



# Note on Country Coverage and Levels of Education

## Country coverage

OECD and partner countries: The different sources from different dates used in this volume mean that OECD membership may not be identical in all cases. The entries cover the 34 countries that were members of the OECD when this report was drafted, as well as a number of partner countries and territories.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

## Levels of education

Education systems vary considerably from country to country, including the ages at which students typically begin and end each phase of schooling, the duration of courses, and what is taught. To facilitate the compilation of internationally comparable statistics on education, the United Nations created an International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), which provides a basis for comparing different education systems and a standard terminology.

### Levels of education and ISCED classification

#### **Pre-primary education/early childhood education ISCED 0**

The first stage of organised education. Minimum entry age to pre-primary education is 3 years of age though "early childhood education and care" is not as restricted in terms of age or preparation for schooling.

#### **Primary education ISCED 1**

Designed to provide a sound basic education with entry age between 5 and 7 years of age. Duration tends to be 6 years.

#### **Lower secondary education ISCED 2**

Completes provision of basic education, usually with greater subject orientation. In some countries, the end of this level marks the end of compulsory education.

#### **Upper secondary education ISCED 3**

Even stronger subject specialisation than at lower secondary level, with teachers often more highly qualified. Students typically expected to have completed 9 years of education or lower secondary schooling before entry and are generally around the age of 15 or 16.

#### **Post-secondary non-tertiary education ISCED 4**

Programmes at this level may be regarded nationally as part of upper secondary or post-secondary education, but in terms of international comparison they are counted as post-secondary as entry typically requires completion of an upper secondary programme. Content may not be much more advanced than at upper secondary and is lower than at the tertiary level. Duration is usually equivalent to between 6 months and 2 years of full-time study.

#### **Tertiary education ISCED 5 (sub-categories 5A and 5B)**

ISCED 5 is the first stage of tertiary education. ISCED distinguishes between levels 5A (longer and more theoretical programmes) and 5B (programmes are shorter and more practically oriented). As tertiary education differs greatly between countries, the demarcation between these two sub-categories is not always clear cut.

#### **Advanced research programmes ISCED 6**

The second stage of tertiary education, devoted to advanced study and original research.

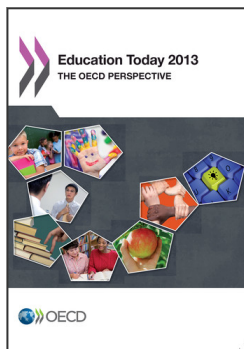
Readers should note that *Education Today 2013* may use simplified terminology from that used in the ISCED classification and in *Education at a Glance 2012*.

For fuller definitions and explanations of the ISCED classification:

ISCED 1997: [www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/isced97-en.pdf](http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/isced97-en.pdf)

ISCED 2011: [www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/UNESCO\\_GC\\_36C-19\\_ISCED\\_EN.pdf](http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/UNESCO_GC_36C-19_ISCED_EN.pdf)





**From:**  
**Education Today 2013**  
The OECD Perspective

**Access the complete publication at:**  
[https://doi.org/10.1787/edu\\_today-2013-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/edu_today-2013-en)

**Please cite this chapter as:**

OECD (2012), "Note on Country Coverage and Levels of Education", in *Education Today 2013: The OECD Perspective*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1787/edu\\_today-2013-2-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/edu_today-2013-2-en)

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