



EDUCATION AT A GLANCE 2015

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 34 OECD countries and a number of partner countries.

United Kingdom

This Country Note focuses on five major topics covered in the 2015 edition of *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators*. These topics are: educational attainment, skills and participation in the labour market, equity in education and the labour market, financing of education, the teaching profession, and tertiary education (based on the new ISCED 2011 classification).

The table *Key facts for United Kingdom in Education at a Glance 2015* presents a summary of figures for the United Kingdom and the OECD average.

Financing of education (primary through tertiary)

The tertiary education systems in the United Kingdom are notable for their differing funding arrangements. In England and Wales, high tuition fees are accompanied by well-developed student-support systems. The level of grants and loans provided differs between countries; tuition fees for Northern Irish students in Northern Ireland are capped at a lower level, and Scottish students studying in Scotland do not pay tuition fees.

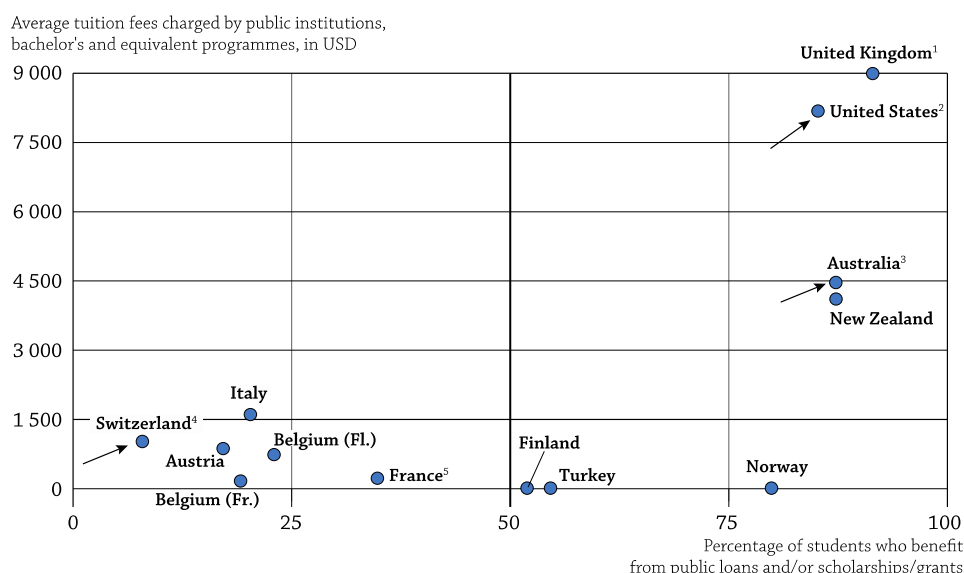
As part of a plan to stabilise university finances, tuition fees in England sharply increased in 2012. In parallel, student loan-repayment conditions were improved in order to accommodate the increase in tuition fees. As a result, since 1995 the United Kingdom has moved from a system marked by low tuition fees and underdeveloped student-support systems to one that includes high tuition fees and significant public support to students (Figure 3). Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the United States have similar systems. In these countries, despite relatively high tuition fees, access to tertiary education is above the OECD average. The entry rate in the United Kingdom was 58% in 2013, compared to the OECD average of 67%.

The great majority of bachelor's degree students in the United Kingdom – 92% of UK-domiciled full-time students – benefit from public loans or grants, and the average annual gross amount of loan borrowed by each student is high: USD 5 612¹ for maintenance loans and USD 10 824 for tuition loans. Moreover, loan-repayment conditions are relatively favourable in the United Kingdom, as it is one of the countries with income-contingent repayment systems and a relatively high minimum annual income threshold before

¹ Values reported in equivalent US dollars (USD) have been converted using purchasing power parities (PPPs).

borrowers have to repay the loan. Nevertheless, the average tuition fee remains much higher than the average student loan on aggregate across the United Kingdom, and nine of out ten graduates in England have debt from loans that average more than USD 30,000.

Figure 1: Average tuition fees charged by public institutions related to the proportion of students who benefit from public loans AND/OR scholarships/grants at bachelor's and equivalent level (2013-14)
 For full-time national students, in USD converted using PPPs for GDP, academic year 2013/14



Note: Arrows show how the average tuition fees and the proportion of students who benefit from public support have changed since 1995 further to reforms.

