

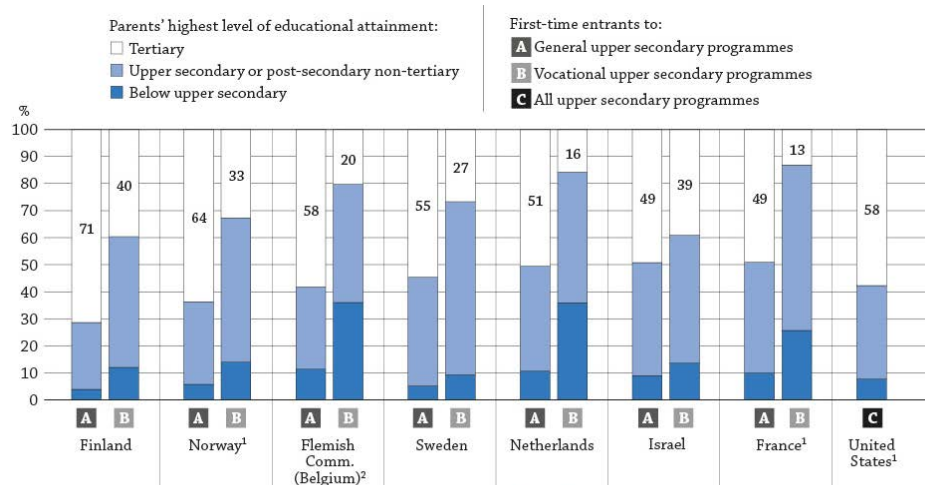
EDUCATION AT A GLANCE 2018

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 OECD and partner countries.

Belgium

- Enrolment in vocational education is strongly associated with parental education. In the Flemish community, the large majority (80%) of new entrants into vocational upper secondary education have parents who have not attained tertiary education.
- Enrolment rates among younger age groups are comparable to those in OECD countries on average. Among older age groups, over **50% of 20-year-olds are enrolled in tertiary education, well above the OECD average of 39%**. Women represent 56% of tertiary students in Belgium.
- **Belgium is one of the countries with the highest share of repeaters**, both at the lower and upper secondary levels. **Boys represent over 60% of repeaters** at both levels (general programmes only).
- Both the **French and Flemish communities of Belgium have among the highest total education expenditure per student among OECD countries**. Teachers' salaries are above the OECD average in both communities.
- At the national level, 46% of 25-34 year-olds have attained tertiary education, which is slightly above the OECD average of 44%. The **tertiary attainment rate in the Walloon region (40%) is slightly below the national and OECD averages while it is slightly above in the Flemish region (47%)**. In both communities, the **employment premium for individuals with a tertiary degree is high**.
- Primary and secondary teachers are relatively younger than on average across OECD countries. At all levels however, **at least one-quarter of the teaching workforce is above age 50**.

Figure 1. Share of first-time entrants to upper secondary education, by programme orientation and parents' educational attainment (2015)



1. Year of reference other than 2015. Please see Annex 3 for further information (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2018-36-en>).

2. Parents' educational attainment refers to mother's educational attainment.

Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of share of students in general programmes with at least one tertiary-educated parent.

Source: OECD 2018 ad hoc survey on upper secondary completion rate by equity dimension. See Source section at the end of this indicator for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2018-36-en>).

