



*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.

## Poland

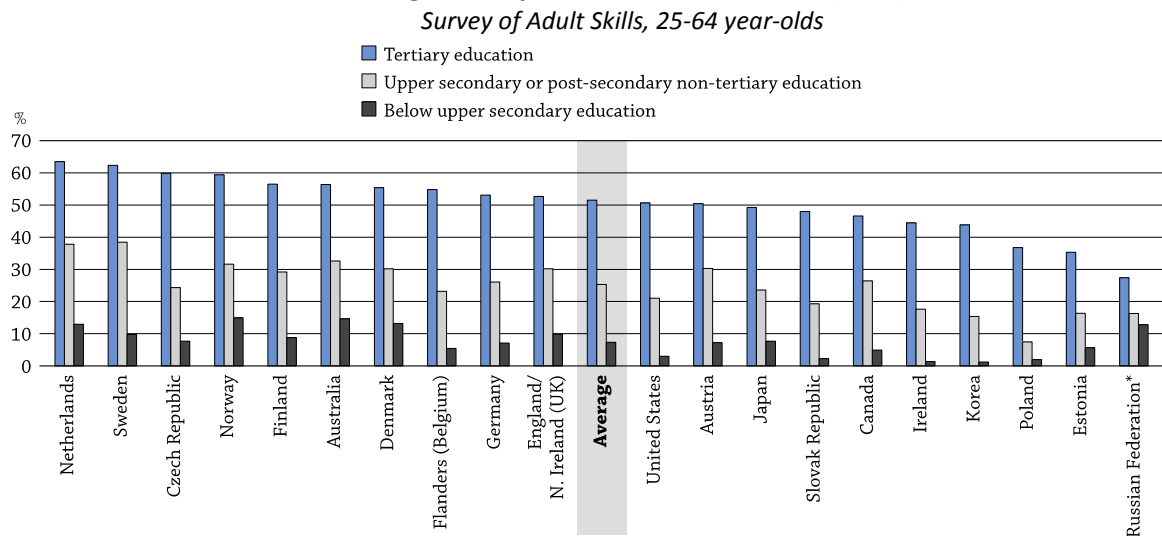
This Country Note focuses on six major topics covered in the 2015 edition of *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators*. These topics are: educational attainment, skills and participation in the labour market, tertiary education (based on the new ISCED 2011 classification), equity in education and the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

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

### Educational attainment, skills and participation in the labour market

*Poland has experienced a high increase in attainment at upper secondary and tertiary levels over the last eight years.*

Poland has one of the highest upper secondary graduation rates among OECD countries, with 86% of young people expected to graduate at least once from that level of education over their lifetime. Upper secondary education is also the most common level of attainment: it is the highest level of education attained for over 60% of the population, significantly higher than the OECD average of 39%. This can be explained by one of the biggest increases in first-time graduation rates at the upper secondary level in Europe – from 41% to 86% between 2005 and 2013. Attainment of below upper secondary level is rare in Poland – no adults have lower secondary education as their highest level of attainment, although 9% have only completed primary education, compared to an OECD average of 7%. Poland also has an above-average proportion of adults whose highest level of attainment is upper secondary vocational programmes: out of the 64% of adults whose highest level of education is upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education, 87% were enrolled in vocational education compared to an OECD average of 66%.

**Figure 1: Percentage of adults with good information and communication technologies and problem-solving skills, by educational attainment (2012)**


**Note:** Data on educational attainment are based on ISCED-97.

\* See note on data for the Russian Federation in the *Methodology* section.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the percentage of adults with tertiary education and with good ICT and problem-solving skills (Group 4).

Source: OECD, Table 1.6a.

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

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933283415> (Education at a Glance 2015, chart A1.4)

### *Higher educational attainment in Poland results in better employability and a higher level of income, particularly at the tertiary level*

Overall in Poland, higher levels of educational attainment improve individuals' employment prospects. This is particularly the case at the tertiary level – 66 of 25-64 year-olds who completed upper secondary and 70% who completed post-secondary non-tertiary education are employed, compared to 82 for those with a bachelor's, 87% for master's and 93% for those with doctoral education, which mirrors OECD-wide patterns. The gap in employment rates between those with tertiary education and those with below upper secondary education was 39 percentage points in 2014.

In contrast, the odds of being employed do not necessarily increase as literacy skills improve. For instance, an adult with tertiary education who scores low on the OECD Adult Skills Survey (PIAAC) in literacy proficiency (Level 1 or below) is 11.7 times more likely to be employed than as someone with below upper secondary education and a literacy proficiency of Level 1 or below. For a tertiary-educated adult with literacy proficiency of Level 4 or 5, this likelihood is only 9.0 times higher. Moreover, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT) skills do improve employability, particularly at the top proficiency levels.

