

5. THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

How much are teachers paid?

- Salaries for teachers in OECD countries with at least 15 years of experience average USD 36 135 at the pre-primary level, USD 38 136 at the primary level, USD 39 934 at the lower secondary level and USD 41 665 at the upper secondary level.
- Teachers' salaries at primary-school level represent 82% of average earnings for 25-64 year-olds with a tertiary education, against 89% at upper secondary level on average in OECD countries
- Salaries at the top of the scale are, on average, 58% higher than starting salaries at pre-primary level and 62% higher at upper secondary level.

Significance

This section shows the starting, mid-career and maximum statutory salaries of teachers in public pre-primary, 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 and other G20 countries, teachers' salaries rise with the level of education they teach. For example, in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Indonesia, Poland and Switzerland, the salary of an upper secondary teacher with at least 15 years of experience is at least 25% higher than that of a pre-primary teacher with the same amount of experience.

Salaries at the top of the scale in pre-primary education are, on average, 58% higher than starting salaries. This figure reaches 59% in primary education, 61% in lower secondary education, and 62% in upper secondary education. The difference tends to be greatest when it takes many years to progress through the scale. In countries where it takes 30 years or more to reach the top of the salary scale, salaries at the top of the scale are on average 78% higher than starting salaries.

Teachers with maximum qualifications at the top of their salary scales earn, on average, USD 47 243 at the pre-primary level, USD 49 609 at the primary level, USD 52 697 at the lower secondary level, and USD 53 449 at the upper secondary level. However, the salary premium for higher qualifications varies. Primary teachers who hold the maximum qualification earn at least 30% more than primary teachers with similar experience, but who hold the minimum qualification, in Israel, Mexico, Poland and Slovenia, for example. However, in around 40% of countries there is no difference.

Trends

Teachers' salaries increased in real terms in most countries between 2000 and 2011. In Denmark, Estonia, Ireland and Portugal, salaries increased at all levels of education by at least 20%. In the Czech Republic (primary and lower secondary levels) and in Turkey (upper secondary level), salaries doubled over the past decade. Notable exceptions are France and Japan, where there was a decline in teachers' salaries in real terms during that period.

In some countries, the economic downturn in 2008 also had a direct impact on teachers' salaries. Teachers' salaries decreased, for the first time since 2000, by around 2% at all levels of education between 2009 and 2011, on average across OECD countries with available data.

Definitions

Data are from the 2012 OECD-INES Survey on Teachers and the Curriculum and refer to the 2010-11 school year. Gross teachers' salaries were converted using purchasing power parities (PPPs) for private consumption from the OECD National Accounts database. Starting salaries refer to the average scheduled gross salary per year for a fully qualified full-time teacher, at the beginning of a teaching career. Earnings for workers with tertiary education are average earnings for full-time, full-year workers aged 25 to 64 with university-level, vocational tertiary or post-tertiary education.

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 D3).

Areas covered include:

