

## EDUCATION AT A GLANCE 2016

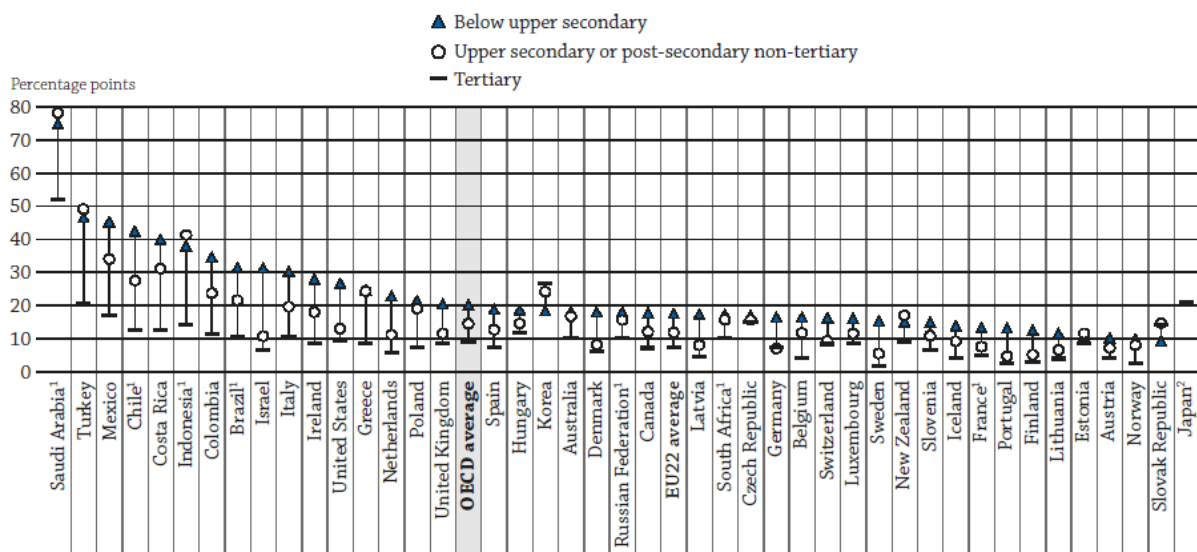
*Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* is the authoritative source for information on the state of education around the world. It provides data on the structure, finances and performance of education systems in the 35 OECD countries and a number of partner countries.

The topics covered in this country note were selected according to data availability.

### Saudi Arabia

- Although **almost half of all new entrants into tertiary education are women, employment rates among tertiary-educated women in Saudi Arabia remain low** compared to other OECD and partner countries. A similar pattern of low female employment rates persists across all levels of educational attainment in Saudi Arabia.
- **Large numbers of adults are entering tertiary education for the first time**, although the first-time graduate rates in Saudi Arabia are low.
- **Saudi Arabia has one of the highest percentages of science graduates**, particularly among those with a doctorate or equivalent degree.
- Unlike most OECD and partner countries, **the unemployment rate in Saudi Arabia is higher among the more educated across all age groups**, with the unemployment rate among 25-34 year-old tertiary-educated adults one of the highest (19.6%).

**Figure 1. Gender difference in employment rates, by educational attainment (2015)**  
25-64 year-olds, percentage-point difference (employment rate for men - employment rate for women)



1. Year of reference differs from 2015. Refer to the source table for more details.

2. Data for tertiary education include upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary programmes (less than 5% of the adults are under this group). Countries are ranked in descending order of the differences in employment rates between male and female adults with below upper secondary education.

Source: OECD (2016), "Educational attainment and labour-force status", *Education at a Glance* (database), [http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?datasetcode=EAG\\_NEAC](http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?datasetcode=EAG_NEAC). See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm)).

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933397067>

## Gender gaps in education and employment persist, but have been improving

- In 2013, 29% of 25-34 year-old women in Saudi Arabia had not completed upper secondary education, compared with 32% of men in the same age group.
- In 2014, 57% of graduates from bachelor's or equivalent programme were female in Saudi Arabia, which is comparable to the average of 58% across OECD countries. However, at master's or equivalent and doctoral or equivalent programmes, Saudi Arabia has one of the lowest shares of female graduates among all OECD and partner countries, at 40% and 27% respectively.
- More women in Saudi Arabia are entering tertiary education, and in 2014 46% of new entrants into tertiary education were women.
- Saudi Arabia has the largest gender gap in employment rates at all levels of educational attainment, across all OECD and partner countries (Figure 1). Tertiary-educated women have less than half the employment rate of similarly educated men. The difference is even greater for the population with below upper secondary education, where 16% of women are employed compared to 91% of men.
- Across the OECD and partner countries, Saudi Arabia is one of the few countries with a gender-balanced teaching workforce. Across all levels of education combined, 52% of teachers in Saudi Arabia are female, compared to the OECD average of 69% and the G20 average of 64%.

