

## EDUCATION AT A GLANCE 2014

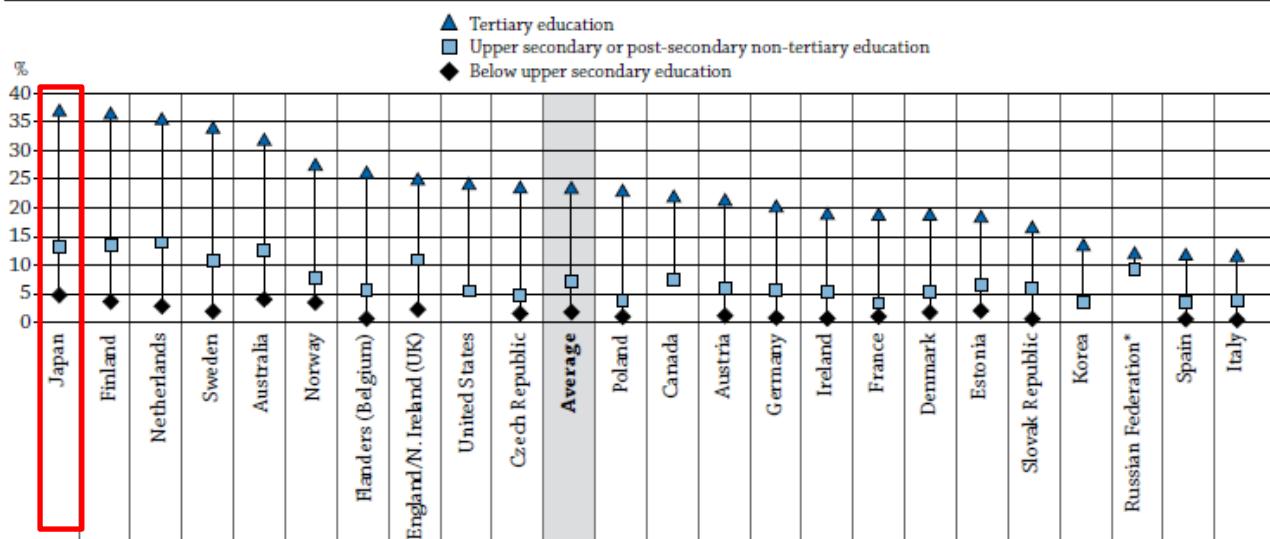
*Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* is the authoritative source for accurate and relevant information on the state of education around the world. It provides data on the structure, finances, and performance of the education systems in the 34 OECD member countries, as well as a number of G20 and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

### Japan

#### Tertiary education is expanding and producing a large proportion of highly skilled adults...

The proportion of tertiary-educated adults in Japan increased from 34% to 47% between 2000 and 2012 and is now the second largest proportion among OECD countries (Chart A1.1 and Table A1.4a). Moreover, the results of the 2012 Survey of Adult Skills indicate that the quality of Japanese tertiary education is high. Some 37% of Japanese tertiary-educated adults perform at Level 4 or 5 in literacy proficiency (the highest level as measured by the survey) – the largest proportion among the 24 countries and subnational regions that participated in the survey (Chart A1.5).

**Chart A1.5. Percentage of adults scoring at literacy proficiency Level 4/5,  
by educational attainment (2012)**  
*Survey of Adult Skills, 25-64 year-olds*



\* See note on data for the Russian Federation in the *Methodology* section.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the percentage of 25-64 year-olds with tertiary education performing at literacy proficiency Level 4 or 5.

Source: OECD. Table A1.6a (L). See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm)).

