



EDUCATION AT A GLANCE 2020

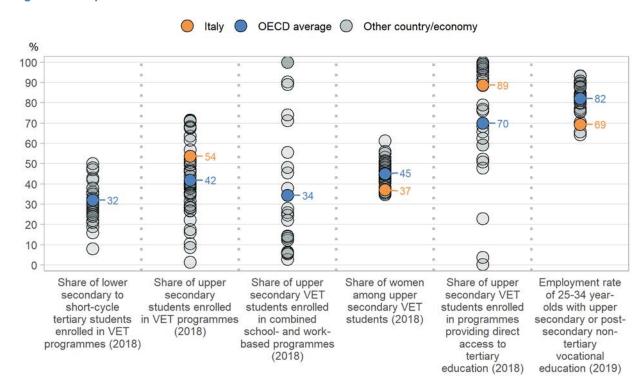
Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators is the authoritative source for information on the state of education around the world. It provides data on the structure, finances and performance of education systems in OECD and partner countries.

Italy

Participation and outcomes of vocational education and training

Vocational education and training (VET) programmes attract a diverse range of students, including
those seeking qualifications and technical skills to enter the labour market, adults wishing to
increase their employability by developing their skills further, and students who may seek entry into
higher education later on.

Figure 1. Snapshot of vocational education



Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. The years shown in parentheses is the most common year of reference for OECD and partner countries. Refer to the source table for more details.

Source: OECD (2020), indicator A3 and B7. See Education at a Glance Database. http://stats.oecd.org/ for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en).

VET is an important part of upper secondary education in most OECD countries. On average, 54% of all upper secondary students opt for VET programmes in Italy, a higher proportion than the OECD average of 42% (Figure 1). Certain fields of study are more common than others at this level. In Italy, the most common broad field is engineering, manufacturing and construction with

- The organisation and delivery of upper secondary VET programmes varies considerably from country to country. In that context, the combination of learning in school and in the work environment through combined school- and work-based programmes offers numerous advantages. However, these programmes do not exist in Italy and all students in upper secondary vocational education are enrolled in school based programmes. In school-based programmes, at least 75% of the curriculum is taught within the school environment.
- The average age of enrolment in upper secondary vocational programmes across OECD countries (21 years) tends to be higher than for general programmes (17 years), a pattern also found in Italy. The average age of enrolment in upper secondary education is higher for students in vocational programmes (17 years) than for students in general programmes (16 years). The share of upper secondary vocational students tends to increase with age. In Italy, the share of upper secondary students enrolled in VET is 54% among 15-19 year-olds (OECD average: 37%), and 88% among 20-24 year-olds (OECD average: 62%).
- Vocational upper secondary students are typically less likely to complete their qualification than
 those from general programmes. Italy follows this pattern as the completion rate for upper
 secondary education (within the theoretical duration of the programme) is lower among students
 enrolled in vocational programmes (52%) than among those in general ones (77%).
- To support upper secondary vocational students' transition to post-secondary education and improve their career prospects, many countries have created direct pathways from vocational programmes to higher levels of education. In Italy, 89% of upper secondary vocational students are enrolled in programmes that offer the chance of direct access to tertiary education, higher than the OECD average of 70% (Figure 1).
- In 2019, 35% of 25-34 year-olds in Italy held an upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary vocational qualification as their highest educational level while 13% held a general one. The employment rate of younger adults with a vocational upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education tend to be higher than the employment rate of those with general qualifications at this level (by 9 percentage points on average across OECD countries). Italy follows this pattern, as 69% of 25-34 year-olds with an upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary vocational qualification are employed compared with 51% of those with a general qualification (Figure 1).
- In some countries, including Italy, the employment rate of younger adults with upper secondary vocational programmes is higher than for adults with tertiary education. Most of these countries have upper secondary or post-secondary vocational programmes with strong and integrated work-based learning or/and vocational programmes designed to offer students direct entry to the labour market. Similarly to most OECD countries, the employment advantage in Italy decreases with age. Among 45-54 year-olds, this employment rate of adults with vocational upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary qualification is 81% and 72% for adults with a general qualification.
- Poorer labour-market prospects of VET qualifications combined with higher tertiary attainment may
 have contributed to the decline in the share of adults with an upper secondary vocational
 qualification across generations in many countries. In Italy, among those with upper secondary or
 post-secondary non-tertiary education as their highest attainment, 75% of 55-64 year-olds (older
 adults), compared with 73% of 25-34 year-olds (younger adults) held a vocational qualification. In
 comparison, the equivalent OECD averages are 72% for older adults and 59% for younger adults.
- On average across OECD countries, the ratio of students to teaching staff is similar in both upper secondary vocational and general programmes. In Italy, there are 12 students for every teaching staff member in general programmes and 9 in vocational ones.

