

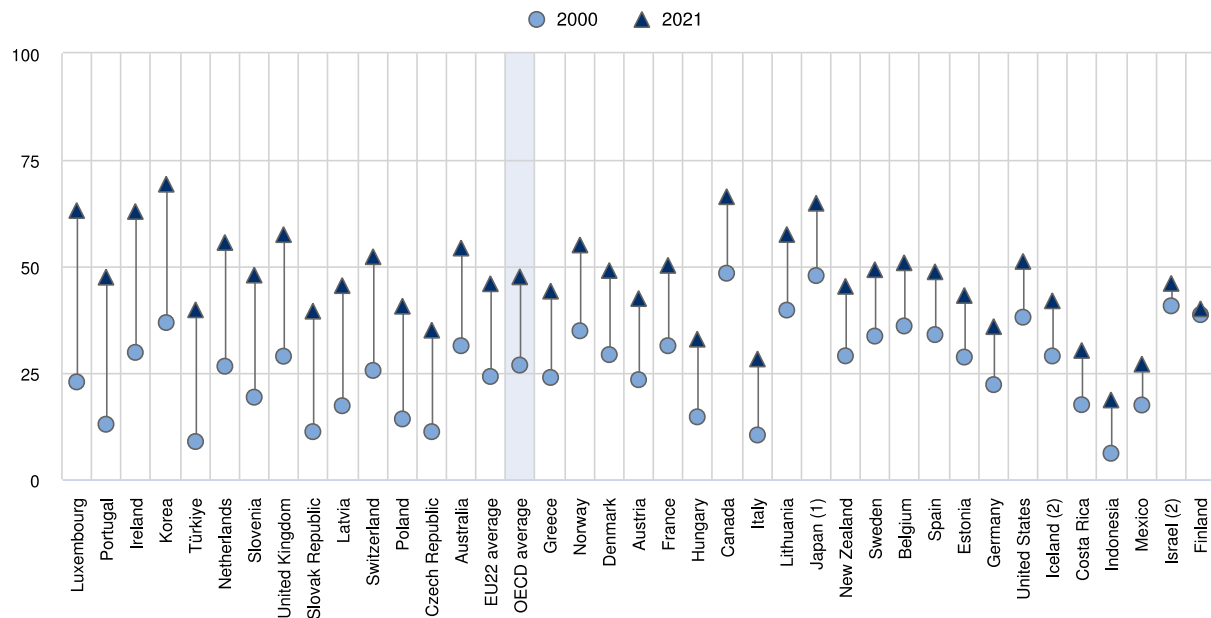
Switzerland

The output of educational institutions and the impact of learning

- Educational attainment has been increasing throughout the OECD, in particular at tertiary level. Between 2000 and 2021, the share of 25-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment increased on average by 21 percentage points. In Switzerland, the share increased at an even faster pace, by 27 percentage points (from 26% in 2000 to 52% in 2021) (Figure 1). Switzerland is one of the 14 OECD countries where at least half of 25-34 year-olds have a tertiary education.
- Upper secondary attainment is often seen as a minimum qualification for successful labour market participation. Although the general increase in educational attainment has seen a parallel decline in the share of 25-34 year-olds without upper secondary attainment, 14% of young adults across the OECD still left school without an upper secondary qualification. In Switzerland, the share is 8%, which is lower than the OECD average.
- Higher educational attainment is often associated with better employment prospects and Switzerland is no exception. In 2021 the employment rate among 25-34 year-olds with tertiary education in Switzerland was 25 percentage points higher than among those with below upper secondary attainment and 4 percentage points higher than among those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment. On average across OECD countries, the employment rate among 25-34 year-olds with a tertiary qualification was 26 percentage points higher than among those with below upper secondary attainment and 8 percentage points higher than among those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment. While the positive link between educational attainment and employment rates holds for both men and for women across the OECD, it is particularly strong for women. In Switzerland, 54% of women with below upper secondary attainment were employed in 2021, compared to 89% of those with tertiary attainment. In contrast, the figures were 76% and 92% for men.
- Across the OECD, the labour market benefits of tertiary attainment have proved especially strong during economic crises. This was also the case during the COVID-19 pandemic in Switzerland. Between 2019 and 2020, unemployment for 25-34 year-old workers with below upper secondary attainment increased by 3.6 percentage points, by 0.8 percentage points for workers with upper secondary attainment and decreased by 0.2 percentage points for workers with tertiary attainment. In 2021, unemployment for workers with below upper secondary attainment increased by 0.5 percentage points, compared to 2020, by 0.1 percentage points for workers with upper secondary attainment and by 0.2 percentage points for workers with tertiary attainment.
- Educational attainment affects not just employment prospects, but also wage levels. On average across the OECD, 25-64 year-old workers with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment earn 29% more than workers with below upper secondary attainment, while those with tertiary attainment earn about twice as much. In Switzerland, the earnings advantage of tertiary-educated workers was smaller than the OECD average. In 2020, workers with upper secondary attainment earned 25% more than those with below upper secondary attainment and those with tertiary attainment earned 88% more.

