

# Indicator B5. Who graduates from tertiary education?

## Highlights

- In OECD countries, bachelor's degrees or equivalent continue to be the most prevalent tertiary qualification among first-time graduates. In 2021, the vast majority of first-time tertiary graduates (77%) obtained a bachelor's degree, compared to 16% obtaining a short-cycle tertiary diploma and 8% a master's degree or equivalent.
- Gender differences persist when choosing a field of study. In OECD countries, female tertiary graduates are under-represented in the traditionally male-dominated science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields (33% on average), while they are over-represented in health and welfare (77%).
- The popularity of fields of study differs at different levels of education. At upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary, more than 30% of OECD graduates from vocational programmes studied a STEM field, partly due to the fact that upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) plays a major role in preparing students for jobs in manufacturing and construction (graduates from these programmes fall into the STEM category). At tertiary level, STEM accounts for less than 25% of graduates in OECD countries. At this level, the broad category of STEM translates into different narrow fields of study (e.g. engineering, biology or physics).

## Context

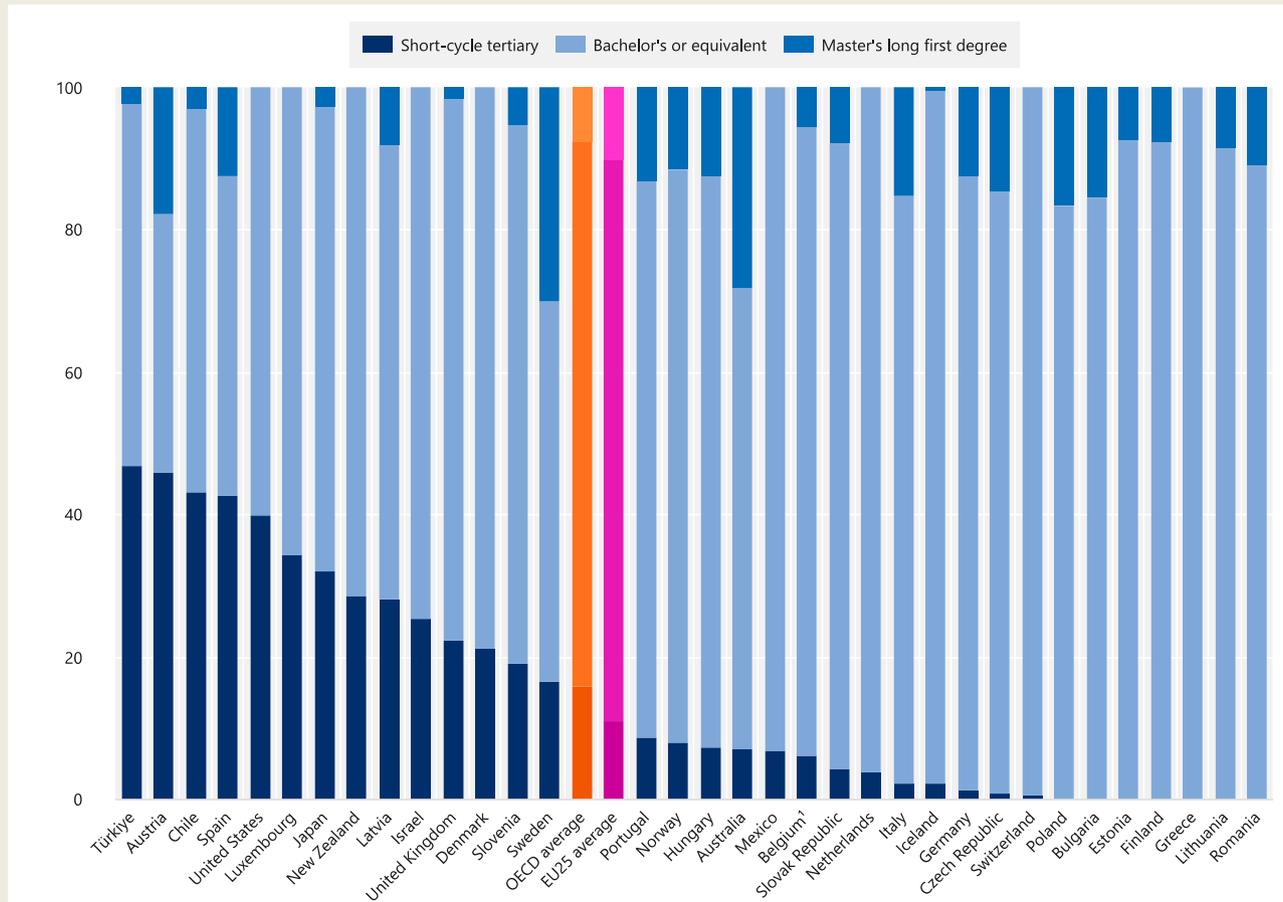
The incentives to earn a tertiary degree, including higher salaries and better employment prospects, remain strong across OECD countries (see Indicators A1, A3 and A4 for further reading on these themes). Tertiary education varies in its structure and scope across countries and its outcomes appear to be influenced by educational factors such as the flexibility of programmes, the supply of places available at each education level and within each field of study, as well as other factors during the academic year, that affect whether or not students complete their programme.

Access to tertiary education has expanded significantly in recent decades, with a variety of institutions offering more options and new delivery methods (OECD, 2016<sup>[1]</sup>). The student population is more international, more women than men are graduating from tertiary education, and field of study options have expanded. Understanding current graduation patterns and profiling tertiary graduates are both helpful to inform the design of inclusive education systems that prepare students for further study or employment without dead ends.

Policy makers are exploring ways to help ease the transition from tertiary education into the labour market (OECD, 2015<sup>[2]</sup>). To this end, short-cycle tertiary programmes, typically vocationally oriented, are central to preparing young people for work, developing adults' skills and responding to labour-market needs.

Figure B5.1. Distribution of first-time tertiary graduates, by level of education (2021)

In per cent



1. Short-cycle tertiary data refer to the Flemish Community of Belgium only.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the share of first-time tertiary graduates in short-cycle tertiary education.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2023), Table B5.1. For more information see Source section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#), (OECD, 2023<sup>[3]</sup>).

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### Other findings

- In 2021, the average age of those graduating for the first-time from tertiary education in OECD countries was 26. The average age of first-time short-cycle tertiary graduates varies more across countries compared to other tertiary degrees. In some countries, these programmes serve as a continuation of upper secondary VET education for younger students, while in others they are more likely to form a part of lifelong learning for older students.
- The completion rates of short-cycle tertiary students with vocational upper secondary backgrounds are similar to or higher than those of their peers with a general upper secondary background. At bachelor's level, however, students with a vocational background have similar or lower completion rates compared to those with a general programme background in most countries.
- Women's participation in higher education has been increasing in recent years and they now form a clear majority of first-time graduates (58%) at all levels of tertiary education. Despite this rising participation, gender disparities persist in fields of study. On average, 33% of tertiary STEM graduates are female, ranging from 20% or less in Chile and Japan to 40% or more in Greece, Iceland, New Zealand and Poland.

