

Indicator B1. Who participates in education?

Highlights

- On average, 63% of tertiary students across the OECD are enrolled in bachelor's programmes. Only in Austria, France and Luxemburg do bachelor's students make up less than half of all tertiary students. Enrolment rates in short-cycle tertiary programmes shows the largest differences across countries: 38% of students in Türkiye and 32% of students in the United States are enrolled in such programmes, while the share is below 5% in 14 other OECD and partner countries.
- Around one-fifth of tertiary students are enrolled on a part-time basis, but large differences exist across OECD countries. Studying part-time is especially common in many Nordic countries, Australia, New Zealand and the United States, where more than 30% of students study part-time. It allows students to obtain a tertiary education while pursuing a career or taking care of a family and is an important instrument for broadening access to tertiary education. However, in some countries like the Czech Republic, and Greece, less than 5% of students study part-time.
- In some countries, such as Chile, Israel, Korea, Latvia and the United Kingdom, 80% or more of tertiary students are enrolled in private institutions, although 71% of tertiary students are enrolled in public institutions on average across the OECD. However, the nature of private institutions varies widely across countries and the share of students enrolled in private institutions needs to be interpreted in the context of a country's organisation and regulation of the private tertiary education system.

Context

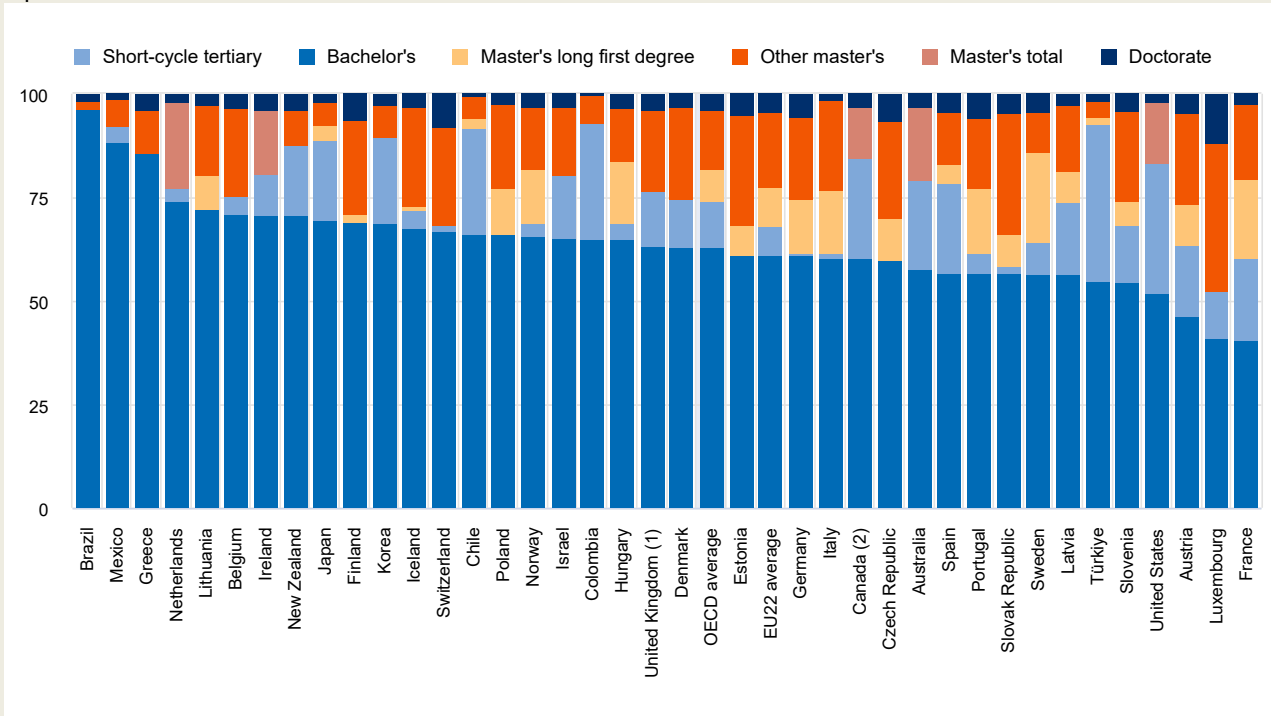
Pathways through education can be diverse, both across countries and within the same country. Students' experiences in primary and secondary education are probably the most similar across countries. Compulsory education is usually relatively homogeneous as students progress through primary and lower secondary education. However, recognising that people have different abilities, needs and preferences, most education systems try to offer different types of programmes and modes of participation, especially at the more advanced levels of education, including upper secondary and tertiary education.

Ensuring that people have suitable opportunities to obtain the skills for successful labour-market participation is a critical challenge. As tertiary attainment rates increase, the profile of tertiary students becomes more diverse and tertiary education has to prepare students for a greater variety of career trajectories. Tertiary education systems have responded to this challenge by offering new programmes (see also Indicator B4), which has led to significant differences across countries. Programme structures and durations differ, as do the shares of young adults enrolled in them. Similarly, the organisation of the tertiary education sector and the role of the state within it varies from country to country.

Despite increasing tertiary attainment, it is important to provide alternative pathways to successful labour-market participation. At upper secondary level, vocational education and training (VET) programmes can be a particularly attractive option for youth who are more interested in practical forms of learning and for those who want to enter the labour market earlier (OECD, 2019^[1]). In many education systems, VET may also serve as a route into higher level studies and also enables some adults to reintegrate into a learning environment and develop skills that will increase their employability.

To some extent, the type of upper secondary programme students attend will influence their educational trajectories. Successful completion of upper secondary programmes gives students access to post-secondary non-tertiary education programmes, where available, or to tertiary education. Upper secondary vocational education and post-secondary non-tertiary programmes, which are mostly vocational in nature, can allow students to enter the labour market earlier. At the same time, higher levels of education often lead to higher earnings and better employment opportunities (see Indicators A3 and A4), so it is important to build strong pathways from vocational programmes to higher levels of education

Figure B1.1. Distribution of tertiary students enrolled by education level (2020)
In per cent




1. Short-cycle tertiary level includes a small number of students enrolled in vocational programmes at Bachelor's and Master's level.

2. Excludes private institutions at short-cycle tertiary level.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the share of tertiary students enrolled in bachelor's or equivalent programmes.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2022), Table B1.2. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

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Other findings

- The gross enrolment ratio (GER) at tertiary education ranges from 20% in Luxembourg to over 100% in Australia, Greece and Türkiye. In almost all countries with available data, the GER is higher for women than men, except in Japan, Korea and Türkiye (Box B1.1).
- Students in most countries experienced significant disruptions to learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In half of the countries with available data for the 2019/20 academic year, schools were fully closed for at least 45 days at the primary and lower secondary levels, and 50 days at the upper secondary level (see chapter on COVID-19).

