

Educational attainment of migrants

Migrants are more likely to be overqualified, especially in lower-density and rural areas.

Educational attainment is a crucial factor in obtaining high-quality jobs. Levels of education of migrants can partially reveal the extent to which migrants struggle to enter and thrive in the regional labour markets of some regions more than in others.

Migrants are highly educated, especially in some OECD countries and regions. In Australia, Canada, Ireland, Norway, Sweden and the UK, most regions show larger shares of highly educated among the foreign-born than among the native-born population, on average (Figures 3.23 and 3.24). In most countries, capital regions house the highest share of both highly educated foreign-born and native-born in their respective country. The share of highly educated migrants represents more than 60% of the foreign-born population in the capital regions of Australia, Mexico and the US. In contrast, in all regions of Italy and Slovenia, less than 20% of the foreign-born population has tertiary education (Figure 3.21).

The labour market, especially jobs that match a worker's skills and occupation, is one of the main channels through which migrants contribute to regional economies. However, migrants often work in occupations below their qualifications, implying that many will not exploit their full productive and earnings potential. In Europe, the share of individuals who work in occupations below their qualifications tends to be higher outside of cities, for both native-born and migrants (Figure 3.22). Although data on educational achievement is not always available for immigrants, it appears that, in all types of areas in Europe, migrants are more likely to be overqualified, notably when their origin is from non-EU countries (OECD, 2022). While the drivers of the differences in the overqualification shares of native-born and foreigners are manifold, the difficulties associated with recognising foreign professional qualifications are an important factor. This could also explain some of the differences between EU-28 and non-EU-28 migrants, as the recognition process is easier for EU-28 migrants thanks to policies that harmonised diplomas obtained across EU countries.

Sources

OECD (2022), *OECD Regional Statistics (database)*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/region-data-en>.

Reference years and territorial level

2017-19; TL2.

Definitions

International migrants: The terms “migrants” and “foreign-born” are used interchangeably. Migrants are defined by their place of birth. The migrant population is defined as the population born in a country different from the one of residence. Unlike citizenship, this criterion does not change over time, it is not subject to country differences in legislation and it is thus adequate for international comparisons.

Degree of urbanisation: This typology reflects the urban-rural continuum and proposes three classes instead of the dichotomy of urban or rural. The three classes are: i) cities (or densely populated areas); ii) towns and semi-dense areas (or intermediate density areas); and iii) rural areas (or thinly populated areas).

Overqualification: The overqualification share is calculated as the share of tertiary-educated workers (ISCED Levels 5-8) employed in low- or medium-skilled jobs (ISCO Levels 4-9) following the definition in OECD/European Union (2018).

Share of highly educated: The proportion of men and women who have a degree in tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8) over the population of the respective gender.

Further information

Territorial grids and regional typology (Annex B).

OECD (2022), *The Contribution of Migration to Regional Development*, OECD Regional Development Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/57046df4-en>.

OECD/European Union (2018), *Settling In 2018: Indicators of Immigrant Integration*, OECD Publishing, Paris/European Union, Brussels, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264307216-en>.

Figure notes

3.21: Two-year averages are calculated using data for 2018 and 2019.

3.22: The sample includes the employed working-age population (15-64 years old) in Europe. Employees of the public service, international organisations and armed forces (ISCO Level 0) are excluded. This definition follows previous OECD calculations (OECD/EU, 2018). The analysis builds on a pooled sample of observations of the years 2017-19.

