

Teachers' salaries

Teachers are the backbone of the education sector which is a crucial determinant of productivity and growth. Teachers' salaries represent the largest single cost item in the labour-intensive education system. Salaries and working conditions play an important role in attracting, motivating and retaining skilled teachers.

In most countries there are three categories of school teachers: primary, lower secondary and upper secondary. Salaries increase with qualifications, experience and job content, meaning the level of education they teach. The data presented here compare the starting, mid-career and maximum statutory gross wages of lower secondary teachers, who have the minimum level of training, in public institutions. However, international comparisons should consider that statutory salaries are just one, albeit major, component of teachers' overall compensation. Variations between countries in social benefits, both employers' social contributions and employees' social contributions, as well as bonuses and allowances can result in differences in total compensation. Moreover, teachers' salaries have not been adjusted for the differences in contractual working hours and holidays that may be relevant for national and international comparisons. However, these data can provide an indication of differences in the returns to teaching experience in OECD member countries.

The annual statutory gross basic wages of lower secondary teachers with 15 years of experience range from less than USD 15 000 PPP in Estonia, the Slovak Republic and Hungary to over USD 60 000 PPP in Luxembourg, Germany and the Netherlands in 2011. The average for OECD member countries reaches nearly USD 40 000 PPP. In Korea, Japan and Mexico top-of-the scale salaries are more than double the starting salaries. Salaries at the top of the scale are on average around 60% higher than starting salaries.

In general, teachers' gross wages are lower than the average annual gross wages for employees with a similar level of education (full-time, full-year workers with a tertiary education aged 25-64 years). In Spain, Korea, Luxembourg and Portugal, teachers earn more. In New Zealand, Canada, Germany and Finland, teachers' statutory salaries are almost equal to the average earnings of tertiary-educated workers. However, in the Slovak Republic, Iceland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy and Austria, teachers' salaries are considerably below the average earnings of workers with a tertiary degree.

Methodology and definitions

Statutory salaries refer to scheduled salaries according to official pay scales. The salaries reported are gross (total sum paid by the employer before tax) less the employer's contribution to social security and pension (according to existing salary scales). They are for a full-time teacher with the minimum training necessary to be fully qualified at the beginning of the teacher career, after 15 years of teaching experience and at the maximum annual salary (top of the scale).

Statutory salaries as reported in this indicator must be distinguished from actual expenditures on wages by governments and from teachers' average salaries.

Gross teachers' salaries were converted to USD using PPPs from the OECD National Accounts Statistics (database).

The relative salary indicator is calculated for the latest year with earnings data available. In this case, teachers' salaries represent those actually paid after 15 years of work experience. Earnings for workers with a tertiary education are average earnings for full-time, full-year workers in the age group of 25-64 years with education at ISCED 5A/5B/6.

Further reading

OECD (2013), *Education at a Glance 2013: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2013-en>.

