

Japan

Highlights

- Japan is one of the 14 OECD countries where at least half of 25-34 year-olds have a tertiary education). Between 2000 and 2021, the share of 25-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment increased by 17 percentage points.
- As is the case in all OECD countries, a majority of students enrolled at tertiary level in Japan are bachelor's students (70%). Short-cycle tertiary students make up the second largest group of tertiary students at 19%.
- Across primary to tertiary education, Japan spend an average of USD 12 474 per student in 2019 (in equivalent USD converted using PPPs for GDP) on educational institutions. At tertiary level only, the average expenditure per student in Japan is USD 19 504 per year.
- Public spending on primary to tertiary education was 7.8% of total government expenditure in Japan, lower than the OECD average. The share of private expenditure at tertiary level reached 67%, which was above the OECD average of 31%.
- In Japan, 79% of tertiary students are enrolled in independent private institutions, well above the OECD average of 17%.
- Annual teaching hours in Japan are 750 hours at primary level, 609 hours at lower secondary level (general programmes) and 507 hours at upper secondary level (general programmes). At the upper secondary level, 71% of teachers' working time is formally dedicated to non-teaching tasks in Japan, which is above the OECD average.
- In Japan, early childhood education starts offering intentional education objectives at age 3 and 3% of children under 3 are enrolled in early childhood education. But 95% of 3-5 year-old children are enrolled in education, which is above the OECD average.

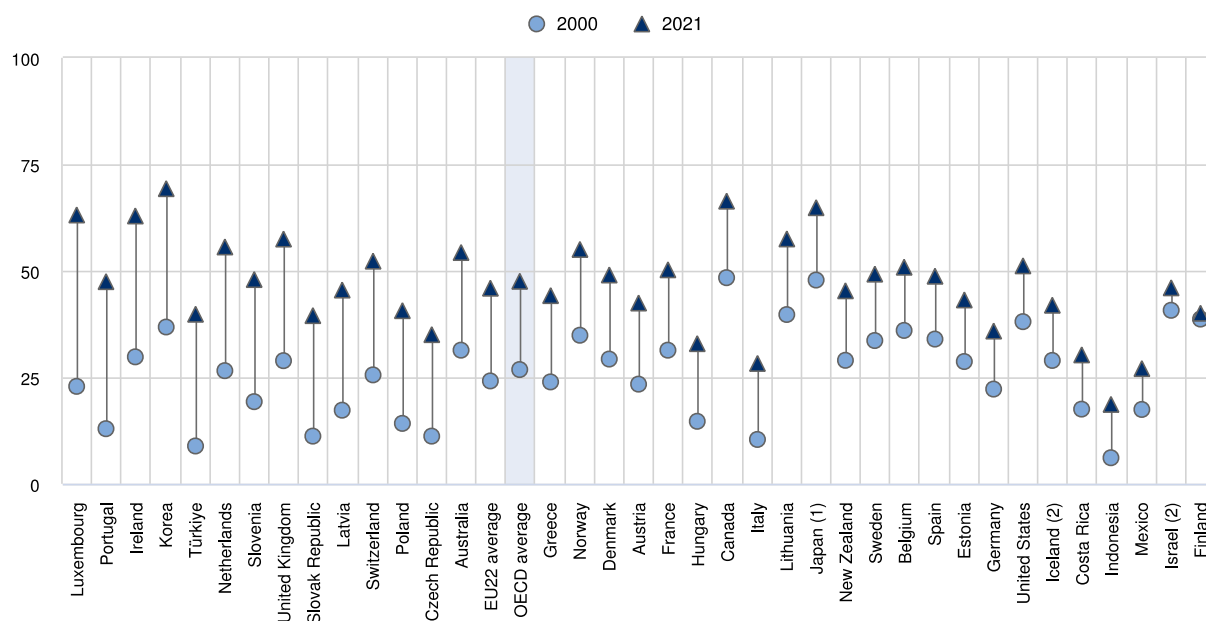
Focus on tertiary education

- 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 Japan, the share also increased albeit at a slower pace, by 17 percentage points (from 48% in 2000 to 65% in 2021) (Figure 1). Japan is one of the 14 OECD countries where at least half of 25-34 year-olds have a tertiary education.
- In most OECD countries including in Japan, tertiary-educated adults have higher rates of participation in non-formal education and training than those with a lower level of educational attainment. In 2012, 55% of 25-64 year-olds with tertiary attainment in Japan had participated in non-formal education and training in the twelve months prior to being surveyed, compared to 21% of their peers with below upper secondary attainment.

