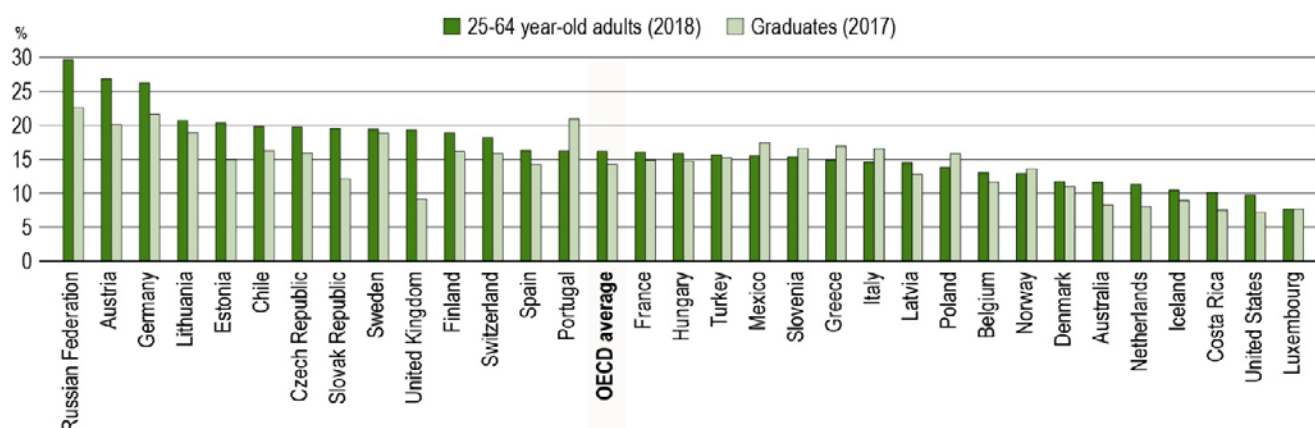


*Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* (OECD, 2019<sup>[1]</sup>) is the authoritative source for information on the state of education around the world. It provides data on the structure, finances and performance of education systems in OECD and partner countries.

## United Kingdom

- In the United Kingdom, the **average employment rate among tertiary-educated adults is 5 percentage points higher** than among those with only an upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary qualification.
- The **United Kingdom enrolls the second largest number of international students in the OECD area** after the United States. As a destination country, the **United Kingdom accounts for 10% of the total international education market share** in OECD and partner countries.
- **Tuitions fees in England are higher than in all OECD countries and economies except the United States.**
- **Early childhood education and care (ECEC) is nearly universal** in the United Kingdom for 3- and 4-year-olds.
- Among OECD countries, the **United Kingdom spends the fourth highest proportion of its gross domestic product (GDP) on primary to tertiary educational institutions.**
- At pre-primary, primary and secondary levels, the average age of the teaching workforce in the United Kingdom has fallen since 2005 and it is now **one of the youngest of all OECD countries.**

**Figure 1. Share of all tertiary-educated 25-64 year-old adults and recent tertiary graduates in engineering, manufacturing and construction (2017 and 2018)**



Countries are ranked in descending order of the share of engineering, manufacturing and construction graduates among all tertiary-educated 25-64 year-olds (2018).

**Source:** OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2019) and OECD/ILO/UIS (2019). See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>).

