

## *Executive summary*

The growing interest in international education statistics has created a need to maintain clear definitions of the concepts and methodologies which underlie them. This handbook presents in detail the methodologies used to calculate the regular core indicators in *Education at a Glance*, following commonly agreed definitions. It sets out the underlying conceptual framework used by the OECD as the basis for its international statistics and provides a reference for the international standards and conventions used in the collection and assimilation of educational data.

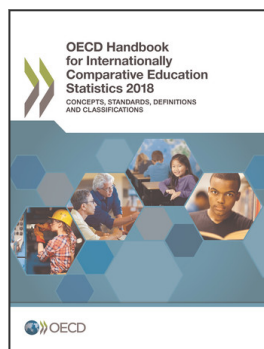
This edition updates previous editions of the *OECD Handbook for Internationally Comparative Education Statistics*. It sets out the concepts, definitions, classifications and methodologies that ground the OECD's work on regular core education statistics and indicators in the 2018 edition of *Education at a Glance* (EAG). The original handbook was released in May 2004, and the first update was released in September 2017, based on 2017 edition of *Education at a Glance*. Between 2004 and 2017, significant work had been carried out on the education indicators in the original handbook, existing indicators had been consolidated and new ones developed, while the methodologies and concepts underlying them have been clarified and the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) had also been revised to reflect the changes in education systems over the last 15 years.

Between 2017 and 2018, further significant work has been carried out to consolidate existing indicators, and this edition also clarifies their underlying methodologies and concepts. This handbook provides a thorough understanding of how the methodologies work, and the limitations and interpretation of the resulting data. Each indicator is complemented by an analysis of its limitations and comparability, based on a thorough understanding of the calculation methodologies and frameworks and how they play out in the context of national educational systems.

- Chapter 1 introduces the purpose of the handbook, its target audience and the structure of the publication.
- Chapter 2 presents the conceptual framework used to collect the data used for education statistics and indicators. It outlines the development of international educational statistics and indicators, the organising framework used for OECD education indicators, and gives an overview of current regular data collections and data sources.
- Chapter 3 outlines the scope and coverage of the OECD's internationally comparable education statistics. Starting with a precise definition of the term "education", it clarifies the boundary issues: what the statistics cover, and specific inclusions and exclusions. It concentrates on early childhood programmes, special needs education, non-regular or adult education, and vocational and professional education. It also presents the challenges of identifying and classifying internationally mobile students.
- Chapter 4 catalogues the definitions and classifications used for the OECD's international education statistics. It covers students and graduates, educational

personnel, school organisation and curricula, educational institutions, and educational expenditure.

- Chapter 5 looks back at the definition and classification of educational programmes and the practical implementation of ISCED. It provides an overview of the latest standard, ISCED 2011, and how it defines and classifies educational programmes and the boundaries between them. It also covers how individual national programmes are mapped onto ISCED levels.
- Chapter 6 focuses on data quality issues. It presents the OECD *Quality Framework*, and eight quality considerations: relevance, accuracy, credibility, timeliness, accessibility, interpretability, coherence and cost-efficiency. It considers how data quality issues arise and how to tackle them, and suggests what estimations can be made where data are missing. It also examines the remaining areas for data quality improvement.
- Chapter 7 presents the concepts behind the current core Indicators of Education Systems (INES) indicators and how they are calculated. It looks at general/international averages, graduation analysis, educational attainment of the population, labour force participation, economic and social benefits of education, expenditure analysis, participation and access to education, participation of adults in education, learning environments and teachers' working conditions, the education and work status of young people, and equity in education. For each of these it considers the policy context and the relevance of the indicator, and explains the calculation methodology used. It also considers the limitations of the indicator, presenting, as needed, any measurement issues, technical definitions, notes on coverage and notes on interpretation, in order to improve understanding of how the indicators may be used.



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