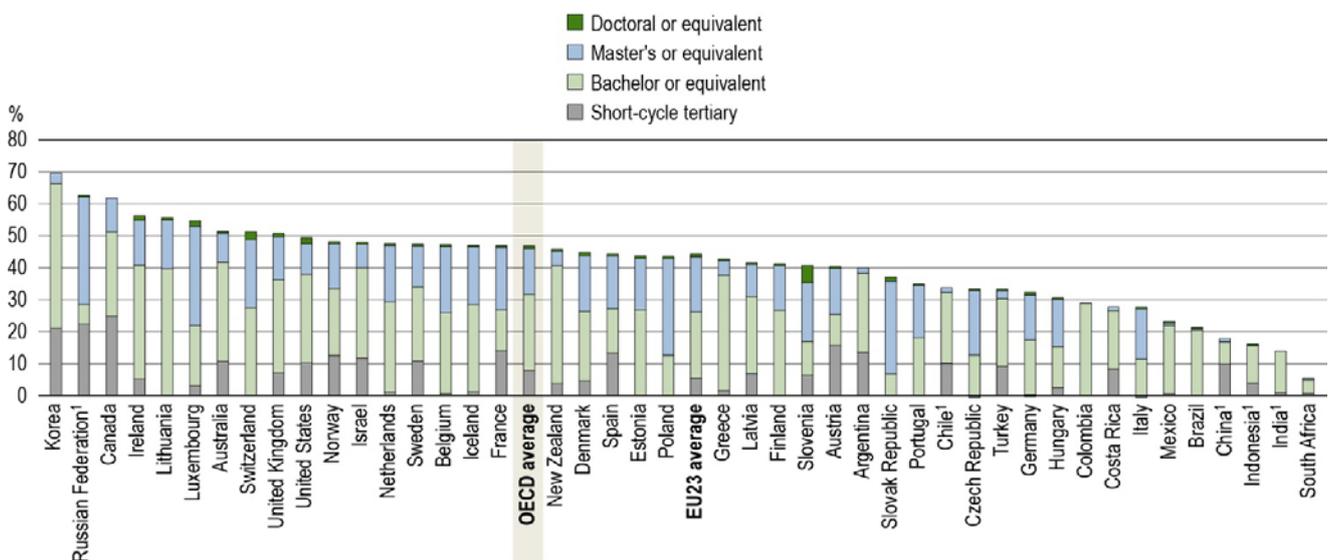


*Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* (OECD, 2019<sub>[1]</sub>) is the authoritative source for information on the state of education around the world. It provides data on the structure, finances and performance of education systems in OECD and partner countries.

## People's Republic of China (China)

- Tertiary attainment is rapidly increasing in China, though the recent share is 18%. **In China, 67% of 25-34 year-olds are expected to enter tertiary education for the very first-time, which is slightly higher than the OECD average of 65%.**
- **In 2017, 2% of Chinese tertiary students studied abroad, on par with the OECD average.** However, they made up 23% of total incoming students in OECD countries, which was the highest share among all OECD member and partner countries.
- Vocational programmes have an important role in China at both upper secondary and tertiary level: 42% of upper secondary students and **60% of first-time tertiary-entrants were enrolled in upper secondary vocational programmes and short-cycle tertiary education respectively.**
- **The quality of learning environment at basic levels of education needs to be improved.** At compulsory levels of education, there are on average 37.5 children per class in primary school and 48.8 in lower secondary school, while the OECD averages are 20.7 and 23.0, respectively.

Figure 1. Distribution of 25-34 year-olds with tertiary education, by level of tertiary education (2018)



**Note:** Some categories might be included in other categories. Please refer to Education at a Glance Database, <http://stats.oecd.org> for details.