Figure 1. Trends in the share of tertiary-educated 25-34 year-olds (2000 and 2021)

In per cent



1. Data for tertiary education include upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary programmes (less than 5% of adults are in this group).

2. Year of reference differs from 2000: 2002 for Israel and 2003 for Iceland.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the difference in the share of tertiary-educated 25-34 year-olds between 2000 and 2021.

Source: OECD (2022), Education at a Glance Database, <http://stats.oecd.org/>. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-A.pdf).

Access to education, participation and progress

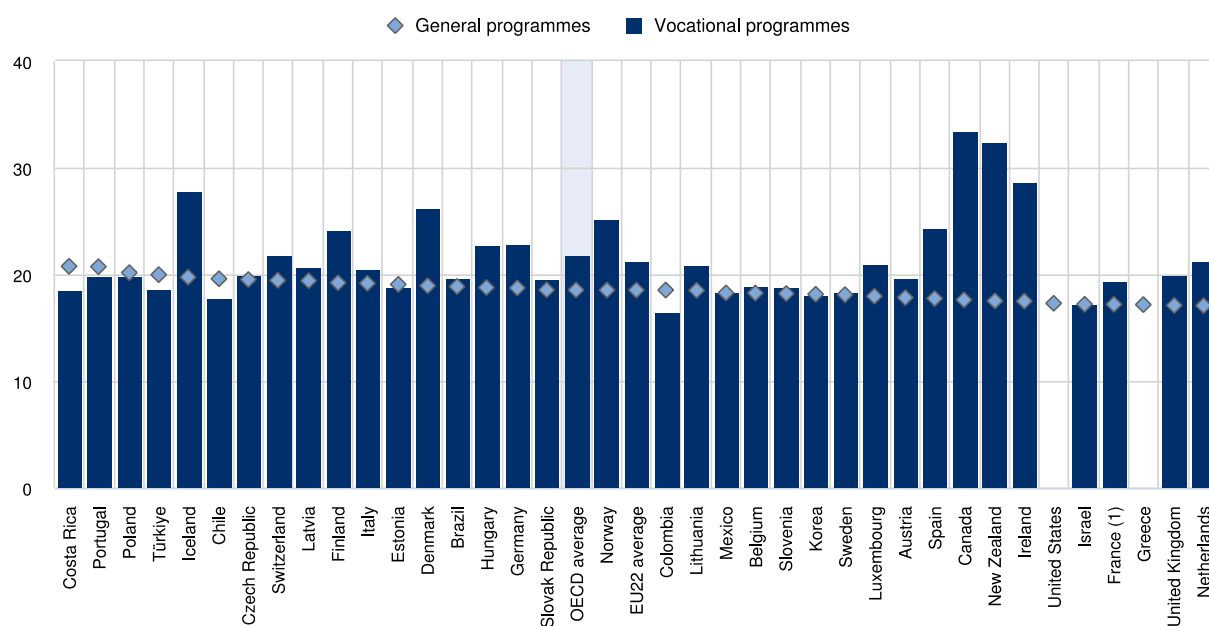
- The average age of graduation from general upper secondary programmes varies from 17 to 21 years across OECD countries and is 19 years in Switzerland. Differences in the average age of graduation from vocational upper secondary education are much larger and vary from 16 to 34 years across the OECD. These differences largely depend on whether vocational upper secondary students usually enrol in these programmes towards the end of their compulsory education or in mid-career. In Switzerland, the average age of graduation from vocational upper secondary education is 22 years, which is the same as the OECD average (Figure 2).
- In almost all OECD countries, women make up the majority of those graduating from general upper secondary education. In Switzerland, the share is 57% (OECD average 55%). In contrast, men are overrepresented among graduates of vocational upper secondary programmes in most OECD countries, as is the case in Switzerland where they make up 56% of all vocational upper secondary graduates, slightly above the OECD average (55%).
- In Switzerland, 55% of 18-24 year-olds are still in full- or part-time education or training at either upper secondary or tertiary level (slightly above the OECD average of 54%). A subset of these students (32% of 18-24 year-olds) combine their education or training with some form of employment in Switzerland, compared to 17% on average across the OECD.
- One significant difference across countries' education systems is on whether or not vocational upper secondary programmes provide access to tertiary education. In 12 OECD countries and