Analysis

Compulsory education

Periods of compulsory education vary widely across OECD countries. In some countries, early childhood education and care (ECEC) is compulsory, as early as the age of three. In other countries, education becomes compulsory only from primary education onwards, sometimes as late as at the age of seven. Likewise, compulsory education ends as early as age 14 in some OECD countries, while it lasts until 18 in many others (Table X1.5). The age at which compulsory education ends may depend on obtaining a particular qualification. For example, in the Netherlands students can leave education from the age of 16 if they obtain a basic qualification, but otherwise have to continue until they are 18. In countries with dual systems, such as Germany, the final years of compulsory education may be partly spent in workplace-based training (European Commission, 2021^[2]).

When compulsory education was first introduced during the late 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, it was often limited to comparatively short periods of primary education (Lee and Lee, 2016^[3]). Since then, the duration of compulsory education has increased gradually, a trend that has continued up to today. Austria made pre-primary education mandatory for 5-year-olds in 2010 and France introduced compulsory pre-primary education starting at 3 years old in September 2019. The upper age limit of compulsory education is also increasing. In 2015, the United Kingdom raised its school leaving age to 18, while in 2017 Austria made formal or non-formal education compulsory until the age of 18 unless students obtain an upper secondary qualification earlier.

However, compulsory education ages are at best only a rough indicator of typical enrolment patterns. In many OECD countries, enrolment rates are already high before the start of compulsory education and, in most countries, a large majority of students continue to study after the end of mandatory education (see Indicator B2). As a consequence, in more than half of OECD countries, the age period for which at least 90% of children and young people are enrolled exceeds the duration of compulsory education. For example, Korea and Slovenia have the shortest compulsory schooling period among OECD countries, from 6 to 14 years old (Table X1.5). However, for both these countries, at least 90% of the population are enrolled for an age range spanning 15 years (i.e. from 2 to 16 years old in Korea and from 4 to 18 years old in Slovenia), towards the top end of the range for OECD countries (Table B1.1).

Although most children and adolescents are enrolled beyond the period of compulsory education, there remain some who are not enrolled even when they are of compulsory education age. In more than two-thirds of OECD and partner countries, the enrolment rates of 6-14 year-olds are below 100%. In most cases, the share of children and adolescents who are not enrolled is in the low single digits, but a few countries have larger gaps (Table B1.1). For example, less than 90% of students aged 14 or older are enrolled in Mexico, even though compulsory education lasts until age 17 (see *Education at a Glance Database* and Table X1.5). Similarly, education is compulsory until the age of 17 in Türkiye, but enrolment rates among 16 and 17 year-olds are below 90%.

In some countries, grade repetition can have a significant effect on enrolment duration in primary and secondary programmes. The number of students who have to repeat a grade and therefore spend a year longer in a programme than usual varies widely across countries. While grade repetition is not universally used across the OECD, it is common in some countries, such as Belgium where 15% of upper secondary students are repeating a grade (OECD, 2022^[4]). Despite its popularity in some countries, the evidence suggests that the effectiveness of this tool is low (Goos, Pipa and Peixoto, 2021^[5]).

From compulsory education to tertiary education

In recent years, countries have adapted their upper secondary offer in response to growing demand for upper secondary education, student aspirations and labour-market needs. Vocational programmes increasingly need to include a strong general component, to equip young people with the skills required to learn and adapt to changing skills needs throughout their careers. Many countries have built flexible pathways from upper secondary programmes, including vocational ones, into higher levels of education and the labour market, as well as options for moving between vocational and general programmes. This growing complexity affects the educational trajectories of adolescents and young adults most strongly between the ages of 17 and 20 and is reflected in diverse enrolment patterns across countries.

Enrolment rates among 17-20 year-olds

On average, more than half of all 17-year-olds in OECD countries are enrolled in general upper secondary programmes, while 31% are enrolled in vocational upper secondary programmes. In a few countries, some students will enrol in tertiary education at that age, but the share is still very low except in Austria and Colombia, where 13% of 17-year-olds are enrolled in tertiary programmes. The age of 18 is when the greatest differences in participation are seen across countries. More than half of all 18-year-olds are enrolled in tertiary education in France, Greece and Korea, while in many other OECD countries tertiary enrolment is still close to zero. This is either due to a longer duration of primary and secondary programmes or a later starting age of primary education. For example, in Switzerland, children start primary education at 7 years old and end upper secondary education at 19. By age 19, tertiary enrolment rates are already peaking in some countries, but are still very low in others; in Denmark, only 6% of 19-year-olds are enrolled in tertiary education. By 20, the transfer out of upper secondary education is nearly complete in most OECD countries and enrolment rates for general upper secondary education and vocational upper secondary education are below 10% (Table B1.3).

As the age of students increases, the share of students enrolled in general upper secondary programmes decreases faster than the share enrolled in vocational programmes. On average, 55% of 17-year-olds are enrolled in general upper secondary education, compared to 8% of 19-year-olds. In contrast, 30% of 17-year-olds are enrolled in vocational programmes, compared with 15% of 19-year-olds. However, the variation across countries is large. In some countries, such as Korea, enrolment in vocational upper secondary education beyond the age of 18 is virtually non-existent even though it is not uncommon at earlier ages. In contrast, enrolment rates in vocational upper secondary education peak at the age of 19 in Australia (Table B1.3).

Different programme structures and possibilities of transferring between programmes explain the differences in enrolment patterns across general and vocational upper secondary education. In Germany, for example, a significant share of young adults with a general upper secondary qualification subsequently pursue a vocational upper secondary programme (Dohmen, 2022^[6]). These students tend to enrol at an older age than their peers who began a vocational upper secondary education immediately after completing a lower secondary programme. Thus, enrolment rates at this level remain high among older students, with 18% of 20-year-olds in Germany enrolled in vocational upper secondary education (Table B1.3).

In Norway, access to tertiary education usually depends on a general upper secondary qualification, but there are a variety of alternative routes to accessing tertiary education. For example, students in vocational programmes have the option to switch to a 1-year general programme after the second year, so that they graduate from a general upper secondary programme even though they started a vocational upper secondary one. Such specific programme structures and chances to transfer between programmes are common in many countries, leading to the diversity in enrolment rates. A noticeable outlier is Israel, where enrolment rates across all programmes are very low between the ages of 18 and 20, as most young adults are doing military service during this time.

Tertiary education

Typical enrolment ages

The diversity of programmes offered at tertiary level is even greater than in upper secondary education. This is particularly the case for short-cycle tertiary programmes. Such programmes are common in some countries, but very rare in others (Figure B1.1). Even within the same country, short-cycle tertiary programmes often include a wide range of different professionally oriented programmes that might be provided at different types of institutions, such as universities, community or vocational colleges and vocational schools. These programmes may provide initial preparation for an occupation but potentially also serve as a bridge into a bachelor's programme (e.g. associate degrees in the United States), or offer upskilling opportunities to adults with work experience. Short-cycle tertiary programmes frequently include elements of work-based learning (OECD, 2022^[7]). Their diverse nature is reflected in their wide range of typical enrolment ages. Enrolment usually starts in the early twenties, but typical enrolment ages can cover the thirties and even the forties in some countries (Table B1.2).

