



EDUCATION AT A GLANCE 2014

Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators is the authoritative source for accurate and relevant information on the state of education around the world. It provides data on the structure, finances and performance of the education systems in the 34 OECD member countries, as well as a number of G20 and partner countries.

Belgium

Tertiary attainment rates are above the average, but remain virtually unchanged since 2010.

Although tertiary attainment has expanded in Belgium over the last decade, the rate of increase is slowing down. In fact, the attainment rate of the adult population (25-64 year-olds) has remained unchanged at 35% since 2010, only slightly above the OECD average of 33%. **Between 2000 and 2012, tertiary attainment has grown at an annual rate of 2.2%, which is considerably lower than the OECD and EU21* average growth rates of 3.2% and 3.4% a year.**

Higher education continues to pay off in the labour market.

Higher levels of education translate into lower chances of unemployment in Belgium. In 2012, the unemployment rate for adults with below upper secondary education was 12%. That figure falls to 6.7% for adults with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education and falls even further, to 3.4%, for those with a tertiary education. Among those with a tertiary education, **the risk of unemployment is lowest for those with a professional (tertiary-type B) degree (3%), while for those with an academic (tertiary-type A) degree the figure is 4%**. In any case, unemployment rates in Belgium are lower than the EU21 averages for every level of education.

Parents' education does not determine children's educational attainment, but seems to highly influence it.

There is a high incidence of intergenerational mobility in education in the Belgian sub-national entity of Flanders. **Over 47% of non-student adults attained higher levels of education than their parents (upward mobility)**. This is considerably higher than the average upward mobility of 39% found among OECD countries and sub-national entities participating in the Survey of Adult Skills.¹

However, the likelihood of a student participating in tertiary education varies greatly depending on the level of education attained by his or her parents. In Flanders, two-thirds of 20-34 year-old tertiary students have at least one parent who has completed that level of education, whereas less than one in ten of those whose parents haven't completed upper secondary education are currently enrolled in a university programme.

Parents' education also seems to affect their children's literacy proficiency. **In Flanders (Belgium), only 6% of adults whose parents have below upper secondary education perform at the highest levels (Level 4/5) of literacy proficiency in the Survey of Adult Skills.** Among those whose parents

¹ The Survey of Adult Skills is a product of the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC).

attained a tertiary education, 28% performed at the highest levels of literacy proficiency. In both cases, the figures are higher than the respective averages among OECD countries and sub-national entities participating in the Survey of Adult Skills of 5 % and 23%.

Unusually for an OECD country, highly educated women are less likely to be unemployed than their male peers.

The gender gap in tertiary attainment in favour of women has greatly widened in the past decade. **Between 2000 and 2012, the average annual growth rate for tertiary attainment among 25-34 year-old women was 2.1%, compared with 0.7% for men.** In 2012, around 50% of these younger women had attained tertiary education, while only 36% of younger men had. The OECD averages were, respectively, 44% and 34%.

The unemployment rate among adult women (25-64 years old) with a tertiary education in Belgium is 3.3%, whereas for tertiary-educated men the figure is 3.6%. Although the difference is quite small, this is the opposite of what happens in most OECD countries, where the unemployment rate is considerably higher for women who have attained at least an upper secondary education: the OECD average unemployment rate for tertiary-educated women is 5.5% and for tertiary-educated men it is 4.8%.

Other findings

- **Belgians enter tertiary education early and graduate young.** For professional programmes, the average age for new entrants is 20, compared with an OECD average of 25, and for academic programmes the average age is 19, compared with an OECD average of 22. Belgians are also among the youngest to graduate. The average age at graduation from professional programmes is 25 and from academic programmes 22 – both well below the OECD averages of 28 and 26 respectively.
- **Teachers' salaries in Belgium (for both the Flemish and French communities) are considerably higher than the OECD average for every level of education up to upper secondary.** At the top of the salary scale, upper secondary teachers earn USD 73 875 and USD 72 172 in purchasing power parity terms in the Flanders and French regions respectively, compared with an OECD average of USD 51 658. Upper secondary teachers' salaries are slightly higher than those of other tertiary-educated workers in both regions, unlike most OECD countries, where teachers on average earn less at every educational level.
- **Belgium continues to have one of the lowest shares of private expenditure on education of all OECD and partner countries.** In total, 95% of the expenditure for all levels of education combined comes from public sources in Belgium, compared with the OECD average of 84%.
- **About half (49%) of the adult population in Flanders (Belgium) participate in either formal and/or non-formal education.** This is slightly below the average of 51% among countries and sub-national entities participating in the Survey of Adult Skills. However, the same is true for 54% of the unemployed in Flanders (Belgium), considerably above the average of 44%.

