



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.

Japan

This Country Note focuses on six 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, tertiary education (based on the new ISCED 2011 classification), and early childhood through upper secondary education.

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

Educational attainment, skills and participation in the labour market

Higher educational attainment is associated with higher employment rates and higher earnings.

In 2014, 86% of adults with a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree were employed, compared with 76% of adults with a short-cycle tertiary or a post-secondary non-tertiary degree. Adults with tertiary education in Japan earned 52% more than adults with upper secondary as their highest level of education (compared to the OECD average of 60% more), and adults with below upper secondary education earned 22% less than adults with upper secondary education (compared to the OECD average of 23% less) in 2013.

Relative earnings for tertiary-educated adults are higher among older adults and among people with higher skills.

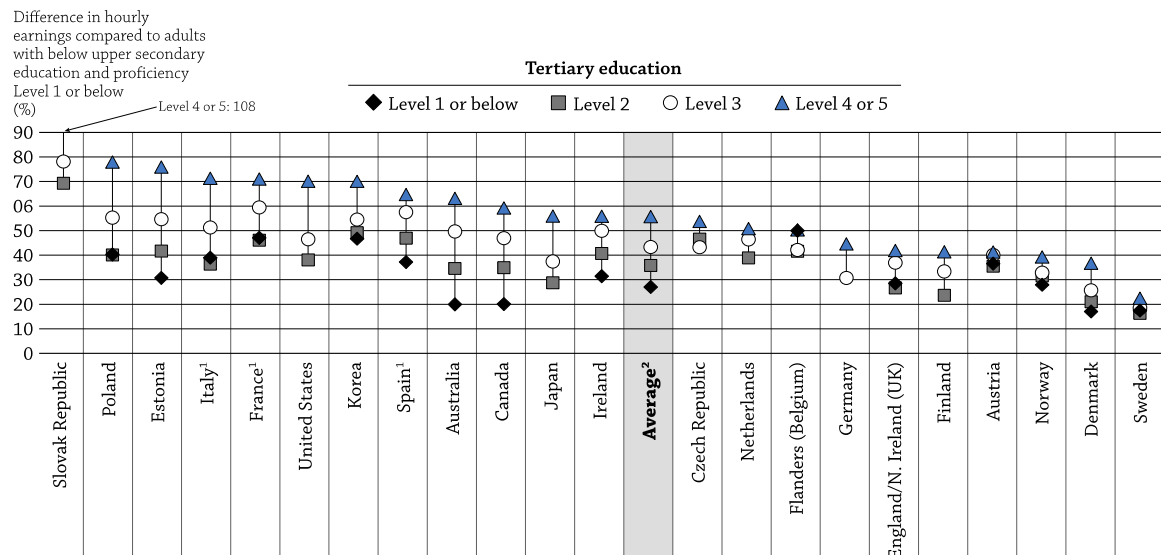
The relative earnings for tertiary-educated adults are higher among older adults than among younger adults in all OECD countries. In Japan, among 55-64 year-olds, tertiary-educated adults earned 77% more than those with upper secondary education as their highest level of attainment (the OECD average is 77% more), while among 25-34 year-olds, tertiary-educated young adults earned only 36% more (the OECD average is 41% more).

In general across OECD countries, within each education level, there are positive returns to greater proficiency; and these returns are even greater for higher educational attainment. Compared to adults with below upper secondary education and numeracy proficiency at or below Level 1, in Japan, adults with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education and the same level of skills earn 10% more, and adults with the same educational attainment but with a higher level of skills earn 28% more. Adults with tertiary education and the lowest skills in numeracy earn 11% more than the reference group, while tertiary-educated adults with the highest skills earn 56% more. Results are similar when considering

literacy skills, but Japan has the fourth smallest increase in hourly earnings related to higher literacy proficiency for those with tertiary education (up to 29%, compared to 48%, on average).

Chart A9.3: Difference in hourly earnings, by educational attainment and numeracy proficiency (2012)

Figure 1: Difference in hourly earnings, by educational attainment and numeracy proficiency (2012)
Survey of Adult Skills, 25-64 year-old non-students, reference category is below upper secondary education and numeracy proficiency of Level 1 or below



How to read this chart

In the Slovak Republic, tertiary-educated adults with numeracy proficiency of Level 4 or 5 earn 108% more compared with adults with below upper secondary education and numeracy proficiency of Level 1 or below.

