COUNTRY NOTE

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.

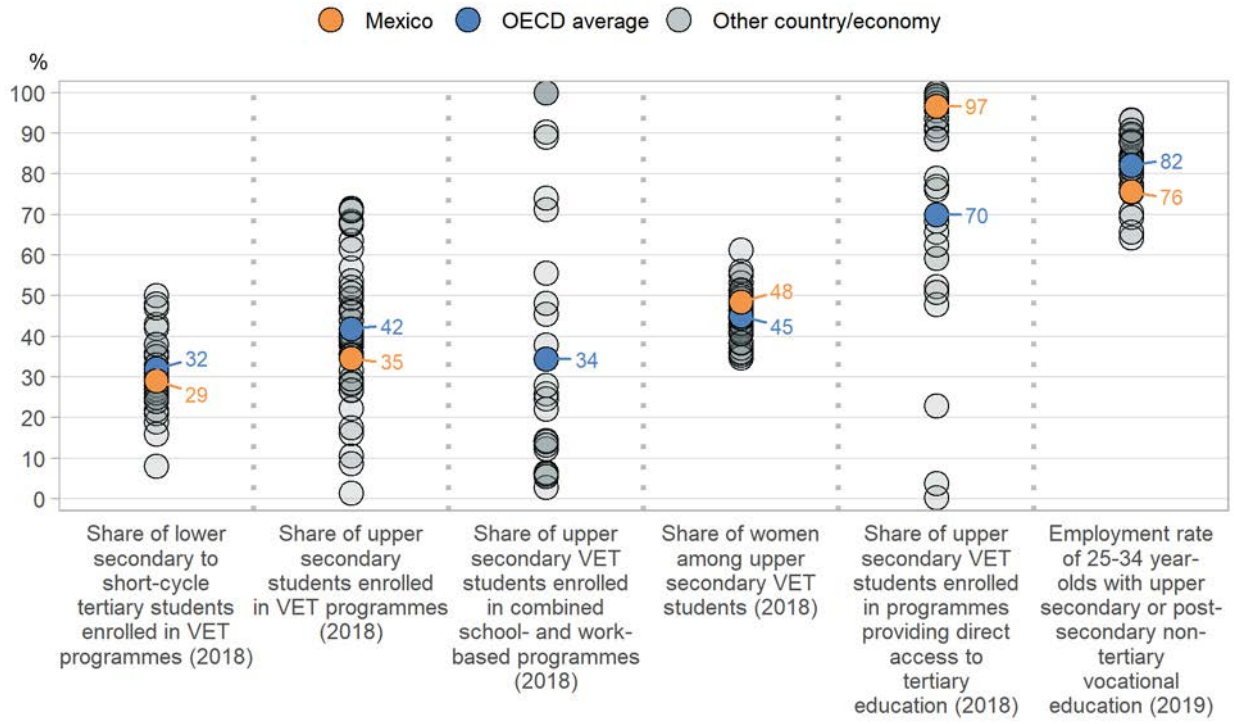
Mexico

- Vocational education and training (VET) at upper secondary level is less prevalent in Mexico than in other OECD countries. **On average, 35% of upper secondary students are enrolled VET programmes in Mexico, well below the OECD average of 42%**.
- Upper secondary vocational students benefit from high levels of access to post-secondary access in Mexico. In Mexico, **97% of upper secondary vocational students are enrolled in programmes that offer direct access to tertiary education**, higher than the OECD average of 70%.
- Tertiary education attainment in Mexico is still low. **Only 24% of 25-34 year-olds had a tertiary degree in Mexico in 2019 compared to 45% on average across OECD countries**.
- Enrolment in private institutions is usually less common for 3-5 year-olds in Mexico than the OECD average. **In Mexico, 18% of children attending pre-primary education are enrolled in private institutions, compared to about one in three children on average across OECD countries.**
- In 2017, **Mexico spent less per full-time student than most other OECD countries**, investing a total of USD 3 320 per student on primary to tertiary educational institutions compared to USD 11 231 on average across OECD countries.
- Maintaining a safe distance in classrooms amid the COVID-19 pandemic will be challenging in Mexico, **with 27 students per class at lower secondary level compared to 23 students on average across OECD countries**.