1. Tuition fees refer to England only.

2. Reference year 2011-12.


3. Only includes the major Australian Government scholarships programmes. It excludes all scholarships provided by education institutions and the private sector.

4. Swiss data refer to the financial year 2013 and the academic year 2012/2013.

5. Tuition fees range from USD 215 to USD 715 for university programmes depending from the Ministry of Higher Education.

Sources: OECD. Tables B5.1a and B5.3.

See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm).

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933284064> (Education at a Glance 2015, Chart B5.1)

Expenditure per student by educational institutions is almost 2.5 times higher in tertiary than in primary education.

Expenditure per student by educational institutions for primary and secondary education (including further education) in the United Kingdom is above the OECD average, but has increased less than in most other OECD countries since 2005. In 2012, expenditure per student on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education was only 8% higher than in 2005. However, the United Kingdom has one of the highest expenditures per student by educational institutions at the tertiary level: USD 24 338 compared with the OECD average of USD 15 028. Relative to per capita GDP, expenditure per student by tertiary educational institutions in the United Kingdom is the highest among all OECD countries with available data. Indeed, expenditure per student at this level of education is equivalent to two-thirds of per capita GDP, which is considerably higher than the second biggest spender, the United States, in which tertiary institutions spend 53% of per capita GDP per tertiary student.

Educational institutions in the United Kingdom receive a relatively high share of their funding from private sources, more so than in most other OECD and partner countries with available data.

Only 84% of expenditure on educational institutions in primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education comes from public sources, the sixth lowest percentage across OECD countries, and lower than the OECD average of 91%. Some 14% of private funding comes from household expenditure, compared with the OECD average of 8%. At the tertiary level, public sources finance 57% of expenditure on educational institutions, which is also below the OECD average of 70%. However, only 19% of funding for tertiary education comes from household expenditure, which is lower than the OECD average of 22%. It is worth noting that in the United Kingdom, given the cash accounting system, private contributions are lower than the actual contributions households and individuals will make in future through repayments of student loans.

The teaching profession

The salaries of teachers in England and Scotland are comparatively low at the start and end of their careers. However, when bonuses and allowances are included, teachers in both countries are better remunerated than teachers in most other OECD countries.

In both England and Scotland, the starting salaries of pre-primary, primary and lower secondary teachers are below the OECD average. In fact, teachers at every level up to upper secondary begin their career with the same salary in both countries. After 10 years of experience, however, teachers' salaries increase considerably, and exceed the OECD and EU21 averages across all levels of education in both England and Scotland. Indeed, in England, the salary increase for pre-primary teachers after 10 years of experience is the second largest, and that in Scotland is the fourth largest, across OECD countries with available data.