Attainment of tertiary education also tends to lead to higher incomes: adults (25-64 year-olds) who attained tertiary education earn on average 71% more than adults with upper secondary education. This advantage is slightly higher for men than for women (87% and 70% respectively).

## Tertiary education: short-cycle, bachelor's, master's and doctoral programmes

*Tertiary attainment is on the rise in Poland, especially at the higher levels, with good gender equality outcomes.*

The expansion in tertiary attainment across generations in Poland has been significant. Tertiary attainment among 25-34 year-olds is above the OECD average and increased sharply between 2005 and 2014. The difference in tertiary attainment between 55-64 year-olds and 25-34 year-olds is about 29 percentage points, well above the OECD average of 16 percentage points. The level of tertiary attainment in Poland is also high: about 75% of tertiary-educated adults have a master's or equivalent degree as their highest tertiary qualification, whereas the majority of tertiary-educated adults in OECD countries have only a bachelor's degree or equivalent. Following general OECD trends, labour-market opportunities increase with the level of tertiary attainment in Poland: about 93% of those with tertiary education at doctoral level are employed against 82% of those with a bachelor's degree.

Despite the rapid changes in enrolment rates, the male and female attainment is balanced, with the same percentage of men and women reaching bachelor's level although a higher share of women reach master's and doctoral levels: 55% of graduates at the doctorate level in Poland are female, well above the OECD average of 47%.

*Further efforts needed to ensure equity of access to tertiary education as students who study part time have to bear the full cost of their tuition.*

Most students enrolled full time in public institutions have their studies fully subsidised by the state, while students enrolled in part-time studies and private institutions pay the full costs of tuition. Only slightly more than half of the students undertake their studies full time. About 28% of students are enrolled in private tertiary educational institutions in Poland, close to the OECD average of 30%.

## Equity and the labour market

*Youth in Poland are more likely to be in education than the OECD average and upward educational mobility is high, but Poland would benefit from strengthening adult learning.*

About 90% of the population in Poland has had 13 years of education, which is similar to the average of other OECD countries. In 2013, 90% of 15-19 year-olds are enrolled in education, against 32% of 20-29 year-olds. These figures were higher for Poland than for OECD countries, where the average was 84% for 15-19 year-olds and 28% for 20-29 year-olds. Polish students are more likely to be enrolled in public schools at all levels, with 96% of primary (OECD average: 90%), 94% of lower secondary (OECD average: 86%), and 84% of upper secondary (OECD average: 81%) students attending public institutions.

Poland achieves high levels of intergenerational educational mobility and low levels of downward mobility – just 7% of Polish people attained lower educational qualifications than their parents, compared to 16% on average across countries, while 36% attained higher qualifications, against an OECD average of 32%.

Despite overall improvements in educational attainment, Poland could reduce levels of loss of human capital by increasing the availability of second-chance programmes and improving access to formal and non-formal education (OECD, 2015). Poland would benefit from improving its adult education programmes: only 3% of the population aged 30 to 39 are enrolled in full-time or part-time education, compared with 6% on average across the OECD. Relatively few adults participate in employer-sponsored education – 38% of 35-44 year-olds took part in such programmes in the 12 months prior to the OECD Survey of Adult Skills in Poland in comparison to 52% across OECD countries. This is compounded by the low availability of additional educational and training opportunities for the low-skilled: 53% of those in

skilled occupations can access training programmes compared to the average of 62% across countries. In addition, only 15% of adults (25-64 year-olds) possess good ICT and problem solving-skills – the lowest rare among OECD countries participating in the OECD Survey of Adult Skills. In order to better promote the development of its human capital and reduce skill mismatches in the labour market, Poland should continue its efforts to strengthen adult learning.

## Financing of education

*Funding per student in Poland is growing but it is still lower than the OECD average at all educational levels.*

Poland spends a comparatively low share of its gross domestic product (GDP) on primary to tertiary educational institutions (including undistributed programmes): 4.8% of GDP, compared to the OECD average of 5.3%. Between 2010 and 2012 GDP grew faster than educational expenditure, resulting in a slight decrease in the share (0.3 percentage points while the OECD average remained stable over the same period). Annual expenditure per student is lower than OECD averages at all education levels, particularly the tertiary level where Poland spends USD 9 799<sup>1</sup> per student against the OECD average of USD 15 028. However, expenditure per student at primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary levels has been growing fast, increasing by more than 50% between 2005 and 2012 compared with an OECD average increase of 21%. This change was boosted by an overall fall in the number of students.

*Education spending is highly decentralised and the share of private expenditure remains low.*

Poland has one of the lowest shares of initial public funds coming from central government than any of the OECD countries at primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education: 4.8% compared to the OECD average of 52.6%. Similarly, after transfers between levels of government, 94.3% of funds come from the local level, well above the OECD average of 42.8%. This results in high levels of autonomy over funding decision making at the local level.

