

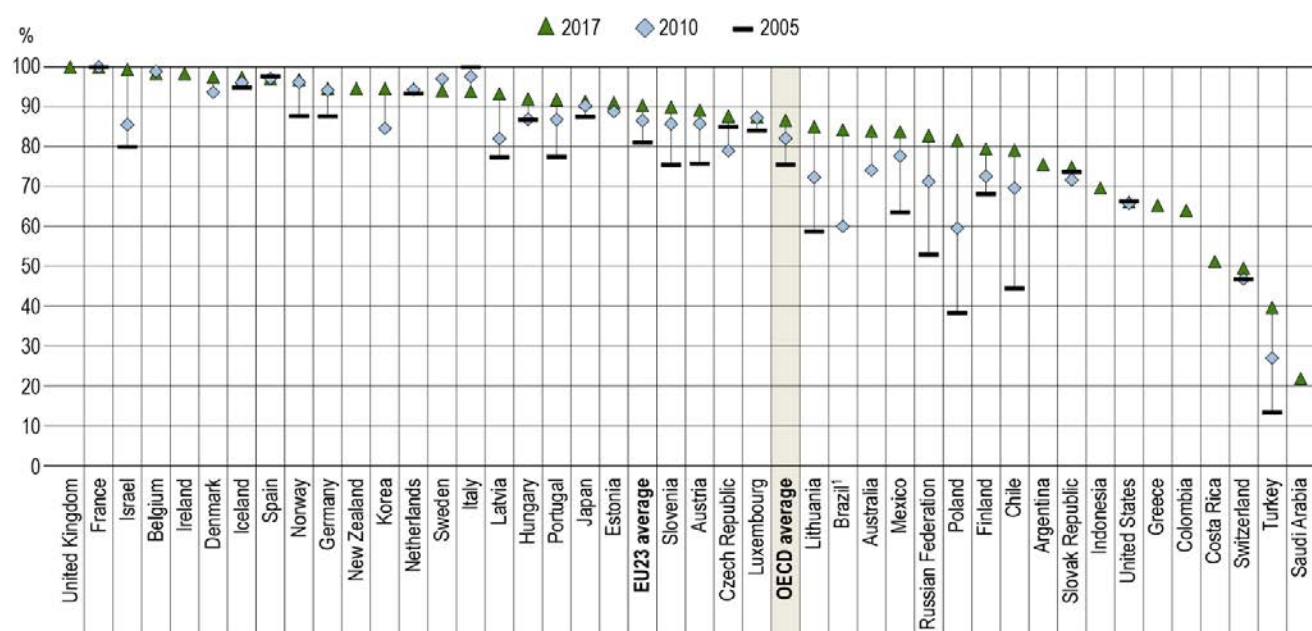
Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators (OECD, 2019^[1]) is the authoritative source for information on the state of education around the world. It provides data on the structure, finances and performance of education systems in OECD and partner countries.

Saudi Arabia

- **Tertiary attainment is lower in Saudi Arabia than in most OECD and partner countries. Only 74% of tertiary-educated adults are employed**, one of the lowest employment rates for tertiary-educated adults among OECD and partner countries.
- **Women are less likely to work despite improving gender equality in tertiary education attainment. In 2018, only 41% of tertiary-educated women were employed in Saudi Arabia**, the lowest rate among OECD and G20 countries with available data, compared to 94% of tertiary-educated men, **one the highest rates across countries**.
- **Enrolment of 3-5 year-olds is much lower than on average across OECD countries**, particularly among children under 5.

Figure.1. Change in enrolment rates of children aged 3 to 5 years (2005, 2010 and 2017)

Early childhood education (ISCED 0) and primary education



1. Year of reference 2012 instead of 2010.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the enrolment rates of 3-5 year-olds in 2017.