## Analysis

### **Profile of first-time tertiary graduates**

#### *Level of education*

Students who are interested in pursuing tertiary education have access to a variety of pathways in different countries. The vast majority of OECD countries promote academic, professional or vocational programmes at the bachelor's level to develop necessary competencies for students attending tertiary education. On average, 77% of first-time tertiary graduates in OECD countries obtain a bachelor's degree (Figure B5.1). In 13 countries, the share is 85% or above and it is 100% in Greece where a bachelor's degree is the only pathway available to those entering tertiary education for the first-time (Table B5.1).

Some OECD countries also encourage participation in short-cycle tertiary programmes to enhance employability and facilitate transitions into the workforce. In 2018, the Ministers of European Higher Education Area (EHEA) recognised the importance of short-cycle tertiary programmes within the framework of the Bologna Process. They acknowledged the programmes as instrumental in equipping students with the skills needed for employment and further academic study. They were also found to be essential for promoting social cohesion by providing access to higher education for individuals who may not have otherwise considered it. Therefore, they were incorporated as a stand-alone qualification within the EHEA's qualification framework (EHEA, 2018<sup>[4]</sup>). On average across OECD countries, 16% of first-time tertiary graduates attain a short-cycle tertiary degree, though the importance of this level varies widely across countries. In Austria and the Republic of Türkiye, for instance, almost half of first-time tertiary graduates (46% and 47%, respectively) obtain a short-cycle tertiary diploma compared to less than 2% in the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland and Switzerland (Table B5.1).

Given that short-cycle tertiary programmes generally have an occupational or professional focus, they are more likely to be pursued by vocational upper secondary graduates. In Austria, Luxembourg, Norway and Spain, short-cycle tertiary is the only pathway into tertiary education available for VET upper secondary graduates, and completion of short-cycle tertiary yields access to bachelor's level programmes (Table B1.4. in Indicator B1). However, in other OECD countries, short-cycle tertiary is not the only route into tertiary education for VET upper secondary graduates. Some countries (e.g. Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland) have programmes at bachelor's and master's level, which act as continuation of VET.

Master's long first degrees are another pathway pursued by tertiary students in some countries, although the average share of first-time tertiary graduates at this level is relatively small (8%) across OECD countries compared to the other two pathways. In certain countries, however, a notable number of first-time graduates complete these programmes, which typically provide specialised professional subjects such as medicine. In Australia and Sweden, for example, at least one-quarter of first-time tertiary students obtain a master's long first degree (Table B5.1).

#### *Age distribution of first-time tertiary graduates*

Many OECD countries are aiming to reduce the age at which students complete tertiary education, so that they can enter the workforce and contribute to their economies as early as possible. In 2021, the average age of first-time tertiary graduates was 26 across OECD countries. There is, however, notable variation between countries, ranging from 22 in Japan to 29 in Latvia (Table B5.1). The age at which students graduate from tertiary education is primarily determined by their age at entrance and the theoretical length of the programmes in which they enrol. The structure of countries' upper secondary education systems, selection processes into tertiary education, gap years, conscription or entrance into the labour market may all delay entry into tertiary education, resulting in older graduation ages. In Iceland, Sweden and Switzerland, for instance, where students have a variety of pathways before entering tertiary education and have the flexibility to switch between programmes or transfer to adult learning, they enter tertiary education and graduate later than in other countries. Conscription in Israel, and

restricted entry to tertiary education due to fixed number of admissible entrants (*numerus clausus* policies) in Finland combined with students commonly taking a voluntary gap year, contribute to an average first-time graduation age of 28 in these two countries.

The average age of graduates also varies by level of education across OECD countries. The average age of first-time short-cycle tertiary graduates is 27, the same as that of first-time master's degree graduates, while for first-time bachelor's graduates the average is 25. There is greater variation in the age distribution of short-cycle tertiary graduates across countries, reflecting differences in countries' education systems. In Austria, for instance, where short-cycle tertiary programmes are designed as a continuation of upper secondary VET programmes for younger learners, the average age at graduation is 20. In other countries, older first-time graduates can be explained by having short-cycle tertiary programmes specifically designed for older students, as well as students taking longer to graduate (Table B5.1).

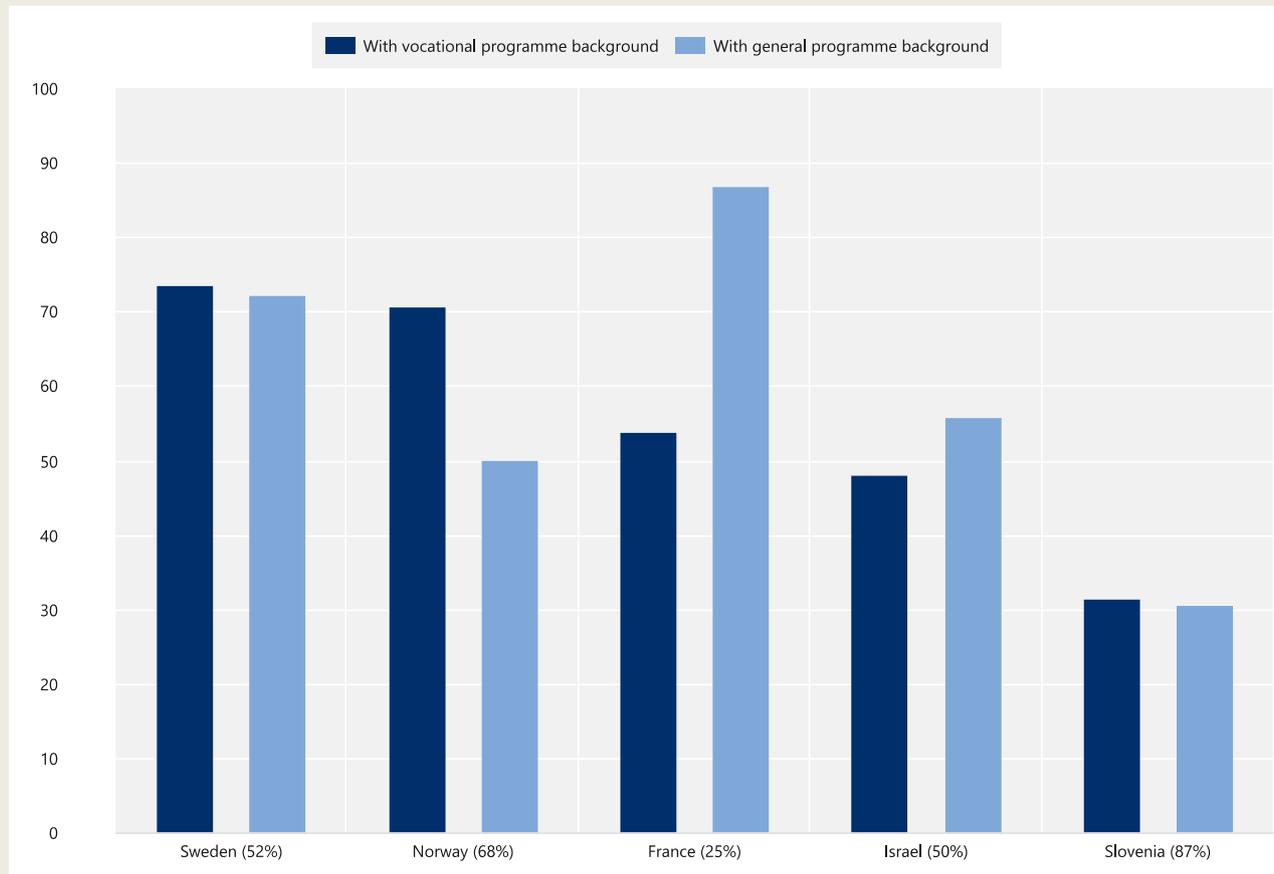
### Box B5.1. How successful are VET students in higher education?

