

## EDUCATION AT A GLANCE 2017

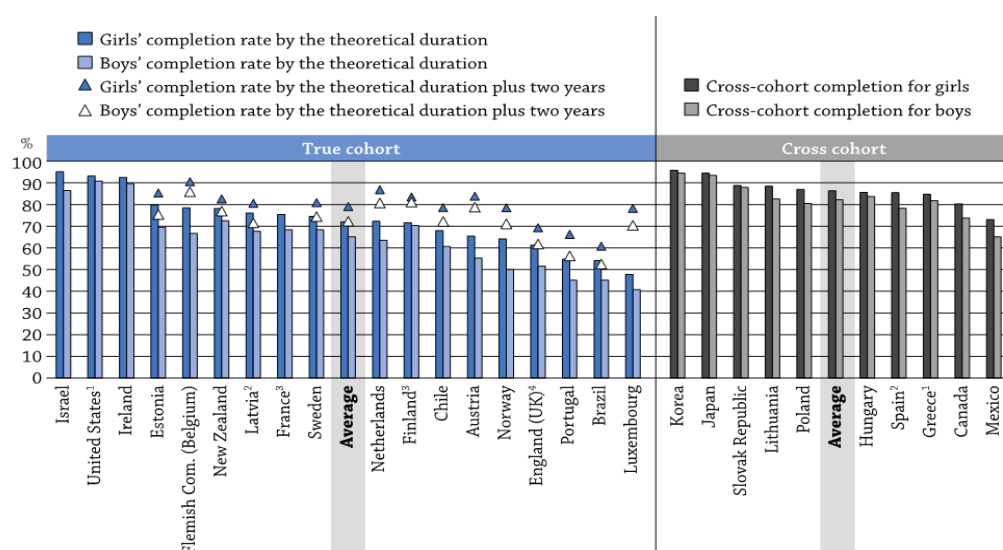
*Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* is the authoritative source for information on the state of education around the world. It provides data on the structure, finances and performance of education systems in the 35 OECD countries and a number of partner countries.

### Ireland

- In Ireland, **18% of new entrants to tertiary education in 2015** chose the fields of **natural sciences, mathematics, statistics, and information and communication technologies**, above the **OECD average of 11%**. Other popular fields of study are business, administration and law; arts and humanities; health and welfare; and engineering, manufacturing and construction.
- Ireland has both a **high share of tertiary-educated people (43%)** and **relatively high earnings for people with tertiary education**. Thirteen percent of adults have attained short-cycle tertiary education and 21% a bachelor's or equivalent qualification, the highest shares for those levels among OECD countries.
- The **enrolment rate for 15-19 year-olds in Ireland is the highest among countries with data available**. At upper secondary level, students typically graduate at the age of 19 from general programmes, and 49% are girls. In vocational tracks the average age of graduation is 30 years old, and 67% of graduates are female, the highest percentage across OECD and partner countries.
- Ireland has the **third highest completion rate of upper secondary programmes within their theoretical duration for girls (92%)** and the **second highest for boys (90%)** among countries and economies with comparable data (Figure 1).
- In 2014, **education accounted for 12.9% of all government expenditure in Ireland**, above the **OECD average of 11.3%**.

**Figure 1. Completion rate of upper secondary education by gender (2015)**

*Completion rate of full-time students in initial education programmes of at least two years of duration*



1. Year of reference 2013.

2. Upper secondary general programmes only.

3. Year of reference 2014.

4. Year of reference is 2016 and data cover successful completion and achievement of two-year GCSE programmes.

Countries are ranked in descending order of girls' completion rate (for true cohort, by the theoretical duration).

Source: OECD (2017), Table A9.1. See Source section for more information and 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)).

