

### How many young people enter tertiary education?

- Some 60% of young adults in OECD countries are expected to enter university-level programmes over their lifetimes; however only 3% are expected to enter advanced research programmes.
- Almost half of young adults in OECD countries will enter university-level programmes before the age of 25.
- Entry rates into university-level programmes are still higher for women (67%) than for men (53%) on average across OECD countries. But in advanced research programmes the gender gap almost disappears.

#### Significance

This section shows how many students are expected to enter a specific type of tertiary education programme during their lifetimes. It also sheds light on the accessibility and perceived value of tertiary programmes, and provides some indication of the degree to which a population is acquiring the high-level skills and knowledge valued by today's labour market. High entry and enrolment rates in tertiary education imply that a highly educated labour force is being developed and maintained.

#### Findings

It is estimated that 60% of young adults in OECD countries will enter university-level programmes during their lifetimes if current patterns of entry continue. In several countries, at least 70% of young adults are expected to enter these programmes, while less than 35% are expected to do so in Belgium and Mexico. This is also true of China and Indonesia among other G20 countries.

However, the numbers are somewhat different if international students who come to a country to study are excluded, with a gap as high as 27 percentage points in the case of Australia. Only in Poland and Slovenia does the entry rate remain at around 70% if international students are excluded.

Roughly 3% of today's young adults in OECD countries are expected to enter advanced research programmes during their lifetimes. The proportions range from less than 1% in Chile, Mexico, Spain and Turkey, to around 5% in Germany, Slovenia and Switzerland.

It is estimated that an average of 19% of today's young adults (20% of women and 18% of men) will enter vocational programmes over their lifetimes. Proportions range from less than 5% in Iceland, Indonesia, Mexico, Poland and the Slovak Republic, to more than 35% in Belgium, Korea and New Zealand, and above 50% in Argentina and Chile.

On average across OECD countries, 81% of all first-time entrants into university-level programmes and 62% of first-time entrants into vocationally oriented programmes in

2011 were under 25 years of age. In addition, 56% of students who entered advanced research programmes in 2011 were under 30 years of age.

The most popular fields of education chosen by new entrants into tertiary programmes are social sciences, business and law in all countries except Finland and Korea, and Saudi Arabia among other G20 countries.

#### Trends

The proportion of students entering university-level education increased by more than 20 percentage points, on average in OECD countries between 1995 and 2011, while entry rates into vocationally oriented tertiary programmes remained stable. This rise is due to the increased accessibility of tertiary education in many countries, but also because of structural changes in the education systems of some countries. Entry rates for tertiary programmes have also increased because the source of applicants has expanded to include many more international and older students.

#### Definitions

Data refer to the academic year 2010-11 and are based on the UOE data collection on education statistics administered by the OECD in 2012. Data on trends in entry rates for the years 1995, 2000 through 2004 are based on a special survey carried out in OECD countries in January 2007. Data on the impact of international students on tertiary entry rates are based on a special survey carried out by the OECD in December 2012. The net entry rate for a specific age is obtained by dividing the number of entrants of that age to each type of tertiary education by the total population in the corresponding age group.

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

#### Going further

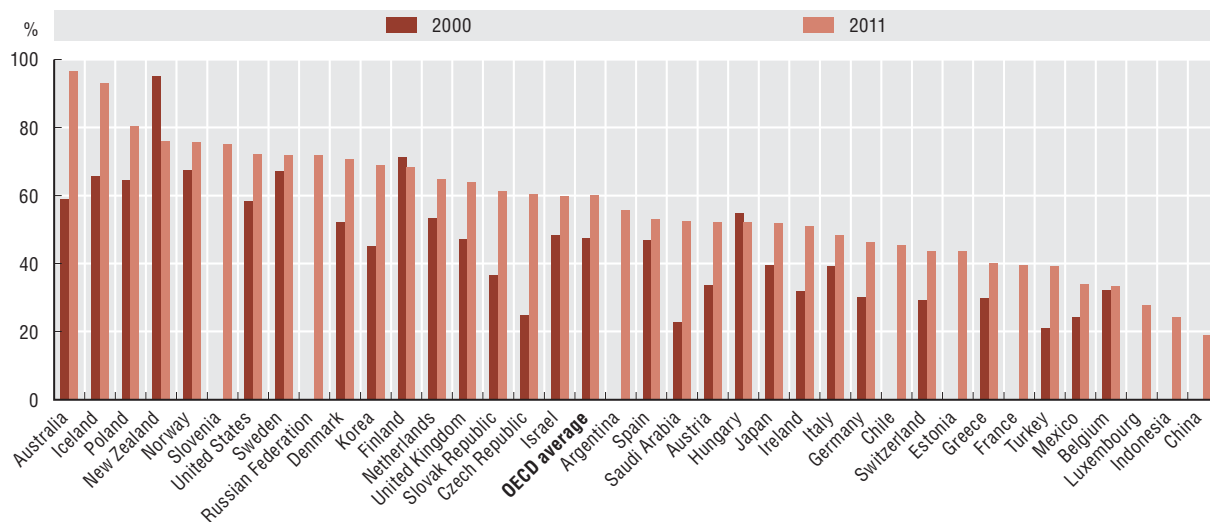
For additional material, notes and a full explanation of sourcing and methodologies, see *Education at a Glance 2013* (indicator C3).