1. Year of reference differs from 2018. Refer to Table A1.1 for more details.

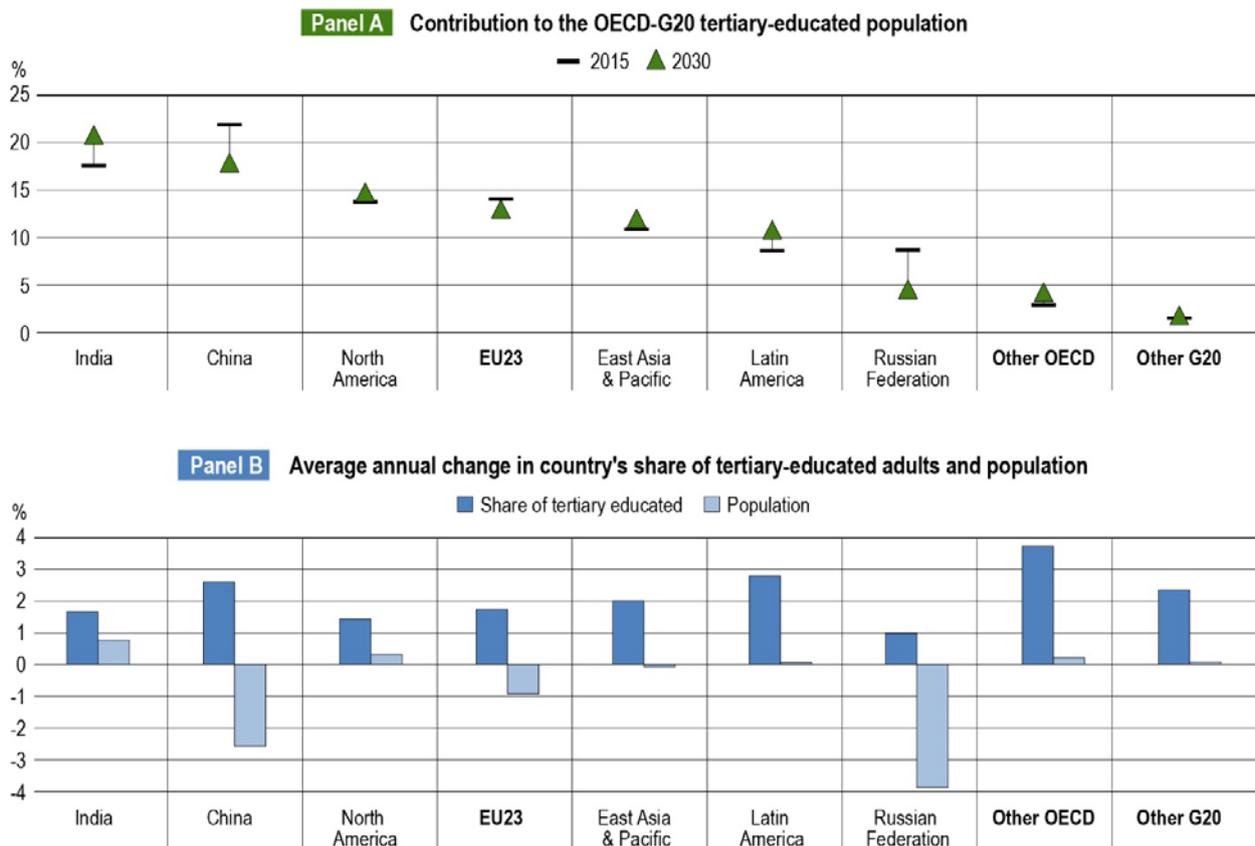
Countries are ranked in descending order of the total percentage of tertiary-educated 25-34 year-olds.

**Source:** OECD (2019), Education at a Glance Database, <http://stats.oecd.org>. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>).

## Tertiary attainment is rapidly increasing in China

- In 2010, only 9% of adults in China hold a tertiary degree. The share doubled when considering the younger generation (25-34 year-olds) (Figure 1). In spite of the low educational attainment, young women and young men equally attained tertiary education.

**Figure 2. Regions' projected contributions to the global tertiary-educated population of 25-34 year-olds (2015 to 2030)**



**How to read this figure:** China's contribution to the OECD-G20 tertiary-educated population is projected to drop from 22% in 2015 to 18% in 2030 (Panel A), even though the share of tertiary-educated 25-34 year olds in the country is projected to grow on average by 2.6% every year, between 2015 and 2030. The decreasing contribution of China is due to the annual decrease of its population by 2.6% (Panel B).

Countries and regions are ranked in descending order of their projected regions contribution to the OECD-G20 tertiary-educated population of 25-34 year-olds in 2030.

**Source:** OECD (2018), "How is the tertiary-educated population evolving?", Education Indicators in Focus, No. 61 (<https://doi.org/10.1787/a17e95dc-en>).

- In 2015, China was the largest contributor to the OECD-G20 pool of tertiary-educated students. This share is projected to grow on average by 2.6% every year, between 2015 and 2030. Nevertheless, its share is expected to decrease by 2030, as its population is declining (Figure 2).
- Based on the patterns of entry to tertiary education in 2017, 67% of 25-34 year-olds are expected to enter tertiary education for the very first-time in China, which is slightly higher than the OECD average of 65%.
- In China, there are stark difference in quality of instruction and research abilities between tertiary education institutions, and their reputation has a strong impact on career prospects (R. Jia., and R. Li,

2017<sup>[2]</sup>). The highly selective admission process of the best universities have encouraged Chinese high school students to travel abroad for tertiary education.

- In 2017, 2% of Chinese tertiary students were enrolled abroad, on par with the OECD average. However, they made up 23% of total incoming students in OECD countries, which was the highest share among all OECD member and partner countries. English-speaking countries were the most popular destinations for Chinese tertiary students: 35% of international students from China were enrolled in the United States, 14% in Australia, and 10% in the United Kingdom.