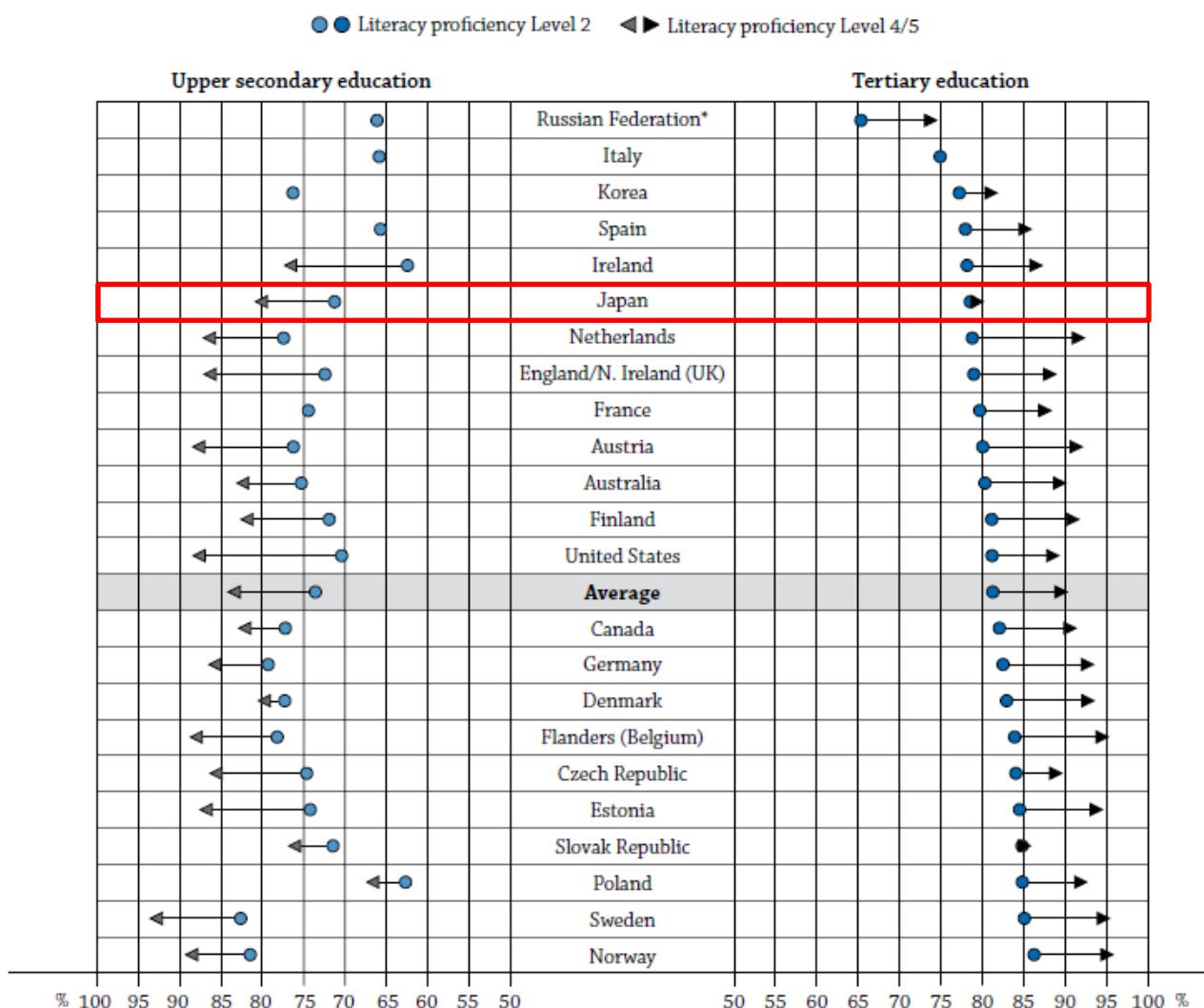
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## ...who benefit economically and socially from their education and skills.

Almost 80% of tertiary-educated adults in Japan are employed, compared with less than 75% of adults with lower levels of education (on average across OECD countries, the employment rate of tertiary-educated adults is nearly 10 percentage points higher than that of adults who attain upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education as their highest level of education [Chart A5.1]). At the same time, the unemployment rate among tertiary-educated adults decreased from 3.5% in 2000 to 3.2% in 2012, while that of adults with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education increased from 4.7% to 5.1% during the same period. This means that the gap between adults with high and low levels of education widened over the past 12 years (Table A5.4a).

Adults with upper secondary education who are highly proficient in literacy, as measured by the Survey of Adult Skills, are more likely to be employed than people with the same level of education who have low levels of proficiency in literacy. However, the results from this survey find that, among tertiary-educated adults in Japan, the difference in employment rates related to skills proficiency is negligible (Chart A5.4).

**Chart A5.4. Employed adults at literacy proficiency Level 2 or Level 4/5, by educational attainment (2012)**  
*Survey of Adult Skills, percentage of 25-64 year-olds*



\* See note on data for the Russian Federation in the *Methodology* section.