## Tertiary education is still expanding but is not always rewarded in the labour market

- The share of adults who have attained tertiary education has increased over the last decades. In 2014, 26% of 25-34 year-olds in Saudi Arabia had attained tertiary education, compared with 15% of 55-64 year-olds. In total, 23% of 25-64 year-olds had gained a tertiary education in 2014 in Saudi Arabia, which is lower than the OECD average of 35%.
- Saudi Arabia has one of the highest shares of students graduating from science fields across OECD and partner countries. At doctoral level, the figure is 44%, well above the OECD and G20 average of 27%, and comparable to Argentina (45%) and France (47%).
- Saudi Arabia has one of the highest percentages of adults entering tertiary education for the first time, at 80%, behind only New Zealand (96%), Turkey (94%), Denmark (89%), Chile (87%), Iceland (86%) and Norway (81%). However first-time graduation rates are low: 24% for bachelor's or equivalent, around 1% for master's or equivalent and 0.1% for doctoral or equivalent programmes. These low first-time graduation rates are comparable to those in other partner countries like China and Indonesia.
- A large share of all national tertiary students in Saudi Arabia are enrolled abroad – 5.7%, compared with the OECD average of 1.6%.
- Employment rates tend to increase with educational attainment and this pattern is also seen in Saudi Arabia. The employment rate is 75% for tertiary-educated adults and 65% for adults with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education, while across OECD countries the rates are 84% and 74% respectively. Employment rates in Saudi Arabia are among the lowest of all OECD and partner countries, comparable to Spain and Turkey. Saudi Arabia is also one of the few countries where the employment rate among 55-64 year-old tertiary-educated adults is higher than among similarly qualified 25-34 year-olds, by 15 percentage points.
- In contrast to the pattern seen across most OECD countries, Saudi Arabia's unemployment rates also rise with educational attainment. The unemployment rate is 4.1% among adults with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education, while it is 7.9% among the tertiary educated (3 percentage points above the OECD average). The unemployment rate is particularly high among tertiary-educated 25-34 year-olds, at 19.6%, the highest among all OECD and partner countries apart from Greece (30.2%).
- Saudi Arabia also has one of the highest levels of inactivity rates among tertiary-educated adults, across the OECD and partner countries: 23% of tertiary-educated 25-34 year-olds are inactive in Saudi Arabia, compared to the OECD average of 11%. However, the inactivity rate is lower among the tertiary educated (33%) than among adults with below upper secondary education (23%).

## Higher levels of education are linked to better social outcomes

- Across OECD and partner countries, tertiary-educated adults report higher life satisfaction than those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education. This holds true in Saudi Arabia, both for reported life satisfaction (89% and 72% respectively) and for expected life satisfaction in five years' time (95% and 86% respectively). Although only 77% of adults, at all levels of education, report being satisfied with their life compared to the OECD average of 84%, the 86% of adults in Saudi Arabia who expect to be satisfied with their life in five years is comparable to the OECD average of 87%.

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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.

### References

OECD (2016), *Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2016-en>.

**For more information on Education at a Glance 2016** and to access the full set of Indicators, visit [www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm](http://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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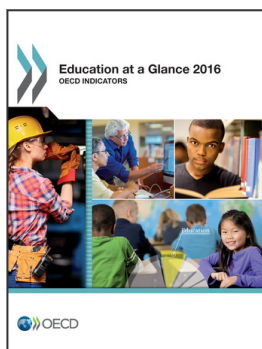
## Key Facts for Saudi Arabia in Education at a Glance 2016

Source	Main topics in Education at a Glance	Saudi Arabia		OECD average	
<b>Gender</b>					
<b>Employment rate of 25-64 year-olds, by educational attainment</b>		2015			
		<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Chart A5.2.	Below upper secondary	91%	16%	66%	46%
	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	93%	15%	81%	67%
	Tertiary	95%	43%	88%	80%
<b>Percentage of people not in employment, nor in education or training (NEET)</b>		2015			
		<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Table C5.2	15-29 year-olds	**	**	12%	17%
<b>Percentage of female graduates, by tertiary levels of education</b>		2014			
		<b>% Women</b>		<b>% Women</b>	
Table A3.4	Short-cycle tertiary	24%		56%	
	Bachelor's or equivalent	57%		58%	
	Master's or equivalent	40%		57%	
	Doctoral or equivalent	27%		47%	
<b>Vocational Education and Training (VET)</b>					
<b>Distribution of enrolment, by programme orientation</b>		2014			
		<b>General</b>	<b>Vocational</b>	<b>General</b>	<b>Vocational</b>
Table C1.3a	Upper secondary education	95%	5%	56%	44%
<b>Financial Investment in Education</b>					
<b>Annual expenditure per student, by level of education (in equivalent USD, using PPPs)</b>		2013			
Table B1.1	Primary education	**		USD 8 477	
	Secondary education	**		USD 9 811	
	Tertiary (including R&D activities)	**		USD 15 772	
<b>Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)</b>					
<b>Expenditure on all early childhood educational institutions</b>		2013			
Table C2.3	As a percentage of GDP	**		0.8%	
<b>Teachers</b>					
<b>Ratio of students to teaching staff</b>		2014			
Table D2.2	Primary education	**		15 students per teacher	
	Secondary education	**		13 students per teacher	
	Tertiary education	21 students per teacher		17 students per teacher	
<b>Tertiary Education</b>					
<b>Percentage of adults who have attained tertiary education, by tertiary level of educational attainment and age group</b>		2015			
		<b>25-34 year-olds</b>	<b>25-64 year-olds</b>	<b>25-34 year-olds</b>	<b>25-64 year-olds</b>
Table A1.2	Short-cycle tertiary	**	**	8%	8%
	Bachelor's or equivalent	26%	23%	21%	16%
	Master's or equivalent	**	**	14%	11%
	Doctoral or equivalent	**	**	1%	1%
<b>Other: Education and Social Outcomes</b>					
<b>Life satisfaction today and in five years for 25-64 year-olds, by educational attainment<sup>1</sup></b>		2015			
		<b>Life satisfaction today</b>	<b>Life satisfaction in 5 years</b>	<b>Life satisfaction today</b>	<b>Life satisfaction in 5 years</b>
Table A8.3a	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	72%	86%	83%	87%
	Tertiary	89%	95%	92%	94%

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

1. Educational attainment categories collected by Gallup World Poll may differ from ISCED-A 2011.

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



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