

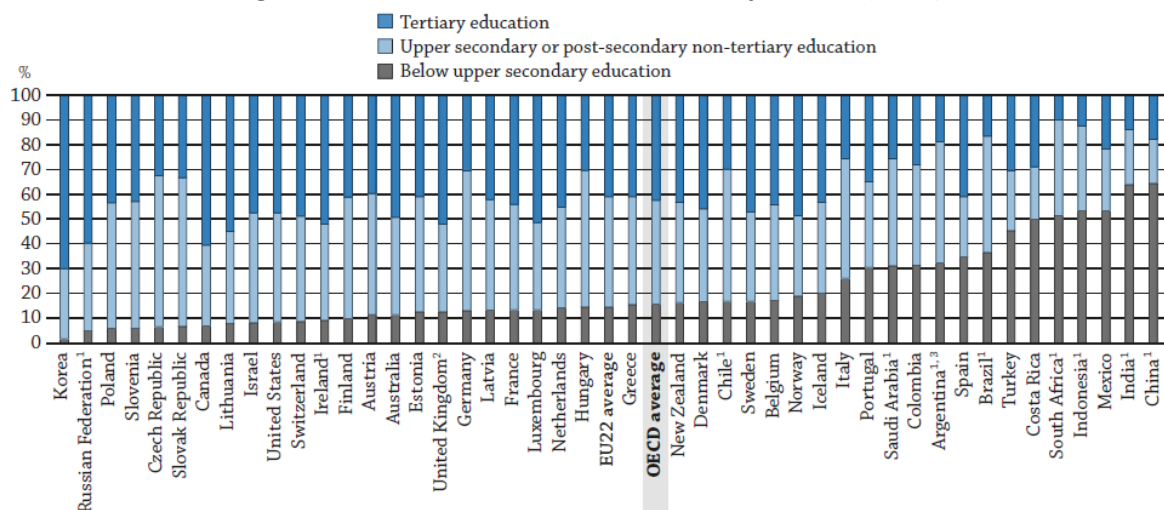
EDUCATION AT A GLANCE 2017

Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators is the authoritative source for information on the state of education around the world. It provides data on the structure, finances and performance of education systems in the 35 OECD countries and a number of partner countries.

South Africa

- **Just over 10% of people in South Africa are expected to complete a bachelor's level degree in their lifetime, compared to at least 30% on average across G20 and OECD countries.** Among those who completed tertiary education in South Africa in 2014, business, administration and law was the most popular field of study.
- **South Africans are attaining higher levels of education than in the past.** This is promising in a country where over 50% of people aged 25-34 have not attained upper secondary education, especially if these trends persist.
- **Public expenditure at the tertiary level makes up a smaller share of gross domestic product (GDP) than that seen in OECD countries.**
- Due to the **higher employment rates for those with tertiary qualifications**, investing more in tertiary education would enable individuals to enhance their chances of employment. Overall, the employment rate for South Africans at all levels of education was 56% in 2015 compared with 75% in OECD countries.

Figure 1. Educational attainment of 25-34 year-olds (2016)




1. Year of reference differs from 2016. Refer to the source table for more details.

2. Data for upper secondary attainment include completion of a sufficient volume and standard of programmes that would be classified individually as completion of intermediate upper secondary programmes (16% of adults aged 25-64 are in this group).

3. Data should be used with caution. See *Methodology* section for more information.

Countries are ranked in ascending order of the percentage of 25-34 year-olds with below upper secondary education.

Source: OECD / ILO / UIS (2017), Education at a Glance Database, <http://stats.oecd.org/>. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm).

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933556957>

Who enrolls in tertiary education in South Africa, and what do they study?

- The three most popular fields of study in 2014 were business, administration and law (32% of all tertiary graduates that year); education (19%); and social sciences, journalism and information (16%). A total of 20% of tertiary graduates in South Africa completed qualifications in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields, which covers subject areas such as mathematics, engineering and natural sciences.
- Based on patterns of graduation in South Africa as of 2014 (including international students), 12% of people are expected to attain a bachelor's level or equivalent degree during their lifetime, 1% a master's and 0.2% a doctorate or equivalent.
- Half of international tertiary students come from neighbouring countries. According to Statistics South Africa, in 2014 the country issued 11 208 study permits, of which almost 41% were issued to nationals of Zimbabwe alone (Statistics South Africa, 2015).