In Poland, the majority of educational expenditure on primary, secondary and tertiary institutions comes from public sources (88.1% in comparison to the OECD average of 83.5%). The share of private funds at primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary level has more than doubled between 2000 and 2012, one of the largest increases among OECD countries during that period. However, at tertiary level, the share of private funds increased between 2000 and 2008, but then decreased between 2008 and 2012, resulting in an overall decrease between 2000 and 2012, contrasting with an increasing trend in the majority of the OECD countries.

## Early childhood education

*Poland is making efforts to give its children a strong start through increasing public expenditure on pre-primary education as percentage of GDP and expanding coverage.*

In 2012, the annual expenditure on pre-primary institution as a share of GDP was 0.7% in Poland, above the OECD average of 0.6%, and similar to the EU21\* average of 0.7%. Poland also had one of the largest increases in enrolment in education at ages 3 and 4 between 2005 and 2013 among countries with available data, although it remains below the OECD average. About 52% of 3-year-olds and 66% of 4-year-olds are enrolled in education, compared to an OECD average of 74% and 88%, respectively. Among OECD countries, Poland had a higher ratio of children to teaching staff in pre-primary education: 16, compared to 14 on average in other OECD countries.

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

## The teaching profession

*The teaching workforce in Poland is ageing, and almost three-quarters of teachers are women.*

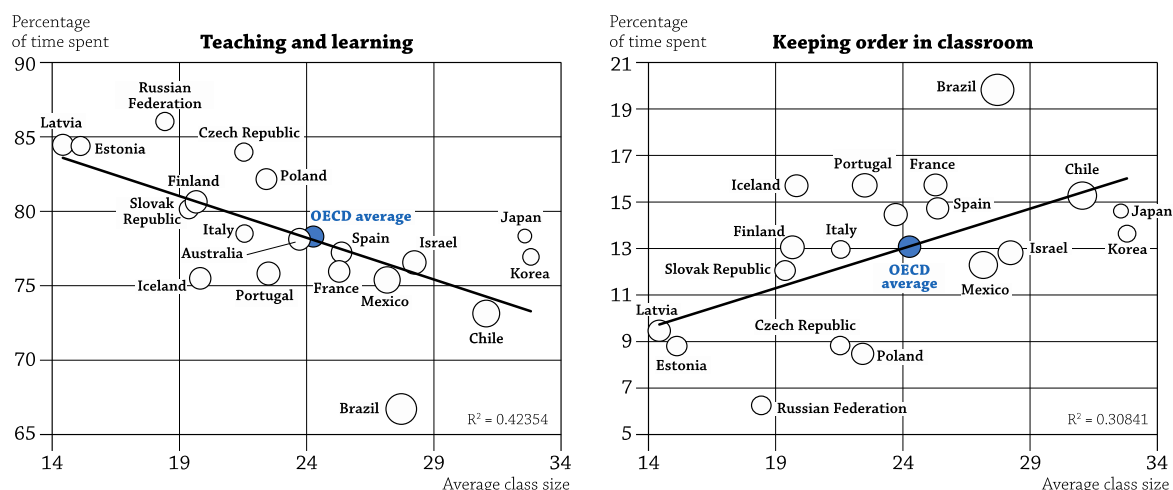
With 57% of teachers aged 40 or more, teaching at secondary level is an ageing profession in Poland, although less so than the OECD average, where the percentage is 64%. A higher share of teachers are women than the average for OECD countries: 74%, compared to 67%. In the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC), 52% of teachers from pre-primary, primary and secondary education demonstrated moderate to good ICT and problem-solving skills, compared to an average of 83% for the countries participating in the survey.

*Poland is also making efforts to make the teaching profession more attractive, with increasing salaries and lower class sizes.*


Teachers' statutory salaries in Poland from pre-primary to upper secondary education remain one of the lowest among OECD countries. Between 2000 and 2013, Poland saw one of the largest increase in teachers' salaries among OECD countries, rising by 22% at all education levels. On average across the OECD, teachers' salaries increased 3% at pre-primary and primary level, 2% at lower secondary level and 1% at upper secondary level. Teachers in Poland in pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education can expect to earn 74%, 85% and 86% of the salary of a full-time full-year worker with tertiary education, respectively. This is a higher share of their peers' salaries than the OECD average (73%, 80% and 86% respectively). At upper secondary level, the trend is reversed: upper secondary teachers in Poland earn 84% of the salaries of other tertiary-educated professions, less than the OECD average of 91%.