Source: OECD (2019), Table B2.2. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>)

Although tertiary attainment is increasing, employment rates for tertiary-educated adults are relatively low

- A significant share of adults in Saudi Arabia still do not have an upper secondary education: 43%, compared to 36% on average across G20 countries and 22% on average across the OECD.
- In 2016, 24% of adults (25-64 year-olds) had attained a tertiary qualification in Saudi Arabia. Although tertiary attainment remains low compared to the OECD average of 39% and the G20 average of 32%, it is higher than in all partner countries except Argentina (36%) and the Russian Federation (57%), and above some OECD countries such as Colombia (23%), Italy (19%), Mexico (18%) and Turkey (21%).
- Tertiary education rates are expected to increase in Saudi Arabia. In 2017, first-time entry rates into short-cycle tertiary education programmes were 20%, rising to 66% for bachelor's programmes. These were higher than the OECD averages of 17% for short-cycle tertiary and 58% for bachelor's programmes. First-time entry rates have remained significantly lower at higher education levels, however: 2% at master's level (OECD average: 24%) and 0.3% at doctoral level (OECD average: 2.3%).
- In contrast to many countries, individuals who attain an upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary qualification do not benefit much in the labour market in Saudi Arabia. While the difference in employment rates between adults with and without upper secondary education is 17 percentage points on average across OECD countries, it is only 3 percentage points in Saudi Arabia, the smallest difference among OECD and partner countries after Indonesia (1 percentage point).
- As in most OECD countries, tertiary-educated adults in Saudi Arabia have better employment prospects than those with lower levels of education. Nevertheless, the employment rate for tertiary-educated adults in Saudi Arabia is only 74%, the lowest value among OECD and partner countries, alongside Greece and Turkey.

Women are still less likely to work despite improving gender equality in tertiary attainment levels

- Despite overall low tertiary attainment rates, women are as likely as men to have a tertiary degree in Saudi Arabia, with a tertiary attainment of 24% for men and 23% for women (23-24%). As a result, the share of tertiary-educated women in 2018 amounted to 97% of the share of tertiary-educated men in Saudi Arabia, above some OECD countries where women tend to reach higher attainment levels than men.
- Women are more likely to pursue a degree in natural science, mathematics and statistics in Saudi Arabia than in other countries. They accounted for 66% of recent graduates in this broad field, compared to 54% on average across OECD countries. However, Saudi Arabia has one of the lowest shares of women graduating from this field at doctoral level (38%, compared to 46% on average across OECD countries).
- In 2018, tertiary-educated women in Saudi Arabia had the lowest employment rates (41%) among countries with available data, behind Turkey (63%) and Korea (65%) and well below the OECD average of 81%. On the other hand, tertiary-educated men in Saudi Arabia had one of the highest employment rates (94%, compared to the OECD average of 90%), equal to Iceland and behind only Japan and the Czech Republic (95%). This means Saudi Arabia has the widest gender gap in employment rates for tertiary-educated adults across all the OECD and partner countries with available data. The gender disparity in employment rates is even higher at lower levels of education, reaching almost 75 percentage points among those with an upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education, and almost 71 percentage points among adults with below upper secondary education. However, with the implementation of the "Women in the Workplace" initiative, the gender gap in employment is expected to decrease (Redvers, 2015^[2]).

Enrolment in early childhood education and care in Saudi Arabia is well below the OECD average and is mostly provided by private institutions


- As in about two-thirds of OECD countries, early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Saudi Arabia is not part of compulsory education, which begins at the age of 6. Saudi Arabia has the lowest enrolment rates among 3-5 year-olds in ECEC and primary education (22%, compared with the OECD average of 87%) among countries with available data (Figure.1).

- Within this age group, most of the enrolment is among 5-year-olds (45%, compared with 82% on average across OECD countries); only 3% of 3-year-olds are enrolled, the lowest among countries with available data (OECD average: 77%).
- ECEC is mainly provided by the private sector in Saudi Arabia. The majority of children in pre-primary education (ISCED 02) are enrolled in private institutions in Saudi Arabia (64%), compared to 42% on average across G20 countries.
- Although employment rates for women are generally low, they are over-represented among pre-primary teachers, who are all women in Saudi Arabia, compared to 97% across OECD countries and 96% across G20 countries with available data.

References

- OECD (2019), *Education at a Glance 2019: OECD indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, [1]
<https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>.
- Redvers, L. (2015), "Keys to the Kingdom: The slow rise of Saudi women", *BBC Worklife*, [2]
<http://www.bbc.com/capital/story/20150408-slow-gains-for-saudi-women> (accessed on 15 July 2019).