Bachelor's programmes are longer and are usually more theoretical in nature than short-cycle tertiary programmes. They last three to four years and are usually offered by universities. As they are often the first tertiary programme students enter after completing upper secondary education, the typical enrolment age is in the late teens and early twenties in most countries. However, in some countries, such as the Nordic countries, the typical enrolment age of bachelor's students stretches into the mid-thirties. In these countries, students are more likely to enter tertiary education for the first time after working for several

years (Table B1.2). In addition, some countries have developed bachelor's level programmes with an applied, practical focus. Examples include professional bachelor's programmes in Denmark, France and the Netherlands (OECD, 2022^[7]). Depending on whether students enrol in these programmes immediately after graduating from upper secondary education or after gaining work experience, the typical enrolment ages can vary.

Master's programmes tend to be second degrees that follow the completion of a bachelor's programme. Their content tends to be more specialised and academic in nature than the content of bachelor's programmes. Some countries have also developed master's programmes with a professional orientation, such as master professional qualifications in Germany, professional master's degrees in the Netherlands and federal examinations in Switzerland (OECD, 2022^[7]). Typical enrolment ages for master's programmes start in the early to mid-twenties. In countries, where students tend to enrol in master's programmes shortly after gaining their bachelor's degree, the typical enrolment age ends in the late twenties (e.g. in many central European countries). In contrast, in countries where master's students return to education after working for some time after earning their first tertiary degree, the typical enrolment age lasts into the thirties and forties (Table B1.2).

Long first degree programmes are often classified as master's programmes, although some lead to qualifications at bachelor's level. As the name suggests, these programmes are designed as a first tertiary programme following the completion of upper secondary education, but with a length of more than four years, comparable to a combined bachelor's and master's programme. Moreover, their content tends to be more complex and specialised than bachelor's programmes, thus justifying their frequent classification as a master's programme (OECD, European Union, UNESCO-UIS, 2015^[8]).

Doctoral programmes are the highest level of tertiary study. They require students to contribute original research and are usually only offered by research-oriented universities and other institutions. Usually, a master's degree is required to enter a doctoral programme (OECD, European Union, UNESCO-UIS, 2015^[8]). While the theoretical duration of doctoral programmes is usually from three to five years, many students need longer to complete their studies at doctoral level. This results in typical enrolment ages that last from the mid- to late twenties, into the late thirties and late forties (Table B1.2).

Box B1.1. Tertiary education's contribution to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Higher education is a core enabler of the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By having a significant impact on students' awareness and contribution to a prosperous society, tertiary education is viewed as a change agent and catalyst in the development of sustainability-related issues (Žalėnienė and Pereira, 2021^[9]). Having a tertiary education may also have a significant impact on future generations' mindset on environmental and social issues (see Figure A6.6 in Indicator A6).

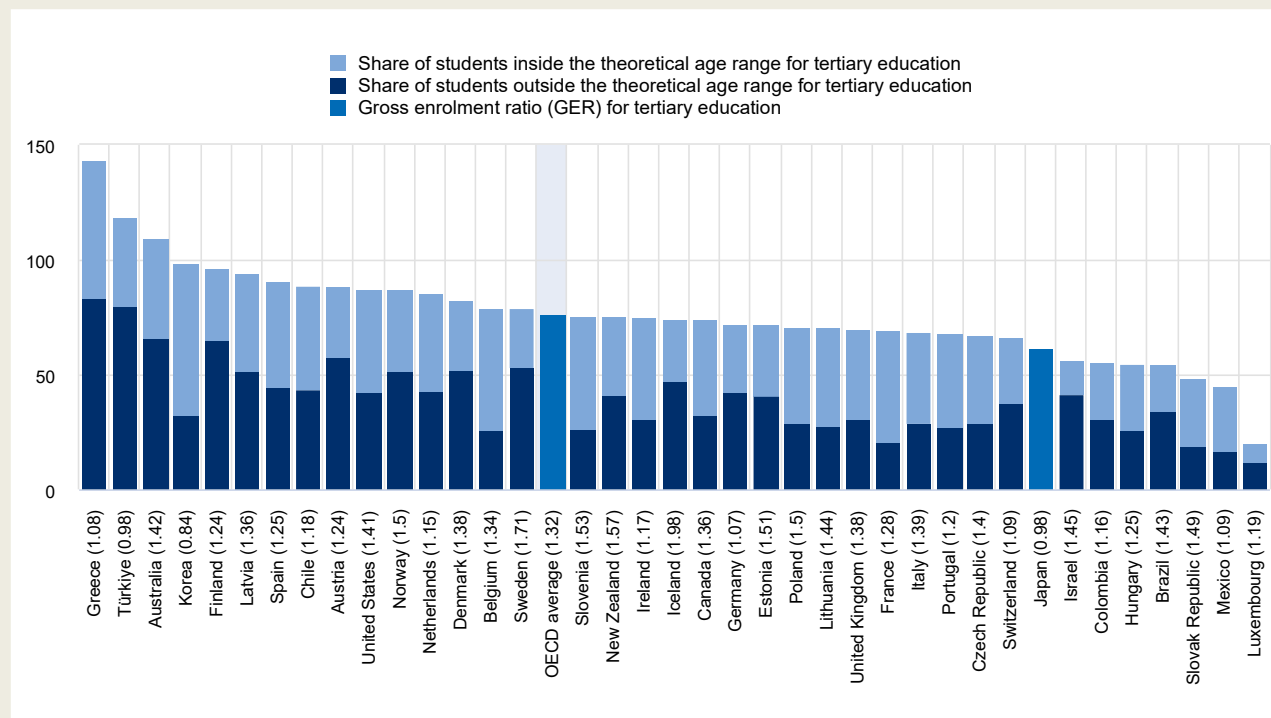
The SDG4 agenda recognises the central role of higher education through Indicator 4.3.2 on participation in tertiary education. This indicator measures the gross enrolment ratio (GER) in tertiary education as the total number of students enrolled in tertiary education – regardless of age – as a percentage of the population in the five-year age range immediately following upper secondary education (typically 18-22 year-olds, but this may differ from country to country). As a broad measure of tertiary participation, the GER may exceed 100% because it does not indicate whether students belong to the theoretical age group for tertiary education or not, but reflects the inclusion of over-aged and under-aged students due to early or late entrance and grade repetition. However, this indicator gives an indication of countries' capacity to accommodate all the students at a particular level of education.

On average across OECD countries, the total number of students enrolled is equivalent to 76% of the relevant population based on the theoretical age for tertiary education, although there are significant disparities between countries. The GER ranges from 20% in Luxembourg to over 100% in Australia, Greece and Türkiye (Figure B1.2). These results should be interpreted with caution, however, as gross enrolment ratios are a broad measure of participation in tertiary education that do not take into account the duration of studies, the existence of gap years, or the pathways through different types of tertiary programmes.