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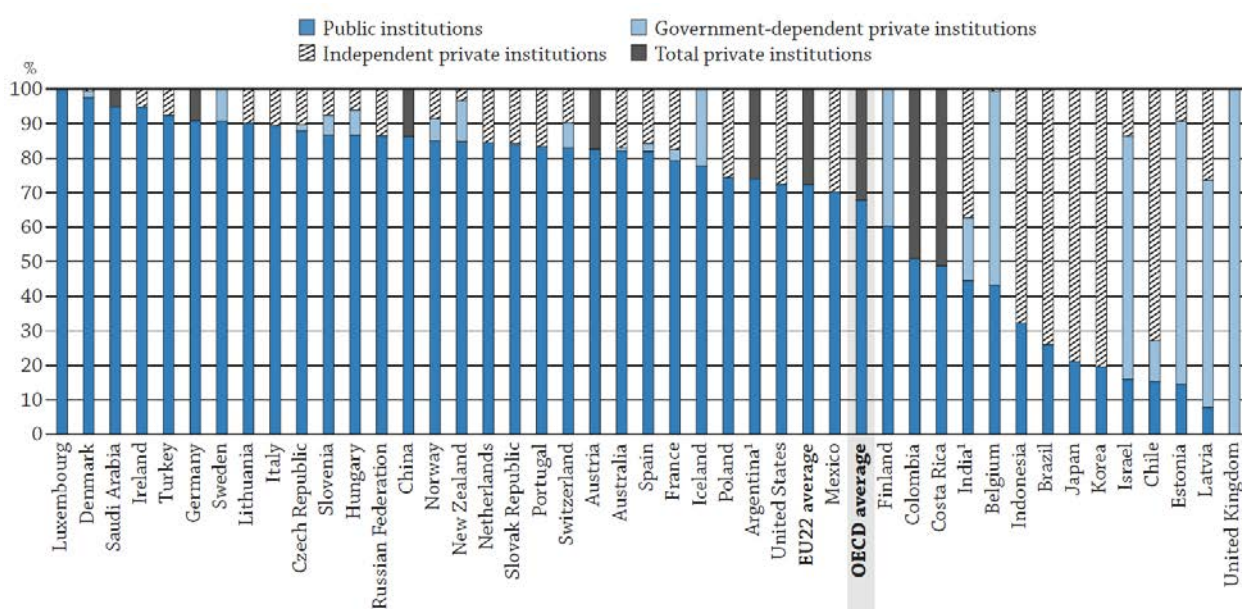
## Business, administration and law; arts and humanities; and health and welfare are the most attractive fields of study to young adults

- As in a number of other countries, business, administration and law were the most popular fields of study with 24% of graduates at tertiary level, similar to the OECD average. Ireland has a larger share of tertiary graduates who studied health and welfare (17%, 5 percentage points) more than the OECD average; arts and humanities (13%); natural sciences, mathematics and statistics (8%); and information and communication technologies (6%); but relatively fewer graduates in education (8%); social sciences, journalism and information (7%); and engineering, manufacturing and construction (10%).
- A similar distribution is found among new entrants into tertiary education, with business, administration and law and arts and humanities attracting most new students, at 21% and 16% respectively.
- The fields with the highest shares of women among new entrants are health and welfare, and education, at 79% and 70% respectively. Women make up the majority of entrants in all fields of study, except three: business, administration and law (53% of new entrants are men); information and communication technologies (81% men); and engineering, manufacturing and construction (81% men).

## Good employment prospects and expected financial benefits are key to making tertiary education attractive

- In Ireland a relatively large share of the population has attained tertiary education: 13% of 25-64 year-olds have attained a short-cycle tertiary qualification, 21% a bachelor's or equivalent qualification, 8% a master's or equivalent qualification and 1% a doctorate. Altogether, tertiary attainment in Ireland is 6 percentage points higher than the OECD average. As in all countries with data available, tertiary educational attainment is higher in the capital city region (45% compared to the national average of 43%) and lower in other regions.
- Ireland has both a high share of tertiary-educated people and relatively high earnings for people with a tertiary education. Tertiary-educated workers in Ireland enjoy a somewhat greater earnings advantage than the OECD average. People with a short-cycle tertiary qualification earn 24% more than those with upper secondary education; those with a bachelor's or equivalent qualification earn 70% more; and those with a master's, doctorate or equivalent title earn 103% more. The relative advantage for all these tertiary levels combined is 10 percentage points higher than the OECD average.