Figure notes

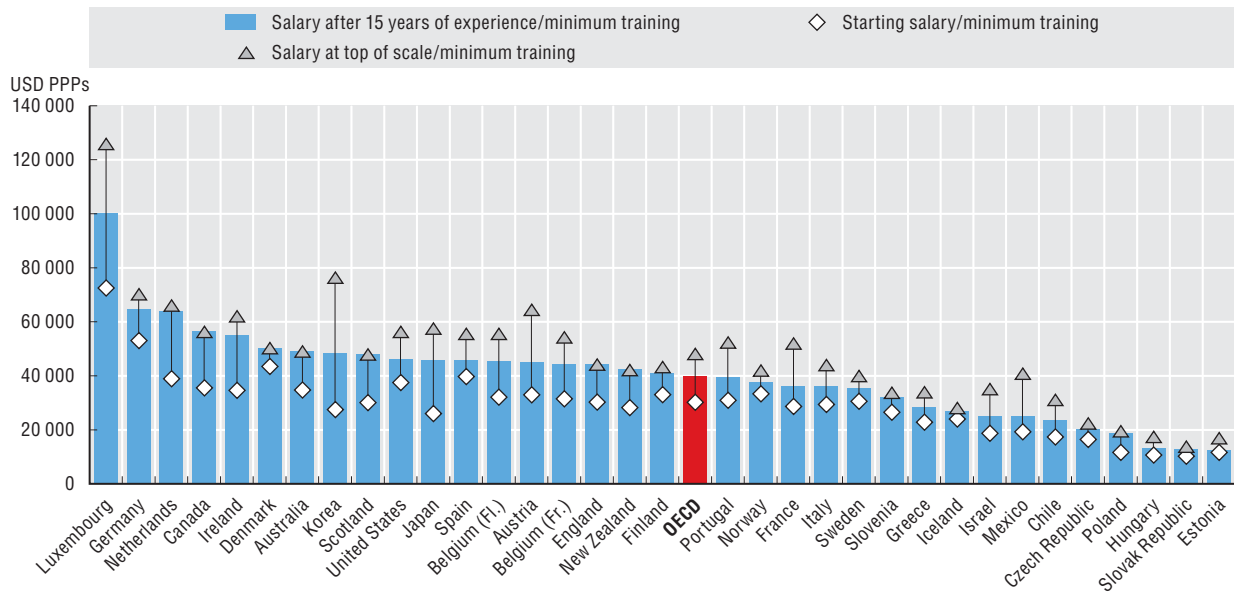
Belgium is presented as Belgium (Fr.) and Belgium (Fl.). The United Kingdom is presented as England and Scotland.

5.15: Data for Switzerland and Turkey are not available.

5.16: Data for Greece, Japan, Mexico, Switzerland and Turkey are not available. Data for Australia, Canada, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal and Spain are for 2010. Data for France are for 2009. Data for Iceland are for 2006.

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

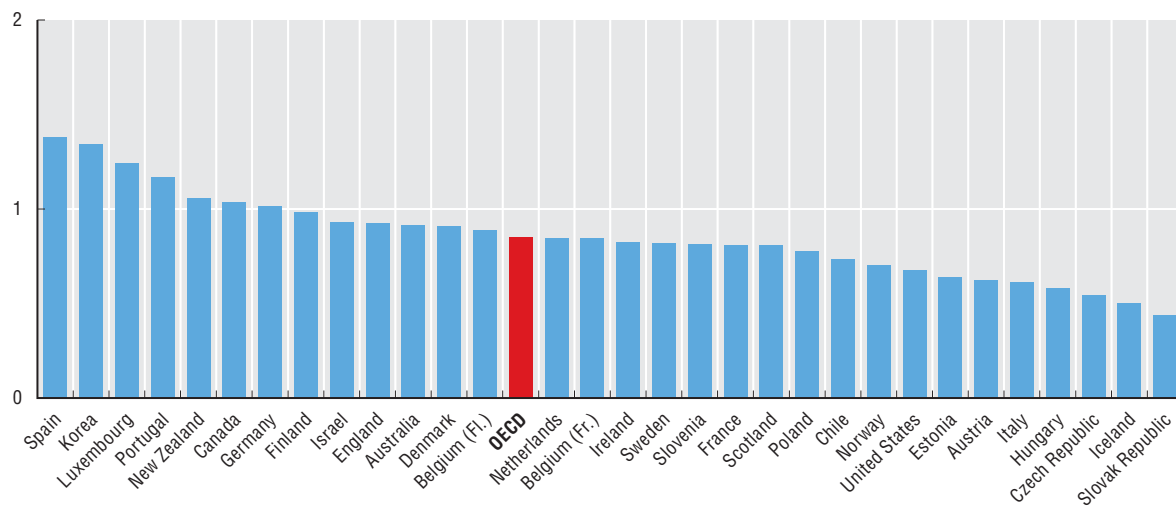
5.15. Teachers' salaries in lower secondary education in public institutions (2011)



Source: OECD (2013), Education at a Glance 2013: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2013-en>.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932942507>

5.16. Ratio of teachers' salaries to the earnings of tertiary-educated workers (2011)



Source: OECD (2013), Education at a Glance 2013: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2013-en>.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932942526>



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