The percentages represent the earnings outcomes compared to the reference category (below upper secondary education and a numeracy proficiency of Level 1 or below).

Notes: The values are based on a linear regression, after accounting for: age, gender, parents' educational attainment, immigration background, parental status (have a child or not), cohabitation status (living with spouse/partner or not), literacy proficiency, skills and readiness to use ICT for problem solving. Differences between the groups are not shown when they are not statistically significant at 95%.

1. The coefficients for France, Italy and Spain have been estimated without accounting for skills and readiness to use ICT for problem solving since it was not tested in these countries. Since there is positive correlation between skills and readiness to use ICT for problem solving and numeracy, literacy and education, the effect of excluding skills and readiness to use ICT for problem solving is likely to be that the coefficients on the proficiency by education level are overestimated, relative to the results for other countries.

2. Average for the regression excludes France, Italy and Spain as a different model specification was used for these countries.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the percentage increase in earnings for individuals with tertiary education and a numeracy proficiency of Level 4 or 5.

Source: OECD. Table A9.2 (N).

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

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933283811> (Education at a Glance 2015, Chart A9.3)

Educational attainment is also related to the level of skills in using information and communication technologies (ICT) and problem solving.

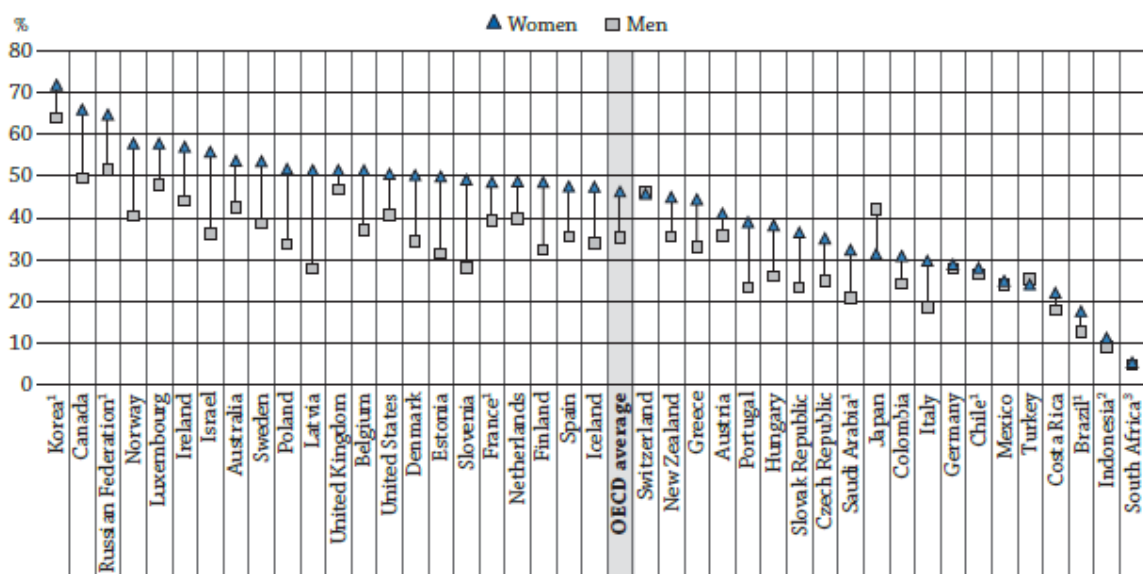
The proportion of the population with good ICT and problem-solving skills increases with educational attainment. On average across OECD countries, 7% of adults who have not attained upper secondary education have good ICT and problem-solving skills (8% in Japan). This proportion increases to 25% among those who have attained upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education (24% in Japan), and to 52% among adults with tertiary education (49% in Japan).

Equity in education and the labour market

Gender gaps are still observed in many areas of education as well as in the labour market in Japan. The share of women among first-time tertiary graduates is particularly small.

While first-time upper secondary graduation rates are high for both men and women (96% and 98%, respectively) in Japan, there are significant gender differences at the tertiary level. Japan is one of only three OECD countries where a larger proportion of 25-34 year-old men (42%; compared to the OECD average of 36%) than women (31%; compared to the OECD average of 46%) had attained tertiary education in 2014.

