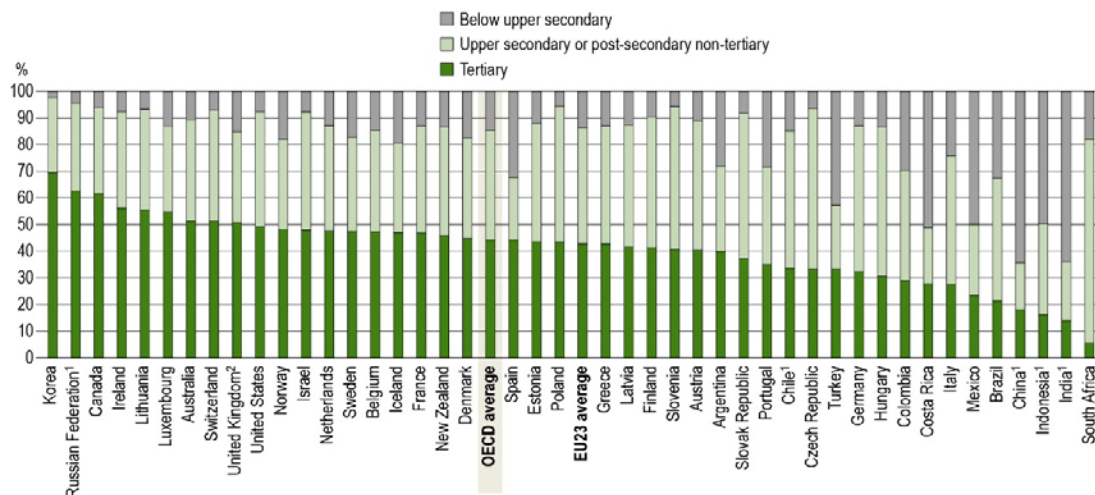


Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators (OECD, 2019^[1]) is the authoritative source for information on the state of education around the world. It provides data on the structure, finances and performance of education systems in OECD and partner countries.

Ireland

- **Nearly half of all 25-64 year-olds (47%) have attained a tertiary education, one of the largest shares across the OECD.** The tertiary attainment rate is even higher among women (51%, compared with 43% among men) and for the younger generation, reaching 60% among 25-34 year-old women and 52% among young men in the same age group.
- **Adults with a bachelor's degree earn on average 81% more than those with upper secondary education,** compared to 44% more on average across OECD countries.
- **Young students in upper secondary education are primarily enrolled in general programmes,** while those over 19 tend to enrol in combined school- and work-based vocational programmes.
- **Ireland has above-average teachers' statutory salaries** (starting at about USD 36 600¹) and **longer teaching hours** (905 hours per year in primary education and 726 hours in secondary schools) and **instruction time** (about 8 200 hours). This is reflected in a relatively high cost of education per student.

Figure 1. Educational attainment of 25-34 year-olds (2018)



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

2. Data for upper secondary attainment include completion of a sufficient volume and standard of programmes that would be classified individually as completion of intermediate upper secondary programmes (13% of adults aged 25-64 are in this group).

Countries are ranked in descending order of the 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 (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>).