## Tertiary-educated workers do better in the labour market but their field of study has a profound impact

- In the United Kingdom, the average employment rate for tertiary-educated adults is 5 percentage points higher than for those with only an upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary qualification. This is relatively low; only five other OECD countries have a smaller employment advantage. However, the employment rate for those with an upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary qualification in the UK is relatively high
- Nearly one-quarter of 25-64 year-olds (23%) have a bachelor's degree, which is 5 percentage points above the OECD average. The proportion of adults with a master's or doctoral degree is similar to the OECD average.
- However, there is considerable variation in the employment rate among tertiary-educated adults by field of study. The proportion of tertiary-educated adults who studied the broad fields of education, and natural sciences, mathematics and statistics are below the OECD averages. However, those who studied these fields have lower employment rates on average than those with only upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education.
- There is a relatively large difference in earnings advantage across fields of study in the United Kingdom. Those with a degree in the best-paid field of study earn about twice as much as those with a degree in the worst-paid field of study. For example, those who studied natural sciences, mathematics or statistics earn over 180% of the earnings of a worker with only an upper secondary education. Meanwhile, those who studied arts, humanities, social sciences, journalism or information earn 92% of the earnings of a worker with an upper secondary education.
- There is a substantial gap (more than 10 percentage points) between the share of tertiary-educated 25-64 year-olds who studied engineering, manufacturing and construction and the share of recent graduates who have done so. (Figure 1) The share of recent graduates getting a degree in this field is less than half the share among the tertiary-educated population.

## The United Kingdom has a well-developed system of financial support for tertiary students

- In spite of high tuition fees and lower than average earning premiums for tertiary graduates, the gains (over a lifetime) associated with a higher level of education still greatly exceed the cost of tertiary studies in the United Kingdom. However, the private net financial returns (the difference between the benefits and cost for the individual) are lower than in most countries. The net returns for women reach USD 195 200<sup>1</sup> in the United Kingdom compared to USD 227 600 on average across OECD countries. The private returns for men are much higher than for women, at USD 245 100, but still lower than the OECD average of USD 295 900.
- More education not only benefits individuals, but the society too. In the United Kingdom, the public cost of tertiary education is far outweighed by its benefits for the society through the additional tax and social contributions paid by graduates. Tertiary-educated men generate USD 147 700 in total benefits through income tax and social contributions while tertiary-educated women generate a total of USD 113 400.
- Financial support to tertiary students comes in various forms across the United Kingdom. Wherever they study in the United Kingdom, English-domiciled students are provided with loans to cover tuition fees, while Welsh-domiciled students are provided with a mixture of grants and loans. The majority of Scottish undergraduate students studying in Scotland do not pay tuition fees, but have a loan provided if they

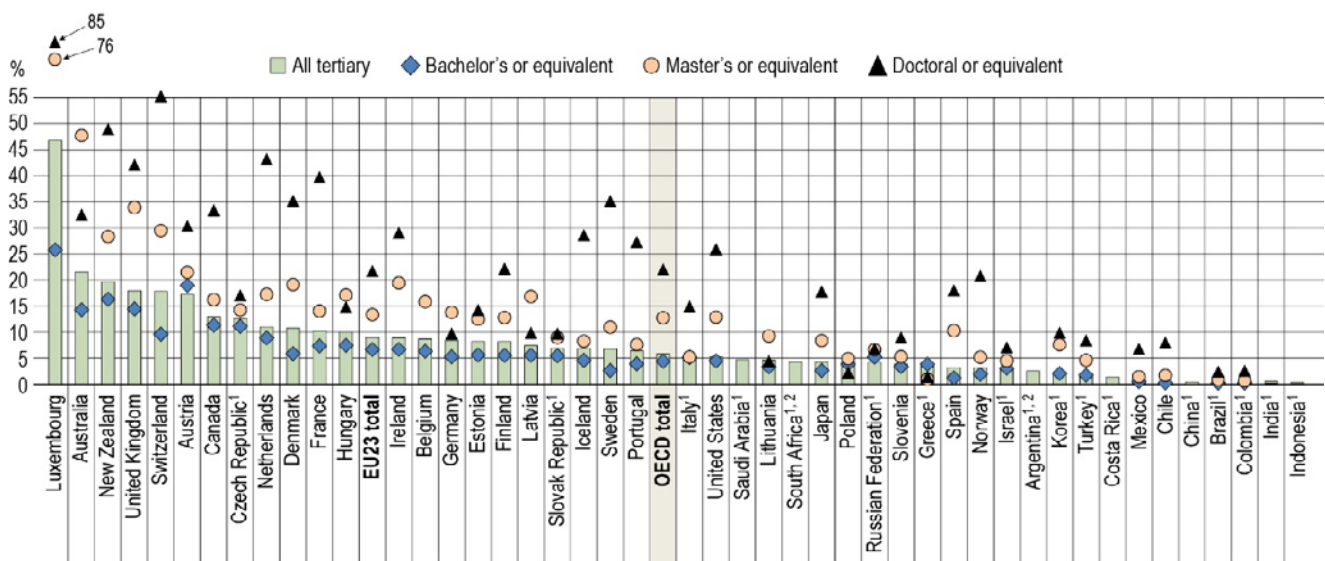
<sup>1</sup> Values reported in equivalent US dollars (USD) have been converted using purchasing power parities (PPPs) for GDP.