Figure 2: Percentage of 25-34 year-olds who have attained tertiary education, by gender (2014)



1. Brazil, Chile, France, Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia: Year of reference 2013.


2. Indonesia: Year of reference 2011.

3. South Africa: Year of reference 2012.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the percentage of women who attained tertiary education.

Source: OECD, Table A1.4b.

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

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933283820> (Education at a Glance 2015, Chart A10.1)

In 2013, 51% of first-time tertiary graduates in Japan were women (compared to 57% on average across OECD countries), but the shares of women among graduates decrease with the level of tertiary programme. While 62% of first-time graduates from short-cycle tertiary programmes were women, 45% of graduates from bachelor's or equivalent programmes, 33% of graduates from master's or equivalent programmes, and 30% of graduates from doctoral or equivalent programmes were women. Japan has the smallest share of women among all first-time graduates from bachelor's, master's and doctoral or equivalent programmes of all OECD countries.

Employment rates of women are much lower than those of men, especially among tertiary-educated adults.

Women in Japan, as women in all OECD countries, are less likely to participate in the labour market than men. The rate of employment among Japanese women remains considerably lower than that of men with the same level of education. While 87% of men without an upper secondary qualification are employed, only 65% of women with a similar level of qualification are (but in Japan, the employment rate for these women is much higher than the OECD average of 47%). Some 90% of men with a tertiary degree (excluding short-cycle programmes) are employed, compared to 71% of similarly educated women (far

below the OECD average of 79%). Given the overall low unemployment rates in Japan, it is assumed that a significant proportion of women are not active in the labour market.

On average across OECD countries, there are no large gender differences in the relative earnings of tertiary-educated adults with income from employment. However, gender differences in relative earnings among tertiary-educated adults do vary across countries. In Japan, women's relative earnings are more than 10 percentage points higher than men's, whereas on average across OECD countries they are 3 percentage points lower. This difference is even larger among younger adults: among 25-34 year-olds, women's relative earnings are more than 30 percentage points higher than men's (women with a tertiary qualification earn 61% more than women with upper secondary education as their highest level of attainment, whereas men with similar qualifications earn 31% more), much larger than the OECD average difference (8 percentage points).

There is a wide gender gap in information and communication technologies (ICT) and problem-solving skills and in adults' participation in education and training.

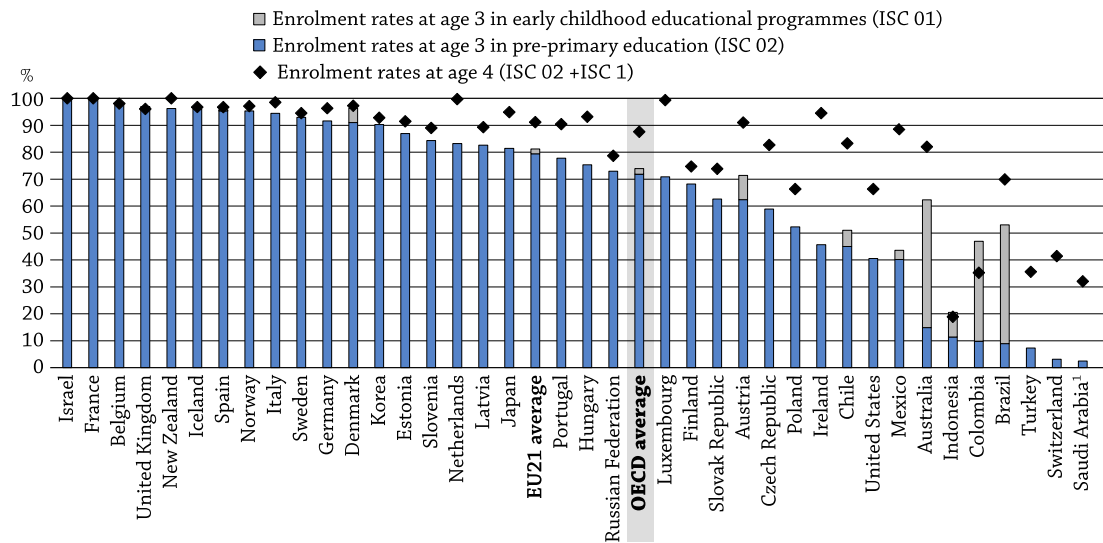
The gender gap is also large when looking at the proficiency in specific domains. In Japan, 40% of men (the OECD average is 34%) compared with 27% of women (the OECD average is 29%) have good ICT and problem-solving skills as measured in the 2012 Survey of Adult Skills. This gender gap is the largest among all OECD countries with available data.