- The expansion of tertiary education is a worldwide trend. Between 2009 and 2019, the share of 25-34 year-olds with a tertiary degree increased in all OECD and partner countries. In Italy, the share increased by 8 percentage points during this period, lower than the average increase across OECD countries (9 percentage points). In 2019, 28% of 25-34 year-olds had a tertiary degree in Italy compared to 45% on average across OECD countries (Figure 2).
- From the gender perspective, younger women are more likely than younger men to achieve tertiary education in all OECD countries. In Italy, 34% of 25-34 year-old women had a tertiary qualification compared to 22% of their male peers, while on average across OECD countries the shares are 51% of younger women and 39% of younger men.
- In Italy, the average age of first-time entrants to tertiary education in 2018 was 20 years, lower than
 the OECD average of 22 years. Structural factors, such as admission procedures, the typical age
 at which students graduate from upper secondary education, or cultural perceptions of the value
 of professional or personal experiences outside of education may explain the differences in the
 average age of entry to tertiary education across countries.
- If current entry patterns continue, it is estimated that 49% of young adults will enter tertiary education for the first time in their life before the age of 25 on average across OECD countries (excluding international students). In Italy, 46% of young adults will enter tertiary education by that age and most of them will enter at bachelor's or equivalent level.
- Short-cycle tertiary programmes are generally designed to be vocationally oriented and represent
 the second most common route of entry into tertiary education on average across OECD countries,
 after bachelor's programmes. If current entry patterns continue, 1% of adults are expected to enter
 short-cycle tertiary education before the age of 25 in Italy, compared to 10% on average across
 OECD countries. In Italy, women make up 27% of students in such programmes, compared to 52%
 on average across OECD countries.
- Young people can face barriers to labour market entry as they transition from school to work, but higher educational attainment increases their likelihood of being employed and is associated with higher incomes. On average across OECD countries, the employment rate in 2019 was 61% for 25-34 year-olds without upper secondary education, 78% for those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education as their highest attainment and 85% for those with tertiary education. In Italy, the shares are 53% for below upper secondary, 64% for upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary and 68% for tertiary attainment. Having a tertiary degree also carries a considerable earnings advantage in most OECD and partner countries. In Italy, in 2016, 25-64 year-olds with a tertiary degree with income from full-time, full-year employment earned 37% more than full-time, full-year workers with upper secondary education compared to 54% on average across OECD countries (Figure 2).
- International student mobility has been expanding quite consistently in the past twenty years. In 2018, 5.6 million tertiary students worldwide had crossed a border to study, more than twice the number in 2005. In Italy, the share of foreign or international students increased from 5% in 2014 to 6% in 2018. Meanwhile 4% of Italian tertiary students are enrolled abroad compared to 2% in total across OECD countries (Figure 2). English-speaking countries are the most attractive student destinations overall in the OECD area, with Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States receiving more than 40% of all internationally mobile students in OECD and partner countries. Among students leaving Italy to study, the most popular destination country is the United Kingdom.
- Beyond the economic and employment outcomes, higher educational attainment is related to greater social benefits. For example, those with a tertiary education are more likely to feel they have a say in what their government does. In 2018, on average across OECD countries

participating in the European Social Survey, 52% of tertiary-educated adults agreed with this sentiment compared to 26% of those with below upper secondary education. In Italy, 22% of tertiary-educated adults feel this way compared with 9% of those with below upper secondary education.

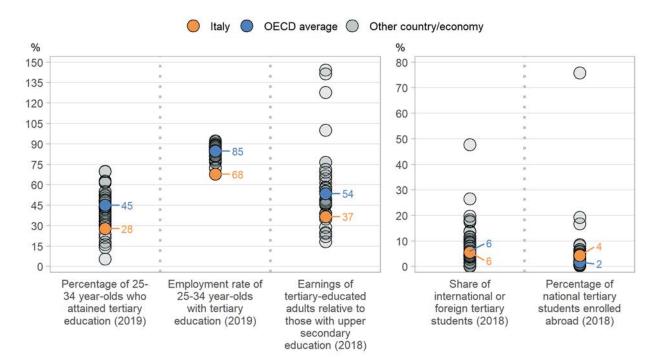


Figure 2. Snapshot of tertiary education

Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. The years shown in parentheses is the most common year of reference for OECD and partner countries. Refer to the source table for more details.