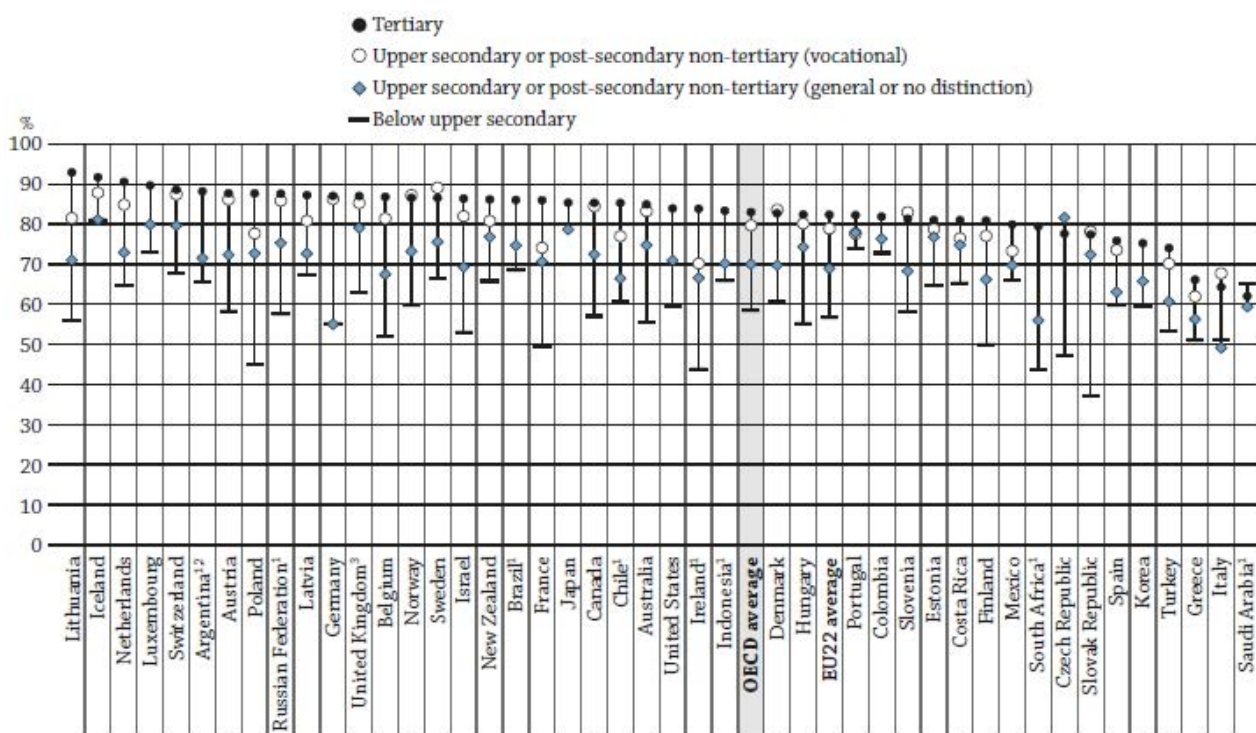
South Africans in general are attaining higher levels of education

- From 2010 to 2015, South Africa has seen a fall in the proportion of people who have not attained an upper secondary education and a rise in those in education at the secondary and tertiary levels. While it is promising that more people are attaining secondary and tertiary education, these gains have been modest and as of 2015, 15% of people in South Africa still do not have even a primary level of education, compared to a G20 average of only 8%. Over 50% of people in South Africa had not attained secondary education as of 2014.
- As of 2015, 10% of 25-34 year-olds in South Africa had attained tertiary education. This is an increase of 1 percentage point since 2010, while the proportion of tertiary-educated people in OECD and G20 countries has risen by 5 percentage points and 4 percentage points respectively over that period.

Educational attainment pays off in the labour market, particularly at tertiary level

- Employment prospects for people in South Africa with lower levels of educational attainment are bleaker than on average across OECD and EU22 countries. The country has an employment rate overall of 56%, which is almost 20% lower than the average for OECD and EU22 countries. However, this does not take into account people who are involved in the informal economy.
- Adults with below upper secondary level education face a 47% employment rate compared to 62% for those who have completed upper secondary. This is in contrast to average employment rates in OECD countries of 57% for those with below upper secondary education and 74% for those with an upper secondary education.
- However, higher educational attainment even in South Africa results in an increased likelihood of being employed. The employment rate of 25-34 year-olds with a bachelor's degree was 85% in 2015. Master's and doctoral graduates fared even better with a 93% employment rate. The difference in employment rates between tertiary graduates and those who only had an upper secondary education is 21 percentage points in South Africa, more than twice the average gap in OECD countries of 9 percentage points.

Figure 2. Employment rates of 25-34 year-olds, by educational attainment and programme orientation (2016)



Note: The label upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary (general or no distinction) refers to "general" for countries with a value for "vocational" and to "no distinction" for the others.

1. Year of reference differs from 2016. Refer to the Table A5.1 for more details.

2. Data should be used with caution. See Methodology section for more information.

3. Data for upper secondary attainment include completion of a sufficient volume and standard of programmes that would be classified individually as completion of intermediate upper secondary programmes (16% of the adults aged 25-64 are in this group).