In some cases, the GER is particularly elevated due to the share of students outside the theoretical age group for tertiary education. In about one-quarter of countries with available data, the share of tertiary students who are over-age exceeds 60%. The smallest share of students outside the theoretical age group for tertiary education is found in France (30%), and the largest in Israel (74%) (Figure B1.2).

Figure B1.2. SDG Indicator 4.3.2: Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education (2020)

In per cent




How to read the chart: in Greece, the gross enrolment ratio, i.e. the total number of tertiary students is 144% of the total population aged 18-22 (the theoretical age range for Greece). The number is greater than 100% because many tertiary students are either younger than 18 or older than 22. The light blue section of the bar indicates the share of the population aged 18-22 enrolled in tertiary education (e.g. 60% in the case of Greece), while the dark blue section shows the number of students outside the theoretical age as percentage of the total population within the theoretical age (e.g. 83% in Greece). Where the share of students inside/outside the theoretical age group for tertiary education is not available, the overall gross enrolment ratio is shown.

Note: The theoretical age range represents the 5-year age group immediately following upper secondary education. If the official entrance age to upper secondary is 15 years and the duration is 3 years, then the age range for tertiary education is 18-22 years. However, this age group does not always capture the reality of the students' age range enrolled in tertiary education (theoretical age for tertiary education). In fact, master's and doctoral students are usually older than the theoretical age group. Furthermore, there are several reasons for a delayed entry to tertiary education (see Box B4.1 in Indicator B4).

The number in parentheses corresponds to the gender parity index, discussed below, where the numerator is the gross enrolment ratio for women and the denominator the ratio for men.

Countries are ranked in descending order of gross enrolment ratio (GER) for tertiary education in 2020.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2022). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

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In other instances, the GER is high even with a relatively small share of students outside the theoretical age group, which may be explained by other structural reasons. This is the case of Korea, for instance, which has a relatively small share of students outside the theoretical age group (33%) but a GER of almost 100%. In this case it is because a large majority of people within the theoretical age for tertiary education are enrolled in tertiary programmes. Another explanation for relatively high enrolment rates at tertiary level would be high incidence of international students. In Australia, for example, international students make up 26% of students enrolled at tertiary level (see *Education at a Glance Database*), which may in turn increase the GER.

The gender parity index is defined as the ratio of the female to male values of a given indicator. A ratio of between 0.97 and 1.03 indicates parity between males and females. A value of less than 0.97 indicates a disparity in favour of men, and a value greater than 1.03 indicates a disparity in favour of women (UNESCO-UIS, 2018_[10]). Across the OECD, the average gender parity index is 1.3, meaning that there are 1.3 enrolled women for every enrolled man.

In almost all countries with available data, the gross enrolment ratio at tertiary education is higher for women than men. The exceptions are Japan, Korea and Türkiye, where men outnumber women in enrolment at tertiary level. In Korea the

gender parity index is 0.84, meaning gender parity has not yet been achieved, whereas in Japan and Türkiye, the gender parity index of 0.98 indicates parity. Some background information may help contextualise these results. For example, in Korea, mandatory military service for men during college may explain longer enrolment at tertiary level. In contrast, gender disparity in favour of women is particularly significant in Estonia, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Slovenia and Sweden, where women are at least 50% more likely to be enrolled in tertiary education than men (Figure B1.2).

Distribution of tertiary students by education level

More than half of all tertiary students are enrolled at bachelor's level in all OECD and partner countries except for Austria, France and Luxemburg. Master's students are the second largest group of tertiary students, but their share varies considerably across OECD countries. The most noticeable differences across countries concern the share of students in short-cycle tertiary programmes, however. Although more than 30% of all tertiary students are enrolled in such programmes in Türkiye and the United States, the share is in the low single digits in many other OECD and partner countries. In some countries where enrolment in short-cycle tertiary programmes is common, such as Canada or the United States, it can play a similar role to vocational upper secondary education in other countries, by offering initial occupational preparation. In other countries, such as Austria, short-cycle tertiary programmes are part of "higher VET" and are commonly pursued after upper secondary vocational programmes. Overall, countries where enrolment in vocational upper secondary education is common among 18-year-olds also have on average a slightly higher share of tertiary students enrolled in short-cycle tertiary programmes (Figure B1.1).

Enrolment rates are an important metric for describing the student population but it is important to bear in mind that enrolment rates in longer programmes tend to be higher than enrolment rates in shorter ones because students are enrolled for a longer period of time. In the countries with the highest share of tertiary students in bachelor's programmes (Brazil and Mexico), bachelor's programmes last four years, whereas in the countries with the lowest share of bachelor's students (France and Luxemburg), they last only three years. Moreover, enrolment rates in Figure B1.1 are expressed as a percentage of all tertiary students. They do not take into account the substantial differences across countries in the share of young adults enrolling in tertiary education overall. For example, bachelor's students make up a smaller share of tertiary students in Australia than the OECD average, but a significantly larger share of young adults in Australia are enrolled in tertiary education than in most other OECD countries (Table B1.3).

