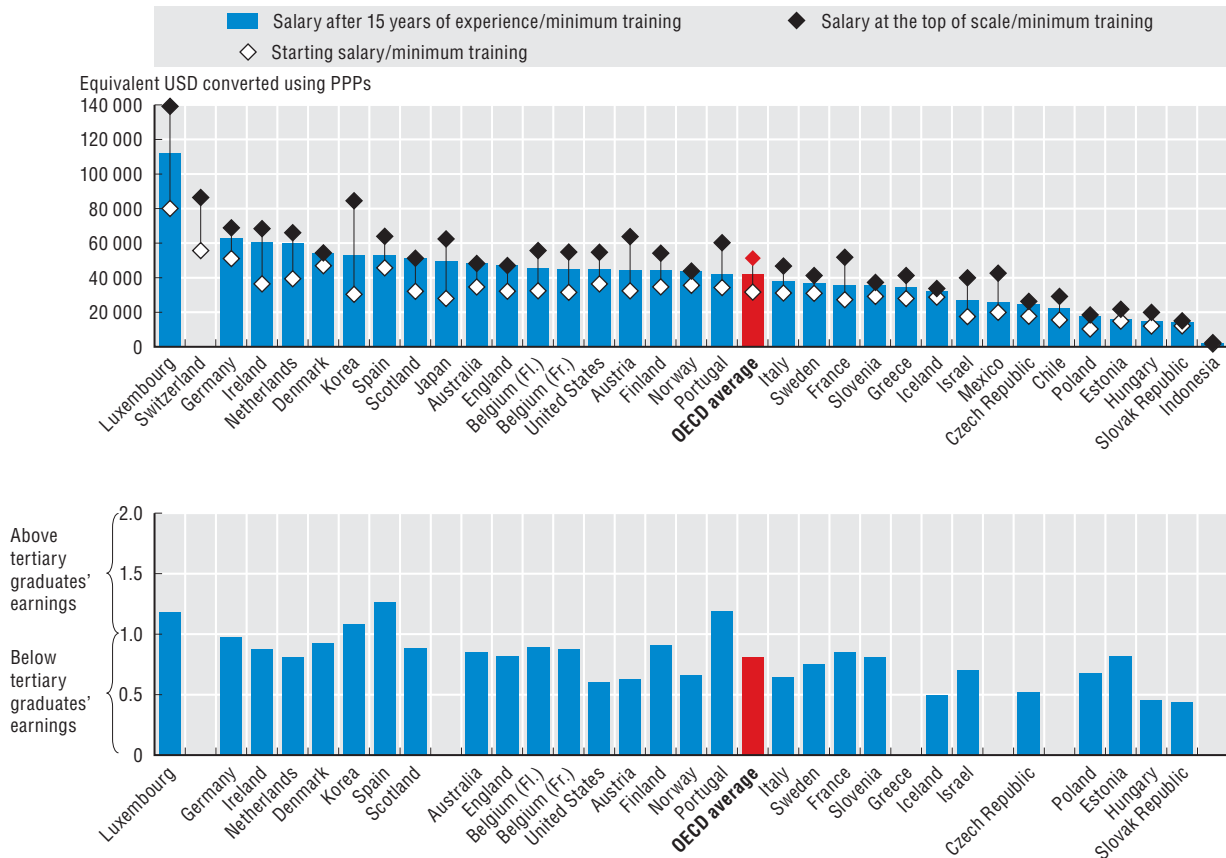
#### Further reading from the OECD

*Evaluating and Rewarding the Quality of Teachers: International Practices* (2009).

*Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (2005).

Figure 4.5. Teachers' salaries in lower secondary education, 2009

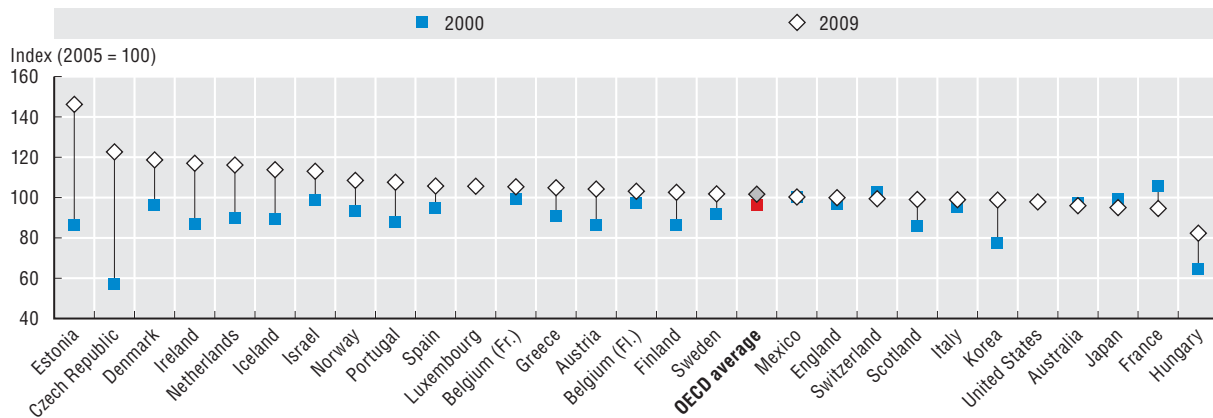
The upper chart in this figure shows how much teachers are paid, and how this varies depending on their years of experience. The lower chart shows the ratio of teachers' salaries (with 15 years' experience) with the earnings of full-time workers with tertiary education.



Source: OECD (2011), Education at a Glance 2011, Tables D3.1 and D3.2, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932465246> and <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932465265>.

Figure 4.6. Trends in teachers' salaries in lower secondary education (2000, 2009)

This figure shows how the salaries of lower secondary teachers, with a minimum of 15 years of experience, have changed in real terms from 2000 to 2009.



Source: OECD (2011), Education at a Glance 2011, Table D3.3 available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932465284>.



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