

TRENDS IN TERTIARY GRADUATION AND ENTRY RATES

Upper secondary graduation is becoming the norm in most OECD countries today. In addition, most students are graduating from upper secondary programmes designed to provide access to tertiary education, which is leading to increased enrolments in tertiary programmes. Countries with high graduation rates at the tertiary level are also the ones most likely to be developing or maintaining a highly skilled labour force.

Definition

The indicators in this chapter show:

- the current tertiary graduate output of educational systems, i.e. the percentage of the population in the typical age cohort for tertiary education that follows and successfully completes tertiary programmes (the indicator only contains the proportion of first-time graduates);
- and the percentage of a youth cohort that will enter different types of tertiary education during their lifetime.

Tertiary education covers a wide range of programmes, but overall serves as an indicator of the rate at which countries

produce advanced knowledge. A traditional university degree is associated with completion of “type A” tertiary courses; “type B” generally refers to shorter and often vocationally oriented courses and usually leads to direct labour market access. The indicator also sheds light on the internal efficiency of tertiary educational systems.

Comparability

Graduation rates for first tertiary-type A programmes are calculated as net graduation rates, as the sum of age-specific graduation rates. Gross graduation rates are presented for those countries that cannot provide such detailed data. In order to calculate gross graduation rates, countries identify the age at which first-time graduation typically occurs.

Entry rates for tertiary-type A programmes correspond to the sum of net entry rates for all ages. The net entry rate for a specific age is obtained by dividing the number of first-time entrants of that age to each type of tertiary education by the total population in the corresponding age group. The sum of net entry rates is calculated by adding the rates for each year of age.

Data on trends in graduation and entry rates at tertiary level for the years 1995, 2000-2004 are based on a special survey carried out in OECD countries and four of the six partner economies in January 2007. The data for the years 2005 and 2006 are based on the UNESCO/OECD/Eurostat data collection on education statistics.

Long-term trends

Based on current patterns of graduation, on average 37% of an age cohort are estimated to have completed tertiary-type A education in 2006 among the 25 OECD countries with comparable data. This figure ranged from 20% or less in Turkey and Greece to more than 45% in Poland, Finland, New Zealand, Australia and Iceland. These graduation rates tend to be higher in countries where the programmes provided are of shorter duration.

On average in OECD countries, tertiary-type A graduation rates increased by 15 percentage points over the last eleven years. In virtually every country for which comparable data are available, these rates increased between 1995 and 2006, often quite substantially. One of the most significant increases was reported in Italy where the rate doubled to 39% between 2000 and 2006.

It is estimated that 56% of young adults in OECD countries will enter tertiary-type A programmes during their lifetime, assuming that current patterns of entry continue. In Australia, Iceland, Poland, Finland, Sweden and New Zealand, 70% or more of young adults enter tertiary-type A programmes. The United States has an entry rate of 64%, but both type A and type B programmes are included in the figures for tertiary-type A. On average, in all OECD countries with comparable data, 8 percentage points more of today's young adults enter tertiary-type A programmes than in 2000, and 18 percentage points more than in 1995. Entry rates in tertiary-type A education increased by more than 15 percentage points between 2000 and 2006 in the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, Australia, Greece and Italy.

Source

- OECD (2008), *Education at a Glance*, OECD, Paris.

Further information

Analytical publications

- OECD (2008), *Trends Shaping Education – 2008 Edition*, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2008), *Trends Shaping Education – 2008 Edition*, OECD, Paris.

Methodological publications

- OECD (2004), *OECD Handbook for Internationally Comparative Education Statistics: Concepts, Standards, Definitions and Classifications*, OECD, Paris.
- UIS, OECD and Eurostat (2008), *UOE Data Collection – 2008 Data Collection on Education Systems: Definitions, Explanations and Instructions*, OECD, Paris.

Websites

- OECD Education at a Glance, www.oecd.org/edu/eag2008.


Tertiary graduation rates (Tertiary type-A level)

Percentage of tertiary-type A graduates to the population
at the typical age of graduation

Tertiary entry rates (Tertiary type-A level)

