

## Gender wage gaps

### Did you know?

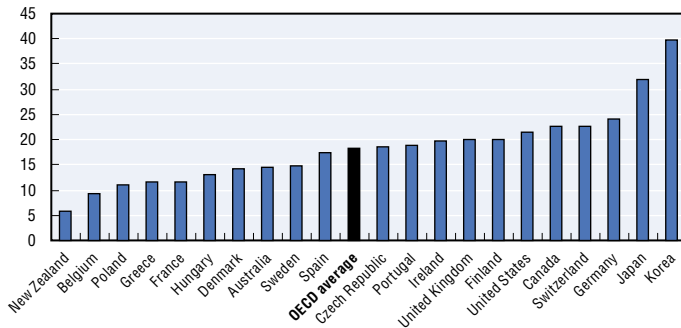
In all OECD countries median wages for men are higher than those for women. The average difference is more than 15% and exceeds 20% in several countries.

Male median earnings are more than 20% higher than those of women in Korea, Japan, Germany, Switzerland, Canada and the United States. Note that these are median earnings in *full-time* jobs and so are not affected by a widespread preference for part-time work by women (though men tend to work longer hours than women). At the other end of the scale, the gender gap is less than 12% in New Zealand, Belgium, Poland, Greece and France.

Almost all OECD countries legislate to ensure equal pay for equal work regardless of gender. But there are all sorts of reasons why this is insufficient to close the gender gap. Discrimination may continue, if legislation is not or cannot be applied. More generally, women may end up in lower-paid occupations than men, and may struggle to be promoted as often as men.

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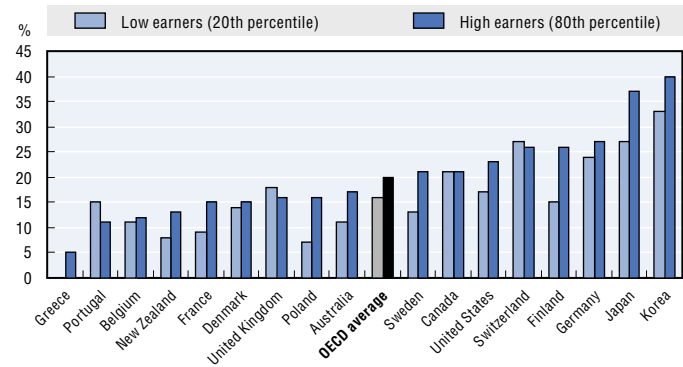
Gender gap in median earnings of full-time employees,  
2004 or latest year available



The chart below shows the gender gaps in wages – men’s minus women’s – for low paid and for high paid workers. (Low and high paid are defined as those in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 80<sup>th</sup> percentiles of the wage distribution respectively.) In a majority of countries, the gender gap is larger for the high wage earners. This is evidence that the “glass ceiling” is no myth – women are less likely to get into higher paid and managerial occupations.

### Gender gap at the top and bottom of the earnings distribution

2003 or latest year available



Source: OECD Employment and Labour Market Statistics.

### Further reading:

OECD (2005), *OECD Employment Outlook*, OECD, Paris.

OECD (2002-2004), *Babies and Bosses – Reconciling Work and Family Life*, series, OECD, Paris.