Adult education has the potential to narrow these gaps in skills, but adults' participation in education and training appears relatively low in Japan, with a persistent gender gap. Some 41% of employed adults reported in 2012 that they had participated in employer-sponsored education in the previous 12 months – among the five smallest proportions across OECD countries (the average is 49%). While 45% of men in Japan participated in such activities, only 34% of women did, which is the largest gender gap in participation across OECD countries with available data.

Early childhood through upper-secondary education

Participation in pre-primary education is high and increasing in Japan, but public and private expenditure on this level of education accounts for a small share of GDP.

Participation in pre-primary education may have a significant impact on the future performance of students, as students who had attended at least one year of pre-primary education tend to perform better than those who had not, even after accounting for students' socio-economic background. Japan's pre-primary education usually lasts for three years. Although attendance is not compulsory, 81% of 3-year-olds, 95% of 4-year-olds and 97% of 5-year-olds were enrolled in pre-primary education in 2013, rates higher than the OECD averages for total enrolment at these ages (74% of 3-year-olds, 88% of 4-year-olds and 95% of 5-year-olds). Between 2005 and 2013, enrolment rates for 3-year-olds increased by 13 percentage points in Japan, but many other OECD countries expanded early childhood education for this age group to an even greater extent, thus narrowing the difference in enrolment rates.

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)

Despite large enrolments, a below-average share of GDP is spent on pre-primary education in Japan (public and private expenditure): 0.2% of GDP, compared with 0.6% on average across OECD countries. This translates into lower public and private expenditure per child than the OECD average (USD 5 872¹, compared with USD 8 008). Moreover, unlike in most other countries, most expenditure on this level of education comes from private sources. Some 44% of expenditure on pre-primary education comes from public sources – the lowest proportion among OECD countries with available data and considerably lower than the OECD average of 80%. And in contrast to most OECD countries, in Japan, most children in pre-primary education are enrolled in independent private institutions. In 2013, 72% of children were enrolled in such institutions (the OECD average was 15%) and 28% were enrolled in public institutions (the OECD average was 61%).

Nearly all young people in Japan will complete (upper) secondary education.

Graduating from upper secondary education has become increasingly important in all countries. Nearly all young people in Japan (97%) are expected to complete upper secondary education over their lifetime, which is considerably higher than the OECD average of 85%. A majority of these students (75%) are expected to graduate from general upper secondary education programmes, and only one in four students (22%) are expected to graduate from vocational programmes (the OECD averages are 52% and 46%, respectively).

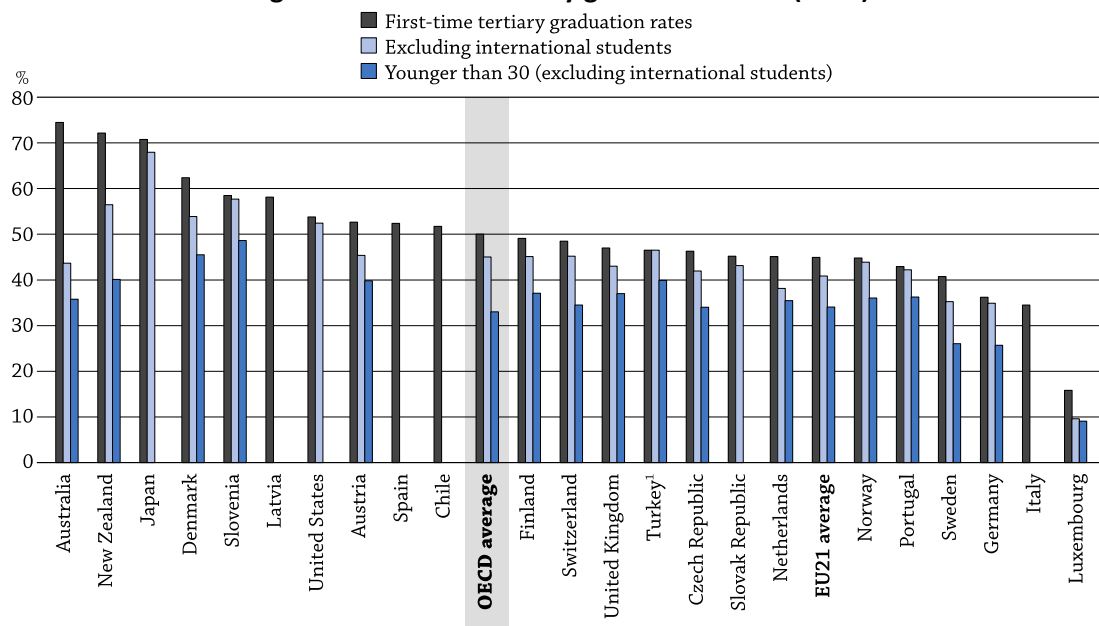
¹ Values reported in equivalent US dollars (USD) have been converted using purchasing power parities (PPPs).