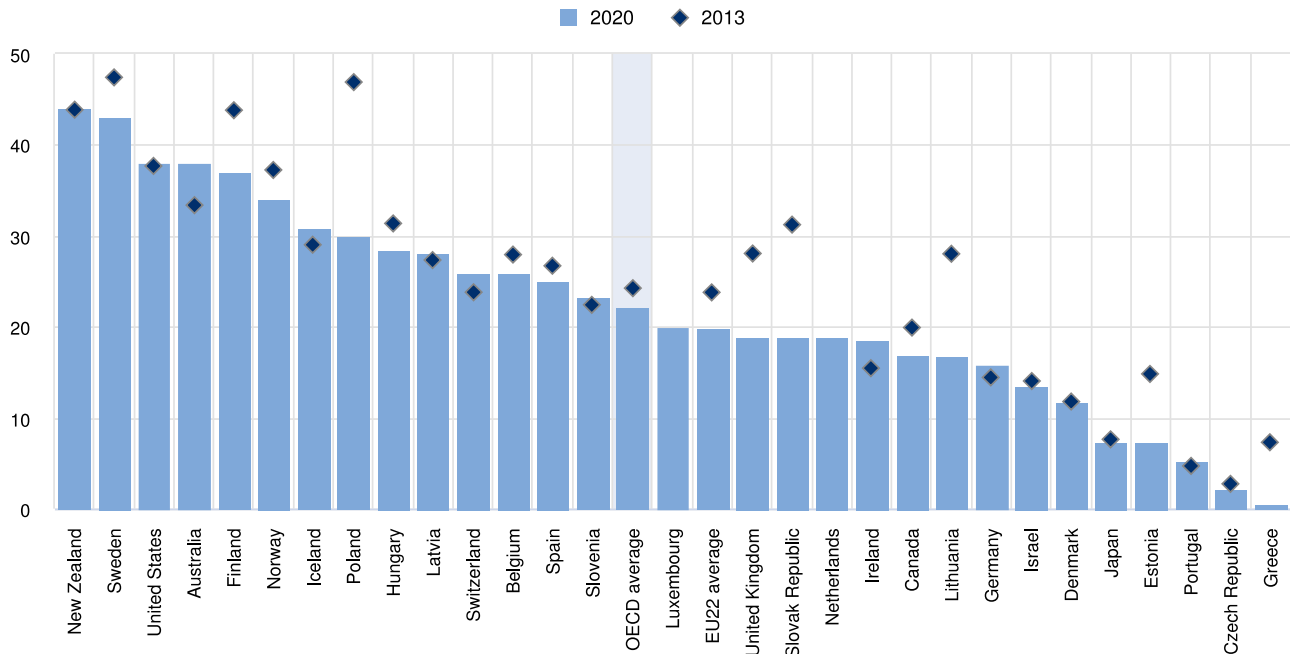
Share of part-time students

Studying part-time is common in tertiary education in most OECD countries: on average, 22% of tertiary students are enrolled on a part-time basis. It is especially widespread in the Nordic countries (except Denmark) and in Australia, New Zealand and the United States, where more than 30% of students study part-time. On average, also the share of part-time students has changed little between 2013 and 2020. However, several countries, such as Estonia, Lithuania, the Slovak Republic, Poland and the United Kingdom, have experienced declines in the share of part-time students of between 7 and 17 percentage points (Figure B1.3). The reasons for these declines are likely to be country specific and may include policy reforms to reduce support for part-time students or for on-the-job training programmes offered by employers. In the United Kingdom, decreases in the number of part-time students have been partially attributed to rising fees for part-time study and the removal of institutional funding for students pursuing second undergraduate qualifications, as well as the decline in employer support for part-time study (Bolton and Hubble, 2022^[11]; Tazzyman et al., 2019^[12]).

Students may choose to enrol part-time in order to combine their learning with work. Often, these students are from families with lower socio-economic backgrounds (Hayden and Long, 2006^[13]). In the United States, for example, 45% of students who were financially dependent on low-income parents were enrolled full time for a full academic year, compared to 57% of students who were dependent on parents whose incomes were above the federal poverty level in the academic year 2015/16 (Chen and Nunnery, 2019^[14]). Part-time students may also be older adults who are relying on their own earnings to fund their education (Heagney and Benson, 2017^[15]). They may also be parents with dependent children, who then have to manage – often costly – child-care obligations (Noll, Reichlin and Gault, 2017^[16]). For these students, it can be a financial impossibility to study full time. Part-time study therefore facilitates access to tertiary education for a broad range of students who may otherwise find it difficult to pursue further studies. Countries that experience large drops in part-time students or have persistently low rates of part-time students may be at risk of disproportionately excluding particular groups from tertiary education.


Figure B1.3. Share of tertiary students studying part-time (2013, 2020)

In per cent



Countries are ranked in descending order of the share of tertiary students studying part-time in 2020.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2022), *Education at a Glance Database*. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

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Distribution of tertiary students by type of institution

The share of tertiary students enrolled in private institutions varies dramatically across countries. It is 100% in the United Kingdom, but virtually 0% in Canada, Denmark, Greece and Luxembourg. While a few countries have large majorities of tertiary students in private institutions, the share is between 10% and 30% in most OECD and partner countries. Across the OECD, 29% of tertiary students are enrolled in private institutions on average, which is stable compared to 2013 (Figure B1.4).

There are important differences between private tertiary institutions. In some countries with high shares of students in private institutions, most of private institutions are government dependent. Even though they are organised as private entities, they obtain large shares of their funding through regular government contributions and governments retain a considerable influence over them. This is especially the case in Belgium, Finland, Israel, Latvia and the United Kingdom. In other countries, private institutions are financially less dependent on the government (see Indicator C3). They rely on various sources of private funding, such as tuition fees and donations. Many of these private institutions operate on a not-for-profit basis. However, some countries like the United States also have tertiary students enrolled in for-profit institutions (NCES, 2022^[17]). Due to this significant variety in the nature of private tertiary institutions across countries, Figure B1.4 should always be interpreted in the context of the private tertiary education system of a country.

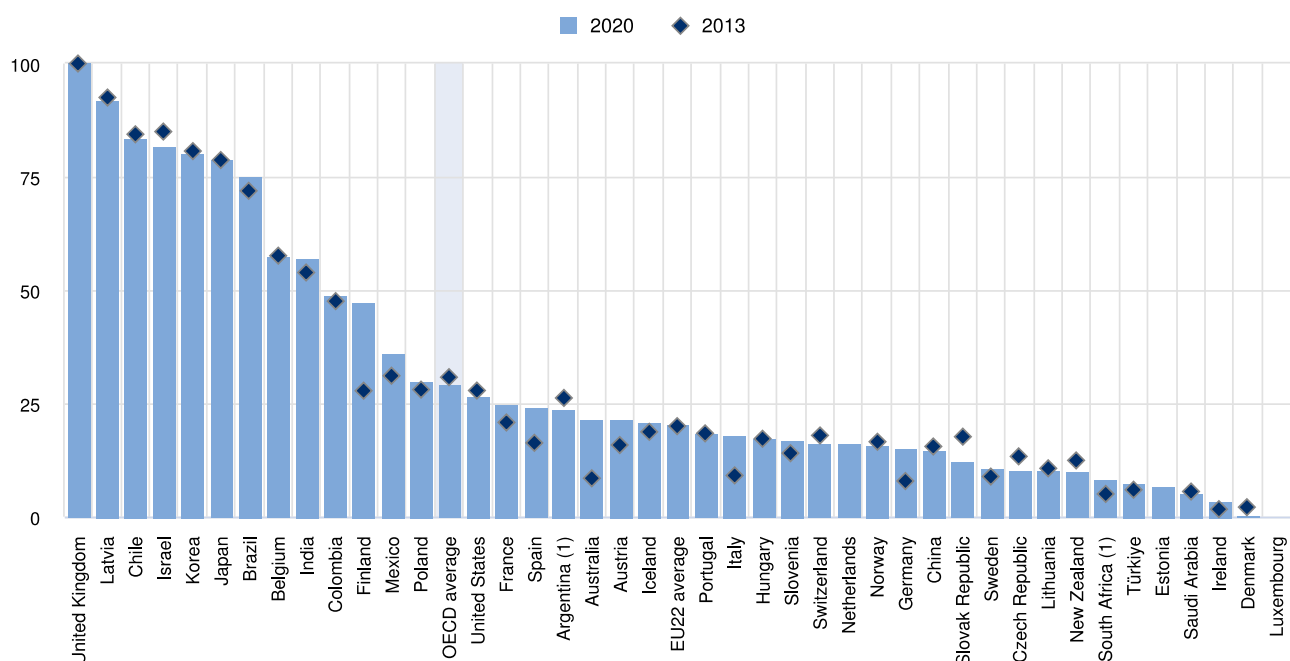
Giving tertiary institutions greater autonomy than they would have under direct government control is a major reason for having government-dependent private tertiary institutions. This was, for example, the motivation of a major reform in Finland in 2010 that transformed universities into independent legal entities (Aarrevaara, Dobson and Elander, 2009^[18]). This change in legal status is one reason behind the strong increase of the share of students enrolled in private institutions in Finland.