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

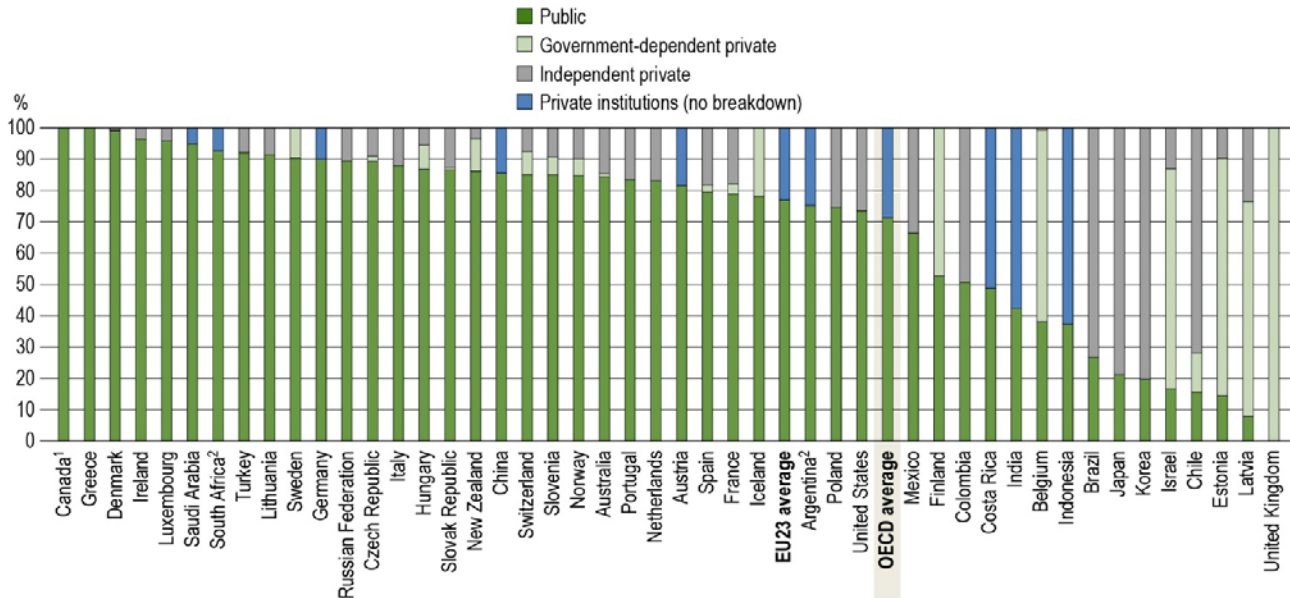
Good employment prospects and completion rates ensure high levels of educational attainment

- Nearly half of all adults (25-64 year-olds) in Ireland (47%) have earned a tertiary qualification, one of the largest shares across OECD countries. The tertiary attainment rate is even larger among women (51%, compared with 43% among men) and it has increased strongly for the younger generation. The share of tertiary-educated adults reached 56% among 25-34 year-olds (Figure 1), with 52% of men and 60% of women in this age group holding a tertiary qualification. Ireland's gender gap in tertiary attainment is close to the average across OECD countries.
- In Ireland, 85% of tertiary-educated adults are employed, the same as the average across OECD countries. The probability of being employed is generally greater for adults who hold a tertiary qualification, even more so in Ireland than on average across OECD countries: the tertiary employment rate is 11 percentage points higher than for those with an upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education (9 percentage points on average across OECD countries) and 33 percentage points higher than for those below this level (OECD average: 27 percentage points).
- Only 4% of tertiary-educated 25-64 year-olds in Ireland are unemployed (similar to the average value across OECD countries); 31% of them for 12 months or more (OECD average: 29%). Among unemployed adults, the share of long-term unemployment (12 months or more) increases with lower educational attainment, rising to 46% among those with an upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education, more so in Ireland than in many other OECD countries (average: 36%).
- The earnings advantage for tertiary-educated adults is larger in Ireland than on average across OECD countries: those with a bachelor's degree earn on average 81% more than those with an upper secondary education (OECD average: 44% more), while those who have completed at least a master's programme can expect to earn twice as much as those with an upper secondary education.
- The earnings advantage for tertiary-educated adults varies significantly according to age and gender: 25-34 year-olds earn 42% more on average if they have completed a tertiary programme, compared to 71% more among 35-44 year-olds and 116% more among 45-54 year-olds. Meanwhile, tertiary-educated 25-64 year-old women earn 28% less than their male peers. Both age and gender gaps are more pronounced among tertiary-educated adults than among those without a tertiary qualification.
- The net financial returns from attaining a tertiary education in Ireland are higher for men in absolute terms (about USD 476 000 compared to about USD 387 000 for women). The average financial benefits women receive from attaining a tertiary education are about 22 times the cost (the highest benefit-cost ratio across OECD countries) while for men they are 15 times the costs (the third highest ratio). Tertiary-educated men earn more than their female peers so they pay more tax than women overall; the public sector's net financial returns when a man attains tertiary education (about USD 369 000) are much higher than for female graduates (about USD 143 000), the largest gap across OECD countries with available data.
- Almost all tertiary students (96%) enrol in public institutions (Figure 2). Students in bachelor's programmes are typically enrolled between the ages of 19 and 21 with enrolment rates reaching 53% among 19-20 year-olds and 39% among 21-22 year-olds, some of the highest rates across OECD and partner countries. High completion rates ensure a smooth transition through bachelor's programmes in Ireland: 63% of new entrants at this level (and 67% of women) complete their degree within its theoretical duration, the second highest completion rate among OECD countries with available data.
- Even though passage through bachelor's programmes is relatively quick, enrolment in master's programmes is lower and spread over a wider age range. At least 50% of master's students are aged between 22 and 30, with enrolment rates peaking at 5%, among 22 and 23-year-olds. The first-time entry rate – the probability of an individual first entering a master's programme – reaches 25% (OECD average: 19%) looked at over their lifetime, and 14% for entry before the age of 30 (the same as the average across OECD countries). In contrast, the first-time entry rates for bachelor's programmes are 69% over the course of a lifetime (OECD average: 53%) and 61% before the age of 25 (OECD average: 45%).