Higher education systems have the challenge of serving all students from diverse academic backgrounds, particularly VET students who are less likely to pursue further studies after upper secondary education. No one should be excluded from the opportunity to pursue advanced studies or be denied a high-quality education because of a decision made at a certain point in the system. Consequently, VET students who either pursue higher education or enter the workforce should be no more likely to face educational dead ends than their counterparts with general upper secondary backgrounds.

The completion rates of short-cycle tertiary students with vocational upper secondary backgrounds are similar to or higher than those of their peers with a general background in all countries with available data, except in France and Israel, where they are significantly lower (Figure B5.2). This might reflect the different function of short-cycle tertiary programmes in different countries. In Norway, Slovenia and Sweden, short-cycle tertiary programmes are a component of higher vocational education, enhancing vocational skills acquired at upper secondary level. Accordingly, completion rates are higher (or similar) among VET graduates to those of general education, although in Slovenia they are low for both backgrounds. In Israel, they primarily focus on practical engineering and technician training for both general and vocational upper secondary graduates, and VET graduates have slightly lower completion rates. On the other hand, in France, short-cycle tertiary programmes are not connected to upper secondary VET in the same way and the majority of students have a general education background.

**Figure B5.2. Completion rates of full-time short-cycle tertiary students, by students' upper secondary orientation (2020)**

In per cent, completion rates are for the end of the theoretical programme duration plus three years



**Note:** The share of short-cycle tertiary students in the entrance cohort who had graduated from a vocational upper secondary programme is shown in parentheses next to each country name. The reference year (2020) corresponds to a period three years after the theoretical end of the programme (2017). The reference year for students' entry into the programme may differ depending on its duration.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the completion rate of short-cycle tertiary students with a vocational upper secondary programme background.

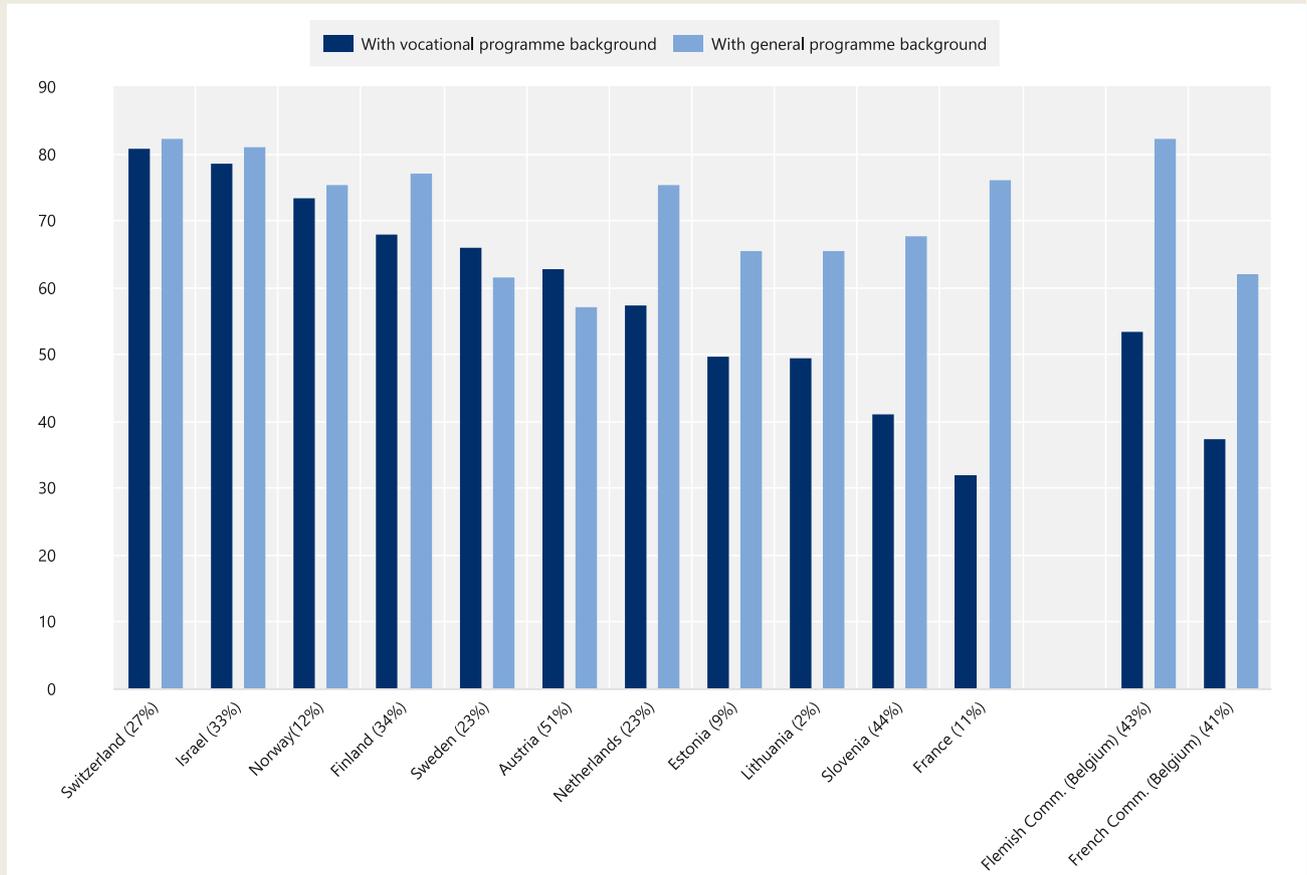
**Source:** OECD - ad-hoc survey on tertiary completion rates (2022). For more information see *Source* section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#), (OECD, 2023<sup>[3]</sup>).

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in most countries with available data, in contrast, completion rates of bachelor's degree students with a VET background are similar to or lower than those with a general programme background (Figure B5.3). VET graduates appear to perform well in bachelor's level programmes in a few countries, however. In Austria and Sweden, for instance, students with a vocational background have higher completion rates than those with a general education background. In Israel, Norway and Switzerland, completion rates among VET graduates are above 70% – higher than for general upper secondary graduates in six countries or other participants. Ensuring completion among VET graduates is often a challenge – in five countries or sub-national entities (e.g. Estonia, France, the French Community of Belgium, Lithuania and Slovenia VET graduates are more likely to drop out or still be in education than they are to complete it).