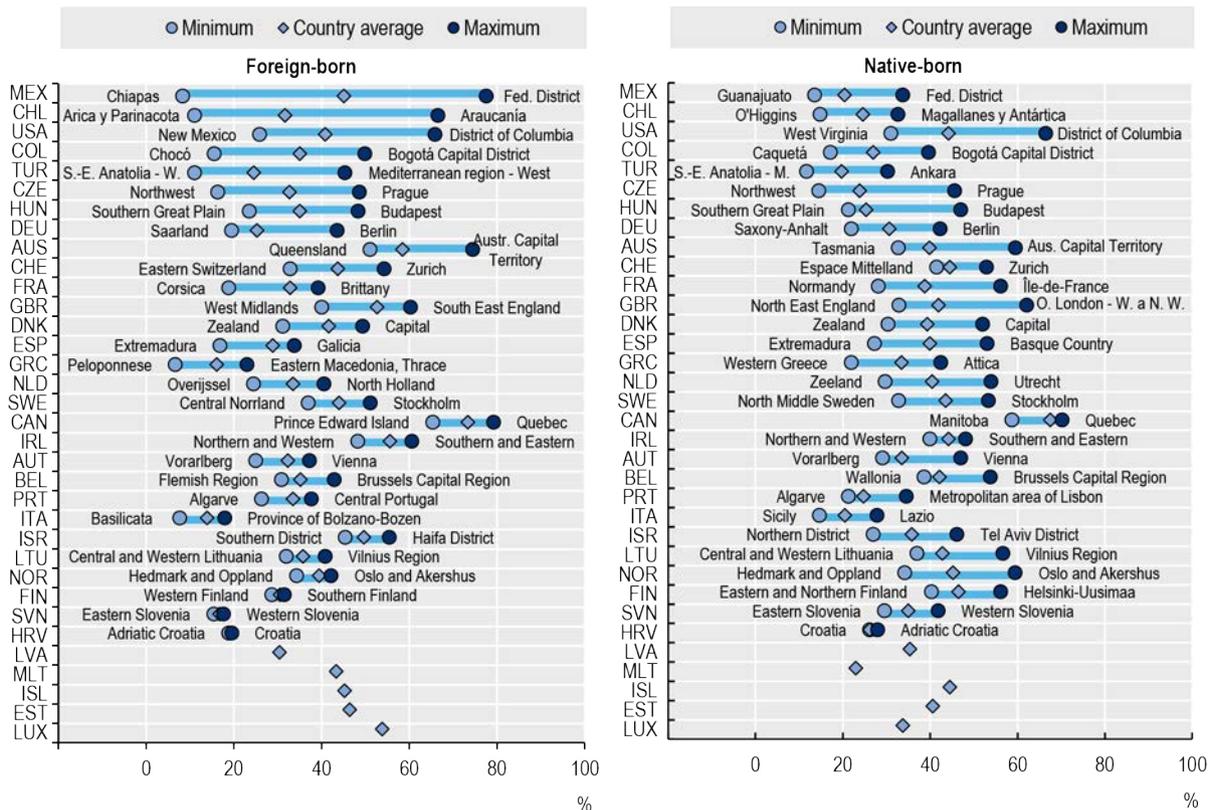
3.23-3.24: Data for 2019 or the latest available year.

3. REGIONS AND CITIES FACING DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

Educational attainment of migrants

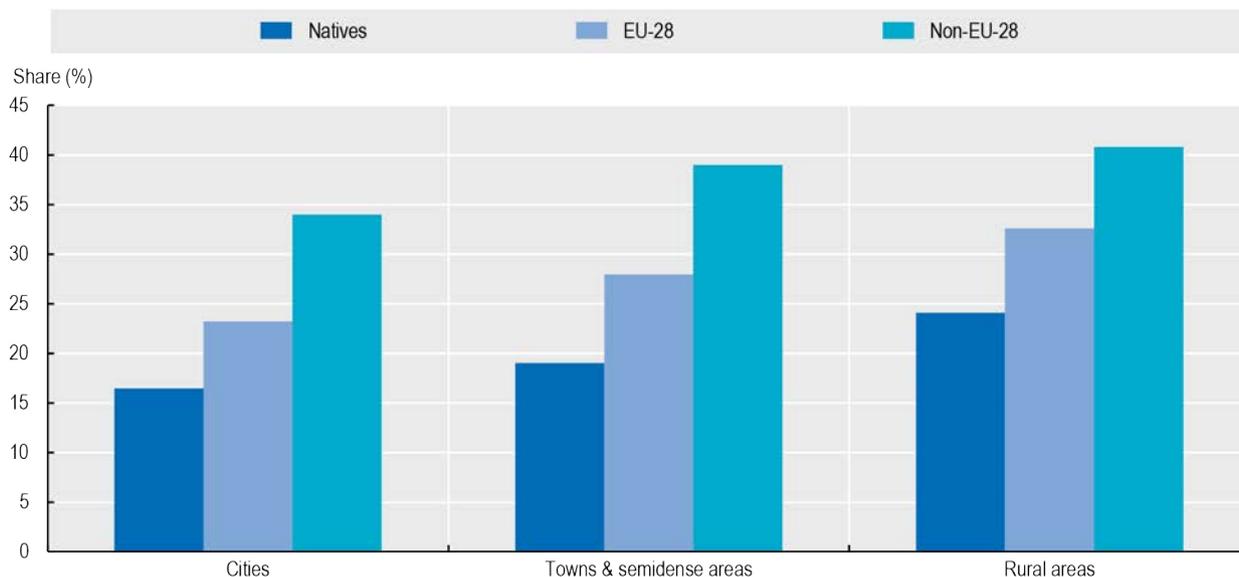
3.21. Regional disparities in the shares of foreign- and native-born with tertiary education