other participants, all vocational upper secondary graduates have direct access to tertiary education. In Switzerland 90% of graduates from vocational upper secondary programme have direct access to tertiary education.

- As is the case in all OECD countries, a majority of students enrolled at tertiary level in Switzerland are bachelor's students (67%). However, the next commonest enrolment level varies from country to country. In Switzerland, master's students make up the second largest group of tertiary students at 24%. This is also the case in 25 other OECD countries, while in the remaining 14 countries with available data, short-cycle tertiary students form the second largest group.
- At 27%, business, administration and law was the most popular field of study among new entrants into tertiary education in Switzerland, which is the case in most OECD countries. Despite the growing need for digital skills and the good employment prospects of students with degrees in information and communication technologies (ICT), only a small fraction of entrants into tertiary education choose this field. In Switzerland, 91% of 25-64 year-olds with a tertiary ICT qualification are employed, but ICT students make up only 4% of new entrants into tertiary education. This is below the OECD average of 6%.

Figure 2. Average age of first-time upper secondary graduates, by programme orientation (2020)

In years



1. Average age is based on all graduates instead of first-time graduates.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the average age of first-time upper secondary graduates in general programmes.

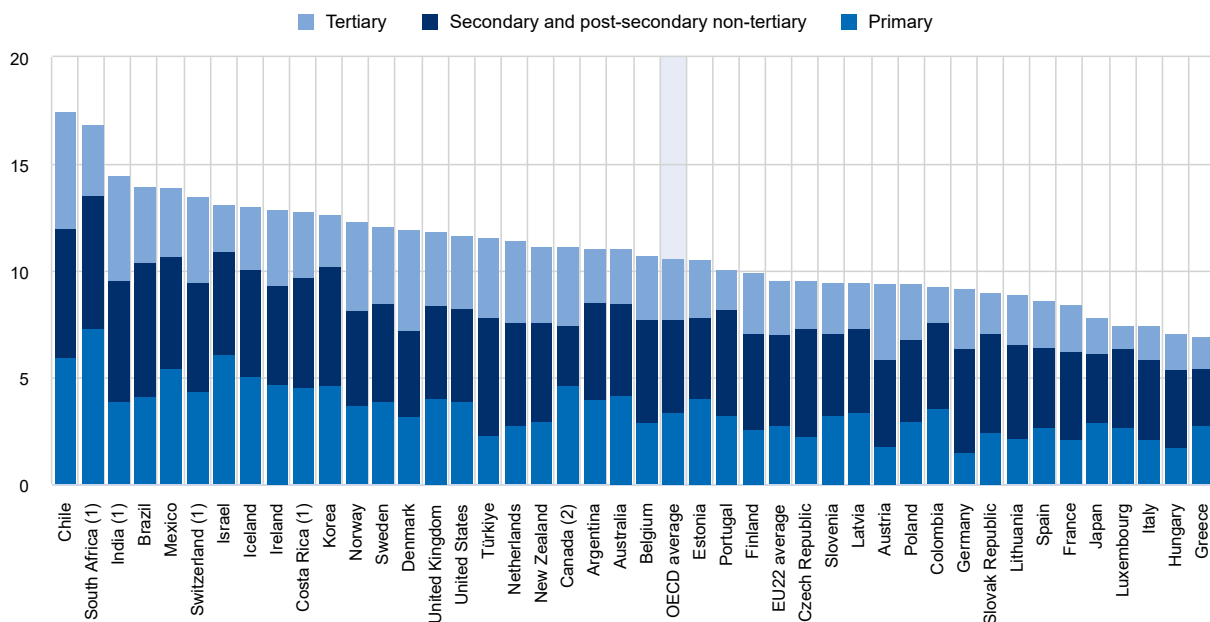
Source: OECD/Eurostat/UIS (2022), Tables B3.1 and B3.2. See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