Source: OECD (2020), indicator A1, A3, A4 and B6. See Education at a Glance Database http://stats.oecd.org/for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en).

Starting strong

- Early childhood education and care (ECEC) has experienced a surge of policy attention in OECD countries in recent decades, with a focus on children under the age of 3 in many countries.
 Among 2 year-olds, the enrolment rate at ISCED 0 is 15% in Italy, 31 percentage points below the OECD average of 46% (Figure 3).
- In many OECD countries, ECEC begins for most children long before they turn 5 and there are
 universal legal entitlements to a place in ECEC services for at least one or two years before the
 start of compulsory schooling. While compulsory education begins at age 6 in Italy, 94% of 3-5
 year-olds in 2018 are enrolled in ECEC programmes and primary education in Italy, compared to
 88% on average across OECD countries (Figure 3).
- Public provision of early childhood education and care is an important factor in ensuring broad
 access to affordable ECEC. On average across OECD countries, more than one in two of the
 children in early childhood educational development services (ISCED 01) are enrolled in private
 institutions. Enrolment in private institutions is usually less common for 3-5 year-olds, who are
 usually enrolled in pre-primary education (ISCED 02), than for younger children. In Italy, 28% of

- The workforce is at the heart of high-quality early-childhood education and care: stimulating environments and high-quality pedagogy are fostered by better-qualified practitioners and high-quality interactions between children and staff facilitate better learning outcomes. In that context, lower child-staff ratios are found to be consistently supportive of staff-child relationships across different types of ECEC settings (NICHD, 2002). In Italy, the ratio of children for every full-time equivalent (FTE) teacher working in pre-primary education (ISCED 02) is 12 compared to 14 on average across OECD countries (Figure 3).
- Sustained public financial support is critical for the growth and quality of ECEC programmes. In 2017, annual total expenditure in pre-primary settings (ISCED 02) averaged USD 8 780 per child in Italy, slightly lower than the average across OECD countries (USD 9 079) (Figure 3).

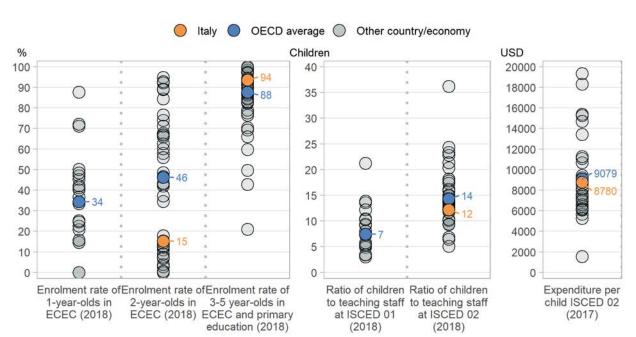


Figure 3. Snapshot of early childhood education and care

Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. Annual expenditure per child is shown in equivalent USD converted using PPPs. The years shown in parentheses is the most common year of reference for OECD and partner countries. Refer to the source table for more details.

Source: OECD (2020), indicator B2. See Education at a Glance Database http://stats.oecd.org/ for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en).

