

READER'S GUIDE

■ Coverage of the statistics

Although a lack of data still limits the scope of the indicators in many countries, the coverage extends, in principle, to the entire national education system (within the national territory), regardless of who owns or sponsors the institutions concerned and regardless of how education is delivered. With one exception (described below), all types of students and all age groups are included: children (including students with special needs), adults, nationals, foreigners, and students in open-distance learning, in special education programmes or in education programmes organised by ministries other than the ministry of education, provided that the main aim of the programme is to broaden or deepen an individual's knowledge. Vocational and technical training in the workplace, with the exception of combined school- and work-based programmes that are explicitly deemed to be part of the education system, is not included in the basic education expenditure and enrolment data.

Educational activities classified as “adult” or “non-regular” are covered, provided that the activities involve the same or similar content as “regular” education studies, or that the programmes of which they are a part lead to qualifications similar to those awarded in regular education programmes.

Courses for adults that are primarily for general interest, personal enrichment, leisure or recreation are excluded.

■ Country coverage

This publication features data on education from the 34 OECD countries, two partner countries that participate in the OECD Indicators of Education Systems programme (INES), namely Brazil and the Russian Federation, and other partner countries that do not participate in INES (Argentina, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Latvia, Lithuania, Saudi Arabia and South Africa). Data sources for these latter ten countries are specified below the tables.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and 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.

■ Calculation of international means

The main purpose of *Education at a Glance* is to provide an authoritative compilation of key international comparisons of education statistics. While countries attain specific values in these comparisons, readers should not assume that countries themselves are homogeneous. The country averages include significant variations among sub-national jurisdictions, much as the OECD average encompasses a variety of national experiences (see Box A1.1 in *Education at a Glance 2014*).

For many indicators, an **OECD average** is presented; for some, an OECD total is shown. The OECD average is calculated as the unweighted mean of the data values of all OECD countries for which data are available or can be estimated. The OECD average therefore refers to an average of data values at the level of the national systems and can be used to answer the question of how an indicator value for a given country compares with the value for a typical or average country. It does not take into account the absolute size of the education system in each country.

The **OECD total** is calculated as the weighted mean of the data values of all OECD countries for which data are available or can be estimated. It reflects the value for a given indicator when the OECD area is considered as a whole. This approach is taken for the purpose of comparing, for example, expenditure charts for individual countries with those of the entire OECD area for which valid data are available, with this area considered as a single entity.

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Both the OECD average and the OECD total can be significantly affected by missing data. Given the relatively small number of countries surveyed, no statistical methods are used to compensate for this. In the case of some countries, data may not be available for specific indicators, or specific categories may not apply. Therefore, readers should keep in mind that the term “OECD average” refers to the OECD countries included in the respective comparisons. Averages are sometimes not calculated if too many countries have missing information or have information included in other columns.

For financial tables using trend series over 1995-2012, the OECD average is also calculated for countries providing data for all reference years used. This allows for a comparison of the OECD average over time with no distortion due to the exclusion of certain countries in the different years.

For many indicators, an **EU21 average** is also presented. It is calculated as the unweighted mean of the data values of the 21 countries that are members of both the European Union and the OECD for which data are available or can be estimated. These 21 countries are Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, the Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

For some indicators, a **G20 average** is presented. The G20 average is calculated as the unweighted mean of the data values of all G20 countries for which data are available or can be estimated (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States; the European Union is the 20th member of the G20 but is not included in the calculation). The G20 average is not computed if data for China or India are not available.

For some indicators, an **average** is presented. This average is included in tables with data from the 2012 Survey of Adult Skills, a product of the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). The average corresponds to the arithmetic mean of the estimates included in the table or chart from both the national and the sub-national entities (which include Flanders [Belgium] and England/Northern Ireland [UK]). Partner countries are not included in the average presented in any of the tables or charts.

■ Standard error (S.E.)

The statistical estimates presented in this report are based on samples of adults, rather than values that could be calculated if every person in the target population in every country had answered every question. Therefore, each estimate has a degree of uncertainty associated with sampling and measurement error, which can be expressed as a standard error. The use of confidence intervals provides a way to make inferences about the population means and proportions in a manner that reflects the uncertainty associated with the sample estimates. In this report, confidence intervals are stated at a 95% level. In other words, the result for the corresponding population would lie within the confidence interval in 95 out of 100 replications of the measurement on different samples drawn from the same population.