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

Nearly three out of four young people in Japan are expected to graduate from tertiary education over their lifetime, mostly from a short-cycle or bachelor's programme.

Based on current patterns of graduation, 71% of today's young people in Japan are expected to graduate from tertiary education at least once during their lifetime, which is the third highest proportion across OECD countries with available data (the OECD average is 50%). More young people are expected to graduate from a bachelor's degree programme over their lifetime (45%, compared with the OECD average of 36%) than from any other level of tertiary education; and an above-average proportion (25%) will graduate from a short-cycle tertiary programme (the OECD average is 11%).

Figure 4: First-time tertiary graduation rates (2013)



Note: Mismatches between the coverage of the population data and first-time graduates data mean that the graduation rates for those countries that are net exporters of students may be underestimated and those that are net importers may be overestimated. The first-time tertiary graduation rate excluding international students accounts for this.

1. Year of reference 2012.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the first time tertiary graduation rates.

Source: OECD, Table A3.1.

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

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933283460> (Education at a Glance 2015, Chart A3.1)

By contrast, relatively few people are expected to graduate from advanced degree programmes. Only 8% will graduate from master's programmes (the OECD average is 17%) and 1.2% are expected to graduate from doctoral programmes (the OECD average is 1.7%).

Tertiary students in Japan are charged high tuition fees, and not many of them benefit from public financial support.

Japan is one of the few OECD countries where a majority of tertiary students are enrolled in private institutions. In 2013, 79% of tertiary students were enrolled in private institutions (the OECD average was 31%), as opposed to 21% in public institutions (the OECD average was 69%). These students are charged particularly high tuition fees both in public and private institutions. For students in a bachelor's programme in Japan, annual average tuition fees were USD 5 152 in public institutions in 2014/15 and

USD 8 263 in private institutions in 2013/14 – some of the highest fees among OECD countries with available data. Some 52% of funding for tertiary institutions in Japan comes from household expenditure.

Many OECD countries have student-support systems to help students bear the cost of their studies, but Japan's systems are relatively less developed. In Japan, some students who excel academically but have difficulty financing their studies can benefit from reduced tuition and/or admission fees or receive total exemptions; but most students and their families face a heavy financial burden. Tertiary students in Japan can benefit from public loans with lower interest rates than private loans, but only 38% of students use these loans, which impose a high level of debt at graduation.

Japan remains an attractive place for foreign students, while only a small share of Japanese students studies abroad.

Some 3.4% of international tertiary students were enrolled in Japan in 2013. This is the seventh largest share among all destination countries. Most of these students came from Asia (93.5%), mainly from neighbouring countries China and Korea (79%). As in most other countries, the proportion of international students among total enrolments was much larger at the most advanced levels of tertiary education: 19% of students in doctoral or equivalent programmes in Japan were international students in 2013 (the OECD average was 24%), compared to 8% at the master's or equivalent level (the OECD average was 14%) and 3% at the bachelor's level (the OECD average was 6%).

By contrast, less than 1% of Japanese tertiary students were enrolled abroad in 2013. More than half of these students (56.4%) were studying in the United States, followed by the United Kingdom (9.3%), Australia (5.2%), Germany (5.0%), France (4.1%), Korea (3.5%) and Canada (2.5%).

Financing of education

Public and private expenditure per student is above the OECD average, but spending on education (from public and private sources) as a proportion of GDP remains below the OECD average.

