

4. THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

How much are teachers paid?

- Salaries for lower secondary teachers with at least 15 years' experience range from less than USD 16 000 in Hungary and Estonia to more than USD 98 000 in Luxembourg.
- For both primary and secondary education, salaries at the top of the scale are on average around 70% higher than starting salaries.
- Salaries in primary and secondary education have grown in real terms since 1996 in almost all OECD countries, with the biggest rises in Finland, Hungary and Mexico and Estonia.

Significance

This spread shows the starting, mid-career and maximum statutory salaries of teachers in public primary and secondary education. Since teachers' salaries are the largest single cost in education, teacher compensation is a critical consideration for policy makers seeking to maintain both the quality of teaching and a balanced education budget.

Findings

In most OECD countries, teachers' salaries rise with the level of education they teach. For example, in Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland and Switzerland, the salary of an upper secondary teacher with at least 15 years experience is at least 25% higher than that of a primary teacher with the same experience. The difference is less than 5%, however, in Australia, England, Greece, Ireland, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Portugal and Scotland and Estonia and Slovenia.

Salaries at the top of the scale are on average around 70% higher than starting salaries for both primary and secondary education, although this differential largely varies among countries in line with the number of years it takes to progress through the scale. Top-of-the-scale salaries in Korea and Portugal are more than 2.5 times starting salaries, but it takes 37 and 31 years respectively to reach the top of the scale.

To get a sense of the relative value of teachers' salaries within countries, a number of comparisons are useful, such as in terms of GDP per capita (see Chart D3.2 in *Education at a Glance 2010*). They can also be compared with the earnings of other tertiary graduates. Salaries for teachers with 15 years of experience in lower secondary education are 26% more than the earnings of workers with tertiary education in Spain. By contrast, they are below 60% in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Italy and Israel and Slovenia.

Trends

Teachers' salaries grew in real terms at both primary and secondary levels in virtually all OECD countries between 1996 and 2008. The biggest increases occurred in Hungary and Estonia, but both still have low real and relative salaries. Top-of-the-scale salaries rose faster than starting and mid-career salaries in Finland, Greece and Mexico (at lower secondary level) and Estonia. In Australia, Denmark, England, New Zealand and Scotland, starting salaries rose faster than mid-career or top-of-the-scale salaries for all education levels.

Definitions

Data are from the 2010 OECD-INES Survey on Teachers and the Curriculum and refer to the 2007-08 school year. Gross teachers' salaries were converted using GDP and purchasing power parities (PPPs) exchange rate data from the OECD National Accounts database. Starting salaries refer to the average scheduled gross salary per year for a fully qualified full-time teacher. Earnings for workers with tertiary education are average earnings for full-time full-year workers aged between 25 and 64 year and with education at ISCED 5A/5B/6. Data presented here offer a simplified illustration of international comparisons in teacher compensation. Large differences in taxation, social benefits and allowances and additional payments for teachers as well as variations in teaching time, workloads and the use of part-time teachers must also be taken into account in making international comparisons of teachers' benefits. It is thus important to exercise caution in interpreting comparisons of teachers' salaries.

Information on data for Israel:
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

Going further

For additional material, notes and a full explanation of sourcing and methodologies, see *Education at a Glance 2010* (Indicator D3).

Areas covered include:

- Teachers' salaries and trends.
- Additional payments for teachers.

Further reading from OECD

Evaluating and Rewarding the Quality of Teachers: International Practices (2009).