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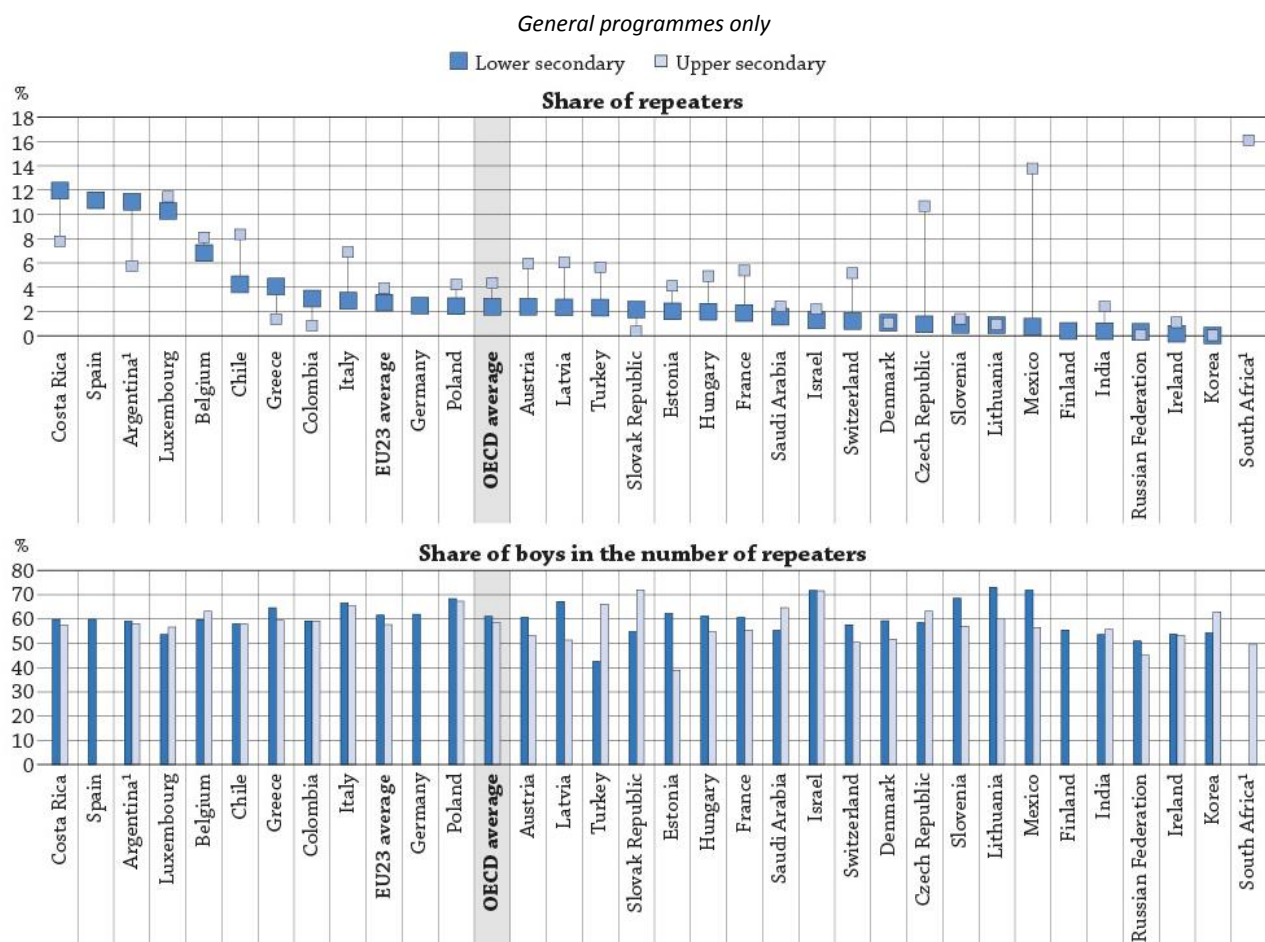
Students start school earlier and leave later than on average across OECD countries, but enrolment remains strongly associated with parental education and immigrant status

- While education is compulsory between ages 6 and 18, over half of children under 3 (60%) are already enrolled in early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Belgium, one of the highest enrolment rates across OECD countries. Although 44% of children whose mothers have not attained tertiary education are enrolled in ECEC, the rate rises to 65% among children with tertiary-educated mothers. The difference between the two groups (over 20 percentage points) is about twice as big as on average across EU23 countries, where 38% of children with tertiary-educated mothers are enrolled in ECEC, compared to 28% of children whose mothers have not attained tertiary education.
- Enrolment in vocational education is also strongly associated with mothers' educational attainment. In the Flemish community, the majority (80%) of new entrants into vocational upper secondary education have mothers who have not attained tertiary education (Figure 1). In contrast, 58% of new entrants into general upper secondary education have tertiary-educated mothers. Furthermore, once enrolled in vocational education, students with tertiary-educated mothers are 8 percentage points more likely to complete upper secondary education than students whose mothers have not attained tertiary education.
- The choice to pursue higher education may also depend on students' immigrant status. Tertiary educational attainment rates are over 10 percentage points lower among foreign-born adults who arrived to the country by the age of 15 than among native-born adults. Foreign-born adults who arrived to the country at 16 or older have a small advantage over those who arrived earlier. In comparison, tertiary education rates are similar for foreign-born adults regardless of their age at arrival in about one-fourth of the countries with available data.