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, 35% of all upper secondary students opt for VET programmes in Mexico, a lower proportion than the OECD average of 42% (Figure 1).
- 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 Mexico 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 not found in Mexico. The average age of enrolment in upper secondary education is lower for students in vocational programmes (16 years) than for students in general programmes (17 years). The share of upper secondary vocational students tends to increase with age. This is not the case in Mexico, where the share of upper secondary students enrolled in VET is 37% among 15-19 year-olds (OECD average: 37%), and 27% among 20-24 year-olds (OECD average: 62%).
- 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 Mexico, 97% 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).

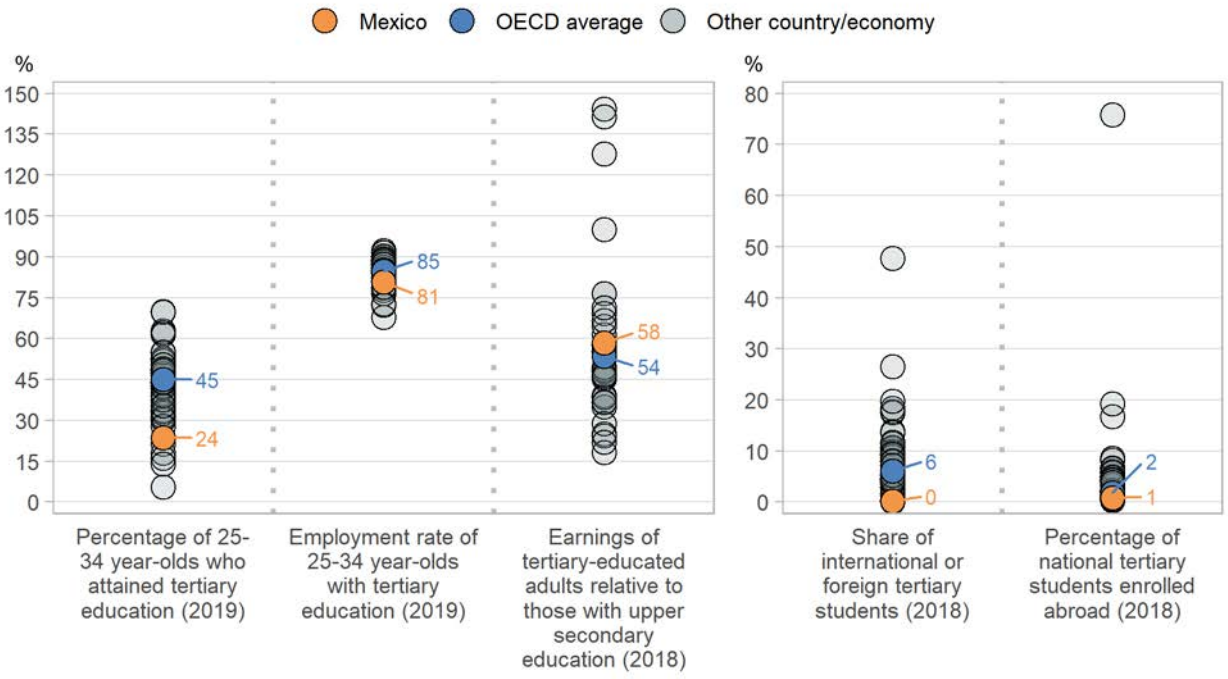
- In 2019, 2% of 25-34 year-olds in Mexico held an upper secondary vocational qualification as their highest educational level while 26% held a general one. The employment rate of younger adults with a vocational upper secondary education tend to be higher than the employment rate of those with general qualifications at this level (by 9 percentage points on average across OECD countries). Mexico follows this pattern, as 76% of 25-34 year-olds with an upper secondary vocational qualification are employed compared with 71% of those with a general qualification (Figure 1).
- On average across OECD countries, adults with an upper secondary vocational education have similar earnings as their peers with a general education at this level. The difference is less than 5 percentage points in about one quarter of the countries with data, and it is of 2 percentage points in Mexico.
- 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 Mexico, among those with upper secondary education as their highest attainment, 37% of 55-64 year-olds (older adults), compared with 6% 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. However, Mexico is the only country where teachers' teaching time in vocational programmes is about 20% lower than in general programmes.