Areas covered include:

- Entry rates by level of education.
- Age of new entrants in tertiary education.
- Distribution by gender of new entrants.

Figure 2.1. **Entry rates into university-level education (2000, 2011)**

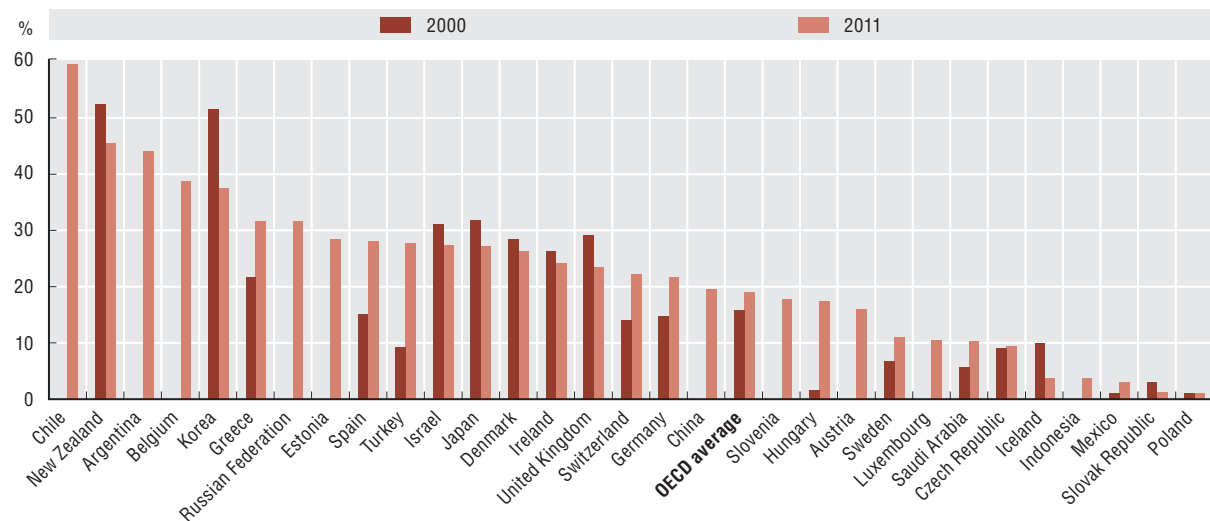
These figures show the growth – or otherwise – in the percentage of young people entering university-level education. Entry rates have risen in most OECD countries.



Source: OECD (2013), *Education at a Glance 2013*, Chart C3.2, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932847488>.

Figure 2.2. **Entry rates into vocationally oriented tertiary education (2000, 2011)**

These figures show the percentage of young people entering vocationally oriented tertiary education in 2000 and 2011.



Source: OECD (2013), *Education at a Glance 2012*, Chart C3.2, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932847488>.



**From:**  
**Education at a Glance 2013**  
Highlights

**Access the complete publication at:**  
[https://doi.org/10.1787/eag\\_highlights-2013-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/eag_highlights-2013-en)

**Please cite this chapter as:**

OECD (2013), "How many young people enter tertiary education?", in *Education at a Glance 2013: Highlights*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1787/eag\\_highlights-2013-8-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/eag_highlights-2013-8-en)

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