### **Vocational programmes have an important role at upper secondary and tertiary level of education**

- In 2015, 42% of upper-secondary students in China were enrolled in vocational education and training (VET) programmes, compared to the OECD average of 49%.
- In 2017, 60% of first-time tertiary entrants were enrolled in short-cycle tertiary programmes in China, which was substantially higher than the OECD average of 17%. In China, as in most OECD and G20 countries, programmes at this level are mostly vocational and their attractiveness to students may be related to its skill-oriented design and low admission requirements.
- The share of students in vocational programmes is expected to increase in the future, as the Chinese government highlighted the role of VET to cope with the short of skilled talent in their 13<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan. Three measures will be taken into account. First, more fields of study will be covered by vocational programmes to meet industrial development goals. Second, a national standard system will be established to ensure the quality of vocational education. Finally, students can combine the academic diploma with multiple skill certificates (1+X system) (MOE, 2019<sup>[3]</sup>).

### **The quality of the learning environment at compulsory levels of education needs to be improved**

- The 9-year free and compulsory education in China targets children from age 6 to age 15. It encompasses primary and lower secondary education. Beyond this level, financial barriers may impede children, in particular those from rural areas, to continue upper secondary education. In 2010, 76% of 25-64 year-olds in China did not achieve upper secondary education. The share fell to 64% among 25-34 year-olds, but was still much higher than in OECD countries.
- Despite the efforts to bring children to schools, the quality of the learning environment still needs to be improved in China. In 2014, in China, there were on average 37.5 children per class in primary school and 48.8 in lower secondary school, while the OECD averages were 20.7 and 23.0, respectively.

### **More than half of children enrolled in pre-primary education attend private institutions**

- At pre-primary level of education, the ratio of children to teaching staff is 19 in China, higher than the OECD average of 16.
- In 2017, 55% of 3-5 year-old children enrolled in ECEC attended private institutions in China, a remarkably higher share than the OECD average of 33%. This may be due to the shortage of public kindergartens in China: the average ratio of children to teaching staff is 21 for public kindergartens, but only 17 for private ones.

## References

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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=CHE&treshold=10&topic=EO>.

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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.

### 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 China in Education at a Glance 2019

Source	Main topics in <i>Education at a Glance</i>	China		OECD average		G20 average	
<b>Tertiary education</b>							
<b>Educational attainment of 25-64 year-olds</b>							
<b>2018</b>							
Table A1.1	Short-cycle tertiary	6%		7%		9%	
	Bachelor's or equivalent	3%		17%		16%	
	Master's or equivalent	0%		13%		7%	
	Doctoral or equivalent	**		1%		**	
<b>Tertiary attainment of 25-34 year-olds, by gender</b>							
<b>2008</b>   <b>2018</b>   <b>2008</b>   <b>2018</b>   <b>2008</b>   <b>2018</b>							
Table A1.2	Men	**	18%	31%	38%	**	35%
	Women	**	18%	40%	51%	**	41%
	Total	**	18%	35%	44%	**	38%
<b>Employment rate of 25-64 year-olds, by educational attainment</b>							
<b>2018</b>							
Table A3.1	Short-cycle tertiary	**		82%		**	
	Bachelor's or equivalent	**		84%		**	
	Master's or equivalent	**		88%		**	
	Doctoral or equivalent	**		92%		**	
	All tertiary levels of education	**		85%		**	
<b>Upper secondary and Vocational education and training (VET)</b>							
<b>Share of 25-34 year-olds with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education</b>							
<b>2018</b>							
Table A1.2	Share of 25-34 year-olds with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education	18%		41%		37%	
<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	**		78%		**	
	Unemployment rate	**		7%		**	
	Inactivity rate	**		16%		**	
<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	**		87%		**	
<b>Share of children enrolled in private institutions</b>							
<b>2017</b>							
Table B2.3	at pre-primary level (ISCED 02)	55%		34%		42%	
<b>Financial resources invested in education</b>							
<b>Total expenditure on educational institutions, by level of education</b>							
<b>2016</b>							
		USD/student <sup>1</sup>	% GDP	USD/student <sup>1</sup>	% GDP	USD/student <sup>1</sup>	% GDP
Table C1.1 and C2.1	Primary	**	**	USD 8 470	1.5%	**	**
	Lower secondary	**	**	USD 9 884	0.9%	**	**
	Upper secondary	**	**	USD 10 368	1.1%	**	**
	Tertiary (including R&D)	**	**	USD 15 556	1.5%	**	**
<b>Teachers, the learning environment and the organisation of schools</b>							
<b>Share of female teachers, in public and private institutions</b>							
<b>2017</b>							
Table D5.2	Primary	**		83%		87%	
	Lower secondary	**		69%		72%	
<b>Average class size by level of education</b>							
<b>2017</b>							
Table D2.1	Primary	**		21		20	
	Lower secondary	**		23		21	

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

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

\*\* 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>.