

5. THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Who are the teachers?

- About 31% of primary teachers and 36% of secondary teachers were at least 50 years old in 2012, on average in OECD countries.
- Two-thirds of teachers and academic staff are women on average in OECD countries, but the proportion of women among teaching staff tends to decline at higher levels of education: from 97% at the pre-primary level to 42% at the tertiary level.
- Lower secondary teachers have an average of 16 years of teaching experience, 10 years of it at their current school.

Significance

This section presents a profile of the teaching workforce. Getting a better understanding of the teaching workforce means countries can anticipate teacher shortages and work to make the teaching profession a more attractive career choice. Given evidence that the quality of teachers is the most significant in-school determinant of student achievement, efforts must be made to attract top academic talent to the teaching profession and provide high-quality training.

Findings

On average across OECD countries, 31% of primary teachers are at least 50 years old. This proportion exceeds 40% in Germany, Italy and Sweden. In only six countries — Belgium, Chile, Ireland, Korea, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom — are 20% or more of primary teachers under the age of 30. The age distribution of teachers at the secondary level is roughly the same. On average among OECD countries, 36% of secondary teachers are at least 50 years old. In Austria, Estonia, Germany, Iceland, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Norway, however, the share rises to 40% or more.

Across all levels of education, women represent two-thirds of the teachers and academic staff, but the percentage of women teachers declines from each level of education to the next. For example, on average across the OECD area, women account for 97% of teachers at pre-primary level; 82% at primary level; 67% at lower secondary level; 57% at upper secondary level; and 42% in tertiary education. The share of women varies considerably between countries. For example, at lower-secondary level, the proportion of women ranges from fewer than half the teachers in Japan to more than 80% in Estonia, Iceland and the Russian Federation. Most tertiary teachers are men in all countries except Finland and the Russian Federation.

Lower secondary teachers have an average of 16 years of teaching experience, 3 years of experience in other educational roles, and 4 years of experience in other types of jobs. However, average teaching experience varies from country

to country, from 20 years in Bulgaria, Estonia and Latvia to a little less than 10 years in Singapore.

Trends

Between 2002 and 2012, the proportion of secondary teachers aged 50 or older climbed by 4 percentage points on average among countries with comparable data. This increase is large (10 percentage points or more) in Italy, Japan, Korea and Portugal, and critically so in Austria, which saw a 26 percentage-point increase in this proportion during the period.

In countries that stand to lose a significant number of teachers through retirement and whose school-age population remains the same or increases, governments will have to boost the appeal of teaching to upper secondary and tertiary students, expand teacher-training programmes, and, if necessary, provide alternate routes to certification for mid-career professionals intent on changing careers.

Definitions

Data refer to the academic year 2011-12 and are based on the UOE data collection on education statistics administered by the OECD in 2012.

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 2014* (Indicator D5).

Areas covered include:

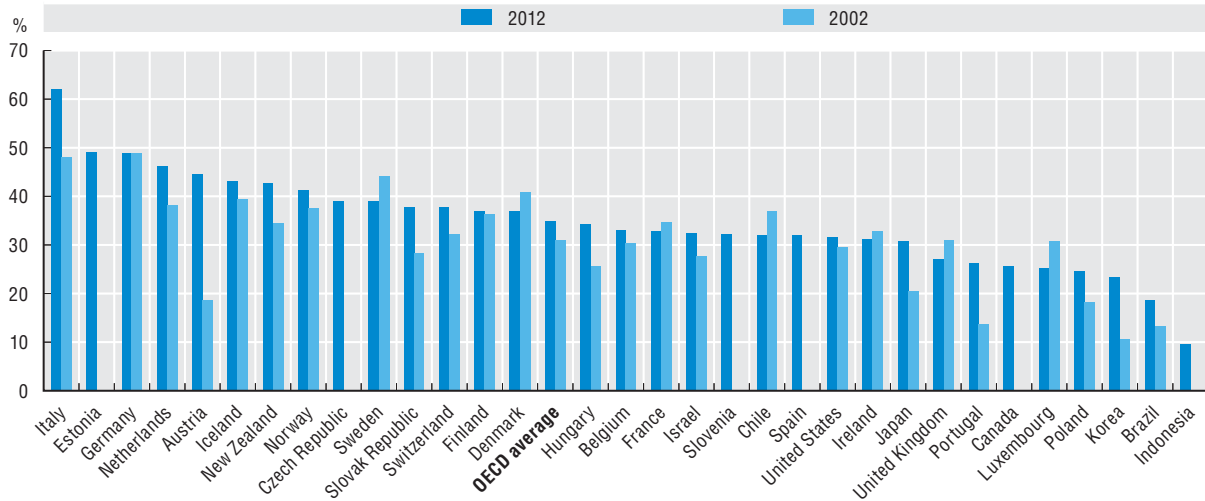
- Age and gender distribution of teachers by country and level of education.
- Change in the age distribution of teachers between 2002 and 2012.
- Teachers' work experience and employment status.