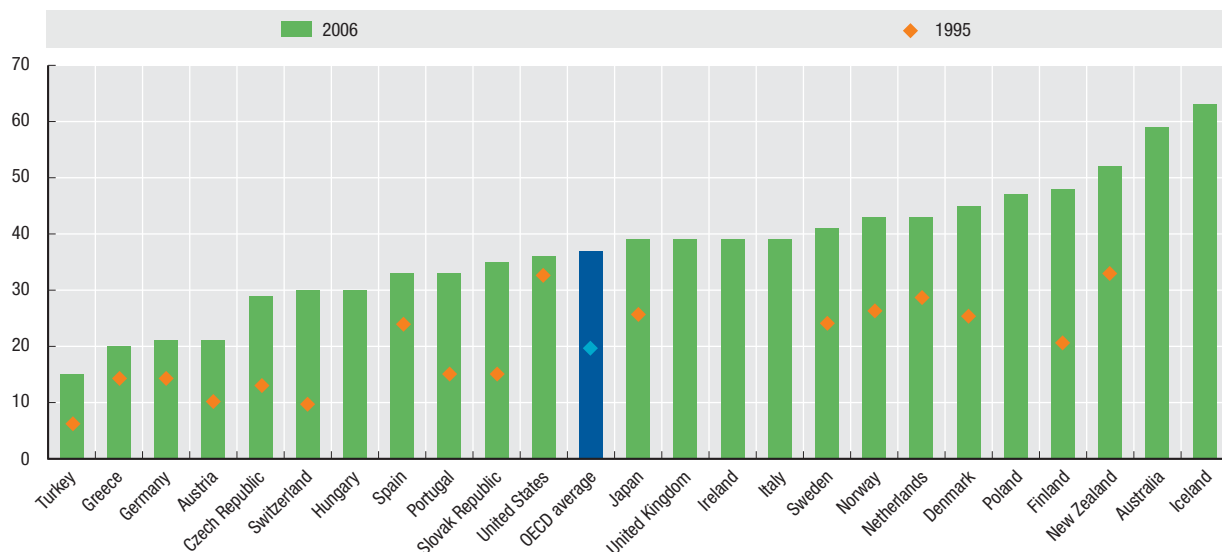
Sum of net entry rates for single years of age


	Typical age of graduation	1995	2000	2002	2004	2006	1995	2000	2002	2004	2006
Australia	20-25	..	36	46	47	59	..	59	77	70	84
Austria	22-26	10	15	18	20	21	27	34	31	37	40
Belgium	22-24	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	33	34	35
Canada	22-25	..	28	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Czech Republic	23-25	13	14	15	20	29	..	25	30	38	50
Denmark	24	25	37	41	44	45	40	52	53	55	59
Finland	25-29	20	41	49	47	48	39	71	71	73	76
Germany	24-27	14	18	18	19	21	26	30	35	37	35
Greece	22-24	14	15	18	24	20	15	30	33	35	49
Hungary	23-24	..	..	..	29	30	..	64	62	68	66
Iceland	24-25	..	33	41	51	63	..	66	72	79	78
Ireland	21-25	..	30	32	39	39	..	32	39	44	40
Italy	23-25	..	19	25	36	39	..	39	50	55	55
Japan	22, 24	25	29	33	35	39	31	40	42	42	45
Korea	21	..	..	..	..	..	41	45	46	49	59
Mexico	23	..	..	..	..	..	..	27	35	30	31
Netherlands	21-23	29	35	37	40	43	44	53	54	56	58
New Zealand	21-22	33	50	46	50	52	83	95	101	86	72
Norway	22-25	26	37	38	45	43	59	67	75	72	67
Poland	23-25	..	34	43	45	47	36	65	71	71	78
Portugal	22-24	15	23	30	32	33	..	..	..	..	53
Slovak Republic	23-24	15	..	23	28	35	28	37	43	47	68
Spain	20-22	24	30	32	33	33	..	47	49	44	43
Sweden	25	24	28	32	37	41	57	67	75	79	76
Switzerland	24-26	9	12	21	26	30	17	29	35	38	38
Turkey	22-24	6	9	10	11	15	18	21	23	26	31
United Kingdom	20-25	..	37	37	39	39	..	47	48	52	57
United States	22	33	34	32	33	36	..	43	64	63	64
OECD average		20	28	31	35	37	37	47	52	53	56
Brazil	21-24	..	10	13	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Russian Federation	19-24	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	65

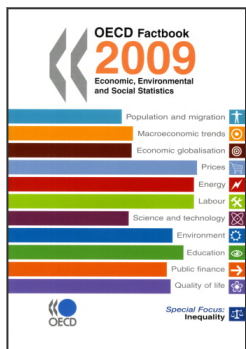
StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/543647311567>

Tertiary-type A graduation rates

Percentage of tertiary-type A graduates to the population at the typical age of graduation



StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/537572781005>



From:
OECD Factbook 2009
Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/factbook-2009-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2009), "Trends in tertiary graduation and entry rates", in *OECD Factbook 2009: Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/factbook-2009-69-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgment of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to rights@oecd.org. Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at info@copyright.com or the Centre français d'exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at contact@cfcopies.com.