However, the character of the universities that were affected by the reform remains drastically different from other private institutions, such as for-profit universities.

A high prevalence of private tertiary institutions can have negative consequences for equity. In all countries with available data, typical tuition fees are higher for students in private tertiary institutions than in public tertiary institutions (OECD, 2021^[19]). The difference in tuition fees is especially important because public support, such as public grants and tuition fee waivers, might not always be available for students in private institutions. Moreover, public and private institutions may use different admission criteria, which can make it harder for marginalised students to access the private institutions even if they can afford it (Hossler et al., 2019^[20]).

Figure B1.4. Share of tertiary students in private institutions (2013, 2020)


In per cent



1. Year of reference 2019.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the share of tertiary students enrolled in private institutions in 2020.

Source: OECD/UJS/Eurostat (2022), Table B1.2. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

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Subnational variations in enrolment

Subnational variation in enrolment patterns are an important indicator of the equity of participation in education and can reflect equality of access to education and labour-market opportunities across a country. In most countries, subnational differences in enrolment are low among 6-14 year-olds (the age range which covers almost all compulsory education in most countries) and among 15-19 year-olds (when students start transition to the labour market or to tertiary education). Subnational differences increase among older age groups, however. Regional differences in 20-29 year-olds are relatively low in some countries like Denmark and the United Kingdom, where the difference between the highest and lowest enrolment rates across subnational regions are less than 10 percentage points. However, this difference in regional enrolment rates of 20-29 year-olds is over 60 percentage points in the Czech Republic, Poland, and Spain, while it is 94 percentage points in Türkiye. The highest enrolment rates for 20-29 year-olds are found in capital cities and regions in over 40% of the countries with data

available. This may be due to the fact that capital cities and regions are the largest urban area in their home country and thus attract a greater share of people pursuing tertiary education. Urban areas tend to offer better salaries and employment opportunities once students graduate, and to have more tertiary education institutions than more rural regions (see Indicator A1). There are also subnational disparities in enrolment among 30-39 year-olds. The variation is especially high in Türkiye, where the difference between the regions with the highest and lowest enrolment rates is 99 percentage points (OECD, 2022^[21]).

Definitions

The data in this indicator cover formal education programmes that represent at least the equivalent of one semester (or half of a school/academic year) of full-time study and take place entirely in educational institutions or are delivered as combined school- and work-based programmes.

Full enrolment, for the purposes of this indicator, is defined as enrolment rates exceeding 90%.

General education programmes are designed to develop learners' general knowledge, skills and competencies, often to prepare them for other general or vocational education programmes at the same or a higher education level. General education does not prepare people for employment in a particular occupation, trade, or class of occupations or trades.

Vocational education and training (VET) programmes prepare participants for direct entry into specific occupations without further training. Successful completion of such programmes leads to a vocational or technical qualification that is relevant to the labour market.

A **full-time student** is someone who is enrolled in an education programme whose intended study load amounts to at least 75% of the normal full-time annual study load. A **part-time student** is someone who is enrolled in an education programme whose intended study load is less than 75% of the normal full-time annual study load.

Methodology

Except where otherwise noted, figures are based on head counts, because it is difficult for some countries to quantify part-time study. Net enrolment rates are calculated by dividing the number of students of a particular age group enrolled in all levels of education by the size of the population of that age group. While enrolment and population figures refer to the same period in most cases, mismatches may occur due to data availability in some countries, resulting in enrolment rates exceeding 100%.

For more information, please see the OECD *Handbook for Internationally Comparative Education Statistics 2018* (OECD, 2018^[22]) and Annex 3 for country-specific notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

Source

Data refer to the 2019/20 academic year and are based on the UNESCO-UIS/OECD/Eurostat data collection on education statistics administered by the OECD in 2021 (for details, see Annex 3 at https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

Data on subnational regions for selected indicators are available in the OECD *Regional Statistics (database)* (OECD, 2022^[21]).

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Indicator B1 tables

Tables Indicator B1. Who participates in education?

Table B1.1	Enrolment rates by age group (2005, 2013 and 2020)
Table B1.2	Profile of students enrolled in tertiary education (2020)
Table B1.3	Enrolment rates from the ages of 17 to 20, by level of education (2020)

StatLink  <https://stat.link/0g3wcu>

Cut-off date for the data: 17 June 2022. Any updates on data can be found on line at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-data-en>. More breakdowns can also be found at <http://stats.oecd.org>, *Education at a Glance Database*.

Table B1.1. Enrolment rates by age group (2005, 2013 and 2020)

Students in full-time and part-time programmes in both public and private institutions

	2020								2013			2005			
	Number of years for which at least 90% of the population of school age are enrolled	Age range at which at least 90% of the population of school age are enrolled	Students as a percentage of the population of a specific age group												
			6 to 14	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 64	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 29	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 29	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)		
OECD	Countries														
	Australia	13	5-17	100	86	53	26	15	6	86	48	21	82	44	21
	Austria	13	4-16	99	80	36	18	6	1	79	35	18	m	m	m
	Belgium	15	3-17	99	93	48	13	6	3	92	51	18	94	42	15
	Canada ¹	12	5-16	100	73	36	11	5	1	73	33	11	m	m	m
	Chile	13	5-17	98	82	42	13	6	1	78	41	16	m	m	m
	Colombia	10	5-14	95	61	24	11	5	1	m	m	m	m	m	m
	Costa Rica	10	4-13	95	63	24	9	2	0	m	m	m	m	m	m
	Czech Republic	13	5-17	98	90	43	10	3	1	90	43	11	91	34	10
	Denmark	15	3-17	100	87	53	28	9	2	88	57	32	84	48	27
	Estonia	14	4-17	97	87	38	14	7	2	89	44	17	91	40	12
	Finland	14	5-18	98	87	48	29	16	6	86	51	31	87	55	30
	France	15	3-17	100	88	38	8	2	0	85	35	7	84	32	7
	Germany	15	3-17	99	87	51	21	5	1	90	48	21	88	41	18
	Greece	13	5-17	96	83	55	26	11	3	86	41	34	m	m	m
	Hungary	13	4-16	95	83	35	10	4	1	87	42	12	87	38	13
	Iceland	16	2-17	99	85	42	21	10	4	88	52	28	85	49	25
	Ireland	15	3-17	100	90	43	12	6	3	94	37	9	89	32	10
	Israel	15	3-17	96	67	21	19	6	2	65	22	22	m	m	m
	Italy	15	3-17	99	86	37	13	4	1	78	37	14	82	33	10
	Japan ²	14	4-17	100	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
	Korea	15	2-16	99	86	50	8	2	1	87	53	10	87	46	9
	Latvia	15	4-18	99	92	47	15	6	1	94	46	12	m	m	m
	Lithuania	15	4-18	100	94	43	10	4	1	94	52	15	98	49	15
	Luxembourg	13	4-16	99	78	20	6	2	0	78	20	6	m	m	m
	Mexico	9	5-13	99	61	26	9	4	2	54	21	6	48	17	5
	Netherlands	14	4-17	100	92	54	18	6	2	91	49	13	m	m	m
	New Zealand	12	5-16	99	81	41	18	12	5	82	40	18	74	41	21
	Norway	17	2-18	99	88	48	20	8	3	87	43	18	89	46	20
	Poland	15	4-18	97	92	47	11	3	1	90	56	13	92	50	10
	Portugal	14	4-17	100	90	38	10	4	1	88	37	10	74	35	12
	Slovak Republic	11	6-16	95	84	32	6	2	1	85	35	8	m	m	m
	Slovenia	15	4-18	99	94	55	12	2	1	93	57	15	93	50	17
	Spain	15	3-17	98	87	46	16	6	2	87	46	15	78	34	11
	Sweden	17	2-18	99	87	45	26	16	5	86	42	28	m	m	m
	Switzerland	13	5-17	100	85	42	18	5	1	86	38	16	83	31	13
	Türkiye ³	10	6-15	100	69	50	32	17	4	69	42	20	m	m	m
	United Kingdom	15	3-17	97	83	33	10	6	2	81	31	11	m	m	m
	United States	13	5-17	100	84	38	13	6	2	81	36	16	77	32	13
	OECD average	14	4-17	98	83	41	15	6	2	84	42	16	84	40	15
	Average for countries with available data for all reference years				87	44	15			86	45	16	84	40	15
	EU22 average	13	4-16	98	88	43	15	6	2	88	44	16	88	41	15
Partners	Argentina ⁴	13	4-16	100	76	42	22	m	m	72	37	20	65	30	16
	Brazil	11	5-15	96	70	26	13	8	3	69	24	12	m	m	m
	China	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
	India	m	m	90	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
	Indonesia ⁴	m	m	m	m	a	m	m	m	70	24	2	m	m	m
	Saudi Arabia	11	7-17	96	91	40	8	2	1	93	37	8	m	m	m
	South Africa ⁴	4	11-14	87	77	30	7	2	2	m	m	4	m	m	m
	G20 average	m	m	98	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m