**Figure B5.3. Completion rates of full-time bachelor's students, by students' upper secondary orientation (2020)**

In per cent, completion rates are for the end of the theoretical programme duration plus three years



**Note:** The share of bachelor's degree students in the entrance cohort who had graduated from a vocational upper secondary programme is shown in parentheses next to each country name. The reference year (2020) corresponds to a period three years after the theoretical end of the programme (2017). The reference year for students' entry into the programme may differ depending on its duration.

Countries and other participants are ranked in descending order of the completion rate of bachelor's students with a vocational upper secondary programme background.

**Source:** OECD - ad-hoc survey on tertiary completion rates (2022). For more information see Source section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#), (OECD, 2023<sub>[3]</sub>).

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### Gender and fields of study

Encouraging students to pursue studies in a field that aligns with their interests and skills has the potential to yield positive outcomes in both the labour market and society as a whole. Gender stereotyping is likely to dissuade women and men from pursuing certain careers, particularly in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) for women and health and welfare fields for men (Makarova, Aeschlimann and Herzog, 2019<sub>[5]</sub>).

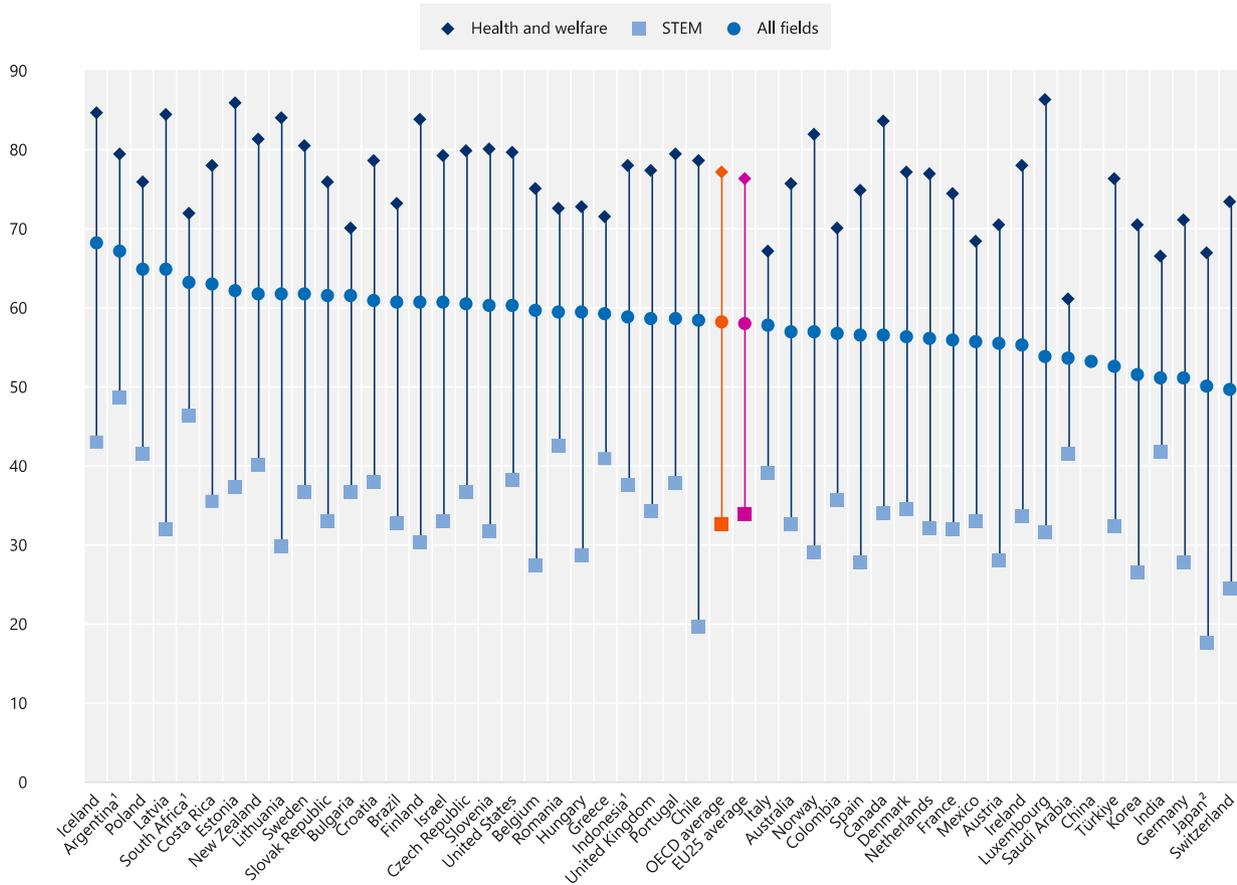
In recent years, there has been a notable increase in the number of women graduating from tertiary education, changing the gender disparity in tertiary participation, with more women than men now graduating from this level. Female tertiary graduates now make up the majority of first-time tertiary graduates, accounting for 58% of the

total on average across OECD countries. Despite this reversal of traditional gender patterns, old gender stereotypes in the choice of field of study still persist. The STEM fields have been traditionally dominated by male students and in 2021, still only 33% of tertiary STEM graduates across OECD countries were female, ranging from 20% or less in Chile and Japan to 40% or more in Greece, Iceland, New Zealand and Poland (Table B5.2). The share is above 40% in many partner countries (Argentina, India, Romania, Saudi Arabia and South Africa). According to research, the under-representation of women in OECD countries may be attributable to them experiencing isolation, micro-aggressions and a male-dominated culture when studying in these fields (Ong, Smith and Ko, 2018<sup>[6]</sup>; Blackburn, 2017<sup>[7]</sup>). Female students in STEM fields might feel less of a sense of belonging than their male counterparts, which has been associated with a lower likelihood of choosing or persisting in these programmes (Lewis et al., 2017<sup>[8]</sup>). The disparity between the share of female tertiary graduates in STEM and health and welfare fields is illustrated in Figure B5.4. Men have also been under-represented in some fields, such as health and welfare. In 2021, 23% of tertiary graduates in health and welfare were male on average across OECD countries, and they made up less than 20% in nearly one-third of countries.

The average shares of female tertiary graduates in some fields within STEM are even lower: 23% in information and communication technologies (ICT), and 28% in engineering, for example. However, since 2015, some countries (e.g. Australia, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg and Saudi Arabia) have reported promising increases in the share of female tertiary ICT graduates, by more than 8 percentage points. Over the same period, the presence of female tertiary graduates in STEM fields has also increased by around 5 percentage points or more in a smaller number of countries, including Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, New Zealand and South Africa (Table B5.2). In the countries where the representation of female tertiary graduates in STEM has increased, their male peers in health and welfare have shown a similar patterns, although with a smaller percentage point change. However, Canada and Türkiye have seen the gender gap in these disciplines widen, with the proportion of female tertiary graduates in health and welfare increasing notably since 2015, while falling in ICT (Table B5.2).