study elsewhere in the United Kingdom, while the tuition fee cap is lower for Northern Irish students in Northern Ireland.

- In England, more than 90% of students only receive loans to cover the cost of their studies (for bachelor's and master's long first degrees). The average annual amount borrowed by each student is USD 17 033.
- England replaced a mortgage-style loan system with an income-contingent loan system in 1999, fixing the conditions for the remission and forgiveness of student loans. Loans are written off 30 years after graduation. It is expected that as much as 45% of the financial value of student loans will not be repaid.

**Figure 2. Incoming student mobility in tertiary education, by level of study (2017)**

International or foreign student enrolment as a percentage of total enrolment in tertiary education



1. Share of foreign rather than international students.

2. Year of reference 2016.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the percentage of international or foreign students in tertiary education.

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

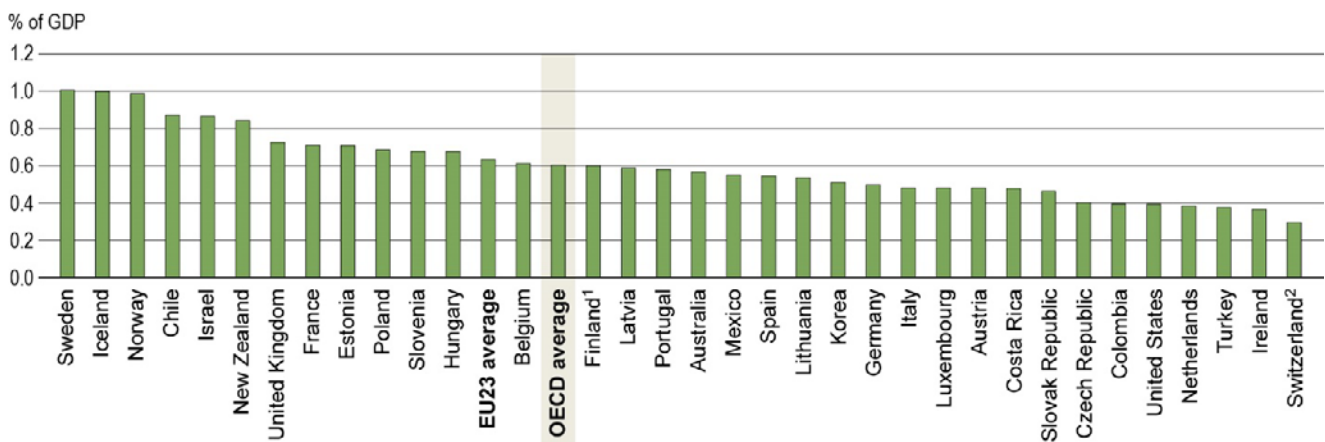
## The United Kingdom's tertiary education system is very attractive to international students