Investing in education

- Annual expenditure per student on educational institutions from primary to tertiary level provides an indication of the investment countries make in each student. In 2017, Italy spent less on primary to tertiary educational institutions per full-time student than the OECD average, investing a total of USD 10 473 per student compared to USD 11 231 on average across OECD countries (Figure 4).
- The way education is provided influences how resources are allocated between levels of education and between public and private institutions. In 2017, Italy spent USD 10 036 per student at non-tertiary level (primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education), USD 37 slightly higher than the OECD average of USD 9 999. At tertiary level, Italy invested USD 12 226 per student, USD 4 101 less than the OECD average (Figure 4). Expenditure per student on private educational institutions is higher than on public institutions on average across OECD countries. However, this is not the case in Italy, where total expenditure on public institutions from primary to tertiary level amounts to USD 10 687 per student, compared to USD 7 943 on private ones.
- Among OECD countries, Italy was among the countries that spent the lowest proportion of its gross domestic product (GDP) on primary to tertiary educational institutions. In 2017, Italy spent 3.9% of GDP on primary to tertiary educational institutions, which is 1.1 percentage points lower than the OECD average. Across levels of education, Italy devoted a below average share of GDP at nontertiary levels and a lower share at tertiary level (Figure 4).
- Between 2012 and 2017, expenditure per student from primary to tertiary education increased by an average annual growth rate of 1.3% across OECD countries. In Italy, expenditure on educational institutions grew at an average rate of 0.2% a year, while the number of students fell on average by 0.1% per year. This resulted in an average annual growth rate of 0.3% in expenditure per student over this period.
- Tuition fees in public institutions in Italy are about average for a bachelor's programme across
 countries with available data: national students are charged USD 1 953 per year for a bachelor's
 degree 36% more than they paid on average in 2007/08. Public transfers to the private sector play
 an important role in the financing of tertiary education in Italy and in providing financial support to
 students. They account for 11% of the total funds devoted to tertiary educational institutions, the
 sixth highest share across OECD countries.
- Capital costs represent a lower than average share of expenditure on primary to tertiary institutions in Italy. At primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary level, capital costs account for 1% of total spending on educational institutions, 6 percentage points below the OECD average. At the tertiary level, capital costs represent 7%, lower than the average across OECD countries of 10%.
- Compensation of teachers and other staff employed in educational institutions represents the largest share of current expenditure from primary to tertiary education. In 2017, Italy allocated 72% of its current expenditure to staff compensation, compared to 74% on average across OECD countries. Staff compensation tends to make up a smaller share of current expenditure on tertiary institutions due to the higher costs of facilities and equipment at this level. In Italy, staff compensation represents 55% of current expenditure on tertiary institutions compared to 76% at non-tertiary levels. On average across OECD countries, the share is 67% at tertiary level and 77% at non-tertiary level.

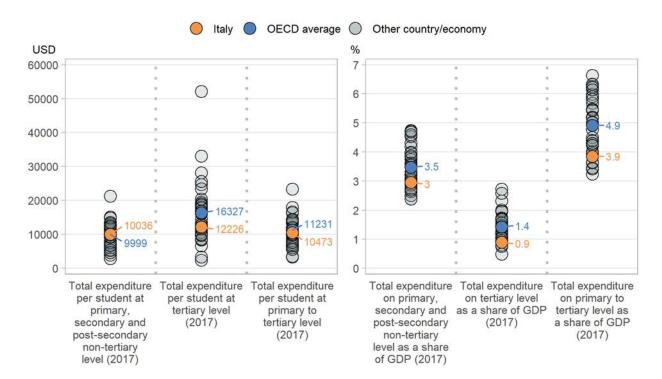


Figure 4. Snapshot of the financial resources invested in educational institutions

Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. Expenditure in national currencies is converted into equivalent USD by dividing the national currency figure by the purchasing power parity (PPP) index for GDP. The years shown in parentheses is the most common year of reference for OECD and partner countries. Refer to the source table for more details.

Source: OECD (2020), indicator C1 and C2. See Education at a Glance Database http://stats.oecd.org/ for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en).

Working conditions of school teachers

- The salaries of school staff, and in particular teachers and school heads, represent the largest single expenditure in formal education. Their salary levels also have a direct impact on the attractiveness of the teaching profession. In most OECD countries and economies, statutory salaries of teachers (and school heads) in public educational institutions increase with the level of education they teach. In most OECD countries and economies, they also increase with experience. On average, statutory salaries of teachers with maximum qualifications at the top of their salary scales are 78-80% higher than those of teachers with the minimum qualifications at the start of their career at pre-primary (ISCED 02), primary and general lower and upper secondary levels. In Italy, maximum salaries are 47% to 56% higher than minimum salaries at each level of education.
- Between 2005 and 2019, the statutory salaries of teachers with 15 years of experience and the
 most prevalent qualifications increased between 5-7% at primary and general lower and upper
 secondary levels, on average across OECD countries, despite a decrease of salaries following the
 2008 financial crisis. In Italy, teachers' salaries at these levels decreased by 6%.
- Teachers' actual salaries reflect their statutory salaries and additional work-related payments.
 Average actual salaries depend also on the characteristics of the teaching population such as their
 age, level of experience and qualification level. In Italy, teachers' average actual salaries amount
 to USD 38 492 at the pre-primary level (ISCED 02) (slightly lower than the OECD average of
 USD 38 677), USD 38 492 at the primary level (lower than the OECD average of USD 43 942),
 USD 41 281 at the general lower secondary level (lower than the OECD average of USD 46 225)