Figure B5.4. Share of female tertiary graduates in health and welfare, STEM, and all fields (2021)

In per cent



**Note:** STEM refers to the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

1. Year of reference differs from 2021. Refer to the source table for more details.

2. All fields of study include the field of information and communication technologies.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the share of female tertiary graduates in all fields.

**Source:** OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2023), Table B5.2. For more information see *Source* section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#). (OECD, 2023<sup>[3]</sup>).

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### Patterns in the fields of study, by level of education

Arts and humanities; business, administration and law; health and welfare; services; and STEM are the most popular fields of study among tertiary education graduates in OECD countries. Of these five broad fields of study, the proportions studying STEM, services and business, administration and law vary the most across different levels of education (Figure B5.5).

On average, more than one-third of OECD graduates of upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education from vocational programmes studied a STEM field. This may partly be driven by the fact that upper secondary VET plays a major role in preparing students for entry-level jobs in manufacturing and construction, and that graduates from these programmes fall into the STEM category. In nearly all OECD countries, STEM fields account for the largest share of VET graduates at this level. In some countries, the share is even more

concentrated. This is the case in Iceland, Israel and Korea where more than 50% of VET students graduate from STEM fields – possibly as a result of the focus on “traditional” VET occupations, as described above (Table B5.3).

At tertiary level (short-cycle tertiary or bachelor’s or above), less than 25% of those graduating in OECD countries studied a STEM field. At this level, the broad category of STEM translates into various specialised fields of study (e.g. engineering, biology or physics), compared to upper secondary and post-secondary where the STEM category would include, among others, electricians and different types of technicians. STEM is the most popular field in short-cycle tertiary education, closely followed by business, administration and law. Given the specialised nature of the short-cycle tertiary sector and its role in addressing specific labour-market demands, it might be prudent for education planners to prioritise a focused approach towards a particular field. This is the case in Israel, Mexico and Norway, where the majority of students at this level graduate from a STEM programme, as short-cycle tertiary programmes are part of the higher vocational sector and play a key role in upskilling upper secondary VET graduates.

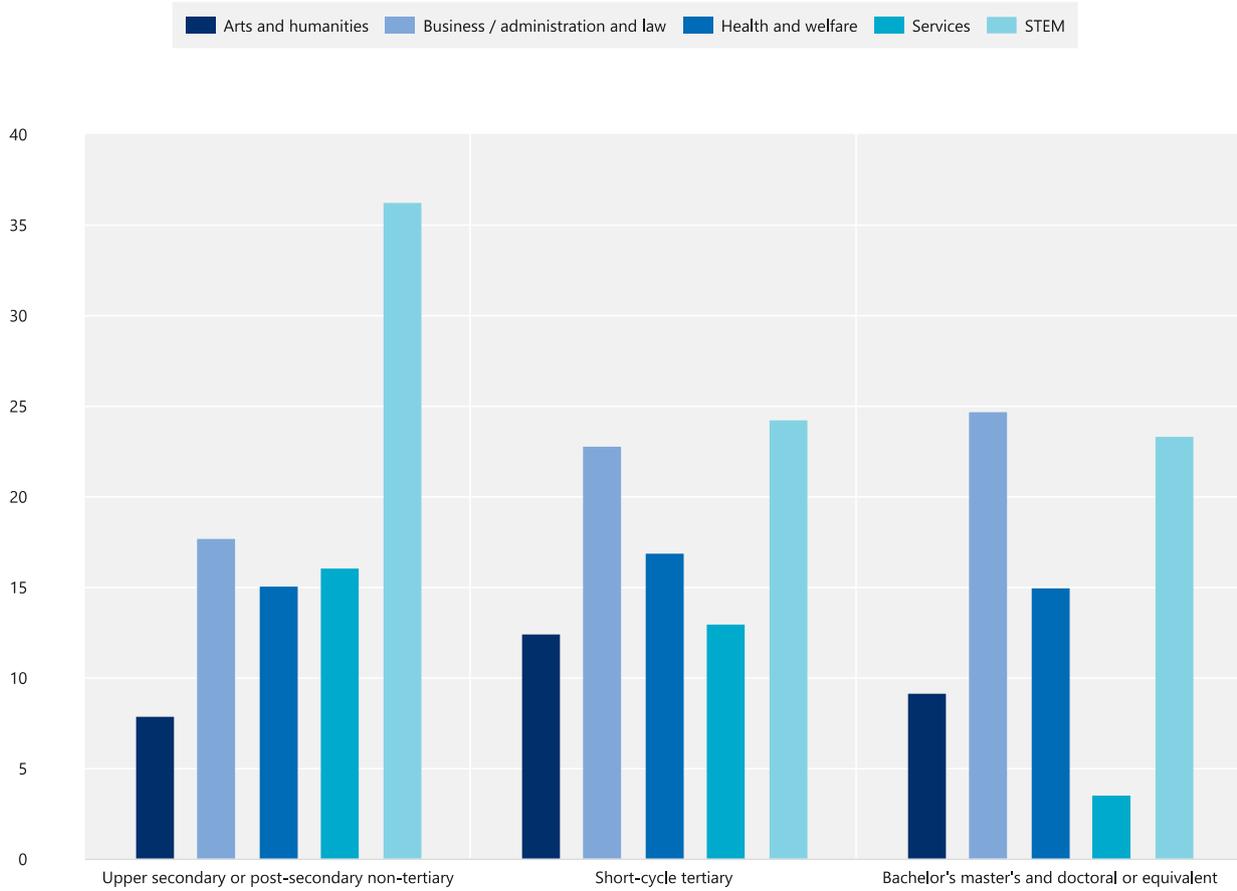
The broad field of services accounts for the smallest share of graduates at bachelor’s or higher levels (4%) compared to around 15% at upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary levels or short-cycle tertiary (Table B5.3). This partly reflects the kind of programmes and qualifications included in this category, such as domestic services (e.g. caretaking or cleaning), hair and beauty services, and hotel and catering, which are usually targeted by vocational programmes rather than tertiary ones. In Croatia, Estonia, Italy, Lithuania and Portugal, more than one-quarter of graduates at upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary levels studied services. Some programmes and qualifications within this field may also be targeted by tertiary level programmes (e.g. tourism or transport studies).

The broad field of business, administration and law is well represented across the different levels of education but more so at the tertiary level. This may be due to the negligible share of VET students in all OECD countries studying law-related fields, which are primarily aimed at those studying a bachelor’s degree or above. One-quarter of graduates with a bachelor’s degree or above in OECD countries completed a programme in business, administration and law. In some countries, such as Colombia and Luxembourg, this field has even greater prominence, accounting for more than 40% of tertiary graduates (Table B5.3).

On average across OECD countries, the distribution of graduates by fields of study and level of education has not changed substantially since 2015. The only notable change has been a 3 percentage point increase in the proportion of graduates from STEM fields at upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary and short-cycle tertiary programmes (Table B5.3).