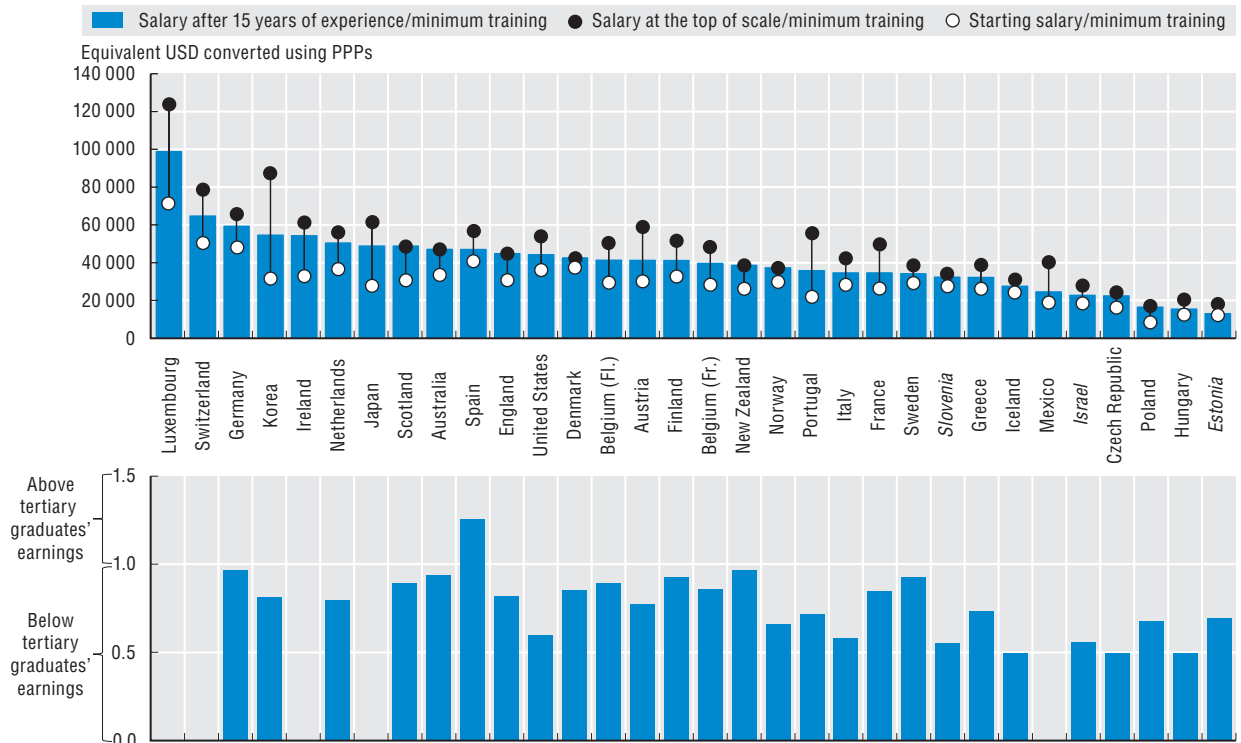
Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers (2005).

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How much are teachers paid?

Figure 4.5. **Teachers' salaries in lower secondary education, 2008**

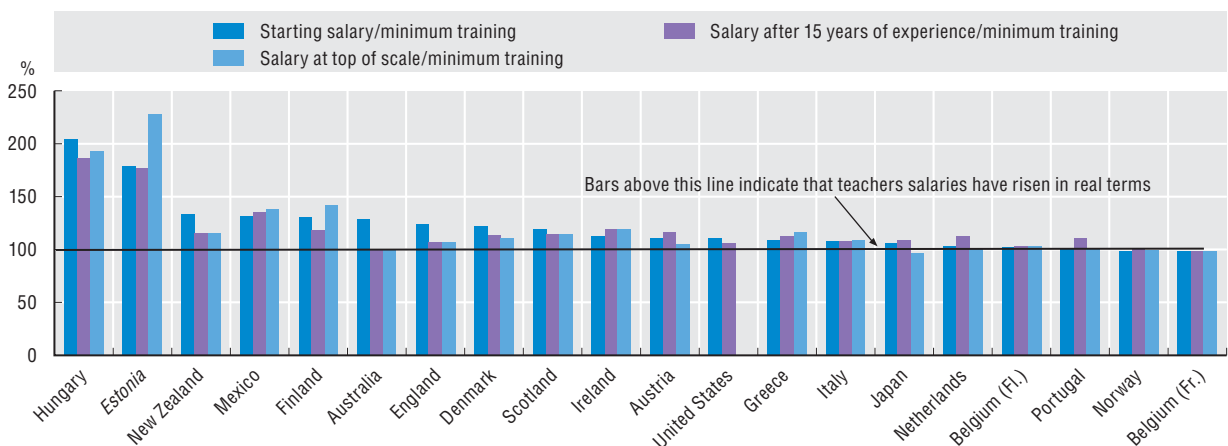
The upper chart in this figure shows how much teachers are paid, and how this varies depending on their years of experience. The lower chart compares the salaries of teachers (with 15 years' experience) with the earnings of full-time workers with tertiary education.



Source: OECD (2010), *Education at a Glance 2010*, Table D3.1, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932310510>.

Figure 4.6. **Trends in teachers' salaries in lower secondary education (1996, 2008)**

This figure shows how the salaries of teachers with different levels of experience have changed in real terms from 1996 to 2008.



Source: OECD (2010), *Education at a Glance 2010*, Table D3.2 available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932310510>.



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