- About 1 400 people in Ireland hold a doctorate, about 1.3% of all adults, compared to 1.1% on average across OECD countries. Employment prospects are rather similar for all levels of tertiary attainment: the employment rate for doctorate holders is only 3% higher than for master's holders.

Figure 2. Share of tertiary students enrolled by type of institution (2017)

Students in full-time and part-time programmes



1. Excludes private institutions at short-cycle tertiary level.

2. Year of reference 2016.

Countries are ranked in descending order of share of tertiary students enrolled in public institutions.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2019). See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>).

Upper secondary education does not guarantee better employment prospects

- An upper secondary education is often considered the minimum qualification for successful entry into the labour market and for continuing to further education. In Ireland, 83% of adults have completed upper secondary education (80% among men and 86% among women), compared to 79% on average across OECD countries. This share increases among young adults (25-34 year-olds) to 92%, compared to 85% on average across OECD countries. The share of young adults who have completed upper secondary education reaches 91% among young men and 94% among young women.
- Adults who attained upper secondary education as their highest level of education have an employment rate of 71% (OECD average: 76%), higher than for those who have not completed upper secondary education (52%), but lower than for those with a post-secondary non-tertiary (77%) or tertiary education. The average earnings of adults with upper secondary educational attainment are relatively similar to the earnings of those with a post-secondary non-tertiary qualification.
- Ireland has reached full enrolment² for both 6-14 year-olds (100%) and 15-19 year-olds (93%). Most students aged 15-19 are enrolled in upper secondary education, of which 98% are in general programmes and 2% in vocational programmes (Leaving Certificate Applied). However, the majority of students older than 19 who are enrolled in upper secondary education (70%) prefer combined school- and work-based

² Full enrolment refers to enrolment rates above 90%.

vocational programmes, which include at least a 25% work component. Students can also enrol in vocational programmes at post-secondary non-tertiary level; enrolment rates at this level peak at 14%, among 18-year-olds.

- Besides vocational and higher education, adults can keep developing new skills in formal and non-formal education throughout their careers. In Ireland, 54% of 25-64 year-olds had participated in formal or non-formal education in the previous 12 months, compared 47% on average among countries with available data. As in other countries, participation is lower for those with lower levels of educational attainment (28% for adults without an upper secondary education, 46% for those with an upper secondary education and 70% for tertiary-educated adults) and among older age groups (64% among 25-34 year-olds and 50% among 45-54 year-olds). Adult learning mostly takes place through non-formal education: 50% of 25-64 year-olds had participated in non-formal activities in the previous 12 months, and these were mostly job-related and sponsored by employers. In 2016, 9% of 25-64 year-olds had participated in some form of formal education (mostly tertiary programmes), above the OECD average (7%).

The education system is characterised by longer instruction time and teaching hours

- The statutory starting annual salary for teachers in Ireland is about USD 36 600 across all levels of education in public institutions; 2% higher than the OECD average in upper secondary education, 7% higher in lower secondary education and 11% higher in primary education. These above-average salaries are the main driver of Ireland's relatively high teachers' salary costs per student compared to other OECD countries, of about USD 3 800 per student at primary level (OECD average: about USD 2 800) and USD 4 500 in secondary education (OECD average: just below USD 3 400).
- Looking at the other factors influencing the cost of education per student, Ireland's above-average teaching hours and class sizes push down the cost per student, while the above-average instruction time increases it. Over the course of the school year, teachers in public institutions spend 905 hours teaching in primary education on average and 726 hours in secondary education, just above the OECD averages. Teaching time is organised over fewer days than average but for more hours per day. Data on class size are only available for public primary schools, which have 25 students per class on average, compared to 21 students on average across OECD countries.
- Students in Ireland receive about 8 200 hours of compulsory education over the 9 years of primary and lower secondary education, over the average of 7 600 hours across OECD countries. Irish students in primary public schools spend more time than the OECD average learning a second language (14%); arts (12%); and religion, ethics and moral education (10%). In lower secondary education they spend 60% of compulsory instruction time learning natural sciences, other languages, arts, religion, ethics and moral education, information and communication technologies (ICT), technology, practical and vocational skills, and other compulsory flexible subjects chosen by the schools, more than the OECD average (38%).