Figure 2. Share of students enrolled in tertiary education by type of institution (2015)



1. Year of reference 2014.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the share of students enrolled in public institutions in tertiary education.

Source: OECD (2017), Education at a Glance Database, <http://stats.oecd.org/>. See Source section for more information and 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)).

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- Enrolment in tertiary education, 95% of which is in public institutions (Figure 2), is made more attractive by the relatively high returns on investment. For men in Ireland, the private net financial return from attaining a tertiary education rather than an upper secondary one exceeds USD 400 000, the third highest return among OECD countries; Irish women enjoy the second highest return, reaching almost USD 300 000. The benefits of attaining tertiary education are over 40% higher than the OECD average for men and over 50% higher for women.
- The employment rate for tertiary-educated 25-64 year-olds is 82%, very close to the OECD average of 84%. It ranges from 78% for adults with short-cycle tertiary education to 88% for those with a doctorate. The fall in the employment rate among tertiary-educated young adults (25-34 year-olds), from 91% in 2000 to 84% in 2015, was quite moderate compared to the fall for those without tertiary education.

### **An inclusive education system is also based on upper secondary education and vocational education and training**

- In Ireland, at least 90% of children are enrolled in school from the age of 5 to the age of 18 and the enrolment rate reaches 97% for 15-19 year-olds, well above the OECD average and the highest among countries with data available. In particular, enrolment rates among 15-19 year-olds in post-secondary non-tertiary and tertiary education are among the highest across OECD countries.
- Enrolment in upper secondary general education is concentrated between the ages of 15 and 19, with students typically graduating at the age of 19. Girls make up 49% of general upper secondary students.
- For upper secondary vocational programmes the average age of graduation is much higher, at 30 years of age and 67% of graduates at this level are women, the highest percentage across OECD and partner countries. Students in post-secondary non-tertiary vocational programmes also have a relatively wide range of ages, going from the age of 17 to at least their late twenties.
- With 92% of girls and 90% of boys completing upper secondary education within its theoretical duration, Ireland has the third highest completion rate for girls and the second highest for boys at this level of education among countries and economies with comparable data (Figure 1). The completion rate for boys and girls combined is 91%, the highest for programmes with general orientation. At the end of the theoretical duration of their programmes, only 1% of the students are still in education (e.g. repeaters) while 8% of them are no longer enrolled but have not graduated.
- Employment rates in Ireland are much lower than the OECD average for those without a tertiary education: 69% of adults with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary educational attainment are employed, 6 percentage points below the OECD average. The gap is wider for those that did not attain upper secondary education, who have an employment rate of 49%, 8 percentage points lower than the OECD average. Between 2000 and 2015, employment rates for young adults (25-34 year-olds) fell from 85% to 68% for those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education and from 68% to 44% for those with below upper secondary education.
- Unlike most other countries, the employment rate in Ireland for young adults with a general upper secondary educational qualification (67%) is not too far below the rate for those with vocational post-secondary non-tertiary education (70%). On average across OECD countries the difference in employment rates between general and vocational tracks at upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary level is 10 percentage points. Tertiary-educated 25-34 year-olds have a higher relative employment advantage than the OECD average.