- and USD 44 107 at the general upper secondary level (lower than the OECD average of USD 49 778) (Figure 5).
- Teachers' average actual salaries remain lower than those of tertiary-educated workers in almost all countries, and at almost all levels of education. Teachers' average actual salaries at pre-primary (ISCED 02), primary and general secondary levels of education are 80-94% of the earnings of tertiary-educated workers on average across OECD countries and economies. In Italy, the proportion ranges from 67% at pre-primary level (ISCED 02) 67% at primary level to 72% at lower secondary level and 77% at the upper secondary level (Figure 5).
- The average number of teaching hours per year required of a typical teacher in public educational institutions in OECD countries tends to decrease as the level of education increases, from 993 hours at pre-primary level (ISCED 02), to 778 hours at primary level, 712 hours at lower secondary level (general programmes) and 680 hours at upper secondary level (general programmes). In Italy, teachers are required to teach 945 hours per year at pre-primary level, 766 hours per year at primary level, 626 hours at lower secondary level (general programmes) and 626 hours at upper secondary level (general programmes).

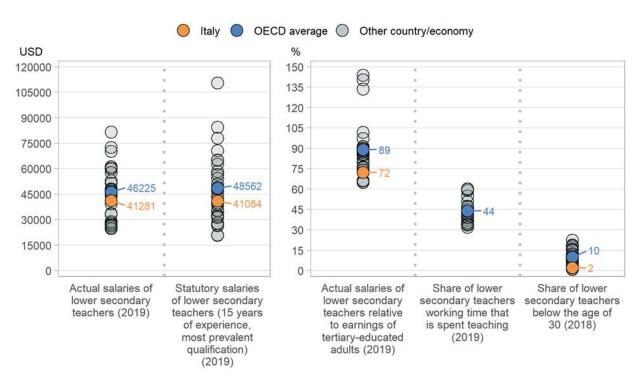


Figure 5. Snapshot of teachers' working conditions

Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. Teachers' salaries are shown in equivalent USD converted using PPPs. The years shown in parentheses is the most common year of reference for OECD and partner countries. Refer to the source table for more details.

Source: OECD (2020), indicator D3, D4 and D5. See Education at a Glance Database http://stats.oecd.org/ for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en).

Large proportions of teachers in many OECD countries will reach retirement age in the next decade, while the size of the school-age population is projected to increase in some countries, putting many governments under pressure to recruit and train new teachers. In Italy, 1% of primary teachers are considered young teachers (under the age of 30), which is lower than the OECD average of 12%. On average across OECD countries, the proportion of young teachers decreases at other levels of education, to 10% in lower secondary education and 8% in upper secondary education. In Italy, the proportion of young teachers increases to 2% at lower secondary level and to 2% at upper secondary level (Figure 5).