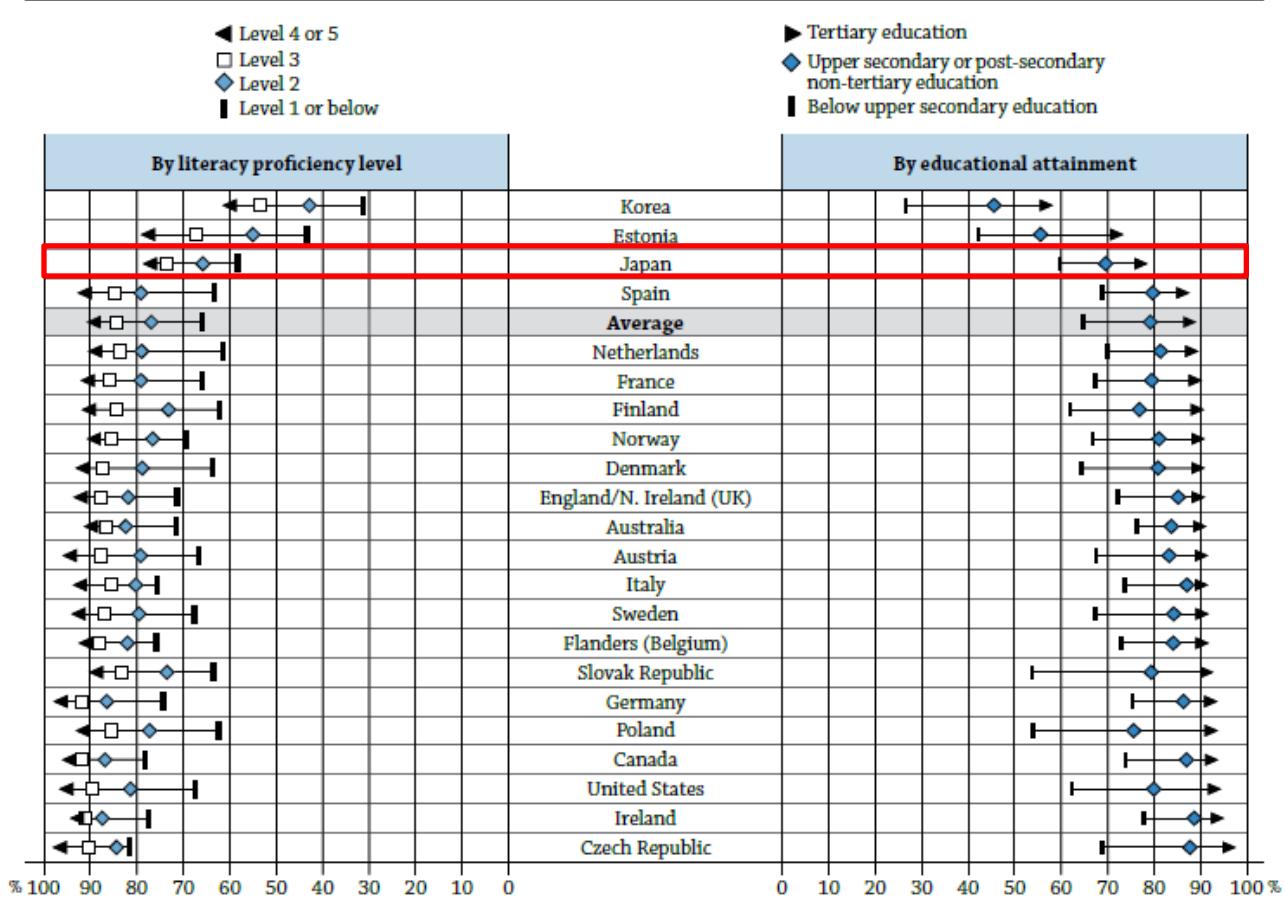
Countries are ranked in ascending order of the proportion of employed adults with tertiary education who score at literacy proficiency Level 2.

Source: OECD, Table A5.7a (L). See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm)).

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In addition, in Japan as in other OECD countries, adults with higher educational qualifications and/or higher literacy proficiency also tend to report that they are in better health (Chart A8.2) and tend to believe that they have a say in the political process (Chart A8.5).

**Chart A8.2. Percentage of adults reporting that they are in good health, by educational attainment and literacy proficiency level (2012)**  
*Survey of Adult Skills, 25-64 year-olds*



Countries are ranked in ascending order of the proportion of people with tertiary education reporting that they are in good health.

Source: OECD, Table A8.1a (L). See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm)).

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## Yet a significant portion of Japan's talent pool – composed largely of women – is underused.

There is a large pool of highly educated and skilled individuals that can potentially contribute to Japan's economic growth. The results of the Survey of Adult Skills show that 18% of tertiary-educated adults who perform at Level 4 or 5 in literacy proficiency are inactive, which is the largest proportion among OECD countries with available data (the OECD average is 10%) (Table A5.7b(L), available on line). Women tend to dominate the skilled population who are out of the labour market. While 5% of men with tertiary education who perform at Level 4 or 5 in literacy proficiency are inactive (the OECD average is 4%), 32% of women with the same levels of education and skills are inactive (the OECD average is 12%).

In 2000, 49% of 25-34 year-old women had a tertiary qualification; by 2012, 61% of women of that age did – well above the OECD average (45%) and larger than the proportion of Japanese men of that age who had the same level of education (56%) (Table A1.4b, available on line). Yet the rate of

employment among Japanese women remains considerably lower than that among men with the same level of education. While 92% of men with a university-level or an advanced research degree are employed, only 69% of similarly educated women are, far below the OECD average of 80% (Table A5.1b).

### **Expanding access to early childhood education could make it easier for Japanese women to enter the labour market.**

Some 78% of 3-year-olds in Japan were enrolled in early childhood education in 2012, above the OECD average of 70% (Chart C2.1, Table C2.1). Between 2005 and 2012 in Japan, the proportion of 3-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education grew by just over 9 percentage points – coinciding with an increase in the employment rates of 25-34 year-old women (by 5 percentage points among those with a tertiary education, and by 4 percentage points among those with lower qualifications) during the same period (Table A5.3c, available on line). Assuming that early childhood education is expanding partly due to the growing number of female workers, and given that statutory parental leave in Japan is 12 months, expanding early childhood education to include younger children could not only benefit children educationally but could help more women to participate in the labour force.

### **Although Japan remains an attractive place for foreign students...**

Some 3.3% of foreign tertiary students were enrolled in Japanese tertiary educational institutions in 2012, reflecting a 0.1 percentage point increase from 2000 (Charts C4.2, C4.3, Table C4.7 available on line). This is the eighth largest share among all destination countries. In 2012, 94% of foreign students in Japan came from Asia (Table C4.3). In particular, 81% of foreign students in Japan came from neighbouring countries, which is the largest proportion among OECD countries with available data (Table C4.5).