The rising demand for tertiary education

- 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 Mexico, the share increased by 6 percentage points during this period, lower than the average increase across OECD countries (9 percentage points). In 2019, 24% of 25-34 year-olds had a tertiary degree in Mexico 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 Mexico, 24% of 25-34 year-old women had a tertiary qualification compared to 23% of their male peers, while on average across OECD countries the shares are 51% of younger women and 39% of younger men.
- In Mexico, the average age of first-time entrants to tertiary education in 2018 was 21 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 Mexico, 45% 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, 4% of adults are expected to enter short-cycle tertiary education before the age of 25 in Mexico, compared to 10% on average across OECD countries. In Mexico, women make up 40% 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 education as their highest attainment and 85% for those with tertiary education. In Mexico, the shares are 67% for below upper secondary, 72% for upper secondary and 81% for tertiary attainment. Having a tertiary degree also carries a considerable earnings advantage in most OECD and partner countries. In Mexico, in 2018, 25-64 year-olds with a tertiary degree with income from full-time, full-year employment earned 58% 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 Mexico, the share of foreign or international students remained stable at 0% between 2014 and 2018. Meanwhile 1% of Mexican 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 Mexico to study, the most popular destination country is the United States.

Figure 2. Snapshot of tertiary education

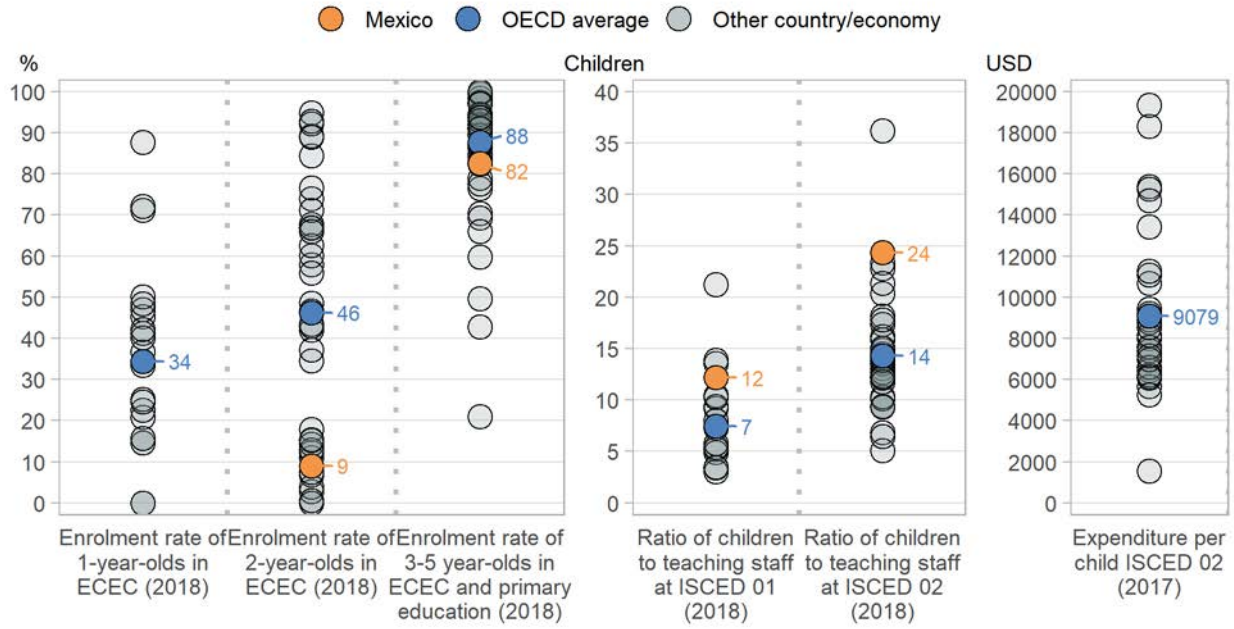


Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. The years shown in parentheses is the most common year of reference for OECD and partner countries. Refer to the source table for more details.
Source: OECD (2020), indicator A1, A3, A4 and B6. See Education at a Glance Database http://stats.oecd.org/for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en).

Starting strong

- 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 3 in Mexico, 82% of 3-5 year-olds in 2018 are enrolled in ECEC programmes and primary education in Mexico, 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. In Mexico, 68% of children enrolled in ISCED 01 programmes attend private ECEC 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 Mexico, 15% of children attending pre-primary education are enrolled in private institutions, compared to one in three children on average across OECD countries.
- 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 Mexico, there are 12 children for every teacher working in early childhood educational development services (ISCED 01) compared to 7 on average across OECD countries. In Mexico, the ratio of children for every full-time equivalent (FTE) teacher working in pre-primary education (ISCED 02) is 24 compared to 14 on average across OECD countries (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Snapshot of early childhood education and care

