

Tertiary education

Did you know?

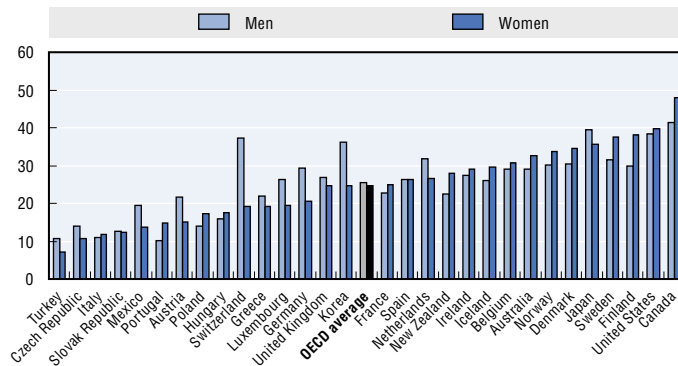
On average 33% of women aged 25 to 34 have tertiary education compared with 28% for men of the same age in OECD countries.

Even in the poorest parts of the world more than 60% of young girls usually attend primary school. In sub-Saharan Africa and in the Indian Sub-Continent only 3-4% of young women receive tertiary education.

Although tertiary education delays the start of paid employment, it substantially increases lifetime earnings and is a good investment both for the individual and for society.

In the OECD area, tertiary attainment rates for the population of working age range from below 12% in Turkey, the Czech Republic, Italy and the Slovak Republic to over 35% in Canada, the United States, Sweden and Japan. Female attainment rates exceed those for men in just over half of the countries with significantly higher rates in Canada, Finland, Sweden and New Zealand. By contrast, the number of men having attained a tertiary level of education is still substantially higher in Korea and Switzerland.

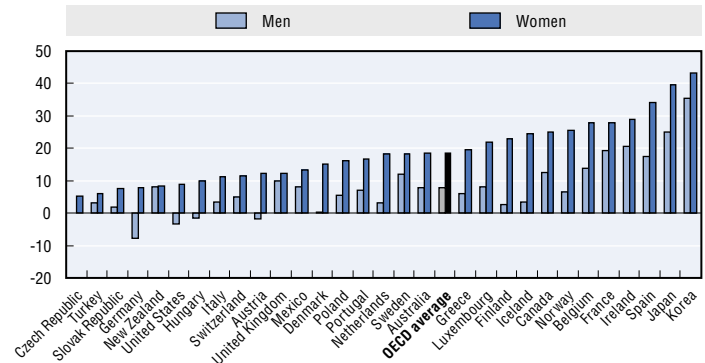
Percentage of men and women aged 25-64 with tertiary education
2004 or latest year available



The next chart shows that in general young people of both sexes are more likely than their parents to acquire tertiary education. The only exceptions are Austria, Germany, Hungary and the United States, where tertiary attainment rates for young men are below those for older men. The most striking feature however is the large difference between the age groups for women. The increase in the number of women attaining a tertiary level of education has been particularly marked in Japan, Korea and Spain where cultural attitudes about the role of women in society have probably undergone more profound changes than in other OECD countries.

Differences in tertiary attainment by people aged 25-34 and 55-64

Percentage of young people with tertiary education minus percentage of older people with tertiary education, 2004



Source: OECD Education database and Gender, Institutions and Development (GID) database.

Further reading:

OECD (2006), *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators*, OECD, Paris.