

EDUCATION AT A GLANCE 2013

BELGIUM

Upper secondary attainment is high in Belgium, with a high proportion in a vocational programme

In 2011, almost three out of four Belgians have at least an upper secondary education: 71% of 25-64 year-olds compared with the OECD average of 75%. The younger generation is doing even better: 82% of 25-34 year-olds hold at least an upper secondary qualification, equal to the OECD average. Given current graduation patterns, it is expected that 68% of young people in Belgium will complete an upper secondary level vocational qualification in their lifetime, high compared with the OECD average of 47%.

Programme orientation can make a significant difference when it comes to finding a job. In the context of the economic crisis and worsening labour market conditions, upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) offers young people the chance to acquire the skills, knowledge and practical experience relevant for specialised occupations, and helps to prepare them for entry into the labour market. In fact, in Belgium, there is a 7 percentage point difference in employment rates between those who graduated from vocational programmes and those who hold a general qualification (76% versus 69%) similar to the OECD average of 76% and 70% respectively.

A well-funded education system, mostly from public sources

Belgium ranks eighth among OECD countries for levels of expenditure from primary through to tertiary education, spending USD 11 028 per student per year compared with an OECD average of USD 9 308. The comparatively high annual expenditure per pupil at the secondary level (USD 11 004, compared with an OECD average of USD 8 998) is linked to both high teachers' salaries and a low student-to-teacher ratio.¹

At 5%, the share of private expenditure on all levels of education in Belgium is one of the lowest among OECD countries where the average share is 16%. Private expenditure on pre-primary education is 4%, very small in comparison with the OECD average of 18% while at tertiary level, only 10% of all spending came from private sources. Again, this proportion of private spending is much lower than most of the OECD countries: on average, across OECD countries, 32% of total expenditure on tertiary education came from private sources while across the EU21 countries the average is 23%.

Four years into the recession, Belgians are still working...

While the unemployment rate in Belgium increased during the period from 2008-11, it did so far less steeply than in other European countries. For adults with a tertiary education, unemployment

¹ The student-to-teacher ratio takes into account the whole teacher staff even those not currently teaching (for example on sick leave or on secondment). The student-to-teacher ratio is a different concept than class size

increased by only 0.2 percentage points (reaching 3.4% by 2011), an insignificant increase when compared with the average increases across the OECD (1.5 percentage points; 4.8% in 2011) and EU21 (2.0 percentage points; 5.2% in 2011) countries. At the same time, for those without an upper secondary education, it increased by 1.2 percentage points (12.1% in 2011), still way below the average increases among both the OECD (3.8 percentage points; 12.6% in 2011) and EU21 (5.1 percentage points; 15.6%) countries.

...but more students without qualifications are left out

Among the 15-29 year-olds in Belgium, 47% were students, 43% employed and 13% not employed, compared with the OECD average of 47%, 37% and 16% respectively. During the period 2008-11, many young adults decided to postpone their entry into an insecure labour market and stay in education. On average among OECD countries, the percentage of students in the 15-29 year-old population increased by 2 percentage points at each level of education over this period. In Belgium, this was also the case for students with upper secondary education (an increase of 5 percentage points to 44%) and with tertiary education (an increase of 3 percentage points to 21%). The situation is reversed for less-educated individuals of which the percentage who continued in education decreased by 2 percentage points, to reach 66% (compared with the OECD average of 68%) and the percentage neither employed, nor in education and training increased by 2 percentage points, up to 18% (compared with the OECD average of 16%).

Other findings:

- Virtually all 3 and 4-year-olds are enrolled in early childhood education in Belgium, compared with average enrolment rates of 68% and 83% respectively across OECD countries. Early childhood enrolments are split almost evenly between public (47%) and government-dependent private institutions (53%).
- Over the past decades, tertiary education has expanded, leading to a significant improvement in the educational attainment of younger generations, with 42% of 25-34 year-olds holding a tertiary degree, higher than the average across EU21 countries of 36% for the same cohort. By contrast, only 25% of 55-64 year-olds attained a tertiary education in Belgium, although this is again higher than both the OECD (24%) and EU21 (21%) average.
- In 2011 more women (37%) had attained tertiary education than men (32%). Furthermore, over the last decade the average annual growth rate of attainment at tertiary level is increasing faster among women (3.5%) than among men (2.6%), and at a similar rate to the average increase across the OECD (4% among women and 2.4% among men).