Secondary students benefit from a diverse educational provision but they are more likely to repeat a grade than in other OECD countries

- In 2016, almost 60% of upper secondary students were enrolled in vocational programmes in Belgium, well over the OECD average of 44%. However, only 3% were enrolled in combined school- and work-based programmes, compared to 11% on average across countries. Girls make up the majority of those enrolled in vocational programmes (57%), unlike in other OECD countries (39% on average).
- Belgium is one of the countries with the highest share of repeaters, at both the lower and upper secondary levels. In Belgium, 7% of lower secondary students and 8% of upper secondary students are repeaters, compared to 2% and 4% on average across OECD countries. Boys are over twice as likely to repeat a grade than girls and make up at least 60% of repeaters at both the lower and upper secondary levels (general programmes only) (Figure 2). Based on existing evidence, grade repetition is an ineffective way to help low-achieving students overcome their difficulties at school, and may even reinforce socio-economic inequities (OECD, 2014). A large share of repeaters could also result in significant financial costs for the country.
- The share of over-age students in the last grade is about the same as the OECD average in primary education (2%) and 2 percentage points higher than the OECD average (4%) in lower secondary general programmes.

Figure 2. Share of repeaters and share of boys in the number of repeaters in secondary education (2016)



1. Year of reference 2015.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the share of repeaters in lower secondary education.

Source: OECD (2018), Table B1.3. See Source section at the end of this indicator for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2018-36-en>).

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Substantial funds are allocated to education in both communities

- Belgium's total expenditure on primary to tertiary education (excluding research and development) corresponds to 5.3% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), above the OECD average of 4.5%. Private expenditure makes up 4% of spending on education from primary to tertiary level, considerably below the OECD average of 12%. The share of public expenditure on primary to tertiary educational institutions has remained high (above 90%) and roughly constant between 2005 and 2015.
- The French and Flemish communities of Belgium have among the highest total education expenditure per student among OECD countries. At the upper secondary level, the total expenditure is over USD 13 100 compared to about USD 10 000 on average across OECD countries.¹ In comparison to other countries with available data, Belgium has the smallest regional differences in annual expenditure per student.
- Just as in other high-spending countries, it may seem as though Belgium does not face significant trade-offs between the different factors influencing the level of teachers' salary cost. In particular, the Flemish and French communities of Belgium have above-average teachers' salaries, above-average instruction time, below-average teaching time and below-average estimated class size – all of which are cost-intensive. However, a comparison of the two communities shows different policy choices behind the very similar salary costs. In the Flemish

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

community, the main factor pushing up salary costs is the low number of teaching hours (542 hours per year, compared to the OECD average of 697), whereas in the French community, the main contributing factor to high salary costs is the small estimated class sizes – estimated using the number of teachers, the number of teaching hours and instruction time (13 students per class, compared to the OECD average of 16).