* EU21 countries are those that are members of both the European Union and the OECD. These 21 countries are Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

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Key Facts for Belgium in Education at a Glance 2014

Table	Indicator	Belgium		OECD average		EU21 average		Rank among OECD countries and partner countries*
Educational Access and Output								
	Enrolment rates	2012	2005	2012	2005	2012	2005	
C2.1	3-year-olds (in early childhood education)	98%	100%	70%	64%	79%	73%	1 of 37
	4-year-olds (in early childhood and primary education)	99%	100%	84%	79%	89%	84%	3 of 38
C1.1a	5-14 year-olds (all levels)	99%		98%		98%		21 of 44
	Percentage of population that has only attained below upper secondary education	2012	2000	2012	2000	2012	2000	
A1.4a	25-64 year-olds	28%	41%	24%	34%	23%	34%	10 of 36
	Percentage of the population whose highest level of attainment is upper secondary education	2012	2000	2012	2000	2012	2000	
A1.4a	25-64 year-olds	36%	31%	44%	44%	48%	46%	28 of 37
	Percentage of population that has attained tertiary education	2012	2000	2012	2000	2012	2000	
A1.3a A1.4a	25-64 year-olds	35%	27%	33%	22%	29%	20%	17 of 37
	25-34 year-olds	43%	36%	40%	26%	37%	24%	14 of 36
	55-64 year-olds	25%	17%	25%	15%	22%	14%	18 of 36
	Entry rates into tertiary education	2012	2000	2012	2000	2012	2000	
C3.1b	Youth expected to enter tertiary-type A programmes before turning 25	33%	m	48%	m	48%	m	32 of 35
	Graduation rates	2012	2000	2012	2000	2012	2000	
A2.2a	Percentage of today's young people expected to complete upper secondary education in their lifetime	m	m	84%	76%	83%	77%	
A3.2a	Percentage of today's young people expected to complete university education (tertiary-type A) in their lifetime	m	m	38%	28%	38%	27%	
Economic and Labour Market Outcomes								
	Unemployment rate of 25-64 year-olds - Men and Women	2012	2008	2012	2008	2012	2008	
A5.4a	Below upper secondary	12%	11%	14%	9%	17%	10%	18 of 35
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	7%	6%	8%	5%	9%	5%	17 of 36
	Tertiary	3%	3%	5%	3%	6%	3%	23 of 36
	Unemployment rate of 25-64 year-olds - Women	2012	2008	2012	2008	2012	2008	
A5.4c (Web)	Below upper secondary	12%	12%	13%	9%	16%	11%	17 of 35
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	8%	7%	9%	6%	10%	6%	15 of 35
	Tertiary	3%	3%	5%	4%	6%	4%	26 of 35
	Average earnings advantage for 25-64 year-olds with tertiary education**	2012 or latest year available		2012 or latest year available		2012 or latest year available		
A6.1a A6.1b (Web)	Men and women	128		159		159		30 of 33
	Men	129		164		166		32 of 33
	Women	134		162		160		31 of 34
	Average earnings penalty for 25-64 year-olds who have not attained upper secondary education**	2012 or latest year available		2012 or latest year available		2012 or latest year available		
A6.1a A6.1b (Web)	Men and women	90		78		79		3 of 33
	Men	92		78		80		1 of 33
	Women	84		75		76		5 of 34
	Percentage of 15-29 year-olds neither employed nor in education or training, by highest level of education	2012	2008	2012	2008	2012	2008	
C5.3d (Web)	Below upper secondary	19%	16%	15%	14%	15%	13%	9 of 35
	Upper secondary	15%	11%	16%	14%	16%	12%	20 of 34
	Tertiary	9%	7%	13%	11%	12%	10%	26 of 34

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Financial Investment in Education								
	Annual expenditure per student (in equivalent USD, using PPPs)	2011		2011		2011		
B1.1a	Pre-primary education	6333		7428		7933		19 of 36
	Primary education	9281		8296		8482		10 of 38
	Secondary education	11732		9280		9615		7 of 38
	Tertiary education	15420		13958		13572		13 of 37
	Total expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP	2011	2000	2011	2000	2011	2000	
B2.2	Percentage of GDP	7%	6%	6%	5%	6%	5%	12 of 37
	Total public expenditure on education	2011	2000	2011	2000	2011	2000	
B4.2	As a percentage of total public expenditure	12%	12%	13%	13%	12%	11%	17 of 34
	Share of private expenditure on educational institutions	2011		2011		2011		
B3.1	Pre-primary education	4%		19%		13%		29 of 33
B3.1	Primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education	4%		9%		6%		28 of 36
B3.1	Tertiary education	10%		31%		21%		30 of 34
B3.1	All levels of education	5%		16%		11%		31 of 33
Schools and Teachers								
	Ratio of students to teaching staff	2012		2012		2012		
D2.2	Pre-primary education	16		14		13		10 of 31
	Primary education	13		15		14		25 of 36
	Secondary education	9		13		12		33 of 37
	Number of hours of teaching time per year (for teachers in public institutions)	2012	2000	2012	2000	2012	2000	
D4.2	Pre-primary education	m		1001		988		
	Primary education	m	m	782	780	761	776	
	Lower secondary education	m	m	694	697	657	658	
	Upper secondary education	m	m	655	628	638	635	
	Index of change in statutory teachers' salaries for teachers with 15 years of experience/minimum training (2005 = 100)	2012	2008	2012	2008	2012	2008	
D3.5	Primary school teachers	m	m	103	103	99	103	
	Lower secondary school teachers	m	m	102	103	99	103	
	Upper secondary school teachers	m	m	101	103	98	103	
	Ratio of teachers' salaries to earnings for full-time, full-year adult workers with tertiary education	2012		2012		2012		
D3.2	Pre-primary school teachers	m		0.80		0.76		
	Primary school teachers	m		0.85		0.81		
	Lower secondary school teachers	m		0.88		0.85		
	Upper secondary school teachers	m		0.92		0.90		

* Countries are ranked in descending order of values.

** Compared to people with upper secondary education; upper secondary = 100.

'm': data is not available. 'n': magnitude is either negligible or zero.