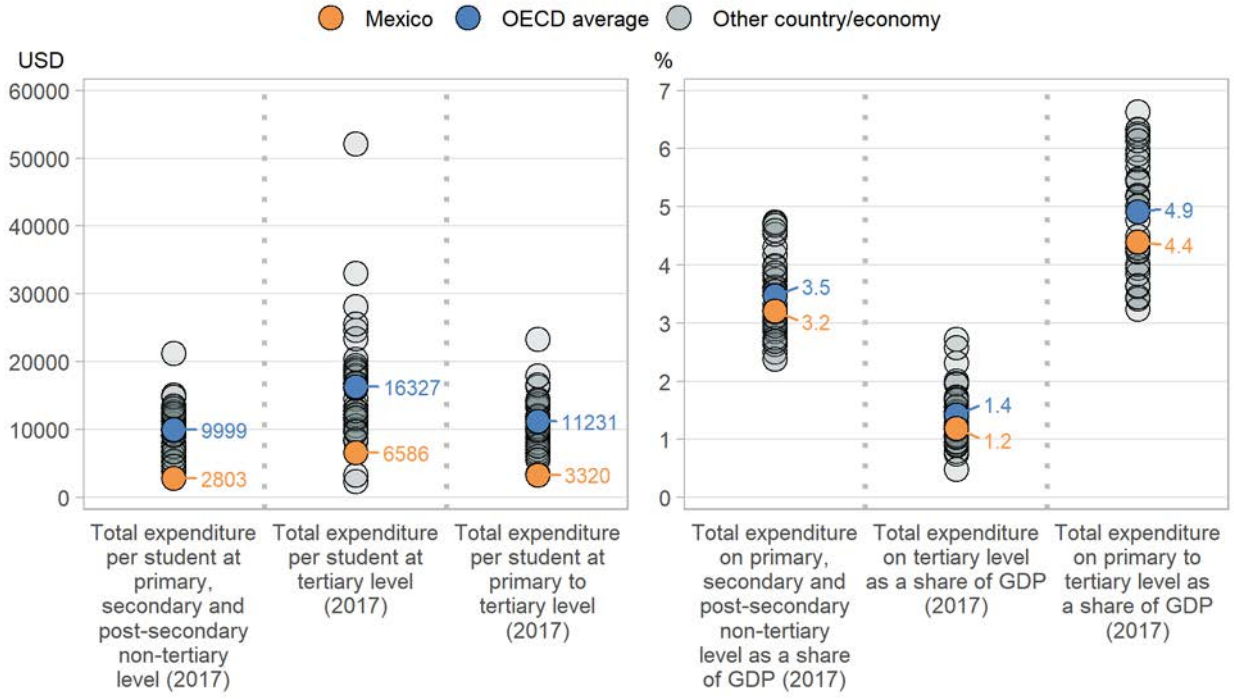


Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. Annual expenditure per child is shown in equivalent USD converted using PPPs. The years shown in parentheses is the most common year of reference for OECD and partner countries. Refer to the source table for more details.
Source: OECD (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, Mexico spent less on primary to tertiary educational institutions per full-time student than the OECD average, investing a total of USD 3 320 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, Mexico spent USD 2 803 per student at non-tertiary level (primary and secondary education), USD 7 196 lower than the OECD average of USD 9 999. At tertiary level, Mexico invested USD 6 586 per student, USD 9 741 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 Mexico, where total expenditure on public institutions from primary to tertiary level amounts to USD 3 350 per student, compared to USD 3 142 on private ones.
- In most OECD countries, expenditure per upper secondary student varies according to programme orientation. Spending per student on upper secondary vocational programmes tends to be higher than for upper secondary general ones due to the higher cost of equipment, lower student-to-teacher ratios, and work-based requirements of such programmes. On average across OECD countries, expenditure per student in upper secondary vocational programmes was USD 1 470 higher than in general programmes in 2017. Mexico follows the same pattern: spending per student amounted to USD 3 980 in upper secondary vocational programmes, USD 865 higher than spending per student on general ones at the same level.
- The share of national wealth devoted to educational institutions is lower in Mexico than on average among OECD countries. In 2017, Mexico spent 4.4% of gross domestic product (GDP) on primary to tertiary educational institutions, which is 0.5 percentage points lower than the OECD average. Across levels of education, Mexico devoted a below average share of GDP than the OECD average at non-tertiary levels and a below average 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 Mexico, expenditure on educational institutions fell at an average rate of 0.6% a year, while the number of students grew on average by 1.5% per year. This resulted in an average annual growth rate of -2% in expenditure per student over this period.