Students have strong labour market incentives to pursue education to tertiary level

- In 2017, 17% of 25-34 year-olds had not attained upper secondary education in Belgium, compared to 15% on average across OECD countries. This national average masks disparities between regions: 21% of 25-34 year-olds had not attained upper secondary education in the Walloon region and Brussels capital region, compared with 13% in the Flemish region. The difference in attainment rates between regions is less pronounced for upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education, but grows larger for those who have attained tertiary education, especially at master's and doctoral or equivalent levels. At the national level, 46% of 25-34 year-olds have attained tertiary education, which is slightly above the OECD average of 44%. The tertiary attainment rate in the Walloon region (40%) is slightly below the national and OECD averages, while it is slightly above in the Flemish region (47%). In the Brussels capital region, the tertiary attainment rate of 25-34 year-olds is 52%.
- In many countries, unemployment rates improve only slightly when continuing education beyond upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education. However, Belgium is one of the countries with the highest positive effect on unemployment rates of young tertiary graduates, alongside countries such as the Czech Republic, Estonia and France. Tertiary-educated adults in Belgium are about twice less likely to be unemployed as those with an upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education.
- The employment premium for individuals with tertiary degrees is very high in both the Walloon and Flemish regions, and in the Brussels capital region. Among 25-34 year-olds who have not attained upper secondary education, 42% are employed in Brussels capital region, 60% in the Flemish region and 42% in the Walloon region. In contrast, among those who attained tertiary education, 81% are employed in Brussels capital region, 91% in the Flemish region and 84% in the Walloon region.

Tertiary students, especially women, are less attracted to science, technology, engineering and mathematics than other fields

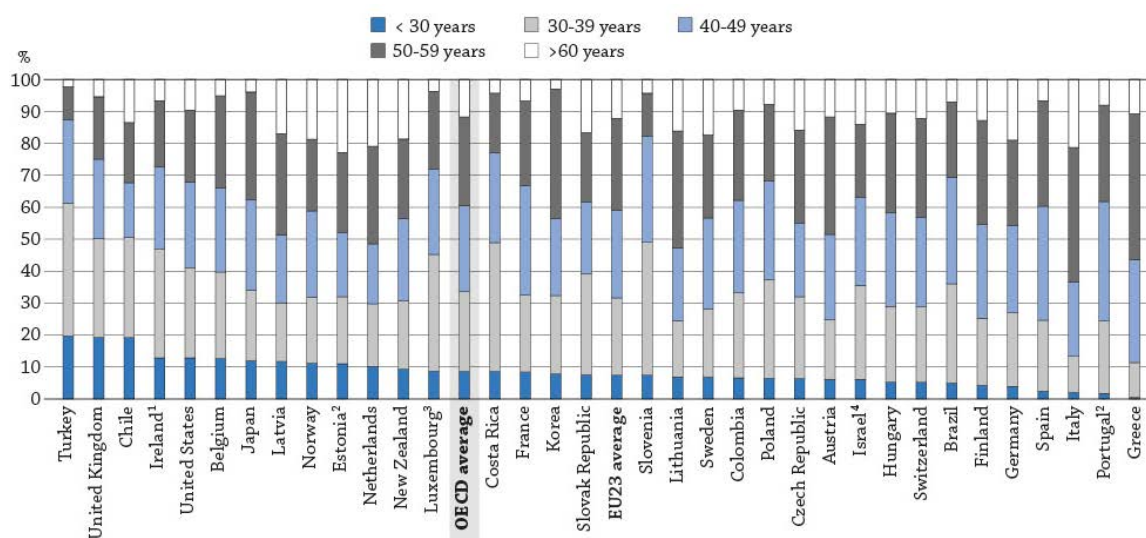
- Students enrol in tertiary education younger than in other OECD countries. Over 50% of 20-year-olds were enrolled in tertiary education in 2016, which is above the OECD average of 39%.
- Belgium welcomes a high share of international students, of which 40% come from neighbouring countries, especially France; almost one-third of international students in Belgium are French. At the doctoral level, international students make up over 40% of students. One-fifth of international and foreign students enrol in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields.
- Overall, the STEM fields are not very popular among tertiary graduates. Less than 20% of tertiary students graduate from one of these fields. In 2016, 12% had graduated in engineering, manufacturing and construction; 4% in natural sciences, mathematics and statistics; and only 2% in information and communication technologies (ICT). In comparison, 24% of students graduate in the STEM fields on average across OECD countries, with 14% in engineering, 6% in natural sciences, mathematics and statistics; and 4% in ICT.
- The gender gap in STEM is large, as women make up less than 30% of STEM graduates. Only 8% of women graduate from STEM at the tertiary level, compared to 32% of men.