Large regions (TL2), 2018-19 (2-year average)



3.22. Migrant overqualification by the degree of urbanisation and country of origin, 2017-19

Share of high-skilled workers employed in medium- and low-skilled jobs in Europe

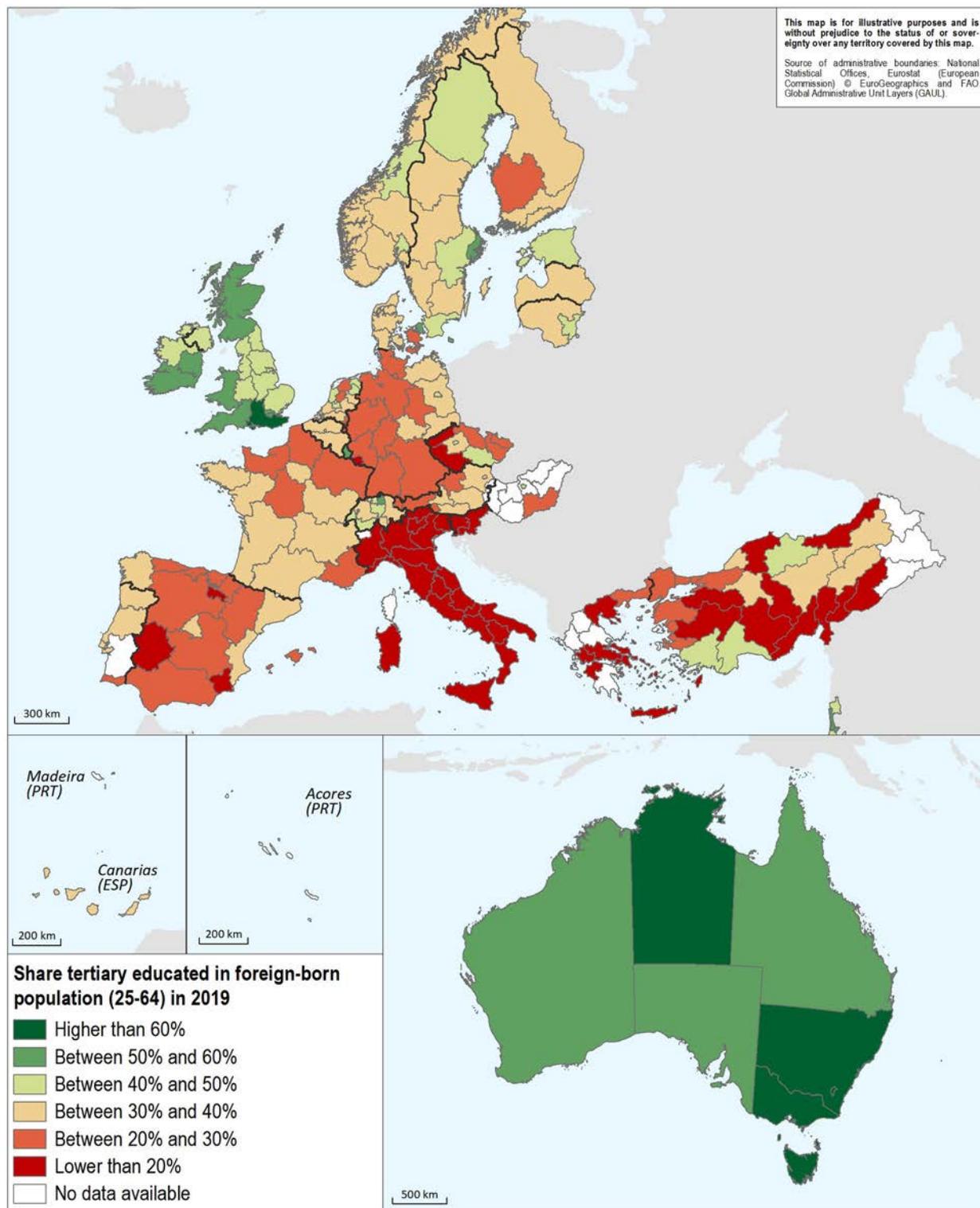


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Educational attainment of migrants