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**For more information on *Education at a Glance 2013*,
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Key Facts for Belgium in Education at a Glance 2013

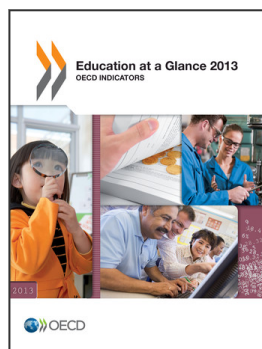
Table	Indicator	Belgium		OECD average		EU21 average		Rank among OECD countries and other G20 countries*
Educational Access and Output								
	Enrolment rates	2011	2005	2011	2005	2011	2005	
C2.1	3-year-olds (in early childhood education)	98%	100%	67%	64%	77%	73%	1 of 36
	4-year-olds (in early childhood and primary education)	99%	100%	84%	79%	90%	84%	5 of 36
C1.1a	5-14 year-olds (all levels)	99%		99%		98%		21 of 38
	Percentage of population that has attained below upper secondary education	2011	2000	2011	2000	2011	2000	
A1.4a	25-64 year-olds	29%	41%	26%	34%	25%	34%	9 of 35
	Percentage of population that has attained upper secondary education	2011	2000	2011	2000	2011	2000	
A1.4a	25-64 year-olds	37%	31%	44%	44%	48%	46%	27 of 36
	Percentage of population that has attained tertiary education	2011	2000	2011	2000	2011	2000	
A1.3a A1.4a	25-64 year-olds	35%	27%	31%	22%	28%	20%	17 of 36
	30-34 year-olds	43%		39%		37%		16 of 34
	25-34 year-olds	42%	36%	39%	26%	36%	24%	15 of 36
	55-64 year-olds	25%	17%	24%	15%	21%	14%	18 of 36
	Entry rates into tertiary education	2011	2000	2011	2000	2011	2000	
C3.1a	Vocational programmes (Tertiary-type B)	38%	m	19%	16%	15%	11%	3 of 32
	University programmes (Tertiary-type A)	33%	m	60%	48%	59%	46%	34 of 36
	Graduation rates	2011	2000	2011	2000	2011	2000	
A2.1a	Percentage of today's young people expected to complete upper secondary education in their lifetime	m	m	83%	76%	83%	77%	m
A3.1a	Percentage of today's young people expected to complete university education (tertiary-type A) in their lifetime	m	m	39%	28%	41%	27%	m
Economic and Labour Market Outcomes								
	Unemployment rate of 25-64 year-olds - Men and Women	2011	2008	2011	2008	2011	2008	
A5.4b	Below upper secondary	12.1%	10.8%	12.6%	8.8%	15.6%	10.4%	15 of 35
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	5.7%	5.7%	7.3%	4.9%	8.5%	5.2%	23 of 36
	Tertiary	3.4%	3.2%	4.8%	3.3%	5.2%	3.2%	26 of 36
	Unemployment rate of 25-64 year-olds - Women	2011	2008	2011	2008	2011	2008	
A5.4d	Below upper secondary	12.2%	12.2%	12.2%	9.5%	15.1%	11.0%	15 of 35
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	6.7%	7.3%	8.0%	5.7%	9.1%	6.1%	17 of 35
	Tertiary	3.3%	3.2%	5.1%	3.6%	5.5%	3.6%	29 of 36
	Average earnings premium for 25-64 year-olds with tertiary education**	2011 or latest year available		2011		2011		
A6.1	Men and women	129		157		158		29 of 33
	Men	129		162		164		32 of 33
	Women	134		161		161		29 of 33
	Average earnings penalty for 25-64 year-olds who have not attained upper secondary education**	2011 or latest year available		2011		2011		
A6.1	Men and women	91		76		77		2 of 33
	Men	92		77		78		1 of 33
	Women	84		74		75		4 of 33
	Percentage of people not in employment, education or training for 15-29 year-olds, by level of education attained	2011	2008	2011	2008	2011	2008	
C5.4d	Below upper secondary	18.3%	16.3%	15.8%	14.4%	15.3%	13.5%	13 of 34
	Upper secondary	13.0%	10.5%	16.2%	13.6%	15.1%	11.8%	20 of 34
	Tertiary	8.0%	7.3%	13.3%	10.6%	12.3%	9.6%	27 of 34