Despite teacher salaries being higher than the European and OECD averages, attracting new teachers remains a big challenge

- As is usual across OECD countries, women represent almost all the teaching workforce in pre-primary education and the majority of the teaching workforce in primary (82%), lower secondary (64%) and upper secondary (63%) education, but less than 50% in tertiary education. Women represent over 60% of the teaching workforce in vocational upper secondary programmes, compared with 56% on average across OECD countries.

- In both primary and secondary education, teachers in Belgium are younger than on average across OECD countries. However, as in the majority of OECD countries, both the French and Flemish communities still have a hard time attracting new teachers, especially in higher levels of education. In upper secondary education, only 14% of teachers are below the age of 30 while 31% are over 50, compared to OECD averages of 8% and 39% respectively. At all levels, almost one-third of the teaching workforce is above age 50. Among male secondary teachers, only 13% are below age 30 (Figure 3).
- The evidence suggests that it is not financial reasons putting young adults off the teaching profession. Teachers' statutory salaries are relatively high in Belgium, compared with the average across OECD and EU23 countries. In upper secondary general programmes, teachers' starting salaries are USD 45 038 in the Flemish community and USD 43 593 in the French community, way above the OECD average of USD 34 534 and the EU23 average of USD 33 205.
- In general upper secondary education, teachers earn about 4% more than tertiary-educated workers in the French community and about 10% more in the Flemish community, well above the average for OECD countries, where they earn 4% less on average. This could be partly explained by the fact that in general upper secondary, the majority of teachers in Belgium hold a Master's degree. In both communities, school heads earn more than tertiary-educated workers at all levels. The largest difference is in upper secondary, where heads earn at least 53% more than tertiary-educated workers, compared to 42% on average across OECD countries.
- The main policy levers to attract more teachers might therefore relate to teachers' working conditions and status, rather than their salaries. In particular, smaller class sizes, better opportunities for career progression and greater autonomy are essential to ensuring better working conditions for teachers (OECD, 2018b).

Figure 3. Age distribution of male teachers in secondary education (2016)



1. Public institutions only.


2. Upper secondary includes programmes from post-secondary non-tertiary education.

3. Upper secondary includes short-cycle tertiary.

4. Private institutions are not included for upper secondary education.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the share of male secondary teachers below the age of 30.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2018), Education at a Glance Database, <http://stats.oecd.org/>. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2018-36-en>).

StatLink  <https://doi.org/10.1787/888933805838>

School governance varies substantially between the French and Flemish communities

- There are significant differences between schools in the Flemish community and the French community. Flemish schools enjoy much greater autonomy, both in terms of pedagogy and resource management: 63% of decisions are taken at the school level in public lower secondary education, 21% in full autonomy and 42% within a framework set by a higher authority. In contrast, only 27% of decisions are taken at the school level in the French community and over 40% are taken at the state level. Evidence suggests that students enrolled in systems with a

high level of school autonomy combined with a strong accountability system are more likely to perform well in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD, 2011).

- While schools enjoy greater autonomy in the Flemish community in general, most decisions regarding personnel management and planning and structures are taken within a framework set by a higher authority.

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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.

Lithuania was not an OECD member at the time of preparation of Education at a Glance and is therefore not included in the zone aggregates mentioned in the publication. However this country note, produced at a later stage, includes updated figures for the OECD and EU averages including Lithuania and therefore may differ from the figures mentioned in Education at a Glance.

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For more information on Education at a Glance 2018 and to access the full set of Indicators, visit 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.

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<http://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?primaryCountry=AUS&treshold=10&topic=E0>.