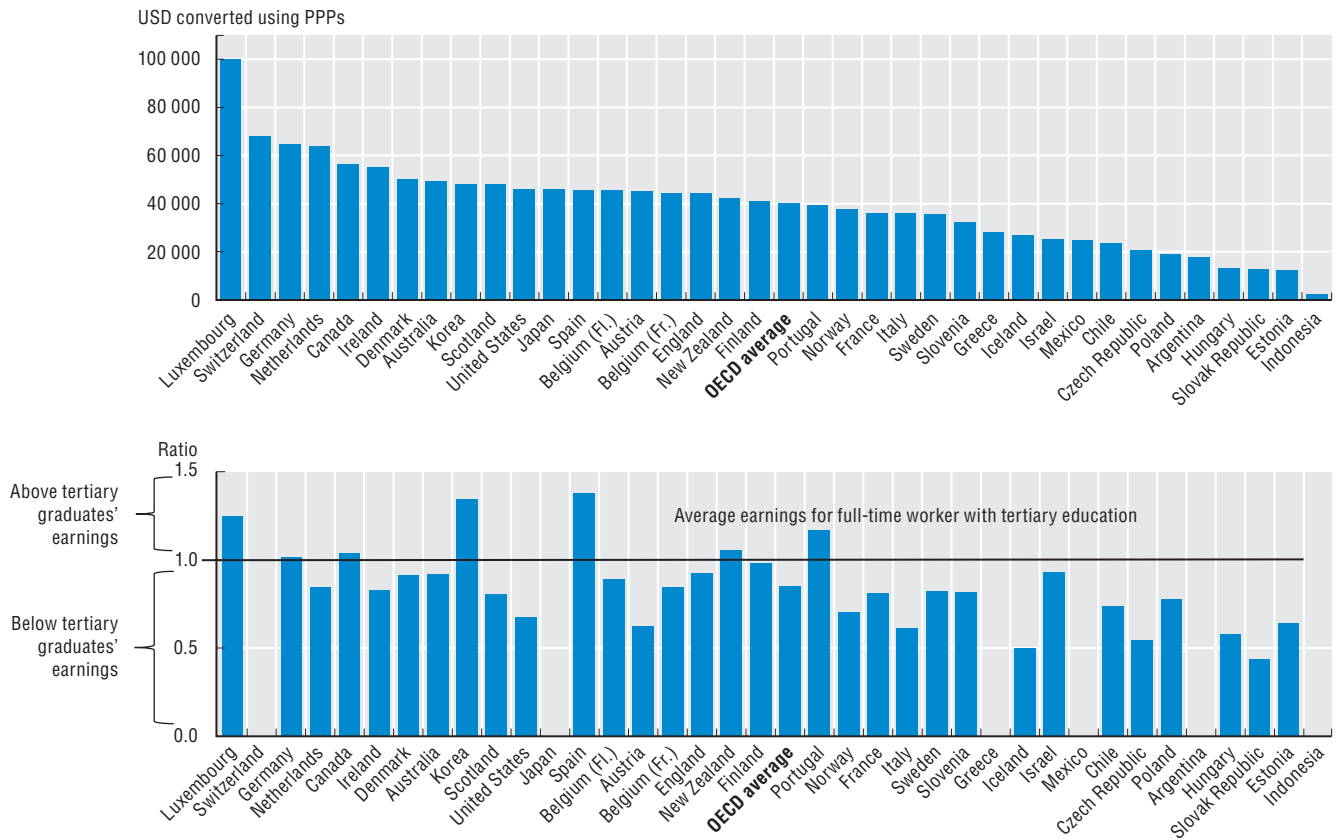
- Teachers' salaries and trends.
- Additional payments for teachers.

Further reading from OECD

Education Today 2013: The OECD Perspective (2013)

Figure 5.5. **Teachers' salaries in lower secondary education, 2011**

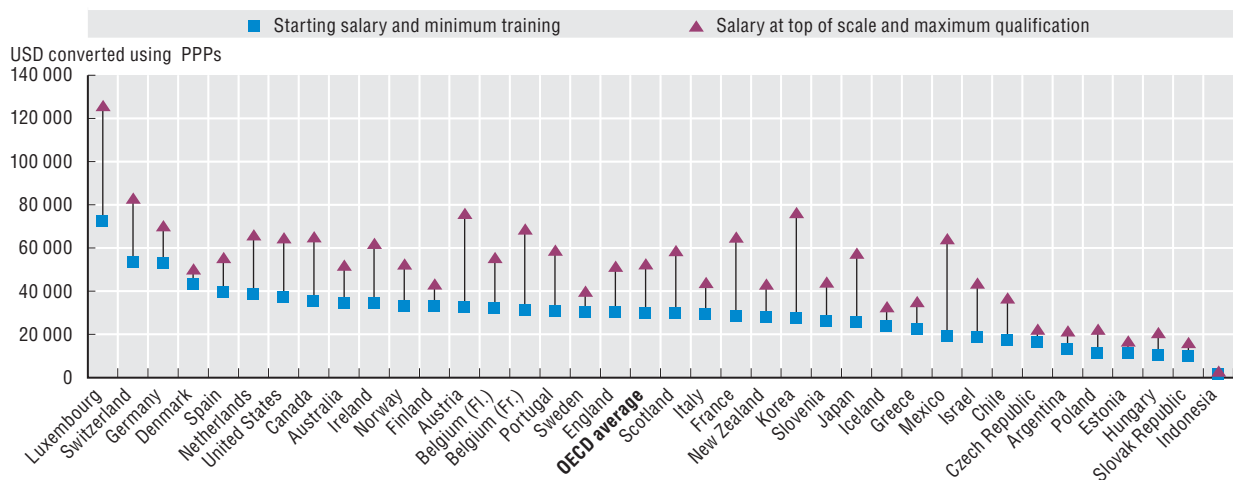
The upper chart in this figure shows how much teachers are paid after 15 years of experience. The lower chart compares teachers' salaries with the earnings of other full-time workers with tertiary education.



Source: OECD (2013), *Education at a Glance 2013*, Chart D3.1 available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932847811>.

Figure 5.6. **Minimum and maximum teachers' salaries in lower secondary education, 2011**

This figure shows the gap between teachers' salaries at the start of their career, with minimum training and at the top of the scale with maximum qualification, in lower secondary education.



Source: OECD (2013), *Education at a Glance 2013*, Chart D3.2 available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932847830>.



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