### **More spending is needed as the number of students has increased**

- Annual expenditure per student in Ireland is lower than the OECD average for pre-primary and primary education, at around USD 6 600 at pre-primary level and USD 8 000 at primary level.<sup>1</sup> It is also lower at tertiary level, where it is over USD 14 100 per student, or USD 10 500 if research and development activities are excluded. Spending per student is higher than the OECD average at secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary levels, at around USD 10 500 at lower secondary, USD 10 800 at upper secondary and nearly USD 11 400 at post-secondary non-tertiary level.
- Expenditure per student has fallen by 15% since 2010 from primary to post-secondary non-tertiary education and by 24% at tertiary level. This is due to both a decrease in funds for education (-10% for below tertiary education

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

and -18% for tertiary) and an increase in the number of students (by 6% from primary to post-secondary non-tertiary and by 8% in tertiary education).

- Expenditure on educational institutions from primary to tertiary education amounted to 4.8% of Ireland's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2014, below the OECD average of 5.2%. However, from primary to post-secondary non-tertiary education, spending on educational institutions amounted to 3.7% of GDP, above the OECD average, while it was much lower at tertiary level (1.1% compared to the OECD average of 1.6%). In Ireland, 91% of expenditure on institutions from primary to tertiary education comes from public sources and the remaining 9% from the private sector, most of which is covered by households.
- Educational institutions spend 94% of the funds they manage on current expenditure while the remaining 6% is allocated for capital investment (i.e. on assets that last longer than one year, including construction, renovation or major repair of buildings, and new or replacement equipment). In 2014, a share that ranges from 71% of current expenditure in tertiary educational institutions to 87% in primary ones was allocated to staff compensation (both teaching and non-teaching staff).
- In 2014, 12.9% of total government expenditure in Ireland went on education, above the OECD average of 11.3%. Total public expenditure on education includes both expenditure on institutions and transfers to households and other private entities (1.2% of total government expenditure). Total government expenditure fell faster than public expenditure on education between 2010 and 2014 (-38% and -12% respectively) and this resulted in a very large increase in the share of public expenditure on education in total government expenditure (+41%).

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This document, as well as any data and map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

#### Note regarding data from Israel


The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and 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.

#### References

OECD (2017), *Education at a Glance 2017: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2017-en>.

**For more information on Education at a Glance 2017** and to access the full set of Indicators, visit [www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm).

**Subnational data** are available at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/annualreports/oecd/index.asp>.

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

**Explore, compare and visualise more data and analysis using:**  **Education GPS**  
<http://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?primaryCountry=IRL&treshold=10&topic=E0>.

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## Key Facts for Ireland in Education at a Glance 2017