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Key Facts for Belgium in Education at a Glance 2018

Source	Main topics in <i>Education at a Glance</i>	Belgium	OECD average	EU23 average			
	Equity						
	Educational attainment of 25-34 year-olds by gender	2017					
Table A1.2		% Men	% Women	% Men	% Women	% Men	% Women
	Below upper secondary	18%	15%	17%	14%	16%	12%
	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	42%	33%	46%	37%	48%	39%
	Tertiary	40%	51%	38%	50%	36%	49%
	Percentage of 15-29 year-olds NEETs by country of birth	2017					
Table A2.3	Native-born	11%	13%	12%			
	Foreign-born	24%	18%	19%			
	Employment rates of native- and foreign-born 25-64 year-olds, by educational attainment	2017					
Table A3.4		Native-born	Foreign-born	Native-born	Foreign-born	Native-born	Foreign-born
	Below upper secondary	48%	43%	56%	60%	55%	57%
	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	76%	63%	76%	72%	76%	71%
	Tertiary	87%	76%	87%	79%	87%	78%
	Earnings of 25-64 women relative to men, by educational attainment	2016					
Table A4.3	Below upper secondary	**	78%	79%			
	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	86%	78%	79%			
	Tertiary	82%	74%	75%			
	Share of girls among repeaters in secondary general programmes	2016					
Table B1.3	Lower secondary	40%	39%	38%			
	Upper secondary	37%	42%	42%			
	Percentage of women and men entering doctoral programmes by field of study	2016					
Table B4.1		% Men	% Women	% Men	% Women	% Men	% Women
	Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	**	**	22%	20%	20%	19%
	Engineering, manufacturing and construction	**	**	22%	10%	23%	11%
	Health and welfare	**	**	12%	19%	11%	18%
	First-time tertiary graduates	2016					
Table B5.1	Share of female first-time tertiary graduates	**	57%	58%			
	Participation of 25-64 year-olds in formal and/or non-formal education	2012 ¹					
Table A7.1	Participation of native-born adults and foreign-born adults who arrived in the country by the age of 25	**	49%	n.a.			
	Participation of foreign-born adults who arrived in the country at 26 or older	**	48%	n.a.			
	Early childhood education and care (ECEC)						
	Enrolment rates in ECEC at age 3	2016					
Table B2.1a	ECEC services (ISCED 0) and other registered ECEC services	99%	76%	82%			
	Share of children enrolled in pre-primary education (ISCED 02), by type of institution	2016					
Table B2.2	Public institutions	47%	68%	75%			
	Private institutions	53%	32%	25%			
	Expenditure on pre-primary level (ISCED 02)	2015					
Table B2.3a	Annual expenditure per child in USD (converted to PPPs)	USD 7 929	USD 8 426	USD 8 163			
	Vocational education and training (VET)						
	Percentage of upper secondary students enrolled in vocational education, by programme orientation	2016					
Table B1.3	All vocational programmes	59%	44%	47%			
	Combined school- and work-based programmes	3%	11%	11%			
	Share of women among upper secondary graduates, by programme orientation	2016					
Figure B3.1	General programmes	56%	54%	55%			
	Vocational programmes	48%	46%	45%			
	Total expenditure on upper secondary educational institutions per full-time equivalent student, by programme orientation	2015					
Table C1.1	General programmes	USD 13 138	USD 8 981	USD 9 235			
	Vocational programmes	USD 13 497	USD 10 831	USD 11 115			
	Tertiary education						
	Share of international or foreign students, by education level ²	2016					
Table B6.1	Bachelor's or equivalent	9%	4%	6%			
	Master's or equivalent	20%	12%	13%			
	Doctoral or equivalent	44%	26%	23%			
	All tertiary levels of education	12%	6%	9%			
	Share of first-time tertiary graduates by education level	2016					
Table B5.1	Short-cycle tertiary	**	14%	10%			
	Bachelor's or equivalent	**	75%	76%			
	Master's or equivalent	**	10%	14%			
	Employment rate of 25-64 year-olds, by educational attainment	2017					
Table A3.1	Short-cycle tertiary	81%	81%	82%			
	Bachelor's or equivalent	84%	84%	83%			
	Master's or equivalent	87%	88%	88%			
	Doctoral or equivalent	93%	92%	92%			
	All tertiary levels of education	85%	85%	85%			
	Relative earnings of full-time full-year 25-64 year-old workers, by educational attainment (upper secondary education = 100)	2016					
Table A4.1	Short-cycle tertiary	**	123	125			
	Bachelor's or equivalent	126	145	137			
	Master's, doctoral or equivalent	165	191	175			
	All tertiary levels of education	141	155	152			