In Japan, public and private expenditure per student by educational institutions from primary to tertiary education amounted to USD 11 671 in 2012, above the OECD average of USD 10 220. Public and private expenditure per student in Japan is also above the OECD average for each level of education: USD 8 595 at the primary level (the OECD average was USD 8 247), USD 10 170 at the secondary level (the OECD average was USD 9 518), and USD 16 872 at the tertiary level (the OECD average was USD 15 028). Public and private expenditure per student by educational institutions averages 33% of per capita GDP in Japan, compared to 27% of per capita GDP on average across OECD countries.

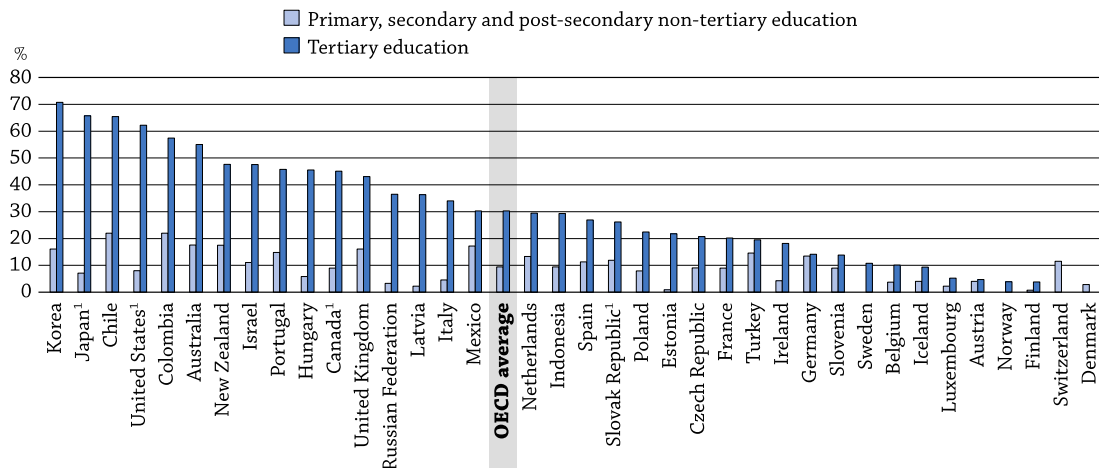
Despite increases in public and private expenditure per student, total public and private expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP is low in Japan. In 2012, Japan spent 5.0% of GDP on primary to tertiary education (public and private funds combined), which is below the OECD average of 5.3%. While public and private expenditure, as a percentage of GDP, at the tertiary level is at the OECD average (1.5% of GDP), expenditure at the primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary levels is much lower (2.9% of GDP) than the OECD average (3.7% of GDP).

While education is mostly publicly funded, the share of private funding of tertiary education is one of the highest among OECD countries.

Some 83% of all funds for primary to tertiary educational institutions come from public sources, on average across OECD countries. In Japan, the share of public funding for education is one of the smallest (70%), mainly as a result of the large share of private funding (high tuition fees) at the tertiary level (65.7%, compared with 30.3%, on average across OECD countries).

At the primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary levels, the share of public funding increased slightly between 2005 and 2013 (to 93% in 2013), partly as a result of the policy introduced April 2010 that made tuition free at public upper secondary schools and provided financial support to students at private upper secondary schools.

Figure 5: Share of private expenditure on educational institutions (2012)



How to read this chart

The chart shows private spending on educational institutions as a percentage of total spending on educational institutions. This includes all money transferred to educational institutions from private sources, including public funding via subsidies to households, private fees for educational services or other private spending (e.g. on accommodation) which goes through the institution.

1. Some levels of education are included with others. Refer to "x" code in Table B1.1a for details.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the share of private expenditure on educational institutions for tertiary education.

Source: OECD, Table B3.1.

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

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933283989> (Education at a Glance 2015, Chart B3.1)

While public expenditure on primary to tertiary education increased in Japan between 2008 and 2012, total public expenditure increased even more, leading to a small decrease in public expenditure on education as a percentage of total public expenditure (by 3%).

The teaching profession

While many teachers have high ICT skills for problem solving, many feel a need for professional development in ICT for teaching.