Key Facts for Belgium in Education at a Glance 2013

Table	Indicator	Belgium		OECD average		EU21 average		Rank among OECD countries and other G20 countries*
Financial Investment in Education								
	Annual expenditure per student (in equivalent USD, using PPPs)	2010		2010		2010		
B1.1a	Pre-primary education	6024 USD		6762 USD		7085 USD		17 of 32
	Primary education	8852 USD		7974 USD		8277 USD		13 of 34
	Secondary education	11004 USD		9014 USD		9471 USD		9 of 34
	Tertiary education	15179 USD		13528 USD		12856 USD		12 of 33
	Total expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	
B2.1	As a percentage of GDP	6.6%	6.1%	6.3%	5.4%	5.9%	5.2%	9 of 33
	Total public expenditure on education	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	
B4.1	As a percentage of total public expenditure	12.5%	12.0%	13.0%	12.6%	11.4%	11.4%	16 of 32
	Share of private expenditure on educational institutions	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	
B3.2a	Pre-primary education	3.6%		17.9%		11.3%		25 of 28
B3.2a	Primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education	4.0%	5.3%	8.5%	7.1%	6.1%	5.6%	22 of 31
B3.2b	Tertiary education	10.2%	8.5%	31.6%	22.6%	22.7%	14.3%	25 of 30
B3.1	All levels of education	5.2%	5.7%	16.4%	12.1%	10.7%	7.9%	27 of 29
Schools and Teachers								
	Ratio of students to teaching staff	2011		2011		2011		
D2.2	Pre-primary education	16 students per teacher		14 students per teacher		13 students per teacher		11 of 31
	Primary education	12 students per teacher		15 students per teacher		14 students per teacher		25 of 35
	Secondary education	9 students per teacher		14 students per teacher		12 students per teacher		33 of 36
	Total intended instruction time for students (hours)	2011		2011		2011		
D1.1	Primary education	m		4717 hours		m		m
	Lower secondary education	m		3034 hours		m		m
	Number of hours of teaching time per year (for teachers in public institutions)	2011	2000	2011	2000	2011	2000	
D4.2	Pre-primary education	m		994 hours		977 hours		m
	Primary education	m	m	790 hours	780 hours	777 hours	776 hours	m
	Lower secondary education	m	m	709 hours	697 hours	669 hours	658 hours	m
	Upper secondary education	m	m	664 hours	628 hours	651 hours	635 hours	m
	Index of change in statutory teachers' salaries for teachers with 15 years of experience/minimum training (2000 = 100)	2011	2008	2011	2008	2011	2008	
D3.4	Primary school teachers	m	m	120	120	121	122	m
	Lower secondary school teachers	m	m	116	116	121	121	m
	Upper secondary school teachers	m	m	117	118	118	119	m
	Ratio of teachers' salaries to earnings for full-time, full-year adult workers with tertiary education	2011		2011		2011		
D3.2	Pre-primary school teachers	m		0.80		0.77		m
	Primary school teachers	m		0.82		0.80		m
	Lower secondary school teachers	m		0.85		0.84		m
	Upper secondary school teachers	m		0.89		0.89		m

* Countries are ranked in descending order of values.

** Compared to people with upper secondary education; upper secondary = 100.



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