Belgium - Country Note - Education at a Glance 2018: OECD Indicators

Source	Main topics in <i>Education at a Glance</i>	Belgium	OECD average	EU23 average			
	Financial resources invested in education						
	Total expenditure on educational institutions per full-time equivalent student, by level of education (in equivalent USD, using PPPs)	2015					
Table C1.1	Primary	USD 10 211	USD 8 539	USD 8 512			
	Secondary	USD 13 070	USD 9 868	USD 9 882			
	Tertiary (excluding R&D activities)	USD 11 627	USD 11 049	USD 10 919			
	Total expenditure on primary to tertiary educational institutions	2015					
Table C2.1	As a percentage of GDP	5.7%	5.0%	4.6%			
	Share of expenditure on tertiary educational institutions by source of funds ³	2015					
Figure C3.1	Public expenditure	86%	73%	76%			
	Private expenditure	10%	21%	19%			
	Public to private transfers	5%	6%	4%			
	Total public expenditure on primary to tertiary education	2015					
Table C4.1	As a percentage of total government expenditure	10.6%	11.1%	9.6%			
	Teachers, the learning environment and the organisation of schools						
	Actual salaries of teachers and school heads in public institutions relative to earnings of full-time, full-year workers with tertiary education	2016					
		Teachers	School heads	Teachers	School heads	Teachers	School heads
Table D3.2a	Pre-primary	**	**	0.82	**	0.83	1.1
	Primary	**	**	0.86	1.21	0.88	1.21
	Lower secondary (general programmes)	**	**	0.91	1.34	0.93	1.37
	Upper secondary (general programmes)	**	**	0.96	1.42	1	1.45
	Annual statutory salaries of teachers in public institutions, based on most prevalent qualifications, at different points in teachers' careers (in equivalent USD, using PPPs)	2017					
		Starting salary	Salary after 15 years of experience	Starting salary	Salary after 15 years of experience	Starting salary	Salary after 15 years of experience
Table D3.1a	Pre-primary	**	**	USD 30 229	USD 40 436	USD 29 096	USD 39 371
	Primary	**	**	USD 31 919	USD 44 281	USD 31 206	USD 43 486
	Lower secondary (general programmes)	**	**	USD 33 126	USD 46 007	USD 32 495	USD 45 472
	Upper secondary (general programmes)	**	**	USD 34 534	USD 47 869	USD 33 205	USD 47 615
	Organisation of teachers' working time in public institutions over the school year	2017					
		Net teaching time	Total statutory working time	Net teaching time	Total statutory working time	Net teaching time	Total statutory working time
Table D4.1	Pre-primary	**	**	1 029 hours	1 628 hours	1 068 hours	1 569 hours
	Primary	**	**	778 hours	1 620 hours	754 hours	1 553 hours
	Lower secondary (general programmes)	**	**	701 hours	1 642 hours	665 hours	1 585 hours
	Upper secondary (general programmes)	**	**	655 hours	1 638 hours	633 hours	1 572 hours
	Percentage of teachers who are 50 years old or over	2016					
Table D5.1	Primary to upper secondary	28%		35%		38%	
	Share of female teachers, in public and private institutions	2016					
Table D5.2	Primary	82%		83%		86%	
	Lower secondary	64%		69%		71%	
	Upper secondary	63%		60%		63%	
	Tertiary	48%		43%		44%	
	Average class size by level of education	2016					
Table D2.1	Primary	**		21		21	
	Lower secondary	**		23		23	

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

1. OECD average includes some countries with 2015 data.

2. For some countries, data on foreign students are provided instead of international students.

3. International expenditure is aggregated with public expenditure

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

Cut-off date for the data: 18 July 2018. Any updates on data can be found on line at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-data-en>.



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