Ireland has full enrolment in early childhood education and care from 3 years old

- Compulsory education in Ireland covers the ages of 6 to 16, although there is full enrolment from 3 years old to the age of 17. This 15-year duration of full enrolment is a year longer than the OECD average. The enrolment rate in early childhood education and care is already 92% among 3-year-olds (OECD average: 77%) and 100% among 4-5 year-olds. In 2017, participation in early childhood education reached 98% among 3-5 year-olds (OECD average: 87%).
- In Ireland, early childhood education and care are almost exclusively provided by private settings (99%), although it is mainly financed by public sources (97%).

References

OECD (2019), *Education at a Glance 2019: OECD indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, [1]
<https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>.

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.

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

| | |
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Note reading data from Ireland:

Changes from 2014 to 2015 are largely driven by the substantial increase in GDP in 2015. For more information on this increase see http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/newsevents/documents/pr_GDPexplanatorynote.pdf. In 2016 Ireland produced a modified estimate of the gross national income (GNI*) that was recommended by the Economic Statistics Review Group and is designed to exclude globalisation effects that are disproportionately impacting the measurement size of the Irish Economy.

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

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 Ireland in Education at a Glance 2019

| Source | Main topics in <i>Education at a Glance</i> | Ireland | | OECD average | | EU23 average | |
|---|--|-----------|-----|--------------|-----|--------------|-----|
| Tertiary education | | | | | | | |
| Educational attainment of 25-64 year-olds | | | | | | | |
| 2018 | | | | | | | |
| Table A1.1 | Short-cycle tertiary | 7% | | 7% | | 5% | |
| | Bachelor's or equivalent | 27% | | 17% | | 14% | |
| | Master's or equivalent | 12% | | 13% | | 15% | |
| | Doctoral or equivalent | 1% | | 1% | | 1% | |
| Tertiary attainment of 25-34 year-olds, by gender | | | | | | | |
| 2018 | | | | | | | |
| Table A1.2 | Men | 38% | 52% | 31% | 38% | 28% | 36% |
| | Women | 52% | 60% | 40% | 51% | 38% | 50% |
| | Total | 45% | 56% | 35% | 44% | 33% | 43% |
| Distribution of first-time tertiary entrants by education level | | | | | | | |
| 2017 | | | | | | | |
| Table B4.1 | Short-cycle tertiary | ** | | 17% | | 12% | |
| | Bachelor's or equivalent | ** | | 76% | | 80% | |
| | Master's or equivalent | ** | | 7% | | 8% | |
| Share of international or foreign students, by education level¹ | | | | | | | |
| 2017 | | | | | | | |
| Table B6.1 | Bachelor's or equivalent | 7% | | 4% | | 7% | |
| | Master's or equivalent | 19% | | 13% | | 13% | |
| | Doctoral or equivalent | 29% | | 22% | | 22% | |
| | All tertiary levels of education | 9% | | 6% | | 9% | |
| Employment rate of 25-64 year-olds, by educational attainment | | | | | | | |
| 2018 | | | | | | | |
| Table A3.1 | Short-cycle tertiary | 80% | | 82% | | 82% | |
