

READER'S GUIDE

■ Coverage of the statistics

Although a lack of data still limits the scope of the indicators in many countries, the coverage extends, in principle, to the entire national education system (within the national territory), regardless of who owns or sponsors the institutions concerned and regardless of how education is delivered. With one exception (described below), all types of students and all age groups are included: children (including students with special needs), adults, nationals, foreigners, and students in open-distance learning, in special education programmes or in education programmes organised by ministries other than the Ministry of Education, provided that the main aim of the programme is to broaden or deepen an individual's knowledge. However, children below the age of three are only included if they participate in programmes that typically cater to children who are at least three years old. Vocational and technical training in the workplace, with the exception of combined school- and work-based programmes that are explicitly deemed to be part of the education system, is not included in the basic education expenditure and enrolment data.

Educational activities classified as “adult” or “non-regular” are covered, provided that the activities involve the same or similar content as “regular” education studies, or that the programmes of which they are a part lead to qualifications similar to those awarded in regular educational programmes.

Courses for adults that are primarily for general interest, personal enrichment, leisure or recreation are excluded.

■ Country coverage

This publication features data on education from the 34 OECD member countries, two partner countries that participate in the OECD Indicators of Education Systems programme (INES), namely Brazil and the Russian Federation, and the other partner countries that do not participate in INES (Argentina, China, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Latvia, Saudi Arabia and South Africa). Data sources for these latter eight countries are specified below the tables.

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.

■ Calculation of international means

The OECD average is calculated as the unweighted mean of the data values of all OECD countries for which data are available or can be estimated. The OECD average therefore refers to an average of data values at the level of the national systems and can be used to answer the question of how an indicator value for a given country compares with the value for a typical or average country. It does not take into account the absolute size of the education system in each country.

The OECD total is calculated as the weighted mean of the data values of all OECD countries for which data are available or can be estimated. It reflects the value for a given indicator when the OECD area is considered as a whole. This approach is taken for the purpose of comparing, for example, expenditure charts for individual countries with those of the entire OECD area for which valid data are available, with this area considered as a single entity.

Both the OECD average and the OECD total can be significantly affected by missing data. Given the relatively small number of countries surveyed, no statistical methods are used to compensate for this. In cases where a category is not applicable (code “a”) in a country or where the data value is negligible (code “n”) for the corresponding calculation, the value zero is imputed for the purpose of calculating OECD averages. In cases where both the numerator and the denominator of a ratio are not applicable (code “a”) for a certain country, this country is not included in the OECD average.

For financial tables using trend series over 1995-2011, both the OECD average and OECD total are also calculated for countries providing data for all reference years used. This allows for a comparison of the OECD average and OECD total over time with no distortion due to the exclusion of certain countries in the different years.

For many indicators, an **EU21 average** is also presented. It is calculated as the unweighted mean of the data values of the 21 countries that are members of both the European Union and the OECD for which data are available or can be estimated. These 21 countries are Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

For some indicators, a **G20 average** is presented. The G20 average is calculated as the unweighted mean of the data values of all G20 countries for which data are available or can be estimated (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States; the European Union is the 20th member of the G20 but is not included in the calculation). The G20 average is not computed if the data for China or India are not available.

For some indicators, an **average** is presented. This average is included in tables with data from the 2012 Survey of Adult Skills, a product of the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). The average corresponds to the arithmetic mean of the estimates included in the table or chart from both the national and the sub-national entities (which include Flanders (Belgium) and England/Northern Ireland [UK]). Partner countries are not included in the average presented in any of the tables or charts.

■ Standard error (S.E.)

The statistical estimates presented in this report are based on samples of adults, rather than values that could be calculated if every person in the target population in every country had answered every question. Therefore, each estimate has a degree of uncertainty associated with sampling and measurement error, which can be expressed as a standard error. The use of confidence intervals provides a way to make inferences about the population means and proportions in a manner that reflects the uncertainty associated with the sample estimates. In this report, confidence intervals are stated at a 95% level. In other words, the result for the corresponding population would lie within the confidence interval in 95 out of 100 replications of the measurement on different samples drawn from the same population.