3.23. Educational attainment of migrants across OECD regions, selected European and OECD countries, 2019

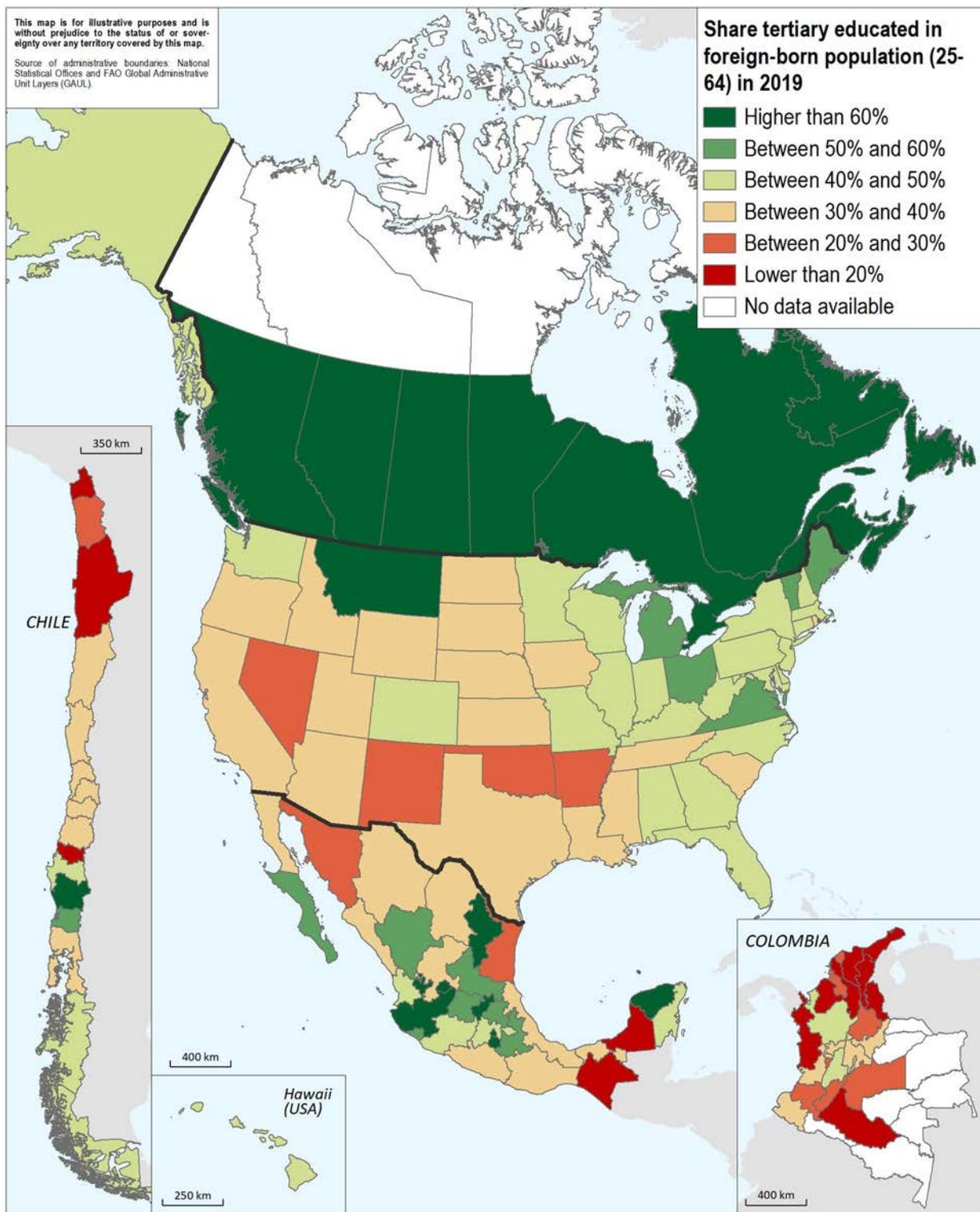
Share of tertiary-educated migrants by TL2 regions



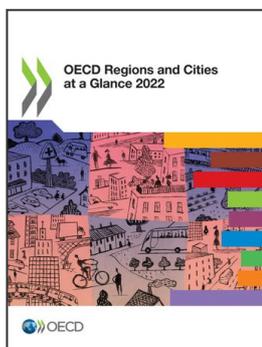
StatLink <https://stat.link/ev5tsz>

3.24. Educational attainment of migrants across OECD regions, Chile, Colombia and the United States, 2019

Share of tertiary-educated migrants by TL2 regions



StatLink <https://stat.link/mtgav1>



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