| | Bachelor's or equivalent | 85% | | 84% | | 84% | |
| | Master's or equivalent | 88% | | 88% | | 88% | |
| | Doctoral or equivalent | 91% | | 92% | | 93% | |
| | All tertiary levels of education | 85% | | 85% | | 86% | |
| Employment rate of tertiary-educated 25-64 year-olds, by field of study | | | | | | | |
| 2018 | | | | | | | |
| Table A3.4 | Education | ** | | 84% | | 85% | |
| | Business and administration and law | ** | | 86% | | 87% | |
| | Engineering, manufacturing and construction | ** | | 89% | | 89% | |
| | Health and welfare | ** | | 87% | | 88% | |
| Relative earnings of full-time full-year 25-64 year-old workers, by educational attainment (upper secondary education = 100) | | | | | | | |
| 2017 | | | | | | | |
| Table A4.1 | Short-cycle tertiary | 135 | | 120 | | 121 | |
| | Bachelor's or equivalent | 181 | | 144 | | 138 | |
| | Master's, doctoral or equivalent | 200 | | 191 | | 174 | |
| | All tertiary levels of education | 174 | | 157 | | 152 | |
| Upper secondary and vocational education and training (VET) | | | | | | | |
| Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment rate | | | | | | | |
| 2018 | | | | | | | |
| Table A1.2 | Share of 25-34 year-olds with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary as their highest attainment | 36% | | 41% | | 44% | |
| Percentage of first-time upper secondary graduates with a vocational qualification | | | | | | | |
| 2017 | | | | | | | |
| Table B3.1 | Vocational programmes | ** | | 40% | | 46% | |
| Age at graduation from upper secondary education, by programme orientation | | | | | | | |
| 2017 | | | | | | | |
| Figure B3.1 | General programmes | ** | | 18 | | 19 | |
| | Vocational programmes | ** | | 21 | | 21 | |
| Share of women among upper secondary graduates, by programme orientation | | | | | | | |
| 2017 | | | | | | | |
| Figure B3.2 | General programmes | 51% | | 55% | | 56% | |
| | Vocational programmes | 61% | | 46% | | 46% | |
| Employment, unemployment and inactivity rates of 25-34 year-olds, with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education | | | | | | | |
| 2018 | | | | | | | |
| Table A3.3 | Employment rate | 75% | | 78% | | 79% | |
| | Unemployment rate | 7% | | 7% | | 8% | |
| | Inactivity rate | 19% | | 16% | | 14% | |
| Total expenditure on upper secondary educational institutions, in USD² per full-time equivalent student, by programme orientation | | | | | | | |
| 2016 | | | | | | | |
| Table C1.1 | General programmes | ** | | USD 9 397 | | USD 9 671 | |
| | Vocational programmes | ** | | USD 10 922 | | USD 11 320 | |
| Early childhood education and care (ECEC) | | | | | | | |
| Enrolment rate of 3-5 year-olds in education | | | | | | | |
| 2017 | | | | | | | |
| Table B2.2 | ECEC and primary education | 98% | | 87% | | 90% | |
| Share of children enrolled in private institutions | | | | | | | |
| 2017 | | | | | | | |
| Table B2.3 | Pre-primary level (ISCED 02) | 99% | | 34% | | 27% | |
| Ratio of children to teaching staff | | | | | | | |
| 2017 | | | | | | | |
| Table B2.3 | Pre-primary level (ISCED 02) | ** | | 16 | | 15 | |
| Expenditure on children aged 3-5 enrolled in education | | | | | | | |
| 2016 | | | | | | | |
| Table B2.4 | Annual expenditure per child, in USD ² per child | USD 6 269 | | USD 8 141 | | USD 8 926 | |