In tables showing standard errors, there is one column with the heading “%”, which indicates the average percentage, and a column with the heading “S.E.”, which indicates the standard error. Given the survey method, there is a sampling uncertainty in the percentages (%) of twice the standard error (S.E.). For example, for the values: % = 10 and S.E. = 2.6, 10% has an uncertainty zone of twice (1.96) the standard error of 2.6, assuming an error risk of 5%. Thus, the true percentage would probably (error risk of 5%) be somewhere between 5% and 15% (“confidence interval”). The confidence interval is calculated as: % +/- 1.96 * S.E., i.e. for the previous example, 5% = 10% - 1.96 * 2.6 and 15% = 10% + 1.96 * 2.6.

■ Classification of levels of education

The classification of the levels of education is based on the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 1997). ISCED 1997 is an instrument for compiling statistics on education internationally; it distinguishes among six levels of education. ISCED 1997 was recently revised, and the new International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011) was formally adopted in November 2011. This new classification will be implemented in *Education at a Glance 2015*.

Term used in this publication	ISCED classification (and subcategories)
Pre-primary education The first stage of organised instruction designed to introduce very young children to the school atmosphere. Minimum entry age of 3.	ISCED 0
Primary education Designed to provide a sound basic education in reading, writing and mathematics and a basic understanding of some other subjects. Entry age: between 5 and 7. Duration: 6 years.	ISCED 1

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<p>Lower secondary education Completes provision of basic education, usually in a more subject oriented way with more specialist teachers. Entry follows 6 years of primary education; duration is 3 years. In some countries, the end of this level marks the end of compulsory education.</p>	<p>ISCED 2 (subcategories: 2A prepares students for continuing academic education, leading to 3A; 2B has stronger vocational focus, leading to 3B; 2C offers preparation of entering workforce)</p>
<p>Upper secondary education Stronger subject specialisation than at lower secondary level, with teachers usually more qualified. Students typically expected to have completed 9 years of education or lower secondary schooling before entry and are generally 15 or 16 years old.</p>	<p>ISCED 3 ISCED 3 (subcategories: 3A prepares students for university-level education at level 5A; 3B for entry to vocationally oriented tertiary education at level 5B; 3C prepares students for workforce or for post-secondary non-tertiary education at level ISCED 4)</p>
<p>Post-secondary non-tertiary education Internationally, this level straddles the boundary between upper secondary and post-secondary education, even though it might be considered upper secondary or post-secondary in a national context. Programme content may not be significantly more advanced than that in upper secondary, but is not as advanced as that in tertiary programmes. Duration usually the equivalent of between 6 months and 2 years of full-time study. Students tend to be older than those enrolled in upper secondary education.</p>	<p>ISCED 4 ISCED 4 (subcategories: 4A may prepare students for entry to tertiary education, both university level and vocationally oriented; 4B typically prepares students to enter the workforce)</p>
<p>Tertiary education</p>	<p>ISCED 5 (subcategories: 5A and 5B; see below)</p>
<p>Tertiary-type A education Largely theory-based programmes designed to provide sufficient qualifications for entry to advanced research programmes and professions with high skill requirements, such as medicine, dentistry or architecture. Duration at least 3 years full-time, though usually 4 or more years. These programmes are not exclusively offered at universities; and not all programmes nationally recognised as university programmes fulfil the criteria to be classified as tertiary-type A. Tertiary-type A programmes include second-degree programmes, such as the American master's degree.</p>	<p>ISCED 5A</p>
<p>Tertiary-type B education Programmes are typically shorter than those of tertiary-type A and focus on practical, technical or occupational skills for direct entry into the labour market, although some theoretical foundations may be covered in the respective programmes. They have a minimum duration of two years full-time equivalent at the tertiary level.</p>	<p>ISCED 5B</p>
<p>Advanced research programmes Programmes that lead directly to the award of an advanced research qualification, e.g. Ph.D. The theoretical duration of these programmes is 3 years, full-time, in most countries (for a cumulative total of at least 7 years full-time equivalent at the tertiary level), although the actual enrolment time is typically longer. Programmes are devoted to advanced study and original research.</p>	<p>ISCED 6</p>

The glossary available at www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm also describes these levels of education in detail, and Annex 1 shows the typical age of graduates of the main educational programmes, by ISCED level.