Financial resources invested in education

- Public spending on primary to tertiary education was 13.5% of total government expenditure in Switzerland (Figure 3), higher than the OECD average (10.6%). In contrast, relative to GDP, public spending on primary to tertiary education (4.4%) is the same as the OECD average.

Figure 3. Composition of total public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure (2019)

Primary to tertiary education (including R&D), in per cent



1. Year of reference differs from 2019. Refer to the source table for more details.

2. Primary education includes pre-primary programmes.

Countries are ranked in descending order of total public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2022), Table C4.1. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-C.pdf).

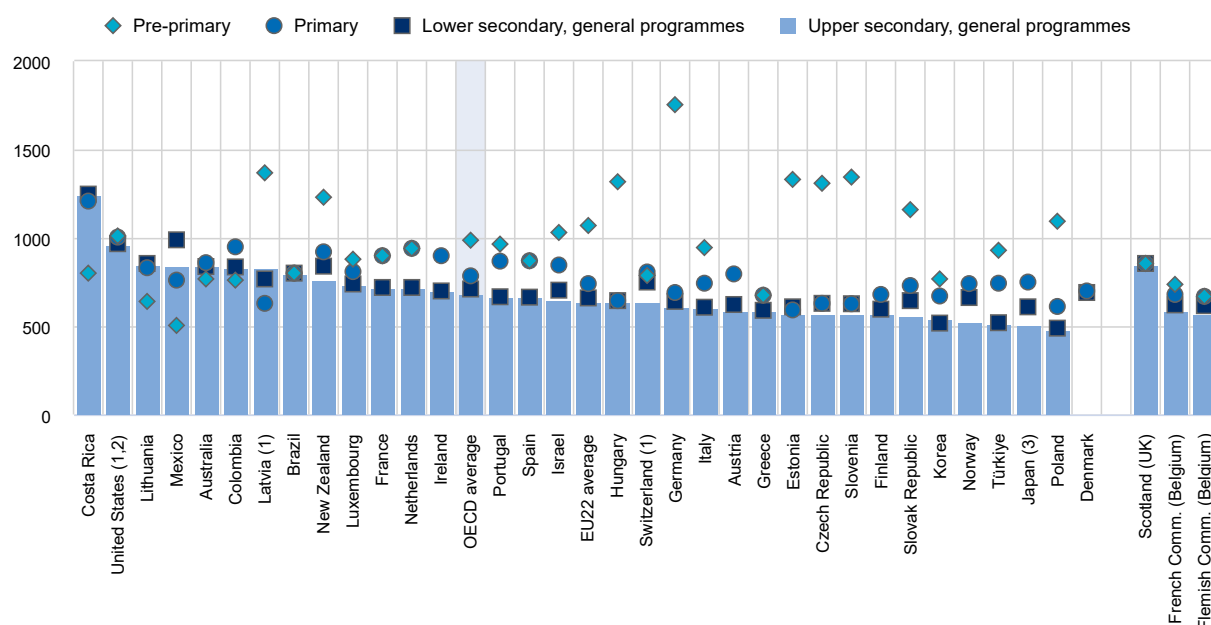
Teachers, the learning environment and the organisation of schools

- The average number of teaching hours per year required from a typical teacher in public educational institutions in OECD countries tends to decrease as the level of education increases. This is also the case in Switzerland.
- Based on official regulations or agreements, annual teaching hours in Switzerland are 788 hours per year at pre-primary level, 806 hours at primary level, 750 hours at lower secondary level (general programmes) and 638 hours at upper secondary level (general programmes) (Figure 4).
- During their working hours, teachers also perform various non-teaching tasks such as lesson planning and preparation, marking students' work and communicating or co-operating with parents or guardians. At the upper secondary level, 66% of teachers' working time is formally dedicated to non-teaching activities in Switzerland, compared to an average of 56% across OECD countries.