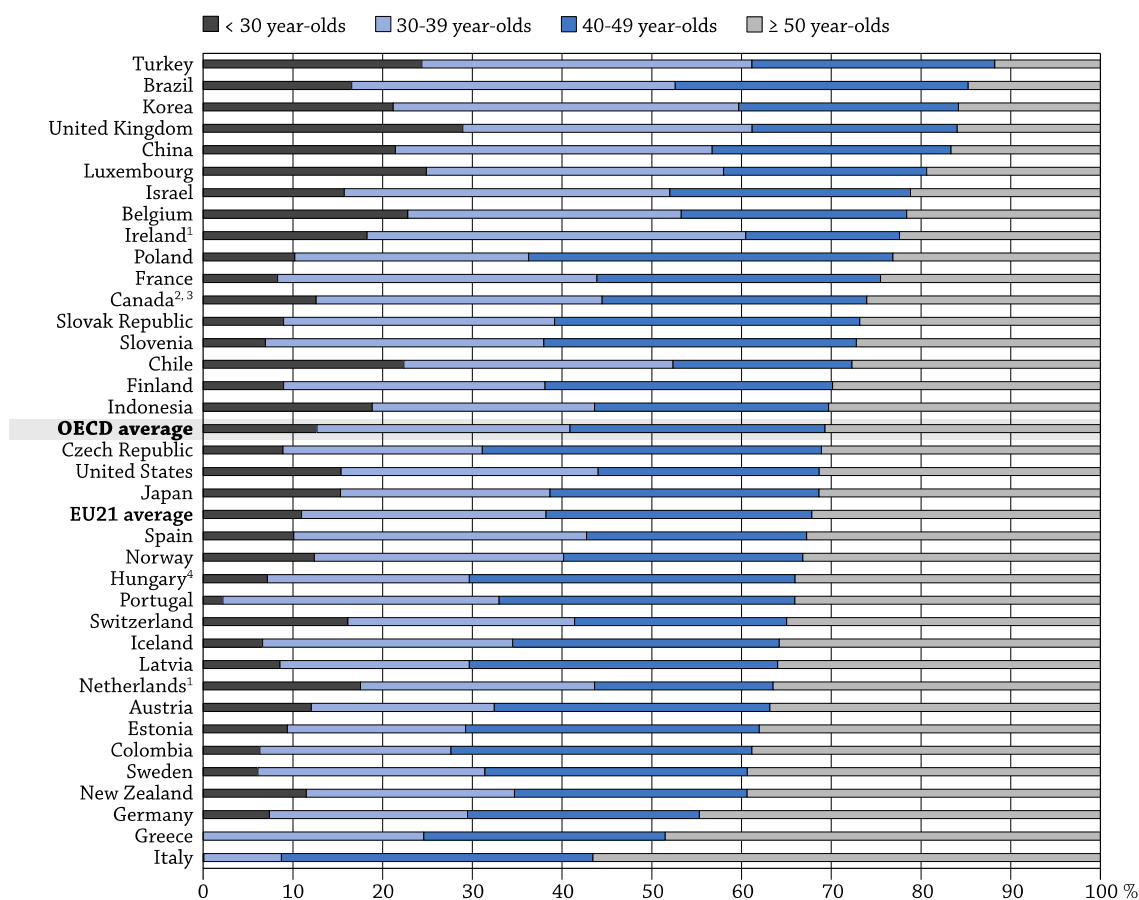
However, increases slow after 10 years of experience, such that the top salaries of teachers in England and Scotland lag behind those in other OECD countries. With the exception of pre-primary teachers in England, teachers' salaries at top of scale, at all levels of education and in both countries are below the OECD and EU21 averages*. But teaching careers in England and Scotland progress relatively rapidly: teachers reach the top of the salary scale after only 12 and 6 years, respectively, compared to the OECD average of 24 years.

When bonuses and allowances are included, the average salary of pre-primary to lower secondary teachers in England exceeds the OECD average, whereas upper secondary teachers earn below the OECD average. In Scotland, average actual salaries (including bonuses and allowances) of pre-primary and primary teachers are also above the OECD average, but lower and upper secondary teachers' salaries remain below the OECD average.

The teaching force in the United Kingdom has become younger since 2005 and is now one of the youngest among all OECD countries.

The proportion of secondary teachers aged 50 or older in the United Kingdom decreased by an average of 3% per year between 2005 and 2013. In 2013, 19% of secondary teachers were 30 or younger, compared to the OECD average of 10% and the EU21 average of 8%. The share of young teachers is even larger in pre-primary and primary education. In primary schools, nearly 30% of teachers are aged 30 or younger – the highest percentage across all OECD and partner countries with available data (Figure 2). The proportion shrinks to 22% in lower secondary and to 17% in upper secondary education, but remains considerably above the OECD average for both levels of education.


Figure 2: Age distribution of teachers in primary education (2013)
Distribution of teachers in educational institutions, by age group



1. Public institutions only.
 2. Year of reference 2012.
 3. Primary includes pre-primary and lower secondary.
 4. Includes data on management personnel.
 Countries are ranked in ascending order of the percentage of teachers aged 50 years or older at the primary level.

Source: OECD, Table D5.1.

See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm).

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933284530> (Education at a Glance 2015, Chart D5.1)