Note: See *Definitions* and *Methodology* sections for more information.

1. Excludes post-secondary non-tertiary education.

2. Breakdown by age not available after 15 years old.

3. The 6 to 14 age group includes a number of students aged over 14 who are enrolled in primary education.

4. Year of reference 2019.

Source: OECD/Eurostat/UIS (2022). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

Table B1.2. Profile of students enrolled in tertiary education (2020)

	Typical enrolment ages ¹				Distribution of tertiary students by education level					Share of students enrolled by type of institution			Share of part-time students			
	Short-cycle tertiary	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate	Short-cycle tertiary	Bachelor's	Master's		Doctorate	Public	Private		Men	Women	Total	
							Total	Of which long first degree			Government-dependent private	Independent private				
							(1)	(2)			(3)	(4)				(5)
OECD	Countries															
	Australia	21 - 39	19 - 29	23 - 35	27 - 43	21	58	18	a	3	78	m	m	36	39	38
	Austria	18 - 26	20 - 28	24 - 34	28 - 39	17	47	32	10	5	78	m	m	a	a	a
	Belgium	20 - 32	19 - 22	22 - 27	26 - 35	4	71	21	a	3	42	57	0	28	25	26
	Canada ²	19 - 27	19 - 24	23 - 35	27 - 38	24	60	12	m	3	100	a	a	16	18	17
	Chile	20 - 31	20 - 26	23 - 37	28 - 38	26	66	8	3	0	16	14	70	a	a	a
	Colombia	19 - 30	19 - 27	27 - 40	31 - 46	28	65	7	a	0	51	a	49	a	a	a
	Costa Rica	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	a	m	m	m	m	m
	Czech Republic	20 - 25	20 - 25	22 - 28	27 - 36	0	60	33	10	7	89	2	9	1	3	2
	Denmark	22 - 36	22 - 30	24 - 30	27 - 36	11	63	22	a	3	100	0	0	11	13	12
	Estonia	a	20 - 31	23 - 36	28 - 38	a	61	34	7	5	93	0	7	8	7	7
	Finland	a	21 - 32	25 - 39	30 - 48	a	69	25	2	6	53	47	a	41	33	37
	France	18 - 21	18 - 22	20 - 26	25 - 34	20	41	37	19	2	75	3	22	a	a	a
	Germany	22 - 34	20 - 28	22 - 29	27 - 36	0	61	33	13	6	85	m	m	17	15	16
	Greece	a	20 - 34	26 - 42	29 - 45	a	86	10	a	4	100	a	a	1	1	1
	Hungary	20 - 25	20 - 29	21 - 29	26 - 37	4	65	28	15	3	82	8	9	25	32	29
	Iceland	24 - 43	21 - 32	26 - 43	29 - 48	4	68	25	1	3	79	21	0	28	33	31
	Ireland	22 - 44	19 - 23	23 - 41	26 - 41	10	71	16	m	4	96	0	4	18	19	19
	Israel	19 - 28	22 - 29	27 - 41	29 - 43	15	66	16	a	3	18	70	12	14	13	13
	Italy	20 - 25	20 - 27	22 - 29	26 - 32	1	60	37	15	2	82	0	18	a	a	a
	Japan	m	m	m	m	19	70	9	4	2	21	a	79	6	8	7
	Korea	19 - 22	19 - 23	25 - 42	27 - 45	21	69	8	a	3	20	a	80	m	m	m
	Latvia	21 - 37	20 - 29	23 - 33	28 - 43	17	56	23	8	3	8	69	23	25	30	28
	Lithuania	a	20 - 25	22 - 30	27 - 37	a	72	25	8	3	89	a	11	17	16	17
	Luxembourg	20 - 23	20 - 24	24 - 35	26 - 33	11	41	36	a	12	100	a	0	20	20	20
	Mexico	18 - 21	19 - 24	25 - 38	29 - 44	4	89	7	a	1	64	a	36	a	a	a
	Netherlands	20 - 29	19 - 25	23 - 34	26 - 32	3	74	21	m	2	84	a	16	17	20	19
	New Zealand	20 - 42	19 - 30	24 - 41	27 - 43	17	71	9	a	4	90	10	0	43	45	44
	Norway	22 - 34	21 - 35	22 - 33	29 - 42	3	66	28	13	3	84	6	10	31	36	34
	Poland	25 - 47	20 - 27	22 - 27	26 - 34	0	66	32	11	2	70	a	30	31	29	30
	Portugal	19 - 23	19 - 24	20 - 29	28 - 45	5	57	33	16	6	81	0	19	6	4	5
	Slovak Republic	20 - 29	20 - 24	22 - 27	26 - 39	2	57	37	8	5	88	1	12	17	20	19
	Slovenia	20 - 29	19 - 23	23 - 26	27 - 40	14	55	27	6	4	83	6	11	24	23	23
	Spain	19 - 31	19 - 27	22 - 32	27 - 44	22	57	17	5	4	76	2	22	25	25	25
	Sweden	23 - 36	22 - 36	22 - 33	28 - 41	8	57	32	22	4	89	10	0	40	46	43
	Switzerland	24 - 44	21 - 28	24 - 32	27 - 35	1	67	24	0	8	84	8	8	31	21	26
	Türkiye	21 - 34	21 - 33	22 - 30	28 - 38	38	55	6	2	2	92	a	8	a	a	a
	United Kingdom ³	21 - 41	19 - 23	22 - 37	24 - 38	13	63	19	a	4	a	100	a	18	20	19
	United States	19 - 31	19 - 26	24 - 39	26 - 42	32	52	15	a	2	73	a	27	36	40	38
	OECD average					11	63	22	8	4	71	12	17	22	22	22
	EU22 average					7	61	28	10	4	79	10	11	20	20	20
Partners	Argentina ⁴	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	76	m	m	m	m	m
	Brazil	18 - 31	20 - 35	25 - 39	28 - 41	0	97	2	a	1	25	a	75	a	a	a
	China	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	85	m	m	m	m	m
	India	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	43	m	m	m	m	m
	Indonesia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
	Saudi Arabia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	95	m	m	m	m	m
	South Africa ⁴	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	92	m	m	m	m	m
	G20 average					m	m	m	m	m	67	6	21	m	m	m