- English is the *lingua franca* of the globalised world, with one in four people using it worldwide (Sharifian, 2013<sup>[2]</sup>). Not surprisingly, English-speaking countries are the most attractive student destinations overall, with Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States receiving over half of all mobile students. In all these countries, tertiary institutions charge relatively high tuition fees (over USD 4 500 for bachelor's degrees in public institutions). Fees for national students in England are higher than in all OECD countries except the United States. Tertiary institutions charged tuition fees of USD 11 866 a year for a bachelor's degree in 2017/18.
- The United Kingdom enrolls the second largest number of international students in the OECD area after the United States. Of the 3.7 million international students enrolled in OECD and partner countries, the United Kingdom hosts 436 000, which is far behind the 985 000 enrolled in programmes in the United States. As a destination country, the United Kingdom accounts for 10% of the total international education market share in OECD and partner countries.

- Students from Asia form the largest group of international students enrolled in tertiary education programmes in the United Kingdom (53% in 2017), as they do across OECD member and partner countries (56%). A further 32% of the United Kingdom's international students are from elsewhere in Europe.
- Across OECD countries, the proportion of international enrolment increases with the level of tertiary education. In the United Kingdom 42% of doctoral students are international compared to 34% of master's students and 14% of bachelor's students (Figure 2). All of these proportions are substantially higher than the OECD averages.

**Figure 3. Expenditure on all children aged 3 to 5 enrolled in ECEC and primary education as a percentage of GDP (2016)**

#### Public and private institutions



1. Expenditure on all children aged 3 to 5 are underestimated due to the estimation method used.

2. Public sources only.

Countries are ranked in descending order of expenditure as a percentage of GDP.

Source: OECD (2019). Table B2.4. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>).

### Enrolment in ECEC is nearly universal from the age of 3, with a significant share of the cost paid by households

- Early childhood education and care (ECEC) is nearly universal in the United Kingdom for those aged 3 and 4, with higher enrolment rates than the OECD average. In 2016, 100% of 3-year-olds were enrolled in pre-primary education, compared to the OECD average of 77%.
- Expenditure on all children aged 3 to 5 enrolled in ECEC and primary education amounts to 0.7% of GDP in the United Kingdom, which is above the OECD average of 0.6% (Figure 3).
- The United Kingdom and Japan are the only OECD countries where private funds account for more than 40% of total expenditure on pre-primary education (ISCED 02). However, in the United Kingdom, most of the private funding comes from households, while in Japan the high cost is shared by households, foundations and the business sector.
- The United Kingdom is one of only a few countries that makes extensive use of teachers' aides at the pre-primary level. The ratio of children to teaching staff is 23:1, well above the OECD average, however the ratio of children to contact staff (teachers and teachers' aides) is 3:1, well below the OECD average.

## A large share of vocational upper secondary graduates are female, although there are significant gender differences in the fields studied

- On average across OECD countries, 8% of graduates from upper secondary vocational programmes earned a qualification in the field of engineering, manufacturing and construction. This rises to 12% for business, administration and law, and 15% for health and welfare.
- The United Kingdom is one of just five countries (along with Brazil, Colombia, Ireland, and New Zealand) where women make up a larger share of graduates from vocational programmes than general ones.
- However, there is significant gender gap in the fields studied in vocational programmes. Women make up 80% of graduates in health and welfare compared to just 6% of graduates in engineering, manufacturing and construction. This pattern of gender disparity is common across OECD countries.
- The United Kingdom spends USD 9 437 per student each year on upper secondary vocational programmes, which is below the OECD average of USD 10 922. It is unusual for an OECD country to spend more per student on upper secondary general programmes than on vocational programmes. The United Kingdom is one of only six countries to do so, spending substantially more on its general programmes (USD 12 263 per student).