Source	Main topics in <i>Education at a Glance</i>	Ireland		OECD average		EU22 average	
	Fields of study						
	Graduates in upper secondary vocational programmes	2015					
		%	% Women	%	% Women	%	% Women
Table A2.1	Business, administration and law	**	**	20%	66%	19%	66%
	Engineering, manufacturing and construction	**	**	34%	12%	33%	11%
	Health and welfare	**	**	12%	82%	12%	82%
	Services	**	**	17%	60%	19%	59%
	New entrants to tertiary education	2015					
		%	% Women	%	% Women	%	% Women
Table C3.1	Education	7%	70%	9%	78%	9%	79%
	Business, administration and law	21%	47%	23%	54%	23%	57%
	Engineering, manufacturing and construction	10%	19%	16%	24%	15%	25%
	Tertiary students enrolled, by mobility status	2015					
		International students <sup>1</sup>	National students	International students <sup>1</sup>	National students	International students <sup>1</sup>	National students
Table C4.2	Education	1%	6%	3%	8%	3%	8%
	Business, administration and law	19%	20%	27%	23%	26%	22%
	Engineering, manufacturing and construction	12%	11%	17%	12%	17%	15%
	Tertiary-educated 25-64 year-olds	2016					
Table A1.3	Education	**		13%		13%	
	Business, administration and law	**		23%		21%	
	Engineering, manufacturing and construction	**		17%		18%	
	Employment rate of tertiary-educated 25-64 year-olds	2016					
Table A5.3	Education	**		83%		83%	
	Business, administration and law	**		85%		85%	
	Engineering, manufacturing and construction	**		87%		86%	
	Early childhood education						
	Enrolment rates in early childhood education at age 3	2015					
Table C2.1	ISCED 01 and 02	38%		78%		80%	
	Expenditure on all early childhood educational institutions	2014					
Table C2.3	As a percentage of GDP	0.1%		0.8%		0.8%	
	Proportions of total expenditure from public sources	100%		82%		85%	
	Vocational education and training (VET)						
	Enrolment in upper secondary education, by programme orientation	2015					
		General	Vocational	General	Vocational	General	Vocational
Table C1.3	Enrolment rate among 15-19 year-olds	56%	**	37%	25%	35%	29%
	Graduation rates, by programme orientation	2015					
		General	Vocational	General	Vocational	General	Vocational
Table A2.2	Upper secondary education - all ages	100%	40%	54%	44%	50%	49%
	Employment rate, by programme orientation	2016					
		General	Vocational	General	Vocational	General	Vocational
Figure A5.3.	25-34 year-olds with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education as their highest educational attainment level	67%	70%	70%	80%	69%	79%
	Tertiary education						
	Share of international or foreign students, by level of tertiary education	2015					
Table C4.1.	Bachelor's or equivalent	6%		4%		6%	
	Master's or equivalent	13%		12%		12%	
	Doctoral or equivalent	25%		26%		22%	
	All tertiary levels of education	7%		6%		8%	
	Educational attainment of 25-64 year-olds	2016					
Table A1.1	Short-cycle tertiary	13%		8%		6%	
	Bachelor's or equivalent	21%		16%		13%	
	Master's or equivalent	8%		12%		14%	
	Doctoral or equivalent	1%		1%		1%	
	Employment rate of 25-64 year-olds, by educational attainment	2016					
Table A5.1	Short-cycle tertiary	78%		81%		81%	
	Bachelor's or equivalent	83%		83%		82%	
	Master's or equivalent	86%		87%		87%	
	Doctoral or equivalent	88%		91%		91%	
	All tertiary levels of education	82%		84%		84%	
	Relative earnings of full-time full-year 25-64 year-old workers, by educational attainment (upper secondary education = 100)	2015					
Table A6.1	Short-cycle tertiary	124		122		124	
	Bachelor's or equivalent	170		146		138	
	Master's, doctoral or equivalent	203		198		177	
	All tertiary levels of education	166		156		153	