| Source | Main topics in <i>Education at a Glance</i> | Ireland | | OECD average | | EU23 average | |
|---|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|
| Social outcomes and adult learning | | | | | | | |
| Participation in formal and/or non-formal education, by educational attainment³ | | | | | | | |
| 2016 | | | | | | | |
| Table A7.1 | Below upper secondary | 28% | | n.a. | | 26% | |
| | Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary | 46% | | n.a. | | 44% | |
| | Tertiary | 70% | | n.a. | | 66% | |
| Participation in cultural or sporting activities in the last 12 months, by educational attainment⁴ | | | | | | | |
| 2015 | | | | | | | |
| Table A6.1 | Below upper secondary | 61% | | n.a. | | 56% | |
| | Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary | 79% | | n.a. | | 77% | |
| | Tertiary | 92% | | n.a. | | 92% | |
| Financial resources invested in education | | | | | | | |
| Total expenditure on educational institutions, by level of education² | | | | | | | |
| 2016 | | | | | | | |
| | | USD/student | % GDP | USD/student | % GDP | USD/student | % GDP |
| Table C1.1 and C2.1 | Primary | USD 8 468 | 1.4% | USD 8 470 | 1.5% | USD 8 548 | 1.3% |
| | Lower secondary | USD 9 814 | 0.6% | USD 9 884 | 0.9% | USD 10 302 | 0.9% |
| | Upper secondary | USD 10 094 | 0.6% | USD 10 368 | 1.1% | USD 10 308 | 1% |
| | Tertiary (including R&D) | USD 13 237 | 0.8% | USD 15 556 | 1.5% | USD 15 863 | 1.2% |
| Share of expenditure on educational institutions, by final source of funds | | | | | | | |
| 2016 | | | | | | | |
| | | Public | Private | Public | Private | Public | Private |
| Table C3.1 | Primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary | 97% | 3% | 90% | 10% | 92% | 8% |
| | Tertiary (including R&D) | 72% | 28% | 66% | 32% | 73% | 24% |
| Total public expenditure on primary to tertiary education | | | | | | | |
| 2016 | | | | | | | |
| Table C4.1 | As a percentage of total government expenditure | 13% | | 10.8% | | 9.6% | |
| Teachers, the learning environment and the organisation of schools | | | | | | | |
| Actual salaries of teachers and school heads in public institutions relative to earnings of full-time, full-year workers with tertiary education | | | | | | | |
| 2017 | | | | | | | |
| | | Teachers | School heads | Teachers | School heads | Teachers | School heads |
| Table D3.2a | Pre-primary | ** | ** | 0.78 | ** | 0.78 | 1.16 |
| | Primary | ** | ** | 0.84 | 1.25 | 0.85 | 1.24 |
| | Lower secondary (general programmes) | ** | ** | 0.88 | 1.34 | 0.89 | 1.34 |
| | Upper secondary (general programmes) | ** | ** | 0.93 | 1.43 | 0.95 | 1.43 |
| Annual statutory salaries of teachers in public institutions, based on most prevalent qualifications, at different points in teachers' careers² | | | | | | | |
| 2018 | | | | | | | |
| | | Starting salary | Salary after 15 years of experience | Starting salary | Salary after 15 years of experience | Starting salary | Salary after 15 years of experience |
| Table D3.1a | Pre-primary | ** | ** | USD 31 276 | USD 42 078 | USD 30 615 | USD 41 354 |
| | Primary | USD 36 553 | USD 61 534 | USD 33 058 | USD 45 947 | USD 32 987 | USD 45 748 |
| | Lower secondary (general programmes) | USD 36 553 | USD 62 135 | USD 34 230 | USD 47 675 | USD 34 261 | USD 47 772 |
| | Upper secondary (general programmes) | USD 36 553 | USD 62 135 | USD 35 859 | USD 49 804 | USD 35 104 | USD 49 875 |
| Organisation of teachers' working time in public institutions over the school year | | | | | | | |
| 2018 | | | | | | | |
| | | Net teaching time | Total statutory working time | Net teaching time | Total statutory working time | Net teaching time | Total statutory working time |
| Tables D4.1a and D4.1b | Pre-primary | ** | ** | 1 024 hours | 1 613 hours | 1 062 hours | 1 550 hours |
| | Primary | 905 hours | ** | 783 hours | 1 612 hours | 754 hours | 1 539 hours |
| | Lower secondary (general programmes) | 726 hours | ** | 709 hours | 1 634 hours | 673 hours | 1 572 hours |
| | Upper secondary (general programmes) | 726 hours | ** | 667 hours | 1 629 hours | 643 hours | 1 558 hours |
| Percentage of teachers who are 50 years old or over | | | | | | | |
| 2017 | | | | | | | |
| Table D5.1 | Primary to upper secondary | 23% | | 36% | | 39% | |
| Share of female teachers, in public and private institutions | | | | | | | |
| 2017 | | | | | | | |
| Table D5.2 | Primary | 86% | | 83% | | 87% | |
| | Lower secondary | ** | | 69% | | 72% | |
| Total number of compulsory instruction time, by level of education | | | | | | | |
| 2019 | | | | | | | |
| Table D1.1 | Primary | 5 430 hours | | 4 568 hours | | 4 258 hours | |
| | Lower secondary | 2 772 hours | | 3 022 hours | | 3 002 hours | |
| | Upper secondary | 924 hours | | ** | | ** | |
| Average class size by level of education | | | | | | | |
| 2017 | | | | | | | |
| 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. For some countries, data on foreign students are provided instead of international students.

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

3. EU23 average refers to the average of OECD countries that participated in the Adult Education Survey (AES).

4. EU23 average refers to the average of OECD countries that participated in the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions 2015.

** 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>.