

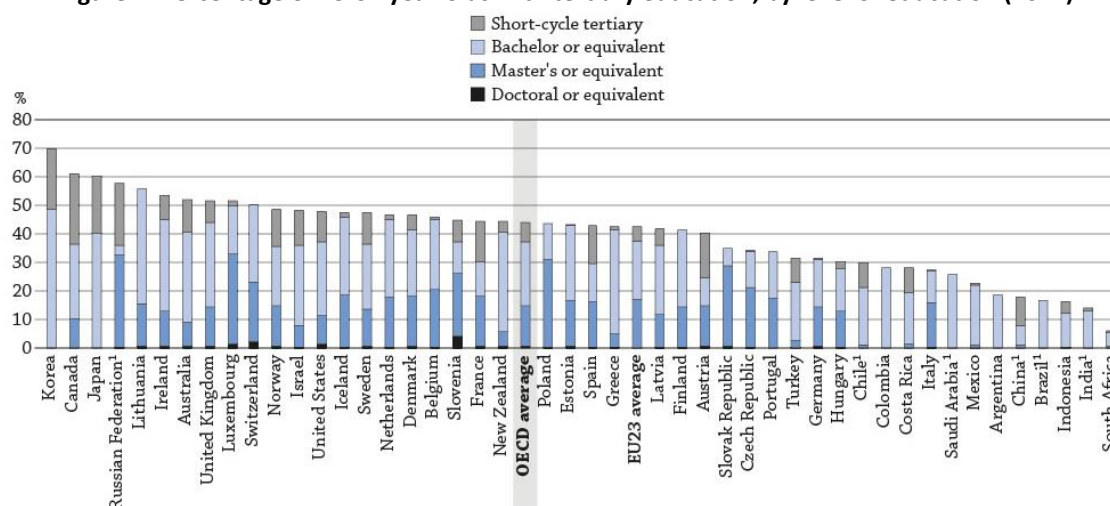
EDUCATION AT A GLANCE 2018

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.

South Africa

- The younger generations in South Africa are attaining higher education levels, **with about three-quarters of 25-34 year-olds having now attained upper secondary education (76%)**.
- **Tertiary attainment is still low in South Africa, with only 6% of young adults attaining this level in 2017**, the lowest share across all OECD and partner countries.
- **Among children aged 5-14, 16% are still not enrolled in education** at all in South Africa, while enrolment is near universal for this age group in most OECD and partner countries.
- In 2017, South Africa had **the highest rate of 20-24 year-olds who were neither employed nor in education or training (NEET)** across OECD and partner countries, with almost half of those in that age group being NEET.
- **Tertiary education pays off in the labour market**, for both men and women. The employment rate for tertiary-educated young adults is almost as high in South Africa (83%) as it is across OECD countries on average (84%).

Figure 1. Percentage of 25-34 year-olds with tertiary education, by level of education (2017)




Note: Some categories might be included in other categories. Please refer to Table A1.1 for details.

1. Year of reference differs from 2017. Refer to Table A1.1 for more details.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the percentage of tertiary-educated 25-34 year-olds.

Source: OECD (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/10.1787/888933801677>

Younger adults are attaining higher levels of education, but tertiary attainment has not yet improved

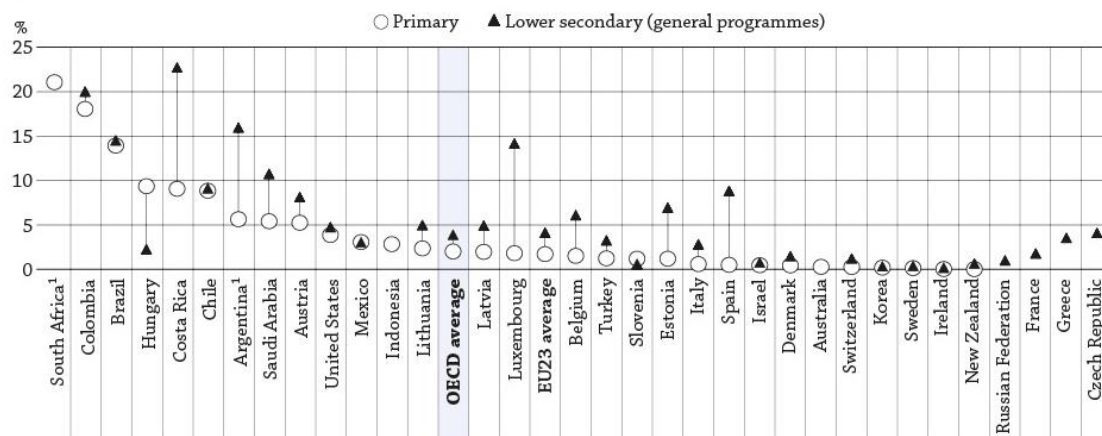
- In 2017, over half of 25-64 year-olds (58%) had attained upper secondary education as their highest educational level in South Africa, well over the G20 average of 33% and the OECD average of 39%. Upper secondary education has expanded over the past two decades, and about three-quarters (76%) of young adults (25-34 year-olds) had attained upper secondary education as their highest level of qualification in 2017, way above the OECD average of 41%. Only 18% of young adults had not attained upper secondary education, close to the OECD average of 15%.
- On the other hand, only 7% of 25-64 year-olds in South Africa have attained a tertiary degree compared to about one-third on average across G20 countries. Nor is the tertiary attainment rate improving among the younger generations, as only 6% of 25-34 year-olds in South Africa are tertiary educated, the lowest rate across all countries with available data (Figure 1).
- Overall, women aged 25-34 had slightly higher educational attainment than men in the same age group, although the gender gap in attainment rates is narrower than in most other countries: 7% of young women had attained tertiary education, and 78% upper secondary education, compared to 5% and 73% respectively for young men.