Equity

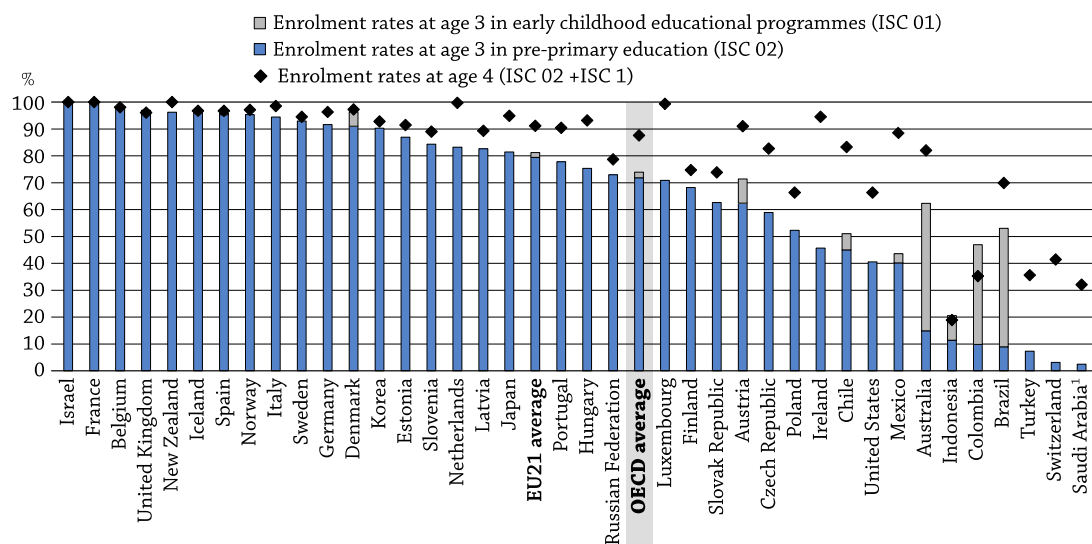
Early childhood education is nearly universal in the United Kingdom from the age of three, and it has a significant impact on reading performance later in life.

Enrolment in early childhood education in the United Kingdom is nearly universal starting at the age of three. In 2013, 97% of 3-year-olds were enrolled in pre-primary education, compared to the OECD average of 74% (Figure 1). Enrolment rates at ages 4 through 6 are equally high, attaining or exceeding the OECD average.

Attendance at early childhood education has a striking impact on learning outcomes later on. In the United Kingdom, the difference in reading scores in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) between 15-year-old non-immigrant students who had attended pre-school and those

who had not attended is the fifth largest among the 32 countries with available data. The performance gap of 52 points is equivalent to more than one year of schooling.

Figure 3: Enrolment rates at age 3 and 4 in early childhood education (2013)



1. Year of reference 2014.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the enrolment rates of 3 year-olds in pre-primary programmes.

Source: OECD, Table C2.1.

See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm).

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933284184> (Education at a Glance 2015, Chart C2.1)

Most students in early childhood education attend private institutions, and there is a relatively large share of expenditure from private sources when compared to other countries.

Of the students enrolled in early childhood educational development programmes, 72% attend either government-dependant or independent private institutions. In pre-primary education, 53% of students attend such schools – a proportion well above the OECD average of 39% and the EU21 average of 33%. Some 37% of total expenditure on early childhood educational institutions originates from private sources in the United Kingdom, which is again above the OECD (22%) and EU21 (17%) averages.

Parents' educational attainment is an important predictor of the level of skills and earnings of their children.

Adults whose parents had attained tertiary education are considerably more likely to earn more than adults whose parents had not attained that level of education. In England and Northern Ireland, the likelihood of being among the 25% top earners (measured in monthly earnings) increases by 15 percentage points when parents' highest level of education is tertiary compared with those whose parents' highest level of education is upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary. The difference decreases to 10 percentage points when accounting for adults' own educational attainment, but it remains significant and considerably above the average difference of 4 percentage points.

Similarly, in England and Northern Ireland, adults whose parents hold a tertiary degree are more likely to be highly proficient in literacy (by 6 percentage points, the same percentage-point difference as the average), and in numeracy (by 8 percentage points, compared to an average difference of 6 percentage points). These percentages have already taken into account individuals' own educational attainment,

meaning that the impact of parents' education on skills goes beyond its impact on their child's educational attainment. The importance of parents' educational attainment is notable in Northern Ireland, which shows the second largest difference (behind only the United States) in the likelihood of being highly proficient in numeracy if an adult's parents had attained tertiary education.