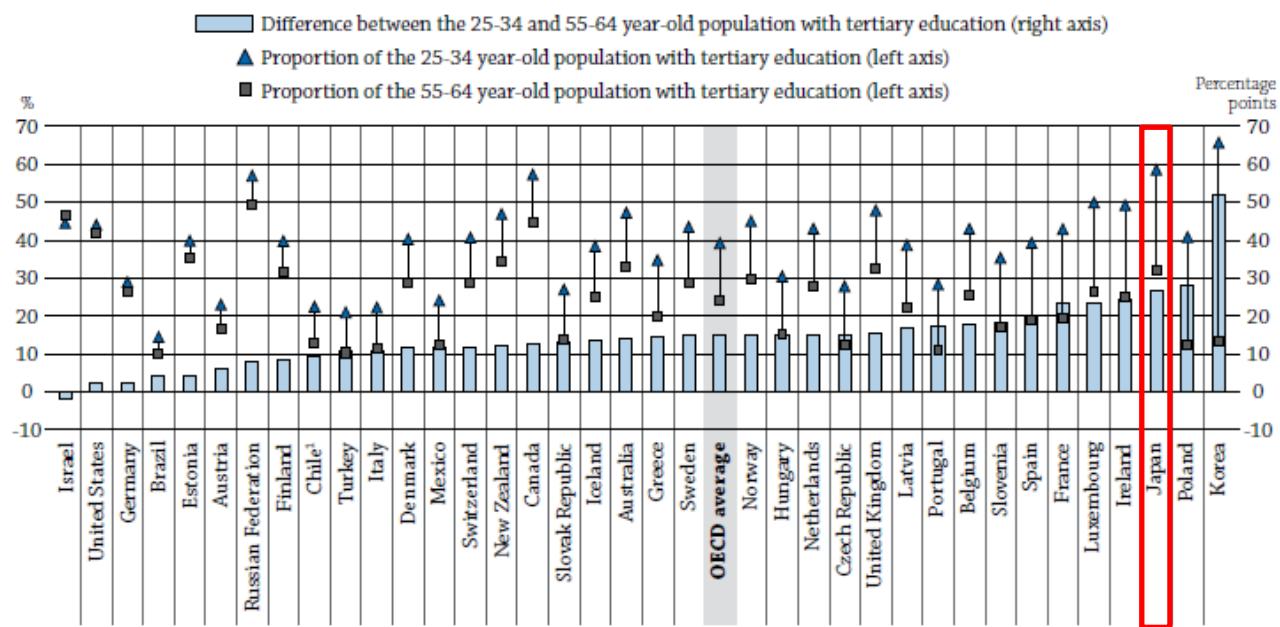
### **...only a limited number of Japanese students studies abroad.**

Sending students abroad is a good way to help students prepare for the increasingly globalised and interconnected labour market. Yet only 1% of Japanese tertiary students were enrolled abroad in 2011 (Table C4.5). Responding to this situation, the Japanese government launched the “Tobitate! Ryugaku Japan” campaign in 2013, which includes a series of events and a new scholarship programme, with the aim of doubling the number of Japanese students studying abroad by 2020 (MEXT, 2014).

### **Expanding access to lifelong learning may help to narrow the gap in skills between generations.**

Although Japan's tertiary-educated and highly-skilled population is large and growing, there is a significant gap between generations. Almost 60% of Japan's younger generation have tertiary education while less than 35% of the country's older generation do – the third largest gap between the generations, after that observed in Korea and Poland, among 36 countries (Chart A1.3 and Table A1.3a). The younger generation also significantly outperforms the older generation in literacy proficiency. Less than 10% of 55-64 year-olds perform at literacy proficiency Level 4 or 5, as measured by the Survey of Adult Skills, while more than 30% of 25-34 year-olds do. The difference of 20 percentage points is the second largest generation gap observed among OECD countries with available data, after Finland (Chart A1.6 and Table A1.7a (L)).

**Chart A1.3. Percentage of younger and older tertiary-educated adults (2012)**  
*25-34 and 55-64 year-olds, and percentage-point difference between these two groups*



1. Year of reference 2011.

Countries are ranked in ascending order of the percentage-point difference between the 25-34 and 55-64 year-old population with tertiary education.

Source: OECD. Table A1.3a. See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm)).

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Adult learning can narrow these gaps and help adults to acquire and develop the knowledge and skills that enrich their professional and personal lives. Some 42% of adults in Japan participated in at least one learning activity in the year prior to the 2012 Survey of Adult Skills, which is below the OECD average of 51% (Chart C6.1). Notably, only 2% of Japanese adults participated in learning activities organised by the formal education system, which is the smallest proportion among OECD countries with available data (the OECD average is 10%) (Table C6.3). This suggests that Japanese adults rarely return to formal education after they begin working.

## Japan sets multiple requirements to ensure the quality of its teachers...

Given the widely shared understanding that the most important factor influencing student learning in schools is teachers, it is clear that recruiting high-quality teachers is critical. Japan is making efforts on this front by establishing multiple requirements for prospective and new teachers.