For more information on **Education at a Glance 2019** 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: 
<http://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?primaryCountry=SAU&treshold=10&topic=EO>.

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On 25 May 2018, the OECD Council invited Colombia to become a Member. While Colombia is included in the OECD averages reported in this note, at the time of its preparation, Colombia was in the process of completing its domestic procedures for ratification and the deposit of Colombia's instrument of accession to the OECD Convention was pending.

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.

Key Facts for Saudi Arabia in Education at a Glance 2019

| Source | Main topics in <i>Education at a Glance</i> | Saudi Arabia | | OECD average | | G20 average | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Tertiary education | | | | | | | |
| Educational attainment of 25-64 year-olds | | 2018 | | | | | |
| Table A1.1 | Short-cycle tertiary | 0% | | 7% | | 9% | |
| | Bachelor's or equivalent | 24% | | 17% | | 16% | |
| | Master's or equivalent | 0% | | 13% | | 7% | |
| | Doctoral or equivalent | ** | | 1% | | ** | |
| Tertiary attainment of 25-34 year-olds, by gender | | 2008 | 2018 | 2008 | 2018 | 2008 | 2018 |
| Table A1.2 | Men | ** | ** | 31% | 38% | ** | 35% |
| | Women | ** | ** | 40% | 51% | ** | 41% |
| | Total | ** | ** | 35% | 44% | ** | 38% |
| Employment rate of 25-64 year-olds, by educational attainment | | 2018 | | | | | |
| Table A3.1 | Short-cycle tertiary | ** | | 82% | | ** | |
| | Bachelor's or equivalent | 74% | | 84% | | ** | |
| | Master's or equivalent | ** | | 88% | | ** | |
| | Doctoral or equivalent | ** | | 92% | | ** | |
| | All tertiary levels of education | 74% | | 85% | | ** | |
| Upper secondary and Vocational education and training (VET) | | | | | | | |
| Share of 25-34 year-olds with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education | | 2018 | | | | | |
| Table A1.2 | Share of 25-34 year-olds with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education | ** | | 41% | | 37% | |
| Employment, unemployment and inactivity rates of 25-34 year-olds, with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education | | 2018 | | | | | |
| Table A3.3 | Employment rate | ** | | 78% | | ** | |
| | Unemployment rate | ** | | 7% | | ** | |
| | Inactivity rate | ** | | 16% | | ** | |
| Early childhood education and care (ECEC) | | | | | | | |
| Enrolment rate of 3-5 year-olds in education | | 2017 | | | | | |
| Table B2.2 | ECEC and primary education | 22% | | 87% | | ** | |
| Share of children enrolled in private institutions | | 2017 | | | | | |
| Table B2.3 | at pre-primary level (ISCED 02) | 64% | | 34% | | 42% | |
| Financial resources invested in education | | | | | | | |
| Total expenditure on educational institutions, by level of education | | 2016 | | | | | |
| Table C1.1 and C2.1 | | USD/student¹ | % GDP | USD/student¹ | % GDP | USD/student¹ | % GDP |
| | Primary | ** | ** | USD 8 470 | 1.5% | ** | ** |
| | Lower secondary | ** | ** | USD 9 884 | 0.9% | ** | ** |
| | Upper secondary | ** | ** | USD 10 368 | 1.1% | ** | ** |
| | Tertiary (including R&D) | ** | ** | USD 15 556 | 1.5% | ** | ** |
| Teachers, the learning environment and the organisation of schools | | | | | | | |
| Share of female teachers, in public and private institutions | | 2017 | | | | | |
| Table D5.2 | Primary | ** | | 83% | | 87% | |
| | Lower secondary | ** | | 69% | | 72% | |
| Average class size by level of education | | 2017 | | | | | |
| Table D2.1 | Primary | ** | | 21 | | 20 | |
| | Lower secondary | ** | | 23 | | 21 | |

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

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

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

Cut-off date for the data: 19 July 2019. Any updates on data can be found on line at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-data-en>.



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