Enrolment of children under 14 is not yet universal, and many students in secondary education are over-age

- Even though upper secondary education is now widespread in South Africa, only 84% of children between 5 and 14 years old were enrolled in education in 2015, the lowest enrolment rate for this age group across all countries for which data are available. There are only 3 years for which at least 90% of the population of school age are enrolled in South Africa (children between 7 and 9 years old), showing that a non-negligible proportion of school-age children have been left out of the educational system. In addition, South Africa has the second highest student to teaching staff ratio in primary education across OECD and partner countries after India, at 30:1. In secondary education, the ratio is almost as high (28:1), the highest ratio among the OECD and partner countries with India.
- Enrolment in education starts late in South Africa, and very few children are enrolled in any kind of early childhood education and care (ECEC) services before the age of 5. In South Africa, 17% of 5-year-olds are enrolled in pre-primary education, while 22% are already enrolled in primary education. Overall, less than 40% of 5-year-olds are enrolled in school, rising to 75% among 6-year-olds, an age at which enrolment is near universal in almost all OECD and partner countries (98%). This delayed enrolment and the lack of availability of ECEC services has consequences for the rest of the education system.
- Students in South Africa tend to be older than the expected age for their grade. In the last grade of primary education, 21% of students in South Africa are over age,¹ the highest rate among countries with available data (Figure 2). This carries on into higher levels of education, as 35% of 19-year-olds and 24% of 20-year-olds were still enrolled in secondary education in South Africa in 2015, about 10 percentage points more than on average across OECD countries. In most countries, over one-third of 19 and 20 year-olds will already be enrolled in tertiary education (34% and 39%).
- The large share of over-age students suggests both delayed enrolment in school and a large proportion of repeaters. In South Africa, 16% of students upper secondary general programmes are repeaters, the highest across OECD and partner countries, and four times the OECD average, with boys and girls equally likely to be among the repeaters.
- Only 12% of students enrolled in upper secondary education attend vocational programmes and, of those, 78% are above the typical age of 20.

¹ Over-age students are defined as those at least two years older than each grade's intended age


Figure 2. Share of over-age students in the last grade of primary and lower secondary education (2016)



1. Year of reference 2015.

Countries are ranked in descending order of their share of over-age students in primary education.

Source: OECD (2018), Table B1.3 and data available on line. 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>).

StatLink  <https://doi.org/10.1787/888933803102>

Tertiary education pays off in South Africa, and the employment gender gap narrows with educational attainment

- Tertiary education pays off on the labour market in South Africa, as the employment rate for adults with a tertiary education was 85% in 2017, similar to the OECD average. Adults with upper secondary education, however, face a 58% employment rate in South Africa, the lowest across all countries with available data, and almost 20 percentage points lower than the OECD average of 76%.
- The gender gap in employment rates narrows with educational attainment: while only 43% of young women with an upper secondary education are employed, 15 percentage points below the rate for young men with similar attainment, tertiary-educated young women in South Africa benefit from an 81% employment rate, only 5 percentage points below the employment rate for tertiary-educated young men.
- In addition, almost half (48%) of 20-24 year-olds in South Africa were neither employed nor in education or training (NEET) in 2017, by far the highest rate across all countries with available data.

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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.

References

OECD (2018), *Education at a Glance 2018: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2018-en>.

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.

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

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Key Facts for South Africa in Education at a Glance 2018

Source	Main topics in <i>Education at a Glance</i>	South Africa	OECD average	G20 average			
	Equity						
	Educational attainment of 25-34 year-olds by gender	2017					
Table A1.2		% Men	% Women	% Men	% Women	% Men	% Women
	Below upper secondary	21%	15%	17%	14%	28%	26%
	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	73%	78%	46%	37%	41%	36%
	Tertiary	5%	7%	38%	50%	32%	39%
	Share of girls among repeaters in secondary general programmes	2016					
Table B1.3	Lower secondary	**		39%		39%	
	Upper secondary	50%		42%		41%	
	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	5%		76%		**	
	Share of children enrolled in pre-primary education (ISCED 02), by type of institution	2016					
Table B2.2	Public institutions	94%		68%		58%	
	Private institutions	6%		32%		42%	
	Vocational education and training (VET)						
	Enrolment in upper secondary education, by programme orientation	2016					
Table B1.3	Percentage of upper secondary students enrolled in vocational programmes	12%		44%		12%	
	Tertiary education						
	Employment rate of 25-64 year-olds, by educational attainment	2017					
Table A3.1	Short-cycle tertiary	82%		81%		**	
	Bachelor's or equivalent	85%		84%		**	
	Master's or equivalent	85%		88%		**	
	Doctoral or equivalent	**		92%		**	
	All tertiary levels of education	85%		85%		**	
	Financial investment 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 8 539		**	
	Secondary	**		USD 9 868		**	
	Tertiary (excluding R&D activities)	**		USD 11 049		**	
	Teachers and the learning environment						
	Share of female teachers in public and private institutions	2016					
Table D5.2	Primary	79%		83%		75%	
	Lower secondary	**		69%		61%	
	Upper secondary	58%		60%		54%	
	Tertiary	**		43%		43%	
	Average class size by level of education	2016					
Table D2.1	Primary	**		21		**	
	Lower secondary	**		23		**	

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 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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