Prospective teachers must first complete initial teacher education, which is similar to the programmes offered in other countries in terms of selection criteria, duration and content (Charts D6.1, D6.2, and Tables D6.1a-d, D6.3c). However, prospective teachers in Japan are not given as much time to practice teaching in schools as their peers in all other countries. The teaching practicum for prospective lower secondary teachers in Japan is only 20 days, compared with between 70 and 120 days in around half of the 22 countries with available data (Table D6.3c).

Unlike many other countries, Japan requires teaching candidates to both pass a competitive examination and acquire a teaching licence after completing initial teacher education. In addition, formal induction programmes are mandatory in Japan, as in half of the countries with available data (Table D6.5c and Tables D6.5a, b and d, available on line).

## ...but support for ongoing professional development could be improved.

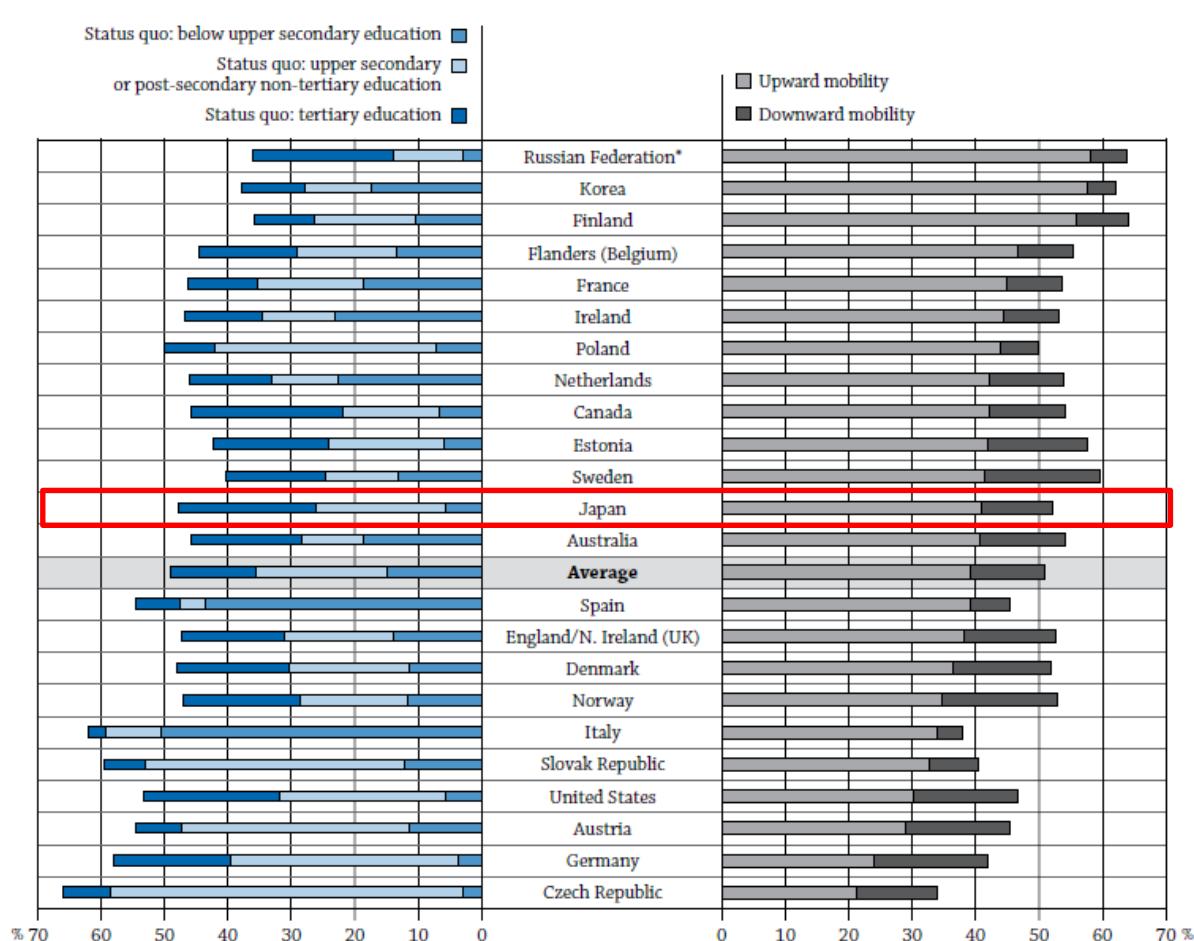
Despite relatively high levels of need for professional development, as reported by teachers in TALIS 2013, Japanese teachers do not receive as much support to participate in professional development activities as teachers in other OECD countries do. For example, financial support to cover fees required for participating in professional development courses for recertification is rarely available, even though since 2009 Japanese teachers have been required to complete these 30-hour recertification courses every 10 years (Table D7.1c).