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

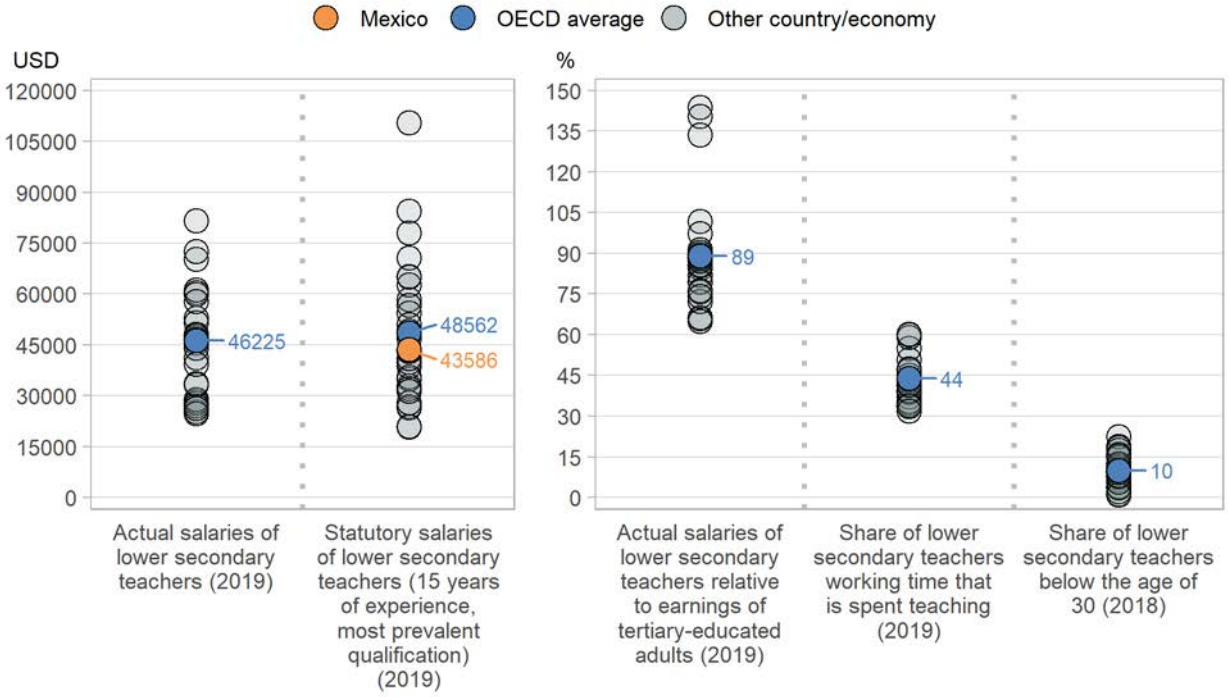


Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. Expenditure in national currencies is converted into equivalent USD by dividing the national currency figure by the purchasing power parity (PPP) index for GDP. The years shown in parentheses is the most common year of reference for OECD 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 Mexico, maximum salaries are 38% to 196% higher than minimum salaries at each level of education.
- 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 Mexico, teachers are required to teach 519 hours per year at pre-primary level, 780 hours per year at primary level, 1 014 hours at lower secondary level (general programmes) and 853 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).