- Entering tertiary education often means costs for students and their families, in terms of tuition fees, foregone earnings and living expenses, although they may also receive financial support to help them afford it. However, public policies on tuition fees and financial support for students differ greatly across countries. In Japan, public institutions charge tuition fees of USD 5 144 for students at bachelor's level and of USD 5 139 at master's level.
- 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 Japan, 79% 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 Japan is 7%, below the OECD average (22%). Compared to 2013, it has decreased.
- Staff at tertiary level tend to start their careers relatively late due to the length of the education they need to qualify. In Japan, 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 47%, which is above the OECD average by 7 percentage points.

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

- Compulsory education begins at the age of 6 and ends at the age of 15 in Japan. The range of ages for which at least 90% of the population are enrolled is longer than the period of compulsory education and goes from the age of 4 to the age of 17. This is similar to most other OECD countries, where more than 90% of the population are also enrolled for longer than the period of compulsory education.
- The age at which children enter early childhood education differs widely across countries. In Japan, early childhood education starts offering intentional education objectives at age 3 and 3% of children under 3 are enrolled in early childhood education. Across OECD countries, the average enrolment rate among children below the age of 3 is 27%, but the rates range from less than 1% to 63%. The enrolment rate among 3-5 year-olds increases substantially in all OECD countries. In Japan, 95% of all children of this age are enrolled in early childhood education, which is above the OECD average.
- In almost all OECD countries, women make up the majority of those graduating from general upper secondary education. In Japan, the share is 51% (OECD average 55%). In contrast, men are overrepresented among graduates of vocational upper secondary programmes in most OECD countries, as is the case in Japan where they make up 57% of all vocational upper secondary graduates, slightly above the OECD average (55%).
- 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, including Japan, almost all vocational upper secondary graduates have direct access to tertiary education.
- As is the case in all OECD countries, a majority of students enrolled at tertiary level in Japan are bachelor's students (70%). However, the next commonest enrolment level varies from country to country. In Japan, short-cycle tertiary students make up the second largest group of tertiary students at 19%. This is also the case in 13 other OECD countries, while in the remaining 26 countries with available data, master's students form the second largest group.