## The relationship between parents' education and children's education and skills is relatively weak in Japan.

In Japan, educational mobility across generations is moderate: 40% of adults have attained a higher level of education than their parents (upward mobility) while nearly one in two adults has the same level of education as their parents (Chart A4.3). This may partly reflect the increasing proportion of older adults who are tertiary-educated. In Japan, 46% of 45-54 year-olds and 32% of 55-64 year-olds have tertiary education, significantly higher than the OECD average (29% and 24%, respectively), and the children of these adults may be more likely to have the same educational attainment as their parents (Table A1.3a).

**Chart A4.3. Absolute educational mobility (2012)**

*Percentage of 25-64 year-old non-students whose educational attainment is higher than (upward mobility), lower than (downward mobility) or the same as (status quo) that of their parents*



\* See note on data for the Russian Federation in the Methodology section.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the proportion of adults with upward mobility with respect to the education attainment of their parents.

Source: OECD, Table A4.4. See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm)).

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Indeed, a large proportion of 25-34 year-olds in Japan have attained tertiary education as their parents have (33% of men and 38% of women, compared to the OECD averages of 19% and 23%, respectively) (Table A4.4).

In Japan, a child's literacy proficiency is also related to his/her parents' educational attainment, although the relationship is relatively weak compared to other OECD countries. While 35% of adults (25-64 year-olds) who have tertiary-educated parents perform at literacy proficiency Level 4 or 5, as measured by the Survey of Adult Skills (the OECD average is 23%), only 12% of those whose parents have below upper secondary education do so (the OECD average is 5%). Meanwhile, less than 2% of adults whose parents are tertiary educated perform at or below literacy proficiency Level 1 (the OECD average is 7%), while 10% of adults whose parents have low levels of education do (the OECD average is 25%) (Chart A4.4 and Table A4.3(L)).

### **Japan's expenditure per student is relatively high...**

Japan's total public and private expenditure per student by educational institutions is relatively high among OECD countries. In 2011, Japan's annual expenditure per student from primary through tertiary education was USD 10 646, which is somewhat higher than the OECD average of USD 9 487 (Chart B1.1, Table B1.1a). At the primary level, expenditure per student was USD 8 280 – nearly the same as the OECD average. At the secondary level, USD 9 886 was spent per student – more than the OECD average of USD 9 280 (Chart B1.2a, Table B1.1a).

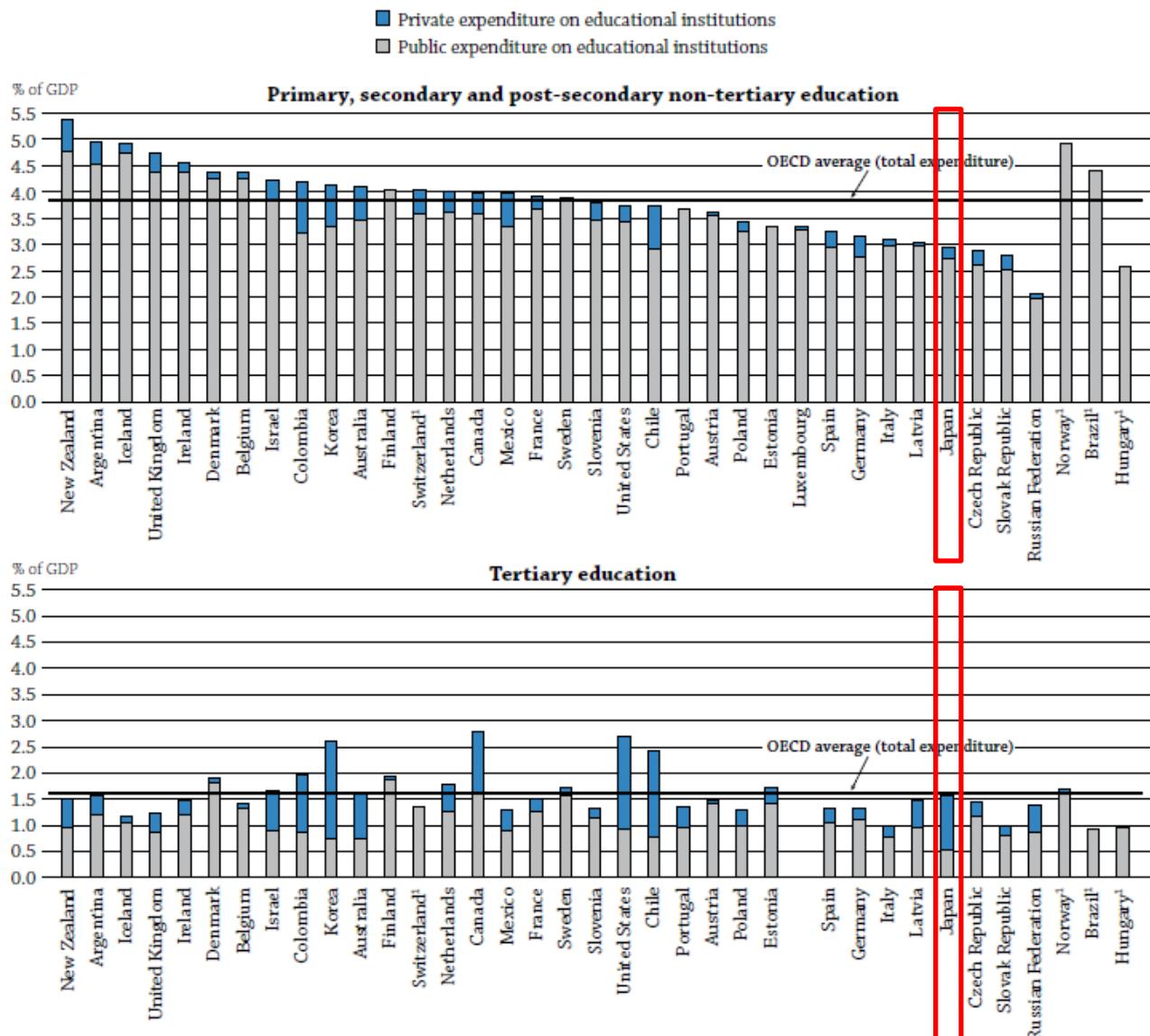
### **...and public spending is increasing...**