Note: See *Definitions* and *Methodology* sections for more information.

1. Typical enrolment ages correspond to the age interval which covers at least 60% of students at that level, from the 20th to the 80th percentile of the enrolled population whose age is known.

2. Excludes private institutions at short-cycle tertiary level.

3. Short-cycle tertiary level includes a small number of students enrolled in vocational programmes at bachelor's and master's level.

4. Year of reference 2019.

Source: OECD/Eurostat/UIS (2022). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

Please refer to the Reader's Guide for information concerning symbols for missing data and abbreviations.

Table B1.3. Enrolment rates from the ages of 17 to 20, by level of education (2020)

Students enrolled in full-time and part-time programmes in both public and private institutions

	Age 17				Age 18				Age 19				Age 20			
	Upper secondary		Post-secondary non-tertiary	Tertiary	Upper secondary		Post-secondary non-tertiary	Tertiary	Upper secondary		Post-secondary non-tertiary	Tertiary	Upper secondary		Post-secondary non-tertiary	Tertiary
	General	Vocational			General	Vocational			General	Vocational			General	Vocational		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
OECD	Countries															
Australia	82	6	1	2	21	11	2	34	3	13	3	48	2	12	3	50
Austria	24	50	0	13	12	33	1	29	3	19	1	32	1	10	1	32
Belgium	42	m	0	1	11	m	2	40	3	m	3	53	2	m	4	56
Canada	72	m	m	3	18	m	m	38	6	m	m	45	3	m	m	46
Chile	64	28	a	0	21	12	a	31	6	4	a	51	3	1	a	52
Colombia	22	8	0	13	12	3	0	23	6	1	0	27	3	0	0	28
Costa Rica	m	m	a	1	m	m	a	9	m	m	a	13	m	m	a	14
Czech Republic	m	66	m	0	m	59	m	1	m	33	m	26	m	11	m	44
Denmark	67	14	a	0	72	15	a	1	40	14	a	6	12	13	a	17
Estonia	65	24	0	0	63	22	0	1	17	13	1	25	3	8	2	35
Finland	53	43	0	0	52	43	0	1	9	20	0	14	3	14	0	25
France	59	32	0	6	11	18	0	51	2	8	0	57	0	5	0	52
Germany	51	19	4	1	33	24	8	9	12	23	11	22	3	18	13	30
Greece	69	m	0	2	3	m	1	52	1	m	12	54	0	m	14	52
Hungary	42	44	0	0	37	28	5	6	13	8	15	25	4	3	10	34
Iceland	78	13	0	0	71	11	0	1	34	10	0	14	15	8	1	24
Ireland	86	4	0	3	44	10	2	25	2	9	4	53	0	4	5	55
Israel	54	37	0	1	10	7	1	9	1	0	1	14	1	0	1	16
Italy	45	47	0	0	38	41	0	5	5	14	0	37	1	5	0	41
Japan	76	21	0	0	2	0	1	m	1	0	0	m	m	m	m	m
Korea	65	14	a	1	11	2	a	64	0	0	a	78	0	0	a	70
Latvia	58	33	0	1	56	29	0	5	10	25	2	39	4	6	3	48
Lithuania	78	15	0	1	72	16	1	6	4	14	7	46	2	3	6	50
Luxembourg	34	43	0	0	24	45	0	2	6	33	0	6	2	20	0	9
Mexico	35	21	a	5	10	7	a	25	3	2	a	32	1	1	a	32
Netherlands	33	43	a	8	13	44	a	27	3	34	a	40	1	23	a	46
New Zealand	74	8	4	2	18	8	10	29	3	6	11	39	1	4	11	41
Norway	54	41	0	0	62	29	0	0	7	32	0	18	5	16	0	34
Poland	43	50	0	1	44	46	0	3	8	35	2	34	6	3	5	47
Portugal	57	35	0	0	20	27	0	34	7	14	0	44	3	7	0	47
Slovak Republic	27	55	0	1	26	51	2	2	11	23	4	21	1	5	3	34
Slovenia	33	63	a	0	32	59	a	1	4	26	a	56	1	13	a	58
Spain	65	22	0	0	15	19	0	41	6	13	0	51	3	8	0	51
Sweden	65	32	0	0	62	32	0	1	16	12	1	15	12	8	1	22
Switzerland	35	54	0	0	26	51	1	5	14	33	1	13	7	17	1	23
Türkiye	46	36	a	0	13	12	a	13	6	4	a	34	4	2	a	48
United Kingdom	40	39	a	3	4	21	a	38	0	13	a	48	0	8	a	49
United States	89	a	0	2	29	a	2	40	5	a	3	53	0	a	3	50
OECD average	55	31	0	2	30	25	1	19	8	15	2	35	3	8	2	39
EU22 average	52	37	0	2	35	33	1	16	9	20	3	34	3	9	3	40
Partners																
Argentina ¹	72	a	a	1	29	a	a	19	11	a	a	36	3	a	a	39
Brazil	57	6	1	0	26	3	2	14	13	1	2	20	7	1	2	21
China	m	m	m	5	m	m	m	30	m	m	m	45	m	m	m	41
India	36	0	0	m	15	1	1	m	5	1	1	m	2	2	2	m
Indonesia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Saudi Arabia	99	1	m	2	26	0	m	40	9	0	m	52	4	0	m	47
South Africa ¹	58	0	0	2	57	1	1	8	38	4	3	12	24	5	5	12
G20 average	60	16	0	4	20	10	1	32	7	6	2	43	3	4	2	43

Note: See *Definitions* and *Methodology* sections for more information.

1. Year of reference 2019.

Source: OECD/Eurostat/UIS (2022). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

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