Figure B5.5. Distribution of graduates, by level of education and selected fields of study (2021)

OECD average, in per cent



**Note:** Each selected field accounts for at least 10% of short-cycle tertiary graduates. STEM refers to the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Data (e.g. on the field of agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary) and more breakdowns available at <http://stats.oecd.org>, Education at a Glance Database.

**Source:** OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2023), Table B5.3. For more information see *Source* section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#), (OECD, 2023<sub>[3]</sub>).

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### Box B5.2. Why are there no data on programme orientation at tertiary level?

Many countries have adopted tertiary programmes with a focus on applied learning in specific fields to expand access to tertiary education particularly for graduates of upper secondary VET programmes and adult learners pursuing opportunities to reskill or upskill.

The ISCED 2011 framework has proposed classifying the orientation of these programmes as “professional” while categorising programmes that provide general knowledge, skills, competencies, as well as literacy and numeracy as “academic” (UIS, 2012<sup>[9]</sup>). However, there are no internationally agreed definitions of academic or professional orientations that would serve as the basis for the collection of comparative data. Programmes training students for the same occupation are reported as academic in some countries and as professional or “unspecified orientation” in others. Therefore, no data on programme orientation at tertiary level are provided in *Education at a Glance*.

The OECD initiated the Higher VET – Professional Tertiary Education Project with the aim of improving the quality of comparative data on professional tertiary education by promoting dialogue on an international definition and classification of tertiary programmes by orientation and exploring ways to enhance the coverage of professional programmes in existing and future data collection (OECD, 2022<sup>[10]</sup>). The project proposes classifying programme orientation into three categories:

**Type 1 – Profession oriented:** Programmes that provide applied education and training designed to equip students with knowledge and skills required to practice a particular profession.

**Type 2 – Sector oriented:** Programmes that provide applied education and training designed to equip students with knowledge and skills required to work within an occupational family or industrial sector.

**Type 3 – General:** Programmes that provide discipline-oriented education in the pure sciences, humanities and arts. While such programmes will also provide knowledge and skills of labour-market relevance, these are applicable in very diverse contexts and are not intended to prepare students for a particular profession, group of occupations or industrial sector.

**Source:** OECD (2022<sup>[10]</sup>), *Pathways to Professions: Understanding Higher Vocational and Professional Tertiary Education Systems*.

## Definitions

**First-time graduates** refer to students who graduated for the first-time at a given level of education during the reference period. Therefore, students who have graduated multiple times over the years are counted as a graduate each year, but as a first-time graduate only once per level of education.

**First-time tertiary graduates** refer to students who graduate for the first-time with a tertiary degree, regardless of the education programme in which they are enrolled. This definition is applied in Table B5.1.

The **theoretical duration** of programmes is the regulatory or common-practice time it takes a full-time student to complete a level of education.

## Methodology

The average age of students is calculated from 1 January for countries where the academic year starts in the second semester of the calendar year and 1 July for countries where the academic year starts in the first semester

of the calendar year. As a consequence, the average age of new entrants may be overestimated by up to 6 months while that of first-time graduates may be underestimated by the same.

For more information see the [OECD Handbook for Internationally Comparative Education Statistics](#) (OECD, 2018<sup>[11]</sup>) and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#) (OECD, 2023<sup>[3]</sup>).

Completion rate of students who graduate at the same ISCED level which they entered: number of graduates in a given calendar year and ISCED level divided by the number of entrants to that same ISCED level with theoretical duration plus three calendar years before.

## Source

Data refer to the 2020/21 academic year and are based on the UNESCO-UIS/OECD/Eurostat data collection on education statistics administered by the OECD in 2022. Data for some countries may have a different reference year. For more information see [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#) (OECD, 2023<sup>[3]</sup>).

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# Indicator B5 Tables

## Tables Indicator B5. Who is expected to graduate from tertiary education?

<b>Table B5.1</b>	Profile of first-time tertiary graduates by level of education (2021)
<b>Table B5.2</b>	Share of female graduates in tertiary education, by field of study (2015 and 2021)
<b>Table B5.3</b>	Distribution of graduates, by field of study and education level (2021)

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Cut-off date for the data: 17 June 2023. Any updates on data can be found on line at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-data-en>. More breakdowns can also be found at <http://stats.oecd.org/>, *Education at a Glance Database*.

Table B5.1. Profile of first-time tertiary graduates by level of education (2021)

	Share of first-time graduates			Share of female first-time tertiary graduates				Average age of first-time tertiary graduates				Share of international first-time graduates			
	Short-cycle tertiary	Bachelor's or equivalent	Master's or first degree	Total tertiary	Short-cycle tertiary	Bachelor's or equivalent	Master's or first degree	Total tertiary	Short-cycle tertiary	Bachelor's or equivalent	Master's or first degree	Total tertiary	Short-cycle tertiary	Bachelor's or equivalent	Master's or first degree
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
<b>OECD countries</b>															
Australia	7	65	28	57	52	59	53	26	25	26	27	45	43	29	82
Austria	46	36	18	56	52	61	58	24	20	25	31	20	0	29	52
Belgium <sup>1</sup>	6	88	5	60	46	61	58	24	27	23	29	12	3	8	89
Canada	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Chile	43	54	3	59	62	56	58	27	28	27	26	1	2	1	0
Colombia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Costa Rica	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Czech Republic	1	85	14	62	65	62	61	26	24	26	27	15	5	11	40
Denmark	21	79	a	56	45	59	a	26	26	26	a	15	12	6	a
Estonia	a	93	7	61	a	61	65	26	a	26	26	10	a	9	14
Finland	a	93	7	58	a	58	51	28	a	27	29	10	a	6	57
France	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Germany	1	86	12	51	49	49	67	26	30	26	26	4	0	5	4
Greece	a	100	a	58	a	58	a	25	a	25	a	2	a	2	a
Hungary	7	80	12	58	63	56	61	26	24	27	25	8	1	7	21
Iceland	2	97	0	64	40	64	75	27	33	26	27	3	2	3	0
Ireland	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Israel	25	75	a	59	49	62	a	28	26	28	a	3	2	3	a
Italy	2	83	15	57	27	57	65	26	24	25	28	2	0	2	1
Japan	32	65	3	52	61	47	49	22	m	23	25	7	12	2	61
Korea	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Latvia	28	64	8	66	71	63	68	29	32	27	28	6	0	6	27
Lithuania	a	92	8	60	a	60	71	24	a	24	24	4	a	3	13
Luxembourg	34	66	a	58	63	55	a	24	22	24	a	26	31	23	a
Mexico	7	93	a	55	45	56	a	25	22	25	a	m	m	m	m
Netherlands	4	96	a	56	56	56	a	23	26	23	a	13	0	14	a
New Zealand	29	71	a	60	58	60	a	26	29	25	a	20	19	20	a
Norway	8	80	11	56	21	60	58	26	28	25	26	2	1	2	2
Poland	0	83	17	61	95	60	66	26	35	25	30	m	0	m	m
Portugal	9	78	13	58	44	61	54	24	23	24	25	5	5	5	6
Slovak Republic	4	88	8	63	66	62	67	24	26	24	25	9	1	8	29
Slovenia	19	76	5	59	41	63	70	25	28	24	25	5	2	5	5
Spain	43	45	12	55	51	58	59	25	25	24	30	5	1	2	28
Sweden	17	54	30	61	52	67	54	28	30	28	28	11	0	3	33
Switzerland	1	99	0	51	60	51	0	28	36	28	a	7	0	7	0
Türkiye	47	51	2	53	55	51	52	27	27	26	24	1	0	2	5
United Kingdom	23	76	1	57	56	58	52	24	28	23	31	13	6	15	44
United States	40	60	a	60	63	57	a	m	m	m	a	5	2	7	a
<b>OECD average</b>	16	77	8	58	54	58	58	26	27	25	27	10	6	8	27
<b>Partner and/or accession countries</b>															
Argentina <sup>2</sup>	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Brazil	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Bulgaria	a	85	15	59	a	59	59	28	a	28	27	6	a	3	24
China	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Croatia	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
India	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Indonesia <sup>2</sup>	m	m	m	59	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Peru	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Romania	a	89	11	58	a	57	67	25	a	25	25	5	a	3	24
Saudi Arabia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
South Africa <sup>2</sup>	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
<b>EU25 average</b>	11	76	9	59	55	59	62	26	26	25	27	9	4	8	27
<b>G20 average</b>	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m