Moreover, there has been an increase in public expenditure on educational institutions of about 6 percentage points since 2008 (Chart B2.3, Table B2.5). The increase partly reflects the high school tuition programme, introduced in 2010, that provides financial support to high school students for their tuition fees. Some 7% of the central education budget goes to this support, contributing to the increase in public funding on education even as the number of students is shrinking (MEXT, 2012). As a result, the proportions of public and private expenditure on education are shifting. The share of public funding on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education has increased from 89.8% in 2000 to 93.0% in 2011 (Table B3.2b). This trend is generally not observed in other OECD countries, where the share of public funding decreased slightly over the period.

### **...but spending on education as a proportion of GDP is below the OECD average.**

Although expenditure per student is comparatively high in Japan, total expenditure relative to GDP is small, partly reflecting Japan's high GDP and shrinking school-age population. Some 2.9% of Japan's GDP is devoted to public and private expenditure on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education, significantly less than the OECD average of 3.9% (Chart B2.2, Table B2.3). Public spending on those levels of education as a percentage of GDP is also low compared to the OECD average (2.7% of GDP in Japan compared with 3.6% of GDP across OECD countries) (Table B2.3).

**Chart B2.2. Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (2011)**  
*From public and private sources, by level of education and source of funds*



1. Public expenditure only (for Switzerland, in tertiary education only; for Norway, in primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education only). Countries are ranked in descending order of expenditure from both public and private sources on educational institutions in primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.

Source: OECD, Table B2.3. See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm)).

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## **Other findings**

- As a percentage of total public expenditure on all services, public spending on education is relatively low in Japan. In 2011, only 9.1% of total expenditure for all services was devoted to education (all levels) – the second smallest proportion among OECD countries (the OECD average is 12.9%) and slightly lower than 1995 levels (Chart B4.1, Table B4.2).
- In Japan, as in Korea and Chile, most tertiary students are charged high tuition fees, but student support systems are somewhat less developed. The average annual tuition for a public tertiary educational institution in Japan is a relatively high – USD 5 019 – but only 40% of students benefit from public loans and/or scholarships/grants (Chart B5.1, Tables B5.1, B5.2). This is in contrast to some other countries with high tuition fees. For example, in the United Kingdom, 71% of students receive support, including income-contingent loans, providing USD 10 070 a year, on average, to enable them to cover high tuition fees (USD 4 980) and living expenses.
- Japan's early childhood education is largely dependent on the private sector. Some 55% of total expenditure on early childhood institutions comes from private sources, largely households (the OECD average is 18.7%) (Chart B3.2, Table B3.1). Less than 30% of pupils who are enrolled in early childhood education are in public institutions (the OECD average is 68.4%) while 71.3% of pupils attend independent private institutions (the OECD average is 11.1%) (Table C2.2).
- A tertiary-educated woman in Japan earns only 48% of what a similarly educated man earns, on average – the smallest proportion among all countries with available data (Table A6.3c, available on line).
- The starting salary for lower secondary teachers in Japan (USD 27 067) is below the OECD average (USD 30 735), but salaries after 15 years of experience (USD 47 561) and at the top of the salary scale (USD 59 643) exceed the OECD average (USD 40 570 and USD 48 938, respectively) (Chart D3.2 and Table D3.1). The statutory salary of Japanese lower secondary teachers with 15 years of experience decreased 7 percentage points between 2005 and 2012 while, on average across OECD countries with data available for all reference years, teachers' salaries remained stable during the same period (Chart D3.3, Table D3.5).