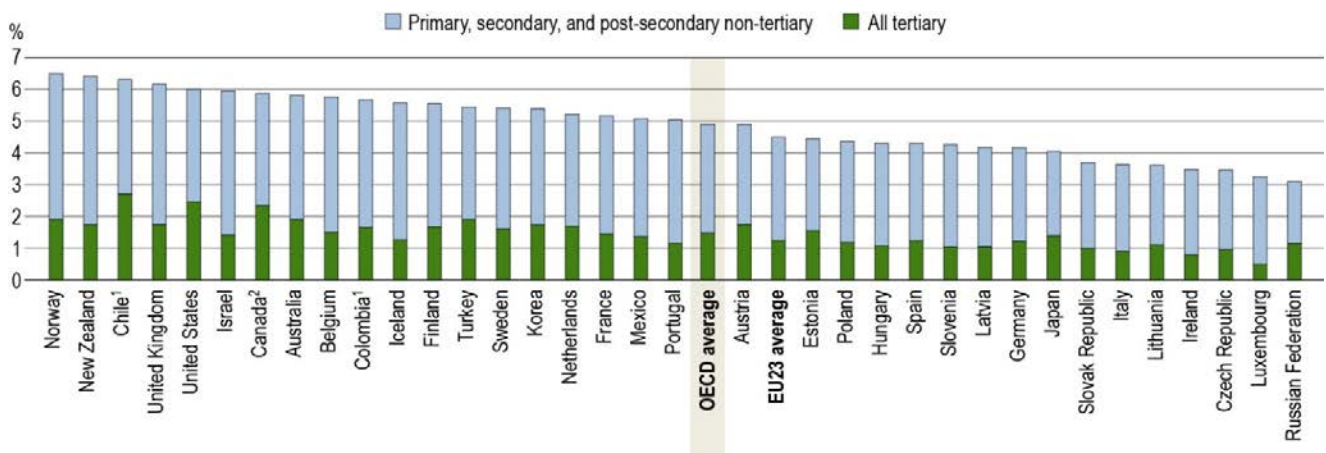
## Expenditure on education is relatively high, with a large share of funding of tertiary educational institutions coming from private sources

- Among OECD countries, the United Kingdom spends the fourth highest proportion of GDP on primary to tertiary educational institutions (6.2% compared to the OECD average of 5.0%), with above-average expenditure as a proportion of GDP at each level of education (Figure 4).
- Total public expenditure in the UK (42.6% of GDP) is in line with the OECD average (42.3%). However, public expenditure on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary educational institutions as a percentage of GDP is appreciably higher than the OECD average (3.8% compared with 3.2%).
- In 2016 the United Kingdom spent USD 11 061 per student in primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary educational institutions. This is 18% higher than the OECD average of USD 9 357.
- OECD countries spend on average 18% more per secondary student than they do per primary student. However, the United Kingdom is one of a small group of countries that invests more per student at primary level than at secondary. In 2016, it spent USD 11 188 per student in primary (32% above the OECD average of USD 8 470) compared to USD 10 963 in secondary (10% above the OECD average).
- Among the likely reasons for this is the fact that, unlike many other OECD countries, teachers' salaries in the United Kingdom do not rise with the level of education. Other factors that influence relative spending on primary and secondary education include the age/experience distribution of teachers and the structure of bonuses and allowances for teachers.
- Spending per student on tertiary institutions in the United Kingdom is USD 23 771 which is substantially above the OECD average of USD 15 556. Only three countries spend more per student: Sweden (USD 24 341), the United States (USD 30 165) and Luxembourg (USD 48 407).
- A relatively high share of the funding of tertiary educational institutions in the United Kingdom comes from the private sector. After transfers between the public and private sectors, private sources account for 68% of the total funding of tertiary educational institutions in the United Kingdom, of which about two-thirds comes from households. Across OECD countries, on average, 32% of the total funding of tertiary educational institutions comes from private sources.



**Figure 4. Total expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (2016)**

From public, private and international sources, by level of education



1. Year of reference 2017

2. Primary education includes pre-primary programmes

Countries are ranked in descending order of total expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP.

**Source:** OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2019), Table C2.1. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes <https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>.