Poland has some positive teaching conditions, such as below OECD-average class sizes (22 students per class in lower secondary education and 18 students in primary schools) and more time spent teaching (as opposed to keeping order or managing the class) than in the majority of OECD countries. Education at a Glance 2015 shows that there is a positive correlation between class size and time spent teaching. Specifically, one additional student added to an average-size class is associated with a 0.5 percentage point decrease in time spent on teaching and learning activities.

**Figure 2: Relationship between average class size and times spent teaching/learning and time spent keeping order in the classroom in lower secondary education (2013)**



Source: OECD. Data on average class size: Table D2.1. Data on use of class time: (OECD, 2014), TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning, TALIS, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264196261-en>.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933284447> (Education at a Glance, chart D2.a)

*Teacher appraisal in Poland is similar in objectives to many other OECD countries, but Poland is the only OECD country where it is performed solely by the school principal.*

In Poland, there are three types of teacher appraisal, covered by policy frameworks and legislated countrywide: regular appraisal, appraisal to complete probation, and appraisal for the purpose of promotion. This is also the case in 21, 20 and 11 other OECD countries respectively at lower secondary level. Teachers are not appraised for registration, or as part of a reward scheme. These practices are also less common among other OECD countries (only 11 OECD countries do teacher appraisal for registration and 9 as part of a reward scheme). Poland is the only OECD country where teacher appraisal is performed solely by the school principal.

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

## References


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OECD (2015b), *Education Policy Outlook: Poland*, OECD Publishing, Paris, forthcoming.

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### Note regarding data from Israel

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and are under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

[www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm).

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.

Explore, compare and visualise more data and analysis using:  **Education GPS**  
<http://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?primaryCountry=POL&treshold=10&topic=EQ>

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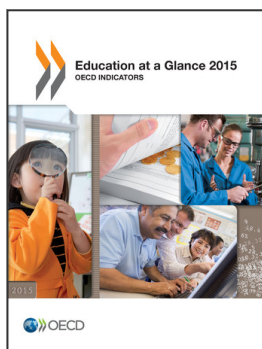


## Key Facts for Poland in Education at a Glance 2015

Table	Indicator	Poland	OECD average
<b>Educational Access and Output</b>			
	<b>Enrolment rates</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2013</b>
C2.1	3-year-olds (in early childhood education)	52%	74%
	<b>Highest educational attainment level of 25-64 year-olds</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2014</b>
A1.4a	Below upper secondary	9%	24%
	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	64%	43%
	Tertiary	27%	34%
	<b>Highest educational attainment level of 25-64 year-olds (disaggregation at tertiary level)</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2014</b>
A1.1a	Short cycle tertiary	0%	8%
	Bachelor's or equivalent	6%	16%
	Master's or equivalent	21%	11%
	Doctoral or equivalent	1%	1%
	<b>Entry and graduation rates</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2013</b>
C3.1	Percentage of today's young people expected to enter tertiary education at least once during their lifetime	79%	67%
A3.1	Percentage of today's young people expected to graduate with a bachelor's or equivalent degree in their lifetime	0%	36%
<b>Economic and Labour Market Outcomes</b>			
	<b>Unemployment rate of 25-64 year-olds</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2014</b>
A5.4a	Below upper secondary	17.5%	12.8%
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	8.6%	7.7%
	Tertiary	4.1%	5.1%
	<b>Average earnings premium for tertiary-educated 25-64 year-olds (upper secondary = 100)</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2013</b>
A6.1a	Short cycle tertiary	0	125
	Bachelor's or equivalent	0	157
	Master's, Doctoral or equivalent	0	214
	All tertiary	171	160
	<b>Percentage of people not in employment, education or training (NEET) for 15-29 year-olds</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2014</b>
C5.2b	Men	13.4%	13.2%
	Women	18.4%	17.9%
<b>Financial Investment in Education</b>			
	<b>Annual expenditure per student (in equivalent USD, using PPPs)</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2012</b>
B1.1a	Primary education	6721 USD	8247 USD
	Secondary education	6540 USD	9518 USD
	Tertiary (including R&D activities)	9799 USD	15028 USD
	<b>Total expenditure on primary to tertiary educational institutions</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2012</b>
B2.2	As a percentage of GDP	4.8%	5.2%
	<b>Total public expenditure on primary to tertiary education</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2012</b>
B4.2	As a percentage of total public expenditure	10.3%	11.6%
<b>Schools and Teachers</b>			
	<b>Ratio of students to teaching staff</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2013</b>
D2.2	Primary education	11 students per teacher	15 students per teacher
	Secondary education	10 students per teacher	13 students per teacher
	<b>Average actual teachers' salaries</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2013</b>
D3.4	Pre-primary school teachers	25681 USD	37798 USD
	Primary school teachers	29434 USD	41248 USD
	Lower secondary school teachers (general programmes)	29912 USD	43626 USD
	Upper secondary school teachers (general programmes)	29252 USD	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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