- The duration of initial teacher education for primary and lower secondary teachers ranges from 2.5 years to 6.5 years across OECD countries. In Switzerland, initial teacher education typically lasts 5 years for prospective lower secondary teachers (general programmes). It is shorter for prospective primary teachers, at 3 years. As is the case in almost all OECD countries, a tertiary degree is awarded to prospective teachers of all levels of education upon completion of their initial teacher training.

Figure 4. Teaching time of teachers, by level of education (2021)

Net statutory teaching time in hours per year, in public institutions



- Actual teaching time (in Latvia except for pre-primary level).
- Reference year differs from 2021. Refer to the source table for details.
- Average planned teaching time in each school at the beginning of the school year.

Countries and other participants are ranked in descending order of the number of teaching hours per year in general upper secondary education.

Source: OECD (2022), Table D4.1. See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-D.pdf).

Focus on tertiary education

- Among 25-64 year-olds in Switzerland, bachelor's degrees and short-cycle tertiary qualifications are the most common tertiary attainment at 24% of the population each followed by master's degrees with 18%. This is similar to the OECD average, where bachelor's degrees are most common (19%), followed by master's degrees (14%) and short cycle tertiary qualifications (7%). As in all OECD countries and other participants, only a small fraction of the population holds a doctoral degree: the share is 3% in Switzerland.
- On average, tertiary attainment generates a wide range of labour-market benefits, including high employment rates. Yet, there are significant differences depending on the field of study. In 2021, employment rates in Switzerland were highest among tertiary-educated individuals who studied engineering, manufacturing and construction with 93% and lowest among those who studied arts

at 82%. However, these differences need to be put into perspective. Even among 25-64 year-olds with tertiary attainment in the field with the lowest employment rate, this was 0.8 percentage points higher than among those with upper secondary attainment (all fields combined).