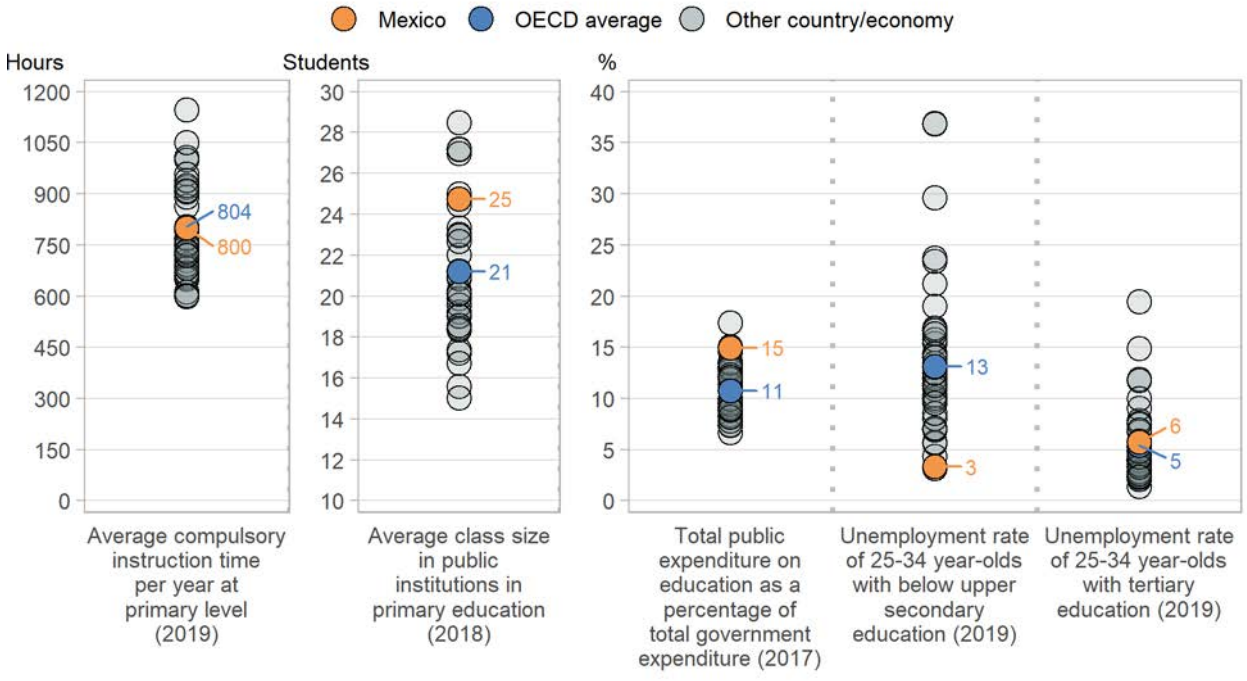
The impact of COVID-19 on education

- 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 Mexico, the closures were nationwide from 23 March 2020. By the end of June, Mexico had experienced 14 weeks of effective school closures in some form, a similar length as the average across OECD countries (UNESCO, 2020).
- Excluding the non-compulsory part of the curriculum, students in public institutions in Mexico attended classes for 800 hours per year on average at primary level and 1 167 hours at lower secondary level in 2019. Each week of school closure therefore represents about 20 hours of compulsory instruction time at the primary level and 29 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 Mexico, the average class size at primary level is 25 students in public institutions, which is larger than the OECD average of 21. In public lower secondary institutions, there are 27 students per class in Mexico, 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 Mexico was 15%, higher than the OECD average of 11% (Figure 6).
- 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. Mexico, with a lower share of international students than in total across the OECD, may be less strongly affected than other countries.
- 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, 3% of young adults with below upper secondary education in Mexico were unemployed compared to 6% 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 1.8 percentage points between 2008 and 2009 in Mexico compared to 1.4 percentage points among those with tertiary education.

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).

References

NICHD (2002), "Child Care Structure>Process>Outcome: Direct and indirect effects of caregiving quality on young children's development", *Psychological Science*, Vol. 13, pp. 199-206.

OECD (2020), *Education at a Glance 2020: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

OECD/Eurostat/UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2015), *ISCED 2011 Operational Manual: Guidelines for Classifying National Education Programmes and Related Qualifications*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264228368-en.

Schleicher, A. and F. Remiers (2020), *Schooling disrupted schooling rethought: How the Covid-19 pandemic is changing education*, https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=133_133390-1rtuknc0hi&title=Schooling-disrupted-schooling-rethought-How-the-Covid-19-pandemic-is-changing-education (accessed on 3 June 2020).

UNESCO (2020), *School closures caused by Coronavirus (Covid-19)*, https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse (accessed on 04 August 2020).

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

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/

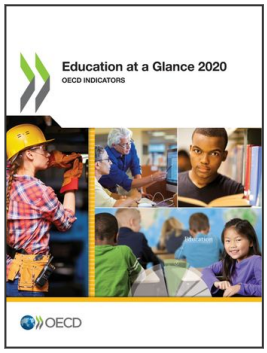
Questions can be directed to:	**Country note authors:**
Marie-Helene Doumet Directorate for Education and Skills marie-helene.doumet@oecd.org	Etienne Albiser, Eric Charbonnier, Manon Costinot, Corinne Heckmann, Bruce Golding, Yanjun Guo, Simon Normandeau, Daniel Sanchez Serra, Markus Schwabe and Giovanni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

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 any 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.

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.

The use of this work, whether digital or print, is governed by the terms and conditions to be found at www.oecd.org/termsandconditions/.



From:
Education at a Glance 2020
OECD Indicators

Access the complete publication at:
https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2020), "Mexico", in *Education at a Glance 2020: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1787/72fe79cd-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.