## Teachers in the United Kingdom are among the youngest across OECD countries and earn less than average at all levels of education

- In primary and lower secondary education, the average age of the teaching workforce in the United Kingdom has fallen since 2005 and it is now one of the youngest among all OECD countries. Nearly one-third of primary teachers (31%) are aged 30 or younger, compared to 13% on average across OECD countries.
- In contrast to the general trend across OECD countries, teachers' statutory salaries for those with 15 years of experience and the most prevalent qualification in England and Scotland have not recovered to their pre-Great Recession highs. In 2018, salaries in England are 10% lower than they were in 2005 and salaries in Scotland are 3% lower.
- In England and Scotland, teachers at every level from pre-primary to upper secondary have the same starting salary. Salary levels in England and Scotland progress relatively rapidly compared to most OECD countries. After 15 years experience, teachers' salaries have increased considerably, and are around or exceed the OECD average across all levels of education except upper secondary education in Scotland. However, salary progression stops at, or before, 15 years of experience, and salaries at the top of the scale once more lag behind those in other OECD countries.
- When bonuses and allowances are included, the average actual salaries of lower secondary teachers in England and Scotland are lower than the average earnings of tertiary-educated workers, as in most countries. However, in Scotland this relative earnings gap is slightly higher than the OECD average.

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- OECD (2019), *Education at a Glance 2019: OECD indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, [1]  
<https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2019-en>.
- Sharifian, F. (2013), "Globalisation and developing metacultural competence in learning English as an International Language", *Multilingual Education*, Vol. 3/1, p. 7, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/2191-5059-3-7>. [2]

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](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:  **Education GPS**

<http://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?primaryCountry=GBR&treshold=10&topic=EO>.

<p><b>Questions can be directed to:</b></p> <p>Etienne Albiser            Directorate for Education and Skills  <a href="mailto:etienne.albiser@oecd.org">etienne.albiser@oecd.org</a></p>	<p><b>Country note author:</b></p> <p>Bruce Golding            Directorate for Education and Skills  <a href="mailto:bruce.golding@oecd.org">bruce.golding@oecd.org</a></p>
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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.

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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.