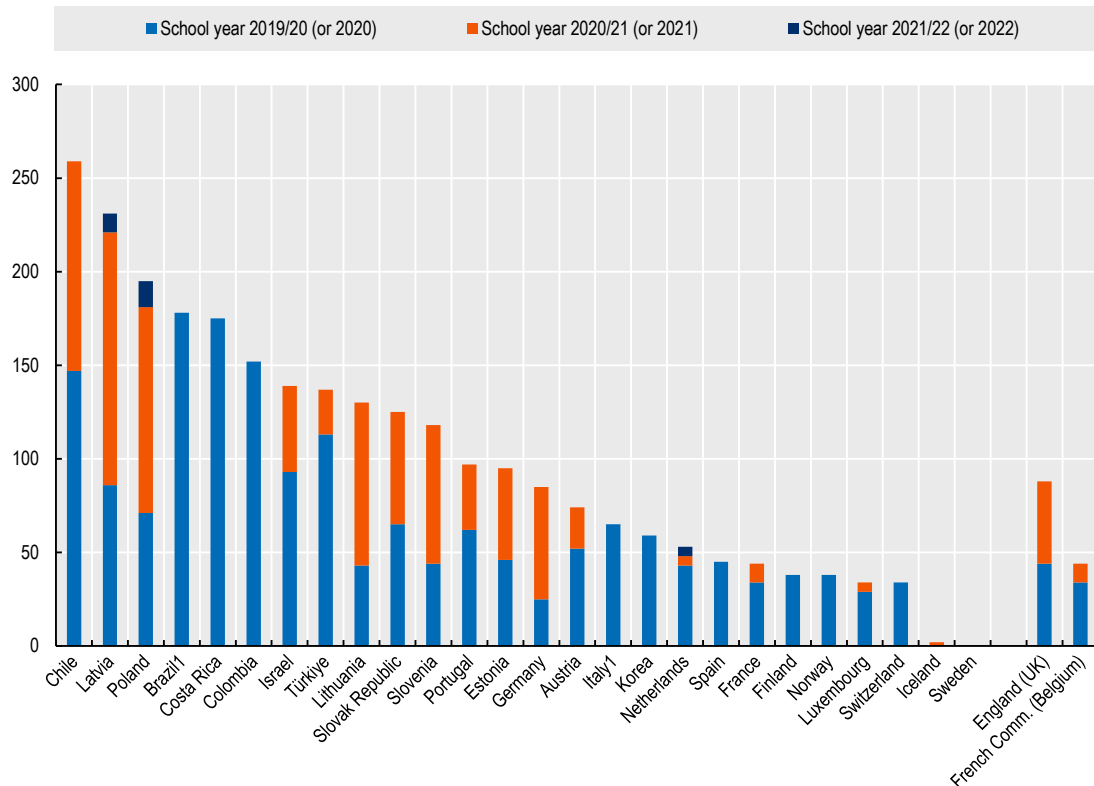
- Wages also differ according to the field of study. In Switzerland, tertiary attainment in medical and dental fields generates the highest earnings. Full-time full-year workers aged 25-64 with a tertiary degree in this field earn on average 97% more than workers with upper secondary attainment (all fields combined). In contrast, tertiary attainment in arts leads to the lowest wages. Workers with this educational background earn on average 9% more than the wage of workers with upper secondary attainment (all fields combined).
- Despite the labour market advantages of a tertiary degree, many tertiary students do not graduate on time or do not graduate at all. In Switzerland, 39% of bachelor's students graduate within the theoretical programme duration. Across the OECD, the completion rate within the theoretical programme duration ranges from 12% to 69%. Completion rates three years after the theoretical programme duration are significantly higher in most countries and the differences between OECD countries somewhat narrower. In Switzerland, 81% of bachelor's students have graduated within three years after the end of the theoretical programme duration, compared to 68% on average across the OECD.
- In all OECD countries, tertiary completion rates are higher for women than for men. In Switzerland, 84% of women graduated within three years after the end of the theoretical programme duration at bachelor's level, compared to 78% of men.
- In most OECD countries including in Switzerland, tertiary-educated adults have higher rates of participation in non-formal education and training than those with a lower level of educational attainment. In 2021, 28% of 25-64 year-olds with tertiary attainment in Switzerland had participated in non-formal education and training in the four weeks prior to being surveyed, compared to 5% of their peers with below upper secondary attainment.
- OECD countries have different approaches to providing financial support to students enrolled in tertiary education, but in general countries with the highest level of public transfers to the private sector are those that also tend to have the highest tuition fees. In six OECD countries and other participants, at least 80% of national students receive public financial support in the form of student loans, scholarships or grants. In another six countries and other participants, including Switzerland, less than 25% of students receive financial support. In these countries, public financial support is targeted on selected groups of students, such as those from socio-economically disadvantaged families.
- Over the decades, independent private institutions have been established to meet increased demand for tertiary education. On average across the OECD, 17% of students are enrolled in independent private institutions, but this figure masks large differences between countries. In Switzerland, 8% of tertiary students are enrolled in such institutions. Independent private institutions charge higher annual tuition fees on average than public institutions for master's programmes in all OECD countries and other participants with available data, except in Chile and Lithuania.
- Enabling students to enrol on a part-time basis is an important way to facilitate access to tertiary education. Many part-time students would not be able to study full time, for example because they have child-care responsibilities or have to work to fund their studies. The share of part-time students at the tertiary level in Switzerland is 26%, above the OECD average (22%). Compared to 2013, it has increased by 2 percentage points.
- Staff at tertiary level tend to start their careers relatively late due to the length of the education they need to qualify. In Switzerland, only 2% of academic staff are aged under 30, below the OECD average (8%). In contrast, the share of academic staff aged 50 or over is 49%, which is above the OECD average by 9 percentage points.