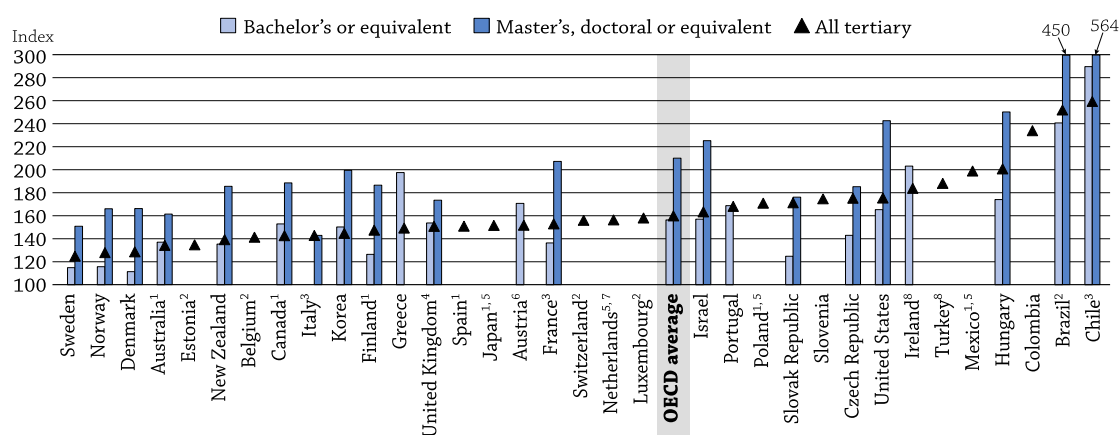
Older generations earn slightly more than younger generations with the same level of education.

Young men, aged 25 to 34, who completed tertiary education earn 47% more than those whose highest level of education is upper secondary. By contrast, tertiary-educated young women earn 63% more than those whose highest level of educational attainment is upper secondary.

The United Kingdom is notable for having one of the smallest differences in relative earnings between older (55-64 years old) and younger (25-34 years old) generations. In the United Kingdom, younger tertiary graduates earn 49% more than adults the same age who ended their education at the upper secondary level, while the income of those aged 55 to 64 who attained tertiary education is 58% higher than that of adults the same age with upper secondary as their highest level of attainment. On average across OECD countries, the earnings premium for holding a tertiary degree compared to an upper secondary one is 41% for younger generations and 77% for older adults.

Figure 4: Difference in relative earnings between older and younger tertiary-educated workers, by level of tertiary education (2013)

25-64 year-olds with income from employment; upper secondary education = 100



Note: Tertiary education includes short cycle tertiary, bachelor's, master's, doctoral or equivalent degrees.

1. Australia, Canada, Finland, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Spain: Year of reference 2012.

2. Belgium, Brazil, Estonia, Luxembourg, Switzerland: Index 100 refers to the combined ISCED levels 3 and 4 of the educational attainment levels in the ISCED 2011 classification.

3. Chile, France, Italy: Year of reference 2011.

4. The United Kingdom: Data for upper secondary attainment includes completion of a sufficient volume and standard of programmes that would be classified individually as completion of intermediate upper secondary programmes (18% of the adults are under this group).

5. Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland: Index 100 refers to the combined ISCED levels 3 and 4 of the educational attainment levels in the ISCED-97 classification.

6. Austria: Master's, doctoral or equivalent are included in bachelor's or equivalent.


7. The Netherlands: Year of reference 2010.

8. Ireland, Turkey: Earnings net of income tax.

Countries are ranked in ascending order of the relative earnings of 25-64 year-olds with tertiary education.

Source: OECD. Table A6.1a.

See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm).

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933283686> (Education at a Glance 2015, Chart A6.1)

The United Kingdom has one of the largest proportions of students who are enrolled in privately managed secondary institutions.

Over half of the students in lower secondary education are enrolled in privately managed institutions (52%), compared to an OECD average of 14%. In fact, this is the second highest percentage among all OECD and partner countries with available data, behind only Belgium, where 58% of students at this level of education are enrolled in private institutions. At the upper secondary level, nearly three-quarters of students are enrolled in privately managed institutions, which is by far the highest percentage among countries with available data and considerably higher than the OECD average of 19%. In both lower and upper secondary education, however, the great majority of students enrolled in private institutions in the United Kingdom studies in government-dependent private institutions, with only a small share of students (6% at lower secondary and 5% at upper secondary level) enrolled in independent private institutions.

The gender gap in educational attainment in the United Kingdom is extremely narrow at all levels of education. The gender gap in the labour market is also comparatively small.

Some 41% of men and 43% of women in the United Kingdom attained tertiary education. Among 55-64 year-olds, 35% of men and 34% of women hold a tertiary degree. This gap remains narrow, although it is inverted, between men and women who are 25-34 years old. A little over half of young women are tertiary-educated, while only 47% of young men are.