Financial resources invested in education

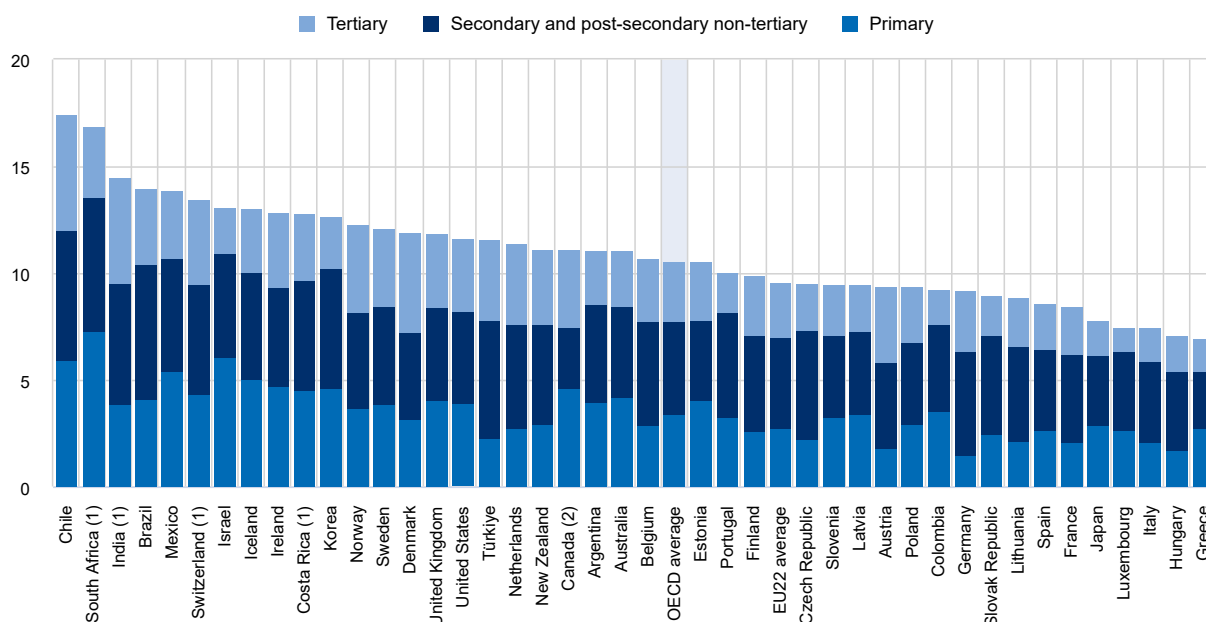
- All OECD countries devote a substantial share of national output to educational institutions. In 2019, OECD countries spent on average 4.9% of their gross domestic product (GDP) on primary to tertiary educational institutions. In Japan, the corresponding share was 4.0%.
- Public spending on primary to tertiary education was 7.8% of total government expenditure in Japan (Figure 2), lower than the OECD average (10.6%). Also, relative to GDP, public spending on primary to tertiary education (3.0%) is lower than the OECD average (4.4%).
- Spending on educational institutions as share of GDP is an important measures of the importance that countries place on education in their budgeting decisions. However, they do not show the total amount of funding per student because GDP levels and student numbers vary from country to country. Across primary to tertiary education, OECD countries spend an average of USD 11 990 per student (in equivalent USD converted using PPPs for GDP) on educational institutions each year. In comparison, Japan spent USD 12 474 per student in 2019. Its cumulative expenditure on educating a student from the age of 6 to 15 was USD 101 399, which was slightly below the OECD average of USD 105 502.
- Across OECD countries, the provision of education at primary and secondary levels in terms of curricula, teaching styles and organisational management leads, on average, to similar patterns of expenditure per student from primary to post-secondary non-tertiary levels. OECD countries as a

whole spend on average around USD 9 923 per student at primary and USD 11 400 per student at secondary level. In Japan, the values are USD 9 379 at primary and USD 11 493 per student at secondary level.

- In contrast to lower levels of education, spending on tertiary education varies widely across OECD countries. Expenditure per student at tertiary level in Japan is higher than at other levels of education, as is the case in almost all other OECD countries. The average expenditure per student in Japan is USD 19 504 per year, which is about USD 10 100 higher than that of the primary level and USD 8 000 higher than that of the secondary level. It is above the OECD average, but similar to many other countries.
- Public funding dominates non-tertiary education (primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary) in all OECD countries, even after transfers to the private sector. On average across the OECD, private funding accounts for 10% of expenditure at primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary levels, while this share was 7% in Japan in 2019. In contrast, private expenditure at tertiary level was higher in all OECD countries. In Japan, the share of private expenditure at tertiary level reached 67%, which was above the OECD average of 31%.

Figure 2. 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.

