

## Introduction

This summary report is based on results from OECD work produced primarily since 2002 when the Directorate for Education was created, and especially in the past 3-4 years. The background to its preparation is explained in the Foreword by Director Barbara Ischinger. The approach chosen focuses on results and policy orientations which are published and hence in the public domain. Only generalised findings about developments, policy, or practice relevant across most OECD countries have been included. So, not covered are: studies or reviews of single countries; publications which provide exchange of information on promising practice without broader analytic conclusions; work plans and programme intentions; clarifying statements of problems/challenges/issues.

It is divided into nine sections, devised as a structure to reflect well the different areas of educational work and to bring out policy conclusions and messages. The choice of a larger number of short sections is deliberate in order to allow the key messages to emerge more clearly than they would in a smaller number of extensive “chapters”. We have also included some illustrative charts as visuals to complement the text.

It is produced entirely in modular format rather than as a continuous narrative. Each of the sections is divided into, respectively: *Key findings and conclusions* and *Orientations for policy*. Each modular text is introduced by the key message it contains or, where the module is in the form of a list of messages, these are highlighted instead. Each one also includes the title and chapter reference to the OECD report from which it comes, and these titles are brought together in an extensive but not exhaustive bibliography at the end.

**In order to stay within manageable limits, this resource is highly selective of all the possible findings and policy orientations regarding education at OECD. As the included texts are removed from the fuller analyses from which they are taken, there is a natural risk of oversimplification with short conclusions taken out of their wider analytical context. For both of these reasons, therefore, it is strongly advised that users looking for more than the headline messages should refer back to the original OECD source for the fuller picture.**