Further reading from OECD

OECD (2014), *TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning*, OECD Publishing, Paris,
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264196261-en>.

Figure 5.9. Secondary school teachers over 50 years old (2002, 2012)

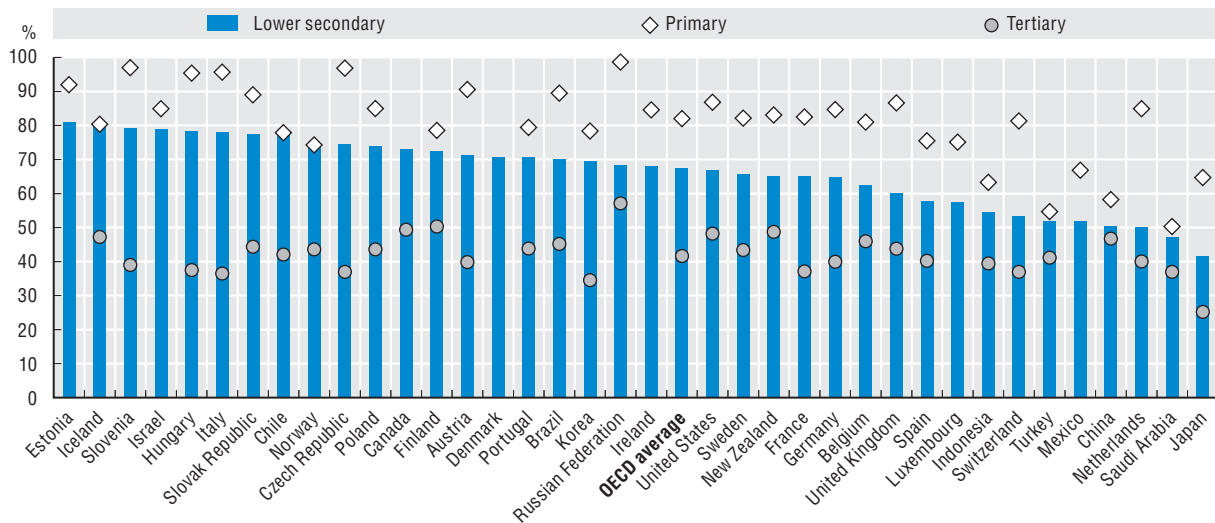
This figure shows the percentage of secondary school teachers more than 50 years old.



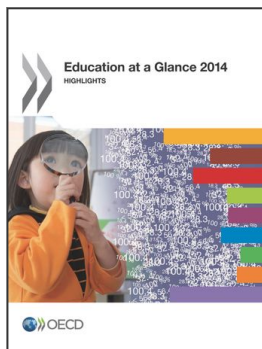
Source: OECD (2014), Education at a Glance 2014, Chart D5.1, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933120214>

Figure 5.10. Gender distribution of teachers, 2012

This figure shows the percentage of female teachers in primary, lower secondary and tertiary education levels.



Source: OECD (2014), Education at a Glance 2014, Chart D5.2, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933120233>.



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