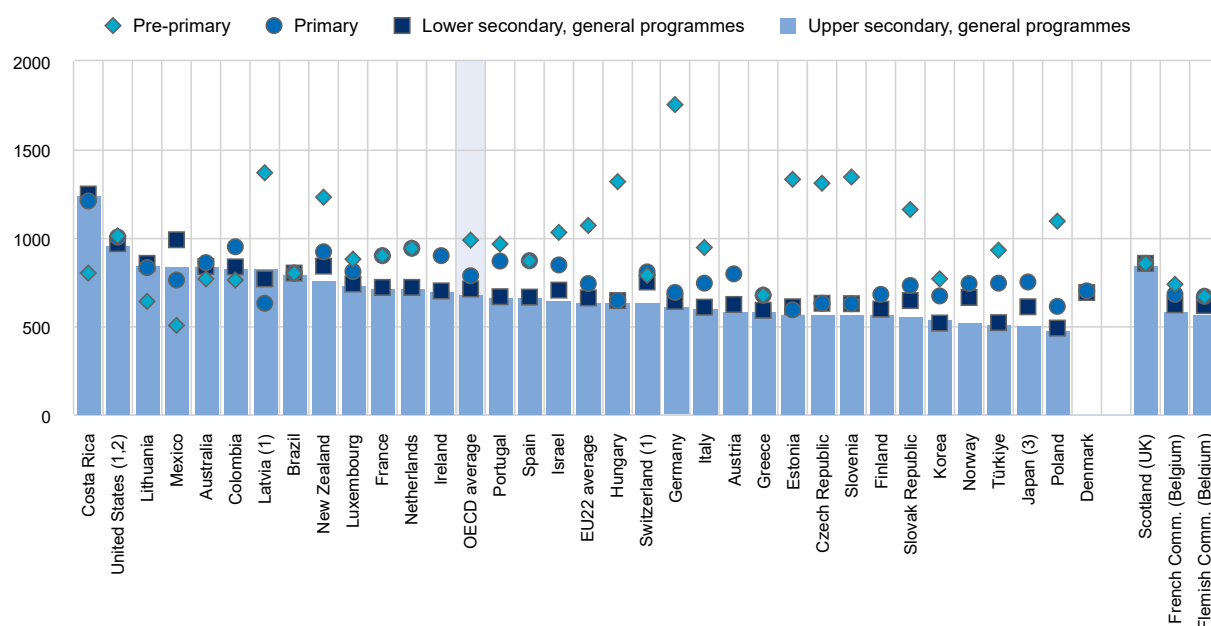
Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2022), Table C4.1. See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-C.pdf).

Teachers, the learning environment and the organisation of schools

- Between 2015 and 2021, on average across OECD countries with data for all reference years, the statutory salaries of teachers at lower secondary level (general programmes) with 15 years of experience and the most prevalent qualifications increased by 6%. In contrast, in Japan, statutory salaries of teachers at lower secondary level largely stayed flat (in real terms).
- 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 Japan.
- Based on official regulations or agreements, annual teaching hours in Japan are 750 hours at primary level, 609 hours at lower secondary level (general programmes) and 507 hours at upper secondary level (general programmes) (Figure 3).
- 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, 71% of teachers' working time is formally dedicated to non-teaching tasks such as lesson planning and preparation preparation, marking students' work and others in Japan, 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 Japan, initial teacher education typically lasts 4 years for prospective lower secondary teachers (general programmes). It is the same length for prospective primary teachers. As is the case in almost all OECD countries, a tertiary degree is awarded to prospective teachers of primary and secondary education upon completion of their initial teacher training.
- Continuing professional development is compulsory for all teachers of general programmes in most countries with data, but Japan is an exception. At secondary level, professional development activities are compulsory for teachers in some circumstances.

Figure 3. Teaching time of teachers, by level of education (2021)

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



1. Actual teaching time (in Latvia except for pre-primary level).

2. Reference year differs from 2021. Refer to the source table for details.

3. 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).

COVID-19: The second year of the pandemic

- Most countries conducted assessments of the impact of school closures on learning outcomes at various levels of education and along several dimensions. Japan has conducted studies to evaluate the effects of the pandemic and its impact on primary and lower secondary, education. The assessments covered mathematics and reading.
- In school year 2022, national programmes to support students affected by the pandemic were implemented in Japan at pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary general and vocational level. At primary to upper secondary education, measures to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic included, psychosocial and mental health support to students and additional water, sanitation and hygiene services.
- The increased digitalisation of education has been a major consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic in many OECD countries. At primary and secondary (general programme) levels, Japan has responded to the pandemic with the introduction of one computing device for each student and an enhanced provision of digitalised assessments/exams, digital tools at school, distance learning, hybrid learning, in-service digital training to teachers and digital training to students.

References

OECD (2022), *Education at a Glance 2022: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/3197152b-en>.


OECD (2022), “Regional education”, *OECD Regional Statistics (database)*, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/213e806c-en>.

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.

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.

Questions can be directed to:

Directorate for Education and Skills

EDU.EAG@oecd.org



From:
Education at a Glance 2022
OECD Indicators

Access the complete publication at:

<https://doi.org/10.1787/3197152b-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2022), “Japan”, in *Education at a Glance 2022: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/1e0a77e5-en>

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, as well as any data and 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. Extracts from publications may be subject to additional disclaimers, which are set out in the complete version of the publication, available at the link provided.

The use of this work, whether digital or print, is governed by the Terms and Conditions to be found at <http://www.oecd.org/termsandconditions>.