## Ireland - Country Note - Education at a Glance 2017: OECD Indicators

Source	Main topics in <i>Education at a Glance</i>	Ireland		OECD average		EU22 average	
	Adult education and learning						
	Participation of 25-64 year-olds in adult education <sup>2</sup>	2012		2012 <sup>3</sup>		2012	
Table C6.1a	Participation in formal education only	6%		4%		n.a.	
	Participation in non-formal education only	36%		39%		n.a.	
	Participation in both formal and non-formal education	9%		7%		n.a.	
	No participation in adult education	49%		50%		n.a.	
	Financial investment in education						
	Annual expenditure per student, by level of education (in equivalent USD, using PPPs)	2014					
Table B1.1	Primary education	USD 8 007		USD 8 733		USD 8 803	
	Secondary education	USD 10 665		USD 10 106		USD 10 360	
	Tertiary (including R&D activities)	USD 14 131		USD 16 143		USD 16 164	
	Total expenditure on primary to tertiary educational institutions	2014					
Table B2.1	As a percentage of GDP	4.8%		5.2%		4.9%	
	Total public expenditure on primary to tertiary education	2014					
Table B4.1	As a percentage of total public expenditure	12.9%		11.3%		9.9%	
	Teachers						
	Actual salaries of teachers in public institutions relative to wages of full-time, full-year workers with tertiary education	2015					
Table D3.2a	Pre-primary school teachers	**		0.78		0.79	
	Primary school teachers	**		0.85		0.86	
	Lower secondary school teachers (general programmes)	**		0.88		0.90	
	Upper secondary school teachers (general programmes)	**		0.94		0.96	
		Annual statutory salaries of teachers in public institutions, based on typical qualifications, at different points in teachers' careers (in equivalent USD, using PPPs)	Starting salary	Salary after 15 years of experience	Starting salary	Salary after 15 years of experience	Starting salary
Table D3.1a	Pre-primary school teachers	**	**	USD 29 636	USD 39 227	USD 28 726	USD 38 487
	Primary school teachers	USD 30 733	USD 57 449	USD 30 838	USD 42 864	USD 30 080	USD 42 049
	Lower secondary school teachers (general programmes)	USD 30 733	USD 58 040	USD 32 202	USD 44 623	USD 31 498	USD 43 989
	Upper secondary school teachers (general programmes)	USD 30 733	USD 58 040	USD 33 824	USD 46 631	USD 32 503	USD 46 151
		Organisation of teachers' working time in public institutions over the school year	Net teaching time	Total statutory working time	Net teaching time	Total statutory working time	Net teaching time
Table D4.1	Pre-primary school teachers	**	**	1001 hours	1608 hours	1034 hours	1564 hours
	Primary school teachers	915 hours	**	794 hours	1611 hours	767 hours	1557 hours
	Lower secondary school teachers (general programmes)	735 hours	**	712 hours	1634 hours	663 hours	1593 hours
	Upper secondary school teachers (general programmes)	735 hours	**	662 hours	1620 hours	629 hours	1580 hours
		Percentage of teachers who are 50 years old or over	2015				
Table D5.1	Primary education	22%		32%		33%	
	Upper secondary education	29%		40%		42%	
		Share of female teachers in public and private institutions	2015				
Table D5.2	Primary education	87%		83%		86%	
	Upper secondary education	71%		59%		61%	
	Tertiary education	44%		43%		44%	
		Ratio of students to teaching staff	2015				
Table D2.2	Primary education	16		15		14	
	Secondary education	14		13		12	
	Tertiary education	20		16		16	
	Equity						
	Intergenerational mobility in education <sup>2</sup>	2012		2012 <sup>3</sup>		2012	
		Both parents have less than tertiary	At least one parent attained tertiary	Both parents have less than tertiary	At least one parent attained tertiary	Both parents have less than tertiary	At least one parent attained tertiary
Tables A4.1 and A4.2	Less than tertiary education (30-44 year-olds' own educational attainment)	65%	25%	69%	31%	n.a.	
	Tertiary-type B (30-44 year-olds' own educational attainment)	16%	20%	12%	16%	n.a.	
	Tertiary-type A and advanced research programmes (30-44 year-olds' own educational attainment)	19%	55%	20%	55%	n.a.	
	Transition from school to work						
	Percentage of people not in employment, nor in education or training (NEET)	2016					
Table C5.1	18-24 year-olds	18%		15%		15%	
	Education and social outcomes						
	Percentage of adults who report having depression	2014					
		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Table A8.1	Below upper secondary	21%	26%	10%	15%	10%	14%
	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	9%	14%	6%	10%	6%	10%
	Tertiary	8%	10%	5%	6%	4%	6%

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

Refer to Annex 3 for country-specific notes and for more information on data presented in this key facts table ([www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm)).

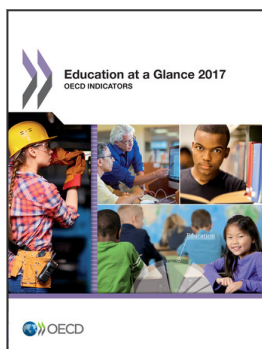
1. For some countries foreign students are provided instead of international students.

2. Data refer to ISCED-97 instead of ISCED-A 2011.

3. OECD average includes some countries with 2015 data.

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

Cut-off date for the data: 19 July 2017. Any updates on data can be found on line at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-data-en>



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