Note: See StatLink and Box B5.3 for the notes related to this Table.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2023). For more information see [Source section](#) and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#). (OECD, 2023<sub>[3]</sub>).

StatLink  <https://stat.link/e4cdf>

Table B5.2. Share of female graduates in tertiary education, by field of study (2015 and 2021)

	Education		Arts and humanities		Social sciences, journalism and information		Business, administration and law		Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics		Information and communication technologies		Engineering, manufacturing and construction		Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary		Health and welfare		Services		All fields	
	2021	2021	2021	2021	2015	2021	2015	2021	2015	2021	2015	2021	2015	2021	2015	2021	2015	2021	2015	2021	2015	2021
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)						
<b>OECD countries</b>	79	65	68	52	51	51	19	28	23	26	62	77	76	59	58	57						
Australia	79	65	68	52	51	51	19	28	23	26	62	77	76	59	58	57						
Austria	80	68	68	57	48	49	14	17	21	24	48	69	71	78	55	55						
Belgium	74	63	73	55	m	44	m	13	m	25	64	m	75	53	m	60						
Canada	78	62	70	54	53	57	30	25	19	23	60	77	84	53	58	56						
Chile	84	54	65	57	48	40	13	12	17	19	54	78	79	51	56	58						
Colombia	65	53	72	62	54	59	28	23	33	36	48	72	70	49	55	57						
Costa Rica	73	57	68	63	46	56	21	22	39	38	49	77	78	64	63	63						
Czech Republic	83	70	66	62	60	61	13	19	32	33	63	83	80	46	61	60						
Denmark	70	67	63	51	49	55	20	26	30	29	65	78	77	48	58	56						
Estonia	93	69	69	66	64	65	30	31	33	31	65	89	86	44	66	62						
Finland	84	74	75	60	57	59	19	25	22	25	61	85	84	58	60	61						
France	76	69	69	59	47	52	17	19	26	24	43	74	74	53	56	56						
Germany	81	71	69	54	47	50	18	22	20	21	41	71	71	51	50	51						
Greece	86	72	65	60	52	53	40	35	32	35	49	72	71	47	58	59						
Hungary	84	67	68	63	53	51	23	17	27	28	49	75	73	57	61	59						
Iceland	81	64	73	64	53	57	21	31	30	41	68	86	85	66	65	68						
Ireland	77	63	65	52	51	52	20	29	16	24	44	75	78	48	52	55						
Israel	84	63	66	59	m	53	m	36	m	27	50	m	79	a	m	61						
Italy	87	70	63	52	m	58	m	19	m	31	50	m	67	40	m	58						
Japan <sup>1</sup>	70	67	48	38	26	27	m	m	13	16	43	64	67	77	49	50						
Korea	78	65	61	51	50	49	24	27	19	22	45	73	70	52	51	51						
Latvia	91	77	76	66	60	63	21	23	27	28	61	87	84	47	65	65						
Lithuania	83	73	75	65	58	61	14	14	26	27	57	83	84	37	63	62						
Luxembourg	74	59	67	52	47	43	12	25	15	28	50	77	86	42	54	54						
Mexico	74	59	62	59	53	53	35	28	28	31	43	67	68	52	53	56						
Netherlands	75	58	69	49	44	46	13	19	22	26	55	76	77	52	56	56						
New Zealand	81	64	70	57	54	60	23	26	28	33	71	79	81	53	56	62						
Norway	73	59	61	54	55	49	16	22	22	25	65	83	82	40	59	57						
Poland	87	73	71	66	72	70	19	22	41	41	57	75	76	59	66	65						
Portugal	78	63	71	62	62	61	21	19	33	33	60	78	79	44	59	59						
Slovak Republic	81	69	72	64	64	67	12	15	28	26	62	79	76	41	63	61						
Slovenia	88	66	70	65	63	59	17	17	26	26	65	79	80	61	61	60						
Spain	75	58	66	56	54	49	14	13	25	26	49	73	75	46	55	57						
Sweden	80	61	67	63	53	54	28	33	30	34	70	81	80	56	62	62						
Switzerland	68	61	66	47	44	43	11	13	16	18	37	74	73	43	48	50						
Türkiye	65	60	53	48	58	56	33	26	28	29	42	66	76	41	49	53						
United Kingdom	77	63	68	55	53	47	19	23	23	27	73	76	77	70	57	59						
United States	80	62	67	51	52	58	23	26	20	24	62	82	79	50	58	60						
<b>OECD average</b>	79	65	67	57	53	54	21	23	25	28	55	77	77	52	58	58						
<b>Partner and/or accession countries</b>																						
Argentina <sup>1</sup>	83	73	60	60	m	58	m	31	m	42	43	m	79	56	m	67						
Brazil	78	56	71	57	60	52	15	15	34	37	53	77	73	55	61	61						
Bulgaria	85	68	68	67	68	70	39	37	29	28	44	68	70	42	60	61						
China	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	52	53						
Croatia	87	68	74	69	64	65	18	24	30	34	62	81	79	46	60	61						
India	62	60	56	50	50	54	45	48	31	26	29	61	66	76	50	51						
Indonesia <sup>1</sup>	70	59	51	58	72	74	35	35	22	25	48	78	78	a	57	59						
Peru	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m						
Romania	88	67	76	65	65	68	33	35	37	39	43	69	73	32	58	59						
Saudi Arabia	77	67	56	48	68	71	40	51	4	7	0	53	61	62	50	53						
South Africa <sup>1</sup>	74	62	70	61	54	60	39	41	31	34	58	75	72	66	60	63						
<b>EU25 average</b>	80	67	68	58	56	56	21	24	26	27	52	76	76	52	58	58						
<b>G20 average</b>	76	64	63	53	53	55	28	29	23	26	47	71	73	57	54	56						

Note: See StatLink and Box B5.3 for the notes related to this Table.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2023). For more information see [Source section and Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#), (OECD, 2023<sub>[3]</sub>).

