

Indicator B3. Who is expected to complete upper secondary education?

Highlights

- On average, 72% of students who enter upper secondary education graduate within its theoretical duration across countries with available data. Two years after the end of the theoretical duration, the average completion rate has increased to 82%.
- Students who entered a general upper secondary programme have a higher rate of completion (87%) than those who entered in a vocational programme (73%) in nearly all countries two years after the end of the theoretical programme duration.
- Continuation patterns of upper secondary graduates vary greatly depending on the pathways available within education systems. On average across countries with available data, the majority of general upper secondary graduates (65%) continue their studies, most often at bachelor's degree level or above. Around one-third of those completing vocational programmes are enrolled in an education programme one year after graduating from upper secondary education.

Context

Upper secondary education, which in many countries includes separate general and vocational pathways, aims to prepare students to enter further levels of education or the labour market. In many countries, this level of education is not compulsory and programmes typically take two to five years to complete. Upper secondary completion rates indicate how many of the students who enter an upper secondary programme ultimately graduate from it. The number of students disengaging and consequently dropping out of the education system, thereby leaving school without an upper secondary qualification, is a challenge for many education systems. Typically, these young people tend to face severe difficulties entering – and remaining in – the labour market.

