



Foreword

The structure of education systems varies widely between countries. In order to produce internationally-comparable education statistics and indicators, it is therefore necessary to have a framework to collect and report data on education programmes (and their resulting qualifications) with a similar level of educational content. It is for this purpose that the *International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)* exists, as the official classification used to categorise and report cross-nationally comparable education statistics.

The ISCED classification was initially developed by UNESCO in the mid-1970s and was first revised in 1997. Due to subsequent changes in education and learning systems throughout the start of the 21st century, a further review of ISCED was undertaken between 2009 and 2011 involving extensive global consultations with countries, regional experts and international organisations. The revision took into account important shifts in the structure of higher education such as the Bologna process in Europe, the expansion of education programmes for very young children, and an increasing interest in statistics on the outcomes of education (e.g. educational attainment). The revised ISCED 2011 classification was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference at its 36th session in November 2011.

The present *ISCED 2011 Operational Manual: Guidelines for Classifying National Education Programmes and Related Qualifications* has been prepared jointly by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the OECD and Eurostat, and takes into account multiple consultations on the mappings of national education systems to ISCED 2011. The publication was prepared under the responsibility of Alison Kennedy from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS); Éric Charbonnier and Nhung Truong from the Innovation and Measuring Progress Division (IMEP) of the OECD Directorate for Education and Skills; and Marta Beck-Domžalska from Eurostat.

The goal of this operational manual is to assist countries in the implementation of ISCED 2011 and to ensure that the mappings of national education systems to the revised ISCED framework are transparent. The implementation of ISCED 2011 should be both an iterative and an interactive process, in which consensus on mappings can be built between countries and international organisations for the purpose of enhancing comparability in the international reporting of education statistics.

The publication of this operational manual is an important step forward in a long-term consultative process designed to continually improve the comparability of international statistics on education.



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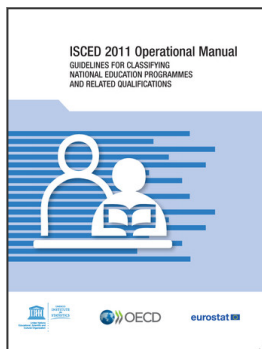
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