StatLink  <https://stat.link/s1gj0u>

Table B5.3. Distribution of graduates, by field of study and education level (2021)

	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary (vocational programmes)					Short-cycle tertiary					Bachelor's, master's and doctoral or equivalent				
	Arts and humanities	Business, administration and law	Health and welfare	Services	STEM	Arts and humanities	Business, administration and law	Health and welfare	Services	STEM	Arts and humanities	Business, administration and law	Health and welfare	Services	STEM
OECD countries	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
Australia	2	22	22	14	27	9	48	14	3	15	9	31	21	1	23
Austria	2	25	10	16	34	4	21	4	22	38	9	25	12	1	28
Belgium <sup>1</sup>	m	m	m	m	m	0	12	50	2	15	10	23	25	1	19
Canada	m	m	m	m	m	8	30	16	11	26	8	23	14	3	27
Chile	1	28	7	4	49	2	24	26	9	21	4	27	22	4	15
Colombia	m	m	m	m	m	3	42	3	12	32	3	43	7	1	21
Costa Rica	0	46	0	11	38	2	42	3	5	17	3	37	10	1	16
Czech Republic	m	m	m	m	m	100	0	0	0	0	8	19	13	7	26
Denmark	2	23	21	14	35	13	44	3	18	21	10	23	23	1	24
Estonia	5	19	2	26	43	a	a	a	a	a	12	24	13	5	28
Finland	4	23	20	19	29	a	a	a	a	a	10	20	21	5	28
France	2	18	20	20	36	2	48	10	6	29	10	32	14	3	24
Germany	2	27	25	10	33	4	0	8	47	28	10	26	8	3	35
Greece	2	8	28	17	41	a	a	a	a	a	11	20	11	4	27
Hungary	6	13	12	25	40	3	62	0	16	13	9	23	8	6	23
Iceland	11	3	6	18	58	3	0	0	59	4	9	21	15	2	17
Ireland	11	13	36	8	14	6	26	16	18	20	11	28	17	3	26
Israel	16	20	3	5	52	3	3	2	0	65	7	23	11	0	20
Italy	1	21	6	26	45	11	17	0	18	49	17	18	12	3	24
Japan <sup>2</sup>	m	m	m	m	m	11	14	23	22	16	18	24	12	3	23
Korea	12	25	3	7	51	13	10	23	18	29	16	16	14	7	31
Latvia	14	12	7	24	38	1	27	33	15	13	9	28	15	7	21
Lithuania	4	9	12	27	46	a	a	a	a	a	9	26	19	2	26
Luxembourg	3	28	10	7	29	7	38	34	0	20	8	49	1	1	20
Mexico	m	m	m	m	m	2	30	6	10	50	4	24	13	2	23
Netherlands	6	17	26	23	21	3	42	18	13	12	8	27	16	5	19
New Zealand	15	16	16	12	27	20	24	11	14	18	9	21	18	1	25
Norway	2	10	29	17	37	16	0	2	13	65	8	18	21	5	20
Poland	4	13	12	24	39	0	0	100	0	0	8	27	16	8	20
Portugal	13	14	13	29	30	10	23	12	13	35	10	22	17	6	27
Slovak Republic	7	14	10	23	38	53	8	17	7	10	7	20	17	7	22
Slovenia	5	13	12	14	44	8	16	3	29	41	8	20	14	5	26
Spain	27	15	20	14	23	7	20	21	15	27	10	19	17	5	19
Sweden	1	11	22	16	39	11	33	4	7	40	6	14	23	2	26
Switzerland	3	31	18	9	34	26	0	46	0	7	7	28	17	5	26
Türkiye	34	10	12	7	36	11	31	26	14	12	14	25	10	5	19
United Kingdom	20	10	16	13	27	9	32	23	1	20	15	24	14	0	23
United States <sup>3</sup>	14	11	29	17	25	42	11	19	5	15	9	21	20	3	22
OECD average	8	18	15	16	36	12	24	17	13	24	9	25	15	4	23
<b>Partner and/or accession countries</b>															
Argentina <sup>4</sup>	m	m	m	m	m	9	25	21	5	15	11	21	14	2	13
Brazil	2	30	21	5	32	56	18	15	10	1	3	32	18	3	16
Bulgaria	7	9	1	23	48	a	a	a	a	a	7	27	11	8	20
China	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Croatia	4	19	8	26	40	0	0	0	0	100	8	22	13	10	28
India	m	m	m	m	m	a	a	a	a	a	5	18	5	0	34
Indonesia <sup>4</sup>	m	m	m	m	m	3	12	41	0	31	6	20	10	0	17
Peru	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Romania	4	2	15	24	36	a	a	a	a	a	9	27	11	5	29
Saudi Arabia	m	m	m	m	m	5	41	0	6	47	21	38	8	1	18
South Africa <sup>4</sup>	m	m	m	m	m	6	44	2	2	11	5	30	7	0	18
EU25 average	6	17	16	19	35	13	25	18	13	24	10	25	14	4	25
G20 average	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	11	25	13	2	23

Note: See StatLink and Box B5.3 for the notes related to this Table.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2023). For more information see Source section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#). (OECD, 2023<sup>[3]</sup>).

StatLink  <https://stat.link/mcq5jg>

### Box B5.3. Notes for Indicator B5 tables

**Table B5.1. Profile of first-time tertiary graduates by level of education (2021)**

1. Short-cycle tertiary data refer to the Flemish Community of Belgium only.
2. Year of reference differs from 2021: 2020 for Argentina and South Africa; 2018 for Indonesia.

**Table B5.2. Share of female graduates in tertiary education, by field of study (2015 and 2021)**

1. All fields of study include the field of information and communication technologies.
2. Year of reference differs from 2021: 2020 for Argentina and South Africa; 2018 for Indonesia.

**Table B5.3. Distribution of graduates, by field of study and education level (2021)**

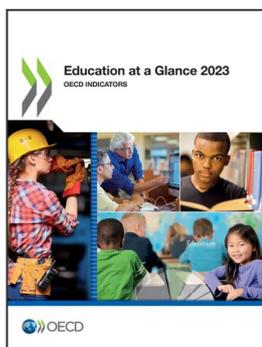
STEM refers to the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Columns 1-5 only refer to field of study for vocational programme graduates.

1. Short-cycle tertiary data refer to the Flemish Community of Belgium only.
2. All fields of study include the field of information and communication technologies.
3. Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary refers to post-secondary non-tertiary only.
4. Year of reference differs from 2021: 2020 for Argentina and South Africa; 2018 for Indonesia.

For more information see *Definitions, Methodology and Source* sections and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#) (OECD, 2023<sup>[3]</sup>).

Data and more breakdowns are available in the Education at a Glance Database (<http://stats.oecd.org/>).

Please refer to the Reader's Guide for information concerning symbols for missing data and abbreviations.



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