## Key Facts for the United Kingdom in Education at a Glance 2019

Source	Main topics in <i>Education at a Glance</i>	United Kingdom		OECD average		EU23 average	
<b>Tertiary education</b>							
<b>Educational attainment of 25-64 year-olds</b>							
<b>2018</b>							
Table A1.1	Short-cycle tertiary	10%		7%		5%	
	Bachelor's or equivalent	23%		17%		14%	
	Master's or equivalent	12%		13%		15%	
	Doctoral or equivalent	1%		1%		1%	
<b>Tertiary attainment of 25-34 year-olds, by gender</b>							
<b>2008</b>							
Table A1.2	Men	42%	48%	31%	38%	28%	36%
	Women	44%	54%	40%	51%	38%	50%
	Total	43%	51%	35%	44%	33%	43%
<b>2018</b>							
<b>Distribution of first-time tertiary entrants by education level</b>							
<b>2017</b>							
Table B4.1	Short-cycle tertiary	22%		17%		12%	
	Bachelor's or equivalent	77%		76%		80%	
	Master's or equivalent	1%		7%		8%	
<b>Share of international or foreign students, by education level<sup>1</sup></b>							
<b>2017</b>							
Table B6.1	Bachelor's or equivalent	14%		4%		7%	
	Master's or equivalent	34%		13%		13%	
	Doctoral or equivalent	42%		22%		22%	
	All tertiary levels of education	18%		6%		9%	
<b>Employment rate of 25-64 year-olds, by educational attainment</b>							
<b>2018</b>							
Table A3.1	Short-cycle tertiary	83%		82%		82%	
	Bachelor's or equivalent	87%		84%		84%	
	Master's or equivalent	87%		88%		88%	
	Doctoral or equivalent	90%		92%		93%	
	All tertiary levels of education	86%		85%		86%	
<b>Employment rate of tertiary-educated 25-64 year-olds, by field of study</b>							
<b>2018</b>							
Table A3.4	Education	79%		84%		85%	
	Business and administration and law	85%		86%		87%	
	Engineering, manufacturing and construction	88%		89%		89%	
	Health and welfare	83%		87%		88%	
<b>Relative earnings of full-time full-year 25-64 year-old workers, by educational attainment (upper secondary education = 100)</b>							
<b>2017</b>							
Table A4.1	Short-cycle tertiary	113		120		121	
	Bachelor's or equivalent	142		144		138	
	Master's, doctoral or equivalent	165		191		174	
	All tertiary levels of education	142		157		152	
<b>Upper secondary and vocational education and training (VET)</b>							
<b>Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment rate</b>							
<b>2018</b>							
Table A1.2	Share of 25-34 year-olds with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary as their highest attainment	34%		41%		44%	
<b>Percentage of first-time upper secondary graduates with a vocational qualification</b>							
<b>2017</b>							
Table B3.1	Vocational programmes	63%		40%		46%	
<b>Age at graduation from upper secondary education, by programme orientation</b>							
<b>2017</b>							
Figure B3.1	General programmes	17		18		19	
	Vocational programmes	20		21		21	
<b>Share of women among upper secondary graduates, by programme orientation</b>							
<b>2017</b>							
Figure B3.2	General programmes	50%		55%		56%	
	Vocational programmes	52%		46%		46%	
<b>Employment, unemployment and inactivity rates of 25-34 year-olds, with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education</b>							
<b>2018</b>							
Table A3.3	Employment rate	84%		78%		79%	
	Unemployment rate	4%		7%		8%	
	Inactivity rate	13%		16%		14%	
<b>Total expenditure on upper secondary educational institutions, in USD<sup>2</sup> per full-time equivalent student, by programme orientation</b>							
<b>2016</b>							
Table C1.1	General programmes	USD 12 263		USD 9 397		USD 9 671	
	Vocational programmes	USD 9 437		USD 10 922		USD 11 320	
<b>Early childhood education and care (ECEC)</b>							
<b>Enrolment rate of 3-5 year-olds in education</b>							
<b>2017</b>							
Table B2.2	ECEC and primary education	100%		87%		90%	
<b>Share of children enrolled in private institutions</b>							
<b>2017</b>							
Table B2.3	Pre-primary level (ISCED 02)	49%		34%		27%	
<b>Ratio of children to teaching staff</b>							
<b>2017</b>							
Table B2.3	Pre-primary level (ISCED 02)	25		16		15	
<b>Expenditure on children aged 3-5 enrolled in education</b>							
<b>2016</b>							
Table B2.4	Annual expenditure per child, in USD <sup>3</sup> per child	USD 7 561		USD 8 141		USD 8 926	