COVID-19: The second year of the pandemic

- The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted traditional schooling in 2020 and the first half of 2021, leading to school closures across all OECD countries. While most shut down their premises entirely in the wake of the pandemic in 2020, by 2021 the situation had improved and returned to normal in most countries in 2022. In Switzerland, primary and secondary schools were entirely closed for 34-56 days during the school year 2019/20 and stayed open in 2020/21 and 2021/22 (Figure 5). There were no partial closures in 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.
- National examinations have also been affected by the pandemic. At general upper secondary level, 18 OECD countries postponed their national examinations during the school year 2019/20, while 10 countries even cancelled them entirely. In 2020/21, national examinations were postponed in 9 countries and cancelled in 6 countries. Switzerland rescheduled its national examinations in 2019/20 and went ahead as planned with them in 2020/21.
- Most countries conducted assessments of the impact of school closures on learning outcomes at various levels of education and along several dimensions. Switzerland has conducted studies to evaluate the effects of the pandemic on the impact on primary as well as upper secondary general and vocational education.
- No national programmes to support students affected by the pandemic were implemented in Switzerland in contrast to many other OECD countries. At primary to upper secondary education, measures to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic included additional hygiene services.
- The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on adult learning in most OECD countries. In 2020, the share of adults who participated in a formal or non-formal education and training activity in the four weeks prior to being surveyed decreased by 2 percentage points on average across OECD countries compared with 2019. However, in 2021, participation in non-formal education and training returned to pre-pandemic levels in most countries. In Switzerland, a different pattern emerged. From 2019 to 2020, the share of adults participating in a formal or non-formal education and training activity fell by 5 percentage points. From 2020 to 2021, it fell by 5 percentage points.
- Young adults who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) for prolonged periods are at risk of adverse economic and social outcomes in both the short and the long term. After remaining constant during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the share of 18-24 year-olds who are NEET in Switzerland rose in 2021. The share of NEET among young adults was 11% in 2021, above pre-COVID levels.

Figure 5. School closures due to COVID-19 (2020, 2021 and the first quarter of 2022)

Number of instruction days of full closure of lower secondary schools excluding school holidays, public holidays and weekends



Note: The data underlying this report were produced through the Survey on Joint National Responses to COVID 19, a collaborative effort conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank (WB), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Data for other levels of education are available at <https://www.oecd.org/education/Results-4th-wave-COVID-Survey-OECD-database.xlsx>.

1. Data for 2021 and 2022 are missing.

Countries and other participants are ranked in descending order of the total number of days lower secondary schools were fully closed during the school years 2019/20 (2020), 2020/21 (2021) and 2021/22 (2022).

Source: OECD/UIS/UNESCO/UNICEF/WB (2022).

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OECD (2022), *Education at a Glance 2022: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en>.


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More information

For more information on Education at a Glance 2022 and to access the full set of Indicators, see:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/3197152b-en>

For more information on the methodology used during the data collection for each indicator, the references to the sources and the specific notes for each country, See Annex 3 (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3.pdf).

For general information on the methodology, please refer to the OECD Handbook for Internationally Comparative Education Statistics: Concepts, Standards, Definitions and Classifications (<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264304444-en>).

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.

Data on subnational regions for selected indicators are available in the *OECD Regional Statistics* (database) (OECD, 2022). When interpreting the results on subnational entities, readers should take into account that the population size of subnational entities can vary widely within countries. For example, regional variation in enrolment may be influenced by students attending school in a different region from their area of residence, particularly at higher levels of education. Also, regional disparities tend to be higher when more subnational entities are used in the analysis.

Explore, compare and visualise more data and analysis using the Education GPS:

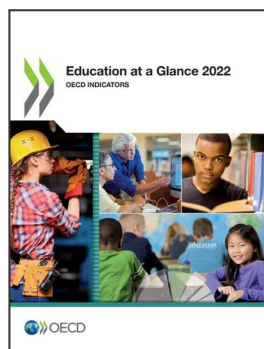
<https://gpseducation.oecd.org/>

The data on educational responses during COVID-19 were collected and processed by the OECD based on the Joint Survey on National Responses to COVID-19 School Closures, a collaborative effort conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS); the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the World Bank; and the OECD.

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