The Skills Outlook Scoreboard assesses the extent to which the United Kingdom is able to make the most of digitalisation. The United Kingdom’s performance is measured along 3 main dimensions: Skills for the digitalisation, Digital exposure and Skills-related policy effort.

The Scoreboard shows that while the share of young people lacking basic skills is relatively high, the share of older people with low skills is below the OECD average. British workers are using ICTs and performing non-routine tasks in their jobs quite intensively. In the United Kingdom, according to OECD estimates, 13.7% of workers are in occupations at high risk of automation and would need moderate training efforts (up to 1 year) to transit to safer occupations at low or medium risk of automation. An additional 2.6% would need important training (up to 3 years) to avoid the risk of automation. Teachers in the United Kingdom are well prepared: more than 60% of them are top performers in problem solving in technology-rich environment and only 32% (the lowest value among OECD countries), report to be in need of training in ICT for teaching.

Note: How to read the data? Low performing students: Percentage of students scoring strictly below Level 2 in PISA (reading, mathematics, science), 2015. Youth with low cognitive and digital skills: Percentage of 16-29 scoring below Level 1 (inclusive) in literacy and numeracy and having no computer experience or having failed ICT core, 2012, 2015. Older people with low cognitive and digital skills: Percentage of 55-65 scoring below Level 1 (inclusive) in literacy and numeracy and having no computer experience or having failed ICT core, 2012, 2015. Individuals making a complex and diversified use of Internet: Share of individuals making a diversified and complex use of Internet, 2016. ICT intensity at work: Median intensity of ICT use across all workers (0-1). Workers needing training to escape high risk of automation: Percentage of employment in occupations at high risk of automation requiring moderate (up to 1 year) to important (up to 3 years) training needs to transition to occupations at low or medium risk of automation (upper bound). Teachers needing ICT training: Percentage of teachers reporting needing further training in ICT for teaching. Enrolment in initial education: Enrolment rates at the age 3 (early childhood education and pre-primary education) and at age 5-15. Adults in training: Percentage of adults participating in non-formal and informal learning over the past 12 months (PIAAC).

Individuals with a well-rounded set of skills are more likely to be able to adapt if digitalisation transforms their job content or everyday activities

Percentage of 16-65 scoring at least Level 3 (inclusive) in literacy and numeracy

Teachers are generally less likely to be top performers in problem-solving skills

Share of top performing teachers and tertiary-educated workers in problem solving in technology-rich environments, by country

Workers more exposed to the risk of automation are less likely to participate in training

Share of workers participating in adult learning (in the last 12 months)

A good level of skills allows people to unlock all the benefits of Internet use. In the United Kingdom, however, only 37% of the individuals aged 16-65 have a good level of literacy and numeracy skills (i.e. score at least Level 3 in PIAAC literacy and numeracy tests).

Contrary to several OECD countries, in the United Kingdom (England and Northern Ireland), teachers appear to have higher proficiency in problem solving in technology-rich environment than other tertiary-educated workers. Additional evidence also shows that the intensity with which teachers use technology is on par with that of other high-skilled workers.

In the United Kingdom, the participation of workers in Adult Learning is above the OECD average. Yet, workers more exposed to the risk of automation and the low-skilled participate less in training than the workers at low-risk of automation and high-skilled workers.


Contact: Montserrat Gomendio  Head of the OECD Centre for Skills (+33 1 45 24 99 44; montserrat.gomendio@oecd.org).

https://doi.org/10.1787/df80bc12-en