■ Symbols for missing data and abbreviations

These symbols and abbreviations are used in the tables and charts:

- a Data are not applicable because the category does not apply.
- c There are too few observations to provide reliable estimates (e.g. in PISA, there are fewer than 30 students or fewer than five schools with valid data; in the Survey of Adult Skills, there are fewer than 30 individuals). However, these statistics were included in the calculation of cross-country averages.

ESCS *PISA index of economic, social and cultural status*

m Data are not available.

n Magnitude is either negligible or zero.

r Values are below a certain reliability threshold and should be interpreted with caution (see Annex 3 for country-specific definitions).

S.E. Standard Error.

w Data have been withdrawn at the request of the country concerned.

x Data included in another category or column of the table (e.g. x(2) means that data are included in column 2 of the table).

~ Average is not comparable with other levels of education.

■ Further resources

The website www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm is a rich source of information on the methods used to calculate the indicators, on the interpretation of the indicators in the respective national contexts, and on the data sources involved. The website also provides access to the data underlying the indicators and to a comprehensive glossary for technical terms used in this publication.

All post-production changes to this publication are listed at www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm.

Education at a Glance uses the OECD's StatLinks service. Below each table and chart in *Education at a Glance 2014* is a URL that leads to a corresponding Excel workbook containing the underlying data for the indicator. These URLs are stable and will remain unchanged over time. In addition, readers of the *Education at a Glance* e-book will be able to click directly on these links and the workbook will open in a separate window.

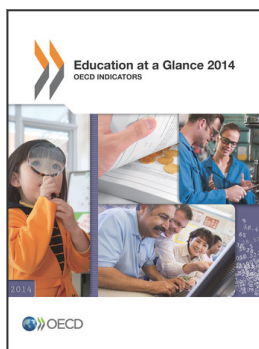
■ Layout of tables

In all tables, the numbers in parentheses at the top of the columns are simply used for reference. When a consecutive number does not appear, that column is available on line only.

■ Codes used for territorial entities

These codes are used in certain charts. Country or territorial entity names are used in the text. Note that throughout the publication, the Flemish Community of Belgium and the French Community of Belgium may be referred to as "Belgium (Fl.," or "Flanders (Belgium)", and "Belgium (Fr.)", respectively.

ARG Argentina	IRL Ireland
AUS Australia	ISL Iceland
AUT Austria	ISR Israel
BEL Belgium	ITA Italy
BFL Belgium (Flemish Community)	JPN Japan
BFR Belgium (French Community)	KOR Korea
BRA Brazil	LUX Luxembourg
CAN Canada	LVA Latvia
CHE Switzerland	MEX Mexico
CHL Chile	NLD Netherlands
CHN China	NOR Norway
COL Colombia	NZL New Zealand
CZE Czech Republic	POL Poland
DEU Germany	PRT Portugal
DNK Denmark	RUS Russian Federation
ENG England	SAU Saudi Arabia
ESP Spain	SCO Scotland
EST Estonia	SVK Slovak Republic
FIN Finland	SVN Slovenia
FRA France	SWE Sweden
GRC Greece	TUR Turkey
HUN Hungary	UKM United Kingdom
IDN Indonesia	USA United States
IND India	ZAF South Africa



From:
Education at a Glance 2014
OECD Indicators

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/eag-2014-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2014), "Reader's Guide", in *Education at a Glance 2014: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/eag-2014-4-en>

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