Women whose highest level of education is below upper secondary (7%) are slightly less likely than men with the same level of education (8%) to be unemployed. However, tertiary-educated men and women have equal unemployment rates (3%). The United Kingdom also shows a comparatively small gender gap in earnings. A tertiary-educated woman earns 77% of what a similarly-educated man earns, compared to the OECD average of 73%. The gap widens, however, among those whose highest level of educational attainment is upper secondary: women earn 71% of what their male counterparts earn, which is below the OECD average of 75%.

Tertiary education: Short-cycle, bachelor's, master's and doctoral programmes (based on the new ISCED 2011 classification)

International students represent a large share of the student body in the United Kingdom, particularly at higher levels of education.

The United Kingdom hosts a large international student community at all levels of tertiary education, but the share of international students sharply increases with each level. In 2013, international students represented 5% of those enrolled in short-cycle tertiary programmes, 13% of those in bachelor's or equivalent programmes, 36% of master's students and 41% of those earning a doctoral degree. These figures are either equal to the OECD average (in the case of short-cycle tertiary programmes), or considerably above the OECD averages of 6% (of students in bachelor's programmes), 14% (of students in master's programmes) and 24% (of students in doctoral programmes).

Some 54% of all international students in the United Kingdom are from Asia. Indeed, one in five international students comes from China. The United Kingdom also receives a large number of students from other OECD countries. Some 14% of all OECD students enrolled abroad study in the United Kingdom, the second highest percentage after the United States, which hosts 21% of them.

International students in the United Kingdom tend to be concentrated in the field of social sciences, business and law: 45% of all international students choose this field, compared to an OECD average 36%. The fields of sciences, and engineering, manufacturing and construction are tied for second place in popularity, both attracting 15% of international students.

The United Kingdom has the largest proportion of tertiary graduates in the field of sciences among all OECD countries, although the proportion varies across tertiary levels.

Some 38% of young people in the United Kingdom are expected to earn a bachelor's degree in their lifetime, and one-third of them are expected to graduate from those programmes before the age of 30. Some 15% of young people are expected to graduate from a master's degree programme and 1.7% from a doctoral programme. The United Kingdom has some of the largest shares of international graduates: 45% of graduates from master's programmes and 44% of PhD graduates are international students.

Of all tertiary graduates in the United Kingdom, 16% graduate in the field of sciences – the highest percentage of all OECD countries. When analysing only bachelor's or equivalent level programmes, one out of five students graduates from sciences, which is twice the OECD average for this level. At the doctoral level, one-third of all graduates earn a PhD in sciences, compared to the OECD average of 27%. While graduates in sciences are more likely to be men, in the United Kingdom around 46% of graduates in this field are women – a larger proportion than found in most other OECD countries.

Educational attainment, skills and participation in the labour market

The United Kingdom has a highly educated and highly skilled population, which is also less likely to be unemployed.

The tertiary attainment rate of adults aged 25-64 in the United Kingdom is comparatively high: 42% compared to an average of 36% across OECD countries; and tertiary-educated people in the United Kingdom show the lowest unemployment rates among OECD countries. Only 2.7% of those who earned a bachelor's degree were unemployed in 2014. The unemployment rate increases to 3.9% for those whose highest level of attainment is upper secondary and to 7.7% for those without upper secondary education. All of these rates are below the respective OECD averages.

Among people who have not completed upper secondary education, unemployment is significantly higher among younger generations. Whereas 5% of those aged between 55 and 64 were unemployed in 2014, the same was true for 14% of those aged 25 to 34. However, among tertiary-educated individuals, the generation gap closes, as older and younger generations have similar unemployment rates of around 2.5%.

The United Kingdom's population is also above average in its skills and readiness to use information and communication technologies (ICT) for problem solving. Some 34% of adults, at all levels of education, in England and Northern Ireland have good ICT and problem solving-skills, compared to the average of 32%. Some 53% of tertiary-educated adults and 30% of adults who have upper secondary as their highest level of attainment also have good ICT and problem-solving skills.

Among UK adults whose highest level of education is upper secondary, the employment rate is similar and comparatively high for both general and vocational programmes.