## **References**

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[http://www.mext.go.jp/a\\_menu/kokusai/tobitate/](http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/kokusai/tobitate/)

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

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# Key Facts for Japan in Education at a Glance 2014

Table	Indicator	Japan		OECD average		
<b>Educational Access and Output</b>						
	<b>Enrolment rates</b>	2012	2005	2012	2005	
C2.1	3-year-olds (in early childhood education)	78%	69%	70%	64%	
	4-year-olds (in early childhood and primary education)	94%	95%	84%	79%	
C1.1a	5-14 year-olds (all levels)	100%		98%		
	<b>Percentage of population that has only attained below upper secondary education</b>	2012	2000	2012	2000	
A1.4a	25-64 year-olds	m	17%	24%	34%	
	<b>Percentage of the population whose highest level of attainment is upper secondary education</b>	2012	2000	2012	2000	
A1.4a	25-64 year-olds	53%	49%	44%	44%	
	<b>Percentage of population that has attained tertiary education</b>	2012	2000	2012	2000	
A1.3a A1.4a	25-64 year-olds	47%	34%	33%	22%	
	25-34 year-olds	59%	48%	40%	26%	
	55-64 year-olds	32%	15%	25%	15%	
	<b>Entry rates into tertiary education</b>	2012		2012		
C3.1b	Youth expected to enter tertiary-type A programmes before turning 25	m		48%		
	<b>Graduation rates</b>	2012	2000	2012	2000	
A2.2a	Percentage of today's young people expected to complete upper secondary education in their lifetime	93%	95%	84%	76%	
A3.2a	Percentage of today's young people expected to complete university education (tertiary-type A) in their lifetime	45%	29%	38%	28%	
<b>Economic and Labour Market Outcomes</b>						
	<b>Unemployment rate of 25-64 year-olds - Men and Women</b>	2012	2008	2012	2008	
A5.4a	Below upper secondary	m	m	14%	9%	
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	5%	4%	8%	5%	
	Tertiary	3%	3%	5%	3%	
	<b>Unemployment rate of 25-64 year-olds - Women</b>	2012	2008	2012	2008	
A5.4c (Web)	Below upper secondary	m	m	13%	9%	
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	5%	4%	9%	6%	
	Tertiary	3%	3%	5%	4%	
	<b>Average earnings advantage for 25-64 year-olds with tertiary education*</b>	2012 or latest year available		2012 or latest year available		
A6.1a A6.1b (Web)	Men and women	152		159		
	Men	144		164		
	Women	160		162		
	<b>Average earnings penalty for 25-64 year-olds who have not attained upper secondary education*</b>	2012 or latest year available		2012 or latest year available		
A6.1a A6.1b (Web)	Men and women	78		78		
	Men	74		78		
	Women	72		75		
	<b>Percentage of 15-29 year-olds neither employed nor in education or training, by highest level of education</b>	2012	2008	2012	2008	
C5.3d (Web)	Below upper secondary	14%	11%	15%	14%	
	Upper secondary	m	m	16%	14%	
	Tertiary	19%	9%	13%	11%	

# Key Facts for Japan in Education at a Glance 2014

Table	Indicator	Japan		OECD average	
<b>Financial Investment in Education</b>					
	<b>Annual expenditure per student (in equivalent USD, using PPPs)</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2011</b>	
B1.1a	Pre-primary education	5591		7428	
	Primary education	8280		8296	
	Secondary education	9886		9280	
	Tertiary education	16446		13958	
	<b>Total expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2000</b>
B2.2	Percentage of GDP	5%	5%	6%	5%
	<b>Total public expenditure on education</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2000</b>
B4.2	As a percentage of total public expenditure	9%	9%	13%	13%
	<b>Share of private expenditure on educational institutions</b>	<b>2011</b>		<b>2011</b>	
B3.1	Pre-primary education	55%		19%	
B3.1	Primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education	7%		9%	
B3.1	Tertiary education	66%		31%	
B3.1	All levels of education	30%		16%	
<b>Schools and Teachers</b>					
	<b>Ratio of students to teaching staff</b>	<b>2012</b>		<b>2012</b>	
D2.2	Pre-primary education	15		14	
	Primary education	18		15	
	Secondary education	13		13	
	<b>Number of hours of teaching time per year (for teachers in public institutions)</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2000</b>
D4.1 D4.2	Pre-primary education	m		1001	
	Primary education	731	635	782	780
	Lower secondary education	602	557	694	697
	Upper secondary education	510	478	655	628
	<b>Index of change in statutory teachers' salaries for teachers with 15 years of experience/minimum training (2005 = 100)</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2008</b>
D3.5	Primary school teachers	93	93	103	103
	Lower secondary school teachers	93	93	102	103
	Upper secondary school teachers	93	93	101	103
	<b>Ratio of teachers' salaries to earnings for full-time, full-year adult workers with tertiary education</b>	<b>2012</b>		<b>2012</b>	
D3.2	Pre-primary school teachers	m		0.80	
	Primary school teachers	m		0.85	
	Lower secondary school teachers	m		0.88	
	Upper secondary school teachers	m		0.92	
<b>New data from the Survey of Adult Skills</b>				<b>Japan</b>	<b>Average of countries with available data</b>
	<b>Students in tertiary education... (20-34 year-olds)</b>	<b>2012</b>		<b>2012</b>	
A4.1a	...whose parents have not attained upper secondary education	2%		9%	
	...whose parents have an upper secondary education	22%		37%	
	...whose parents have a tertiary education degree	76%		56%	
	<b>Adults in formal and non-formal education</b>	<b>2012</b>		<b>2012</b>	
C6.1(L)	25-64 year-olds	42%		51%	

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

The Survey of Adult Skills is a product of the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies

'm': data is not available. 'n': magnitude is either negligible or zero. 'c': there are too few observations to provide reliable estimates.