The impact of COVID-19 on education

- The global 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has sent shockwaves around the world. In a first effort to contain the virus, many countries have imposed a lockdown and schools and/or universities have closed for several months across all OECD and partner countries. In Italy, the closures were localised from 24 February 2020 and on 10 March 2020, closures became nationwide. By the end of June, Italy had experienced 18 weeks of effective school closures in some form, compared to 14 weeks on average across OECD countries (UNESCO, 2020). However, the actual impact in some countries may have been less severe as some of these periods included scheduled school breaks.
- Excluding the non-compulsory part of the curriculum, students in public institutions in Italy attended classes for 891 hours per year on average at primary level and 990 hours at lower secondary level in 2019. Each week of school closure therefore represents about 22 hours of compulsory instruction time at the primary level and 25 hours of compulsory instruction time at lower secondary level during which students have physically not attended school (Figure 6). During this time, many OECD and partner countries have turned to distance learning to ensure the continuity of education.
- School reopening in the context of the pandemic is contingent on the capacity to maintain a safe distance of 1-2 metres between pupils and staff. Countries with smaller class sizes may find it easier to comply with new restrictions on social distancing. In Italy, the average class size at primary level is 19 students in public institutions, which is smaller than the OECD average of 21. In public lower secondary institutions, there are 21 students per class in Italy, compared to 23 students per class on average across OECD countries. However, the need to reduce class size may depend on other factors such as physical space, the availability of rooms and staff, and personal decisions by students and staff on whether to return to school (Figure 6).
- While there is uncertainty about the likely overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education expenditure, governments will face difficult decisions on the allocation of resources, as government funds are injected into the economy and the health sector. In 2017, public spending on primary to tertiary education as a share of government expenditure in Italy was 7%, lower than the OECD average of 11% (Figure 6).
- As unemployment rises, private funding of education may also be at risk. The impact may be most severe in those countries and levels of education that rely most heavily on household expenditure, in particular early childhood education and care and tertiary education. This is less the case in Italy. In pre-primary education (ISCED 02), private sources accounted for 12% of total expenditure in Italy in 2017, lower than the OECD average of 17%. At tertiary level, 35% of total expenditure comes from private sources, compared to 29% on average across OECD countries.
- The crisis may have a severe impact on the internationalisation of higher education as the delivery of online course material and travel restrictions may raise questions among international students' perception on the value of obtaining their degree from an institution abroad. Italy, with a similar share of foreign students as in total across the OECD, may be equally strongly affected as other countries. In order to cope with the possible reduction in the share of international students, Italy implemented several actions: The process of international recruitment and visas has been fully dematerialized through a dedicated web portal shared among universities, consular authorities and Ministry of universities and research; International students will be also allowed to be enrolled in distant modality and follow the first semester in distant education.

- A decrease in the share of international students may have repercussions on the funding model of some higher education institutions, as foreign students may pay higher tuition fees than domestic ones. This is not the case in Italy: While students from within the European Union/European Economic Area (EU/EEA) pay similar fees to national ones international and foreign students from outside the EU/EEA zone pay about the same for a bachelor's programme in a public institution than national students (USD 1 953).
- Unemployment may increase, as the economy struggles to cope with the reduced activity that resulted from the lockdown. Those with lower educational attainment are the most vulnerable, as they are the most unlikely to benefit from remote working. In 2019, before the pandemic hit, 21% of young adults with below upper secondary education in Italy were unemployed compared to 12% of tertiary-educated 25-34 year-olds (Figure 6). In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, the unemployment of young adults without an upper secondary education increased by 1.4 percentage points between 2008 and 2009 in Italy compared to 2.2 percentage points among those with tertiary education.

OECD average Other country/economy Students % Hours 1200 30 40 0 0 28 1050 35 26 900 30 24 804 750 25 22 21 600 20 20 18 450 15 13 16 300 10 14 150 5 12 0 10 0 Average compulsory Average class size Total public Unemployment rate Unemployment rate instruction time in public expenditure on of 25-34 year-olds of 25-34 year-olds per year at institutions in education as a with below upper with tertiary primary level primary education percentage of secondary education (2019) (2019)(2018)total government education (2019) expenditure (2017)

Figure 6. Snapshot of indicators relevant to the impact of COVID-19 on education

Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. The years shown in parentheses is the most common year of reference for OECD and partner countries. Refer to the source table for more details.

Source: OECD (2020), indicator A3, D1, D2, and C4. See Education at a Glance Database http://stats.oecd.org/ for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en).

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More information

For more information on Education at a Glance 2020 and to access the full set of Indicators, visit www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm

For more information on to the methodology used during the data collection for each indicator, the references to the sources and the specific notes for each country, visit Annex 3 of the publication (https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en).

For general information on methodology, please refer to the OECD Handbook for Internationally Classifications Comparative Education Statistics: Concepts, Standards, Definitions and (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 and charts in the publication.

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https://gpseducation.oecd.org/

The calculation on the number of weeks of school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic is based on data from UNESCO (UNESCO, 2020). For general information on the methodology considered for the data, please refer to the methodological note.

Questions can be directed to:	Country note authors:
Marie-Helene Doumet	Etienne Albiser, Eric Charbonnier, Manon Costinot, Corinne
Directorate for Education and Skills	Heckmann, Bruce Golding, Yanjun Guo, Simon Normandeau, Daniel Sanchez Serra, Markus Schwabe and Giovanni Maria
marie-helene.doumet@oecd.org	Semeraro

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On 15 May 2020, the OECD Council invited Costa Rica to become a Member. While Costa Rica is included in the OECD averages reported in this note, at the time of its preparation, Costa Rica was in the process of completing its domestic procedures for ratification and the deposit of the instrument of accession to the OECD Convention was pending.

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