In most OECD countries, most adults with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education as their highest level of attainment have vocational qualifications. However, in the United Kingdom, where, in 2014, 19% of adults had attained upper secondary education as their highest level, the proportions of adults with this level of education who hold general or vocational qualifications are similar. More specifically, graduates of upper secondary vocational programmes tend to be concentrated in the fields of education, humanities and social sciences: 40% graduate from one of those fields, while 20% graduate from the fields of sciences and engineering, and 14% graduate from health and welfare.

The employment rates for both vocational and general upper secondary graduates in 2014 were similar and higher than the respective OECD averages: 81% for those with vocational qualifications (compared to the OECD average of 77%) and 79% for those with general qualifications (compared to the OECD average of 70%).

References

OECD (2015), *Education at a Glance 2015: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2015-en>.

* EU21 countries are those that are members of both the European Union and the OECD. These 21 countries are Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, the Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.


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Note regarding data from Israel

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and are 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.

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

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Questions can be directed to:

Corinne Heckmann
Directorate for Education and Skills
corinne.heckmann@oecd.org

Country Note authors:

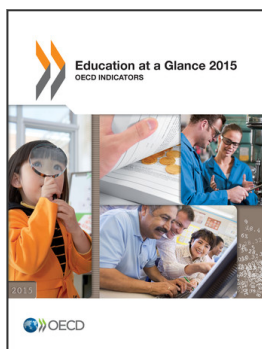
Diogo Amaro de Paula and Camila de Moraes
Directorate for Education and Skills
diogo.amaro@oecd.org
camila.demoraes@oecd.org

Key Facts for United Kingdom in Education at a Glance 2015

Table	Indicator	United Kingdom	OECD average
Educational Access and Output			
Enrolment rates			
		2013	2013
C2.1	3-year-olds (in early childhood education)	97%	74%
Highest educational attainment level of 25-64 year-olds			
		2014	2014
A1.4a	Below upper secondary	21%	24%
	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	37%	43%
	Tertiary	42%	34%
Highest educational attainment level of 25-64 year-olds (disaggregation at tertiary level)			
		2014	2014
A1.1a	Short cycle tertiary	11%	8%
	Bachelor's or equivalent	22%	16%
	Master's or equivalent	8%	11%
	Doctoral or equivalent	1%	1%
Entry and graduation rates			
		2013	2013
C3.1	Percentage of today's young people expected to enter tertiary education at least once during their lifetime	58%	67%
A3.1	Percentage of today's young people expected to graduate with a bachelor's or equivalent degree in their lifetime	45%	36%
Economic and Labour Market Outcomes			
Unemployment rate of 25-64 year-olds			
		2014	2014
A5.4a	Below upper secondary	7.7%	12.8%
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	3.9%	7.7%
	Tertiary	2.5%	5.1%
Average earnings premium for tertiary-educated 25-64 year-olds (upper secondary = 100)			
		2013	2013
A6.1a	Short cycle tertiary	123	125
	Bachelor's or equivalent	154	157
	Master's, Doctoral or equivalent	174	214
	All tertiary	151	160
Percentage of people not in employment, education or training (NEET) for 15-29 year-olds			
		2014	2014
C5.2b	Men	12%	13.2%
	Women	16.9%	17.9%
Financial Investment in Education			
Annual expenditure per student (in equivalent USD, using PPPs)			
		2012	2012
B1.1a.	Primary education	10017 USD	8247 USD
	Secondary education	10085 USD	9518 USD
	Tertiary (including R&D activities)	24338 USD	15028 USD
Total expenditure on primary to tertiary educational institutions			
		2012	2012
B2.2	As a percentage of GDP	6.3%	5.2%
Total public expenditure on primary to tertiary education			
		2012	2012
B4.2	As a percentage of total public expenditure	11.9%	11.6%
Schools and Teachers			
Ratio of students to teaching staff			
		2013	2013
D2.2	Primary education	21 students per teacher	15 students per teacher
	Secondary education	18 students per teacher	13 students per teacher
Average actual teachers' salaries			
		2013	2013
D3.4	Pre-primary school teachers	**	37798 USD
	Primary school teachers	**	41248 USD
	Lower secondary school teachers (general programmes)	**	43626 USD
	Upper secondary school teachers (general programmes)	**	47702 USD

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

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



From:
Education at a Glance 2015
OECD Indicators

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/eag-2015-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2015), "United Kingdom", in *Education at a Glance 2015: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/eag-2015-85-en>

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