

5. THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

How much time do teachers spend teaching?

- The number of teaching hours per teacher in public schools averages 994 hours per year in pre-primary education, 790 hours per year in primary education, 709 hours in lower secondary education, and 664 hours in upper secondary education.
- Average teaching time increased or decreased by at least 10% between 2000 and 2011 in primary, lower secondary and/or upper secondary education in almost half of the countries with available data.
- The way teachers' working time is regulated varies significantly among countries, from hours per year to number of lessons per week.

Significance

This section examines the time teachers spend teaching and doing non-teaching work, such as preparing lessons and assessing students. Although working time and teaching time only partly determine teachers' actual workload, they do provide valuable insights into differences in what is required of teachers in different countries. Teaching hours and the extent of non-teaching duties may also affect the attractiveness of teaching as a profession. The amount of time that teachers spend teaching is also one of the factors that affect the financial resources countries need to allocate to education.

Findings

The average number of teaching hours in public pre-primary schools in OECD and other G20 countries is 994 hours per year, but ranges from 450 hours in Indonesia to over 1 500 hours in Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Public primary school teachers teach an average of 790 hours per year, but teaching time ranges from less than 600 hours in Greece and the Russian Federation to over 1 000 hours in Chile and the United States. The number of teaching hours in public lower secondary schools averages 709 hours per year, but ranges from 415 hours in Greece to over 1 000 hours in Argentina, Chile, Mexico and the United States. Teachers in public upper secondary schools teach an average of 664 hours per year, but this figure ranges from 369 hours in Denmark to 1 448 hours in Argentina.

Pre-primary teachers are required to teach almost 30% more hours than primary school teachers, on average; but the actual time during which teachers are required to be

working at school, or their total working time, is often equivalent for these two levels of education.

Trends

Teaching time varied by at least 10% for at least one level of education between 2000 and 2011 in almost half of the countries with available data. In most countries with a significant change, teaching time increased over this period. The number of teaching hours changed dramatically in a few countries: it increased by more than 25% in Portugal and Spain at the secondary level. In contrast, net teaching time dropped by around 10% between 2000 and 2011 in Mexico (lower secondary level), in the Netherlands (lower and upper secondary levels) and in Scotland (primary level).

Definitions

Data are from the 2012 OECD-INES Survey on Teachers and the Curriculum and refer to the 2010-11 school year. Teaching time is defined as the scheduled number of hours per year that a full-time teacher teaches a group or class of students as set by policy. Working time refers to the normal working hours of a full-time teacher and includes time directly associated with teaching as well as the hours devoted to teaching-related activities, such as preparing lessons, counselling students, correcting assignments and tests, and meeting with parents and other staff.

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

Going further

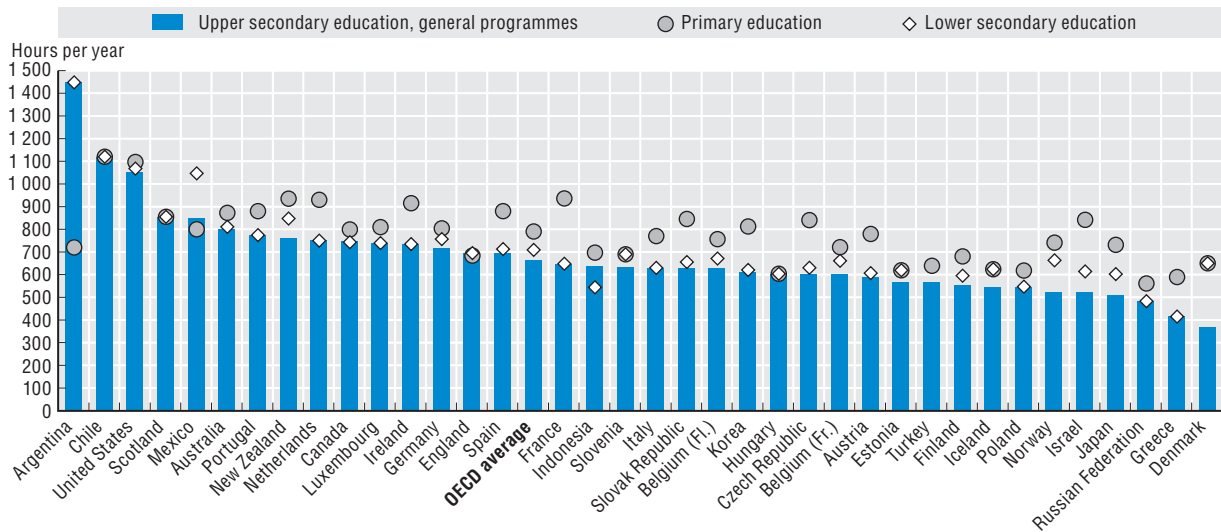
For additional material, notes and a full explanation of sourcing and methodologies, see *Education at a Glance 2013* (Indicator D4).

Areas covered include:

- Organisation of teachers' working time.
- Number of teaching hours per year, by level of education.

Figure 5.7. Annual teaching hours by education level, 2011

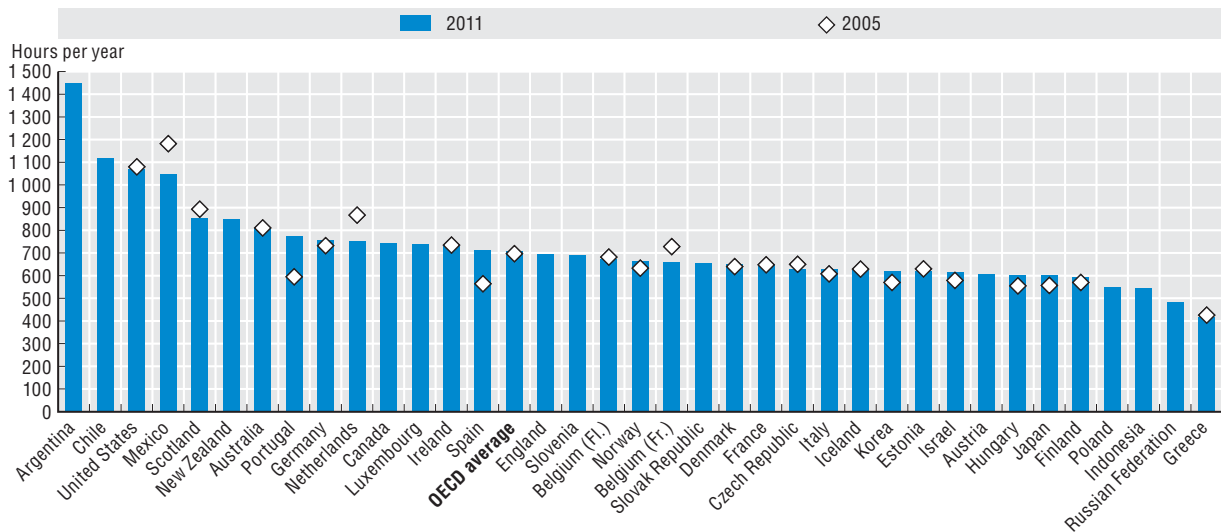
This figure shows the variation in annual teaching hours for teachers in different levels of education.



Source: OECD (2013), Education at a Glance 2013, Chart D4.2, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932847887>.

Figure 5.8. Trends in annual teaching hours in lower secondary education (2005, 2011)

This figure shows the trends in the number of hours teachers actually spent teaching, between 2005 and 2011. Contact time with students is a major part of teachers' workloads, but duties also include preparing classes and correcting assignments.



Source: OECD (2013), Education at a Glance 2013, Chart D4.1, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932847868>.



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