Teachers in Japan appear to have high ICT skills, but less confidence in their ICT skills for their work. In the 2012 Survey of Adult Skills, 85% of primary and secondary teachers in Japan reported having moderate or good skills in using ICT to solve problems, compared to the OECD average of 83%. However, only 63% reported that they had the computer skills needed to do their job – the smallest proportion among OECD countries with comparable data (the OECD average is 87%). This may partly explain why, in the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) of 2013, 26% of lower secondary teachers in Japan expressed a need for professional development in ICT skills for teaching (compared to the OECD average of 18% of teachers), although teachers in Japan generally indicated a high level of need in all the areas surveyed (OECD, 2014).

These results may be associated with relatively little use of ICT in classrooms in Japan. Only 10% of lower secondary teachers in Japan reported that students use ICT for projects or class work “frequently” or “in all or nearly all lessons”, which is the smallest proportion among OECD countries with comparable data.

In the 2012 OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), 62% of students in Japan reported that they spent no time at school using the Internet, which is the third largest proportion of students in OECD countries who so reported.

Teachers in Japan manage large classes and their statutory working time is above average.

Classes in primary and lower secondary schools in Japan are among the largest in OECD countries. In 2013, in public institutions (which enrol 99% of students at the primary level and 93% of students at the lower secondary level), the average primary class had 27 students – the third largest among OECD countries with available data (the OECD average is 21 students) – and the average lower secondary class had 32 students – the second largest class among OECD countries (the OECD average is 24 students). Classes in private institutions are even larger: 30 students at the primary level (the second largest among OECD countries; the OECD average is 21 students), and 34 students per class at the lower secondary level (the largest among OECD countries; the OECD average is 22 students).

While larger classes are generally associated with more class time spent keeping order as opposed to teaching and learning, teachers in Japan devote a similar amount of time in class to teaching and learning as the average across OECD countries, even though they teach larger classes. In addition, a below-average proportion of teachers in Japan reported that more than 10% of students in their classes had behaviour problems.

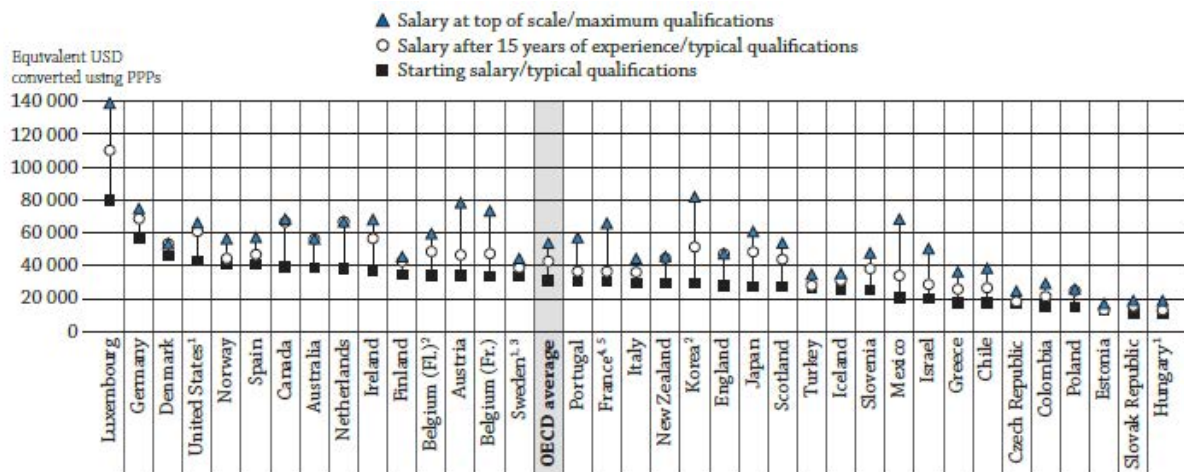
Teachers in Japan also have above-average statutory working time at the primary, lower secondary and upper secondary levels of education. In 2013, the statutory working time for public school teachers in Japan was 1 899 hours per year at each of these levels, compared with the OECD averages, which vary from 1 600 hours at the primary level to 1 618 hours at the lower secondary level. Moreover, teaching time represents a relatively small proportion of the statutory working time in Japan (39% at the primary level, 32% at the lower secondary level, and 27% at the upper secondary level, compared to the OECD averages of 49%, 41% and 40%, respectively) This indicates that a significant amount of time is spent on activities other than teaching, such as lesson preparation, correction, student and staff meetings.