Countries are ranked in descending order of the employment rate of tertiary-educated 25-34 year-olds.

Source: OECD/ILO (2017), Education at a Glance Database, <http://stats.oecd.org/>. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm).

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933557280>

South Africa is investing in education, especially at the primary level

- Public expenditure on education from primary to tertiary level in South Africa amounts to 5.2% of gross domestic product (GDP), which is higher than the G20 average of 4.3%. However South Africa dedicates a relatively small share to tertiary education, earmarking only 0.7% of GDP as opposed to an average of 1.3% in OECD countries and 1.1% in G20 countries.
- The greatest share of government expenditure went towards primary education. In 2013, South Africa spent 7.4% of its total government expenditure on primary education, versus 5.9% at the secondary level. Countries such as Canada, Indonesia and Israel have a similar pattern of higher spending at the primary level, but in general countries tend to spend more on secondary than primary education.
- South Africa spends a larger proportion of its current expenditure in public institutions on compensation of teachers and staff than on average across OECD countries. As of 2013, compensation of teachers and teaching staff made up 82% of current expenditure at the primary level versus 78% across OECD countries. At the secondary level, this rose to 88% of current expenditure, which is 10% higher than the OECD average. This leaves a smaller proportion of funds available for other expenditure.

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Note regarding data from Israel


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.

References

OECD (2017), *Education at a Glance 2017: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2017-en>.

Statistics South Africa (2015), "Documented immigrants in South Africa, 2014", *Statistical Release*, P0351.4, Statistics South Africa, Pretoria, www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P03514/P035142014.pdf.

For more information on Education at a Glance 2017 and to access the full set of Indicators, visit www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm.

Updated data can be found on line at [OECD.Stat](http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-data-en) as well as by following the *StatLinks*  under the tables and charts in the publication <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-data-en>.

Explore, compare and visualise more data and analysis using:  **Education GPS**
<http://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?primaryCountry=ZAF&treshold=10&topic=EO>.

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Key Facts for South Africa in Education at a Glance 2017

Source	Main topics in <i>Education at a Glance</i>	South Africa		OECD average		G20 average	
Fields of study							
New entrants to tertiary education							
2015							
		%	% Women	%	% Women	%	% Women
Table C3.1	Education	**	**	9%	78%	9%	72%
	Business, administration and law	**	**	23%	54%	23%	48%
	Engineering, manufacturing and construction	**	**	16%	24%	18%	23%
Early childhood education							
Expenditure on all early childhood educational institutions							
2014							
Table C2.3	As a percentage of GDP	**		0.8%		**	
	Proportions of total expenditure from public sources	**		82%		**	
Vocational education and training (VET)							
Enrolment in upper secondary education, by programme orientation							
2015							
		General	Vocational	General	Vocational	General	Vocational
Table C1.3	Enrolment rate among population aged 15-19 year-olds	**	**	37%	25%	38%	18%
Tertiary education							
Educational attainment of 25-64 year-olds							
2016							
Table A1.1	Short-cycle tertiary	5%		8%		10%	
	Bachelor's or equivalent	6%		16%		16%	
	Master's or equivalent	1%		12%		9%	
	Doctoral or equivalent	**		1%		**	
Employment rate of 25-64 year-olds, by educational attainment							
2016							
Table A5.1	Short-cycle tertiary	79%		81%		**	
	Bachelor's or equivalent	85%		83%		**	
	Master's or equivalent	93%		87%		**	
	Doctoral or equivalent	**		91%		**	
	All tertiary levels of education	83%		84%		**	
Financial investment in education							
Annual expenditure per student, by level of education (in equivalent USD, using PPPs)							
2014							
Table B1.1	Primary education	**		USD 8 733		**	
	Secondary education	**		USD 10 106		**	
	Tertiary (including R&D activities)	**		USD 16 143		**	
Total expenditure on primary to tertiary educational institutions							
2014							
Table B2.1	As a percentage of GDP	**		5.2%		**	
Total public expenditure on primary to tertiary education							
2014							
Table B4.1	As a percentage of total public expenditure	16.3%		11.3%		12.3%	
Teachers							
Share of female teachers in public and private institutions							
2015							
Table D5.2	Primary education	79%		83%		76%	
	Upper secondary education	**		59%		54%	
	Tertiary education	48%		43%		42%	
Ratio of students to teaching staff							
2015							
Table D2.2	Primary education	33		15		19	
	Secondary education	**		13		16	
	Tertiary education	**		16		18	

The reference year is the year cited or the latest year for which data are available.

Refer to Annex 3 for country-specific notes and for more information on data presented in this key facts table (www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm).

** Please refer to the source table for details on this data.

Cut-off date for the data: 19 July 2017. Any updates on data can be found on line at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-data-en>



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