In tables showing standard errors, there is one column with the heading “%”, which indicates the average percentage, and a column with the heading “S.E.”, which indicates the standard error. Given the survey method, there is a sampling uncertainty in the percentages (%) of twice the standard error (S.E.). For example, for the values: % = 10 and S.E. = 2.6, 10% has an uncertainty zone of twice (1.96) the standard error of 2.6, assuming an error risk of 5%. Thus, the true percentage would probably (error risk of 5%) be somewhere between 5% and 15% (“confidence interval”). The confidence interval is calculated as: % +/- 1.96 * S.E., i.e. for the previous example, 5% = 10% - 1.96 * 2.6 and 15% = 10% + 1.96 * 2.6.

■ Classification of levels of education

The classification of levels of education is based on the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). ISCED is an instrument for compiling statistics on education internationally. ISCED-97 was recently revised, and the new International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011) was formally adopted in November 2011. This new classification is used for the first time in this edition of *Education at a Glance*. The major changes between ISCED 2011 and ISCED-97 are described in the section “About the new ISCED 2011 classification”.

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■ Symbols for missing data and abbreviations

These symbols and abbreviations are used in the tables and charts:

- a Data are not applicable because the category does not apply.
- b There is a break in the series when data for the latest year refer to ISCED 2011 and data for previous years refer to ISCED-97.
- c There are too few observations to provide reliable estimates (e.g. in PISA, there are fewer than 30 students or fewer than five schools with valid data; in the Survey of Adult Skills, there are fewer than 30 individuals).
- d Includes data from another category.
- m Data are not available.
- 0 Magnitude is either negligible or zero.
- r Values are below a certain reliability threshold and should be interpreted with caution.
- q Data have been withdrawn at the request of the country concerned.
- x Data included in another category or column of the table (e.g. x(2) means that data are included in column 2 of the table).
- ~ Average is not comparable with other levels of education.

■ Further resources

The website www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm provides information on the methods used to calculate the indicators, on the interpretation of the indicators in the respective national contexts, and on the data sources involved. The website also provides access to the data underlying the indicators and to a comprehensive glossary for technical terms used in this publication.

All post-production changes to this publication are listed at www.oecd.org/publishing/corrigenda (corrections) and <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-data-en> (updates).

Education at a Glance uses the OECD's StatLinks service. Below each table and chart in *Education at a Glance 2015* is a URL that leads to a corresponding Excel file containing the underlying data for the indicator. These URLs are stable and will remain unchanged over time. In addition, readers of the *Education at a Glance* e-book will be able to click directly on these links and the workbook will open in a separate window.

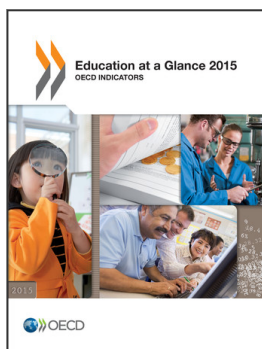
■ Layout of tables

In all tables, the numbers in parentheses at the top of the columns are simply used for reference. When a consecutive number does not appear, that column is available on line only.

■ Codes used for territorial entities

These codes are used in certain charts. Country or territorial entity names are used in the text. Note that throughout the publication, the Flemish Community of Belgium and the French Community of Belgium may be referred to as "Belgium (Fl.)" and "Belgium (Fr.)", respectively.

ARG Argentina	CZE Czech Republic	ISL Iceland	PRT Portugal
AUS Australia	DEU Germany	ISR Israel	RUS Russian Federation
AUT Austria	DNK Denmark	ITA Italy	SAU Saudi Arabia
BEL Belgium	ENG England	JPN Japan	SCO Scotland
BFL Belgium (Flemish Community)	ESP Spain	KOR Korea	SVK Slovak Republic
BFR Belgium (French Community)	EST Estonia	LUX Luxembourg	SVN Slovenia
BRA Brazil	FIN Finland	LVA Latvia	SWE Sweden
CAN Canada	FRA France	LTU Lithuania	TUR Turkey
CHE Switzerland	GRC Greece	NZL New Zealand	UKM United Kingdom
CHL Chile	HUN Hungary	MEX Mexico	USA United States
CHN China	IDN Indonesia	NLD Netherlands	ZAF South Africa
COL Colombia	IND India	NOR Norway	
CRI Costa Rica	IRL Ireland	POL Poland	



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