Statutory teachers' salaries in Japan exceed the OECD average after 10 years of experience, but have decreased since 2005, unlike most other OECD countries.

In Japan, teachers' salaries do not vary much between primary, lower secondary and upper secondary levels. Starting teachers' salaries at the primary and secondary levels are lower than the OECD average, but after 10 years of experience, teachers' salaries at the primary and secondary levels equal or exceed the OECD average (by 9% at the primary level, 5% at the lower secondary level and at the OECD average level at upper secondary level), and they exceed the OECD average substantially at the top of the salary scale (by 25% at the primary level, 21% at the lower secondary level, and 18% at the upper secondary level). The ratio of top salary to starting salary at the primary and secondary levels in Japan is one of the highest among OECD countries: statutory salaries at the top of the scale are more than double starting salaries (compared to about 65% higher on average in OECD countries), although it takes a relatively long time to reach the top salary (34 years, compared to the OECD average of 24 years).

However, teachers' statutory salaries decreased in recent years in Japan. Those for primary and secondary teachers with 15 years of experience decreased by 6% between 2005 and 2013, whereas on average across OECD countries, teachers' statutory salaries increased by 3% at the primary level, 2% at the lower secondary level and 1% at the upper secondary level.


Figure 6: Lower secondary teachers' salaries at different points in teachers' careers (2013)
Annual statutory salaries of teachers in public institutions, in equivalent USD converted using PPPs



1. Actual base salaries.
 2. Salaries at top of scale and typical qualifications, instead of maximum qualifications.
 3. Salaries at top of scale and minimum qualifications, instead of maximum qualifications.
 4. Includes average bonuses for overtime hours.
 5. The typical qualification of starting teachers differ substantially from the typical qualification of all the current teachers.
- Countries are ranked in descending order of starting salaries for lower secondary teachers with typical qualifications.

Source: OECD, Table D3.1a, and Table D3.6a, available on line.

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

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933284469> (Education at a Glance 2015, Chart D3.2)

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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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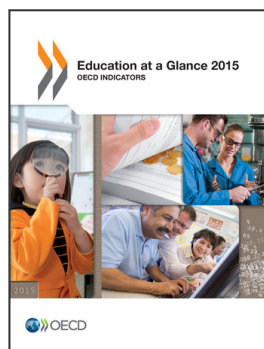
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Key Facts for Japan in Education at a Glance 2015

Table	Indicator	Japan	OECD average
Educational Access and Output			
	Enrolment rates	2013	2013
C2.1	3-year-olds (in early childhood education)	81%	74%
	Highest educational attainment level of 25-64 year-olds	2014	2014
A1.4a	Below upper secondary	**	24%
	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	**	43%
	Tertiary	**	34%
	Highest educational attainment level of 25-64 year-olds (disaggregation at tertiary level)	2014	2014
A1.1a	Short cycle tertiary	21%	8%
	Bachelor's or equivalent	28%	16%
	Master's or equivalent	**	11%
	Doctoral or equivalent	**	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	78%	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	**	12.8%
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	**	7.7%
	Tertiary	**	5.1%
	Average earnings premium for tertiary-educated 25-64 year-olds (upper secondary = 100)	2013	2013
A6.1a	Short cycle tertiary	**	125
	Bachelor's or equivalent	**	157
	Master's, Doctoral or equivalent	**	214
	All tertiary	152	160
	Percentage of people not in employment, education or training (NEET) for 15-29 year-olds	2014	2014
C5.2b	Men	6%	13.2%
	Women	7.2%	17.9%
Financial Investment in Education			
	Annual expenditure per student (in equivalent USD, using PPPs)	2012	2012
B1.1a	Primary education	8595 USD	8247 USD
	Secondary education	10170 USD	9518 USD
	Tertiary (including R&D activities)	16872 USD	15028 USD
	Total expenditure on primary to tertiary educational institutions	2012	2012
B2.2	As a percentage of GDP	4.5%	5.2%
	Total public expenditure on primary to tertiary education	2012	2012
B4.2	As a percentage of total public expenditure	8.8%	11.6%
Schools and Teachers			
	Ratio of students to teaching staff	2013	2013
D2.2	Primary education	17 students per teacher	15 students per teacher
	Secondary education	13 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.



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