Source	Main topics in <i>Education at a Glance</i>	United Kingdom		OECD average		EU23 average	
<b>Social outcomes and adult learning</b>							
<b>Participation in formal and/or non-formal education, by educational attainment<sup>3</sup></b>		<b>2016</b>					
Table A7.1	Below upper secondary	28%		n.a.		26%	
	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	47%		n.a.		44%	
	Tertiary	68%		n.a.		66%	
<b>Participation in cultural or sporting activities in the last 12 months, by educational attainment<sup>4</sup></b>		<b>2015</b>					
Table A6.1	Below upper secondary	62%		n.a.		56%	
	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	81%		n.a.		77%	
	Tertiary	92%		n.a.		92%	
<b>Financial resources invested in education</b>							
<b>Total expenditure on educational institutions, by level of education<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>2016</b>					
Table C1.1 and C2.1		<b>USD/student</b>	<b>% GDP</b>	<b>USD/student</b>	<b>% GDP</b>	<b>USD/student</b>	<b>% GDP</b>
	Primary	USD 11 188	2%	USD 8 470	1.5%	USD 8 548	1.3%
	Lower secondary	USD 10 921	1%	USD 9 884	0.9%	USD 10 302	0.9%
	Upper secondary	USD 10 992	1.5%	USD 10 368	2%	USD 10 308	1.9%
	Tertiary (including R&D)	USD 23 771	1.7%	USD 15 556	1.5%	USD 15 963	1.2%
<b>Share of expenditure on educational institutions, by final source of funds</b>		<b>2016</b>					
Table C3.1		<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>
	Primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	85%	15%	90%	10%	92%	8%
	Tertiary (including R&D)	28%	68%	66%	32%	73%	24%
<b>Total public expenditure on primary to tertiary education</b>		<b>2016</b>					
Table C4.1	As a percentage of total government expenditure	12.2%		10.8%		9.6%	
<b>Teachers, the learning environment and the organisation of schools</b>							
<b>Actual salaries of teachers and school heads in public institutions relative to earnings of full-time, full-year workers with tertiary education</b>		<b>2017</b>					
Table D3.2a		<b>Teachers</b>	<b>School heads</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>School heads</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>School heads</b>
	Pre-primary	**	**	0.78	**	0.78	1.16
	Primary	**	**	0.84	1.25	0.85	1.24
	Lower secondary (general programmes)	**	**	0.88	1.34	0.89	1.34
	Upper secondary (general programmes)	**	**	0.93	1.43	0.95	1.43
<b>Annual statutory salaries of teachers in public institutions, based on most prevalent qualifications, at different points in teachers' careers<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>2018</b>					
Table D3.1a		<b>Starting salary</b>	<b>Salary after 15 years of experience</b>	<b>Starting salary</b>	<b>Salary after 15 years of experience</b>	<b>Starting salary</b>	<b>Salary after 15 years of experience</b>
	Pre-primary	**	**	USD 31 276	USD 42 078	USD 30 615	USD 41 354
	Primary	**	**	USD 33 058	USD 45 947	USD 32 987	USD 45 748
	Lower secondary (general programmes)	**	**	USD 34 230	USD 47 675	USD 34 261	USD 47 772
	Upper secondary (general programmes)	**	**	USD 35 859	USD 49 804	USD 35 104	USD 49 875
<b>Organisation of teachers' working time in public institutions over the school year</b>		<b>2018</b>					
Tables D4.1a and D4.1b		<b>Net teaching time</b>	<b>Total statutory working time</b>	<b>Net teaching time</b>	<b>Total statutory working time</b>	<b>Net teaching time</b>	<b>Total statutory working time</b>
	Pre-primary	**	**	1 024 hours	1 613 hours	1 062 hours	1 550 hours
	Primary	**	**	783 hours	1 612 hours	754 hours	1 539 hours
	Lower secondary (general programmes)	**	**	709 hours	1 634 hours	673 hours	1 572 hours
	Upper secondary (general programmes)	**	**	667 hours	1 629 hours	643 hours	1 558 hours
<b>Percentage of teachers who are 50 years old or over</b>		<b>2017</b>					
Table D5.1	Primary to upper secondary	19%		36%		39%	
<b>Share of female teachers, in public and private institutions</b>		<b>2017</b>					
Table D5.2	Primary	85%		83%		87%	
	Lower secondary	62%		69%		72%	
<b>Total number of compulsory instruction time, by level of education</b>		<b>2019</b>					
Table D1.1	Primary	**		4 568 hours		4 258 hours	
	Lower secondary	**		3 022 hours		3 002 hours	
	Upper secondary	**		**		**	
<b>Average class size by level of education</b>		<b>2017</b>					
Table D2.1	Primary	27		21		20	
	Lower secondary	23		23		21	

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

1. For some countries, data on foreign students are provided instead of international students.

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

3. EU23 average refers to the average of OECD countries that participated in the Adult Education Survey (AES).

4. EU23 average refers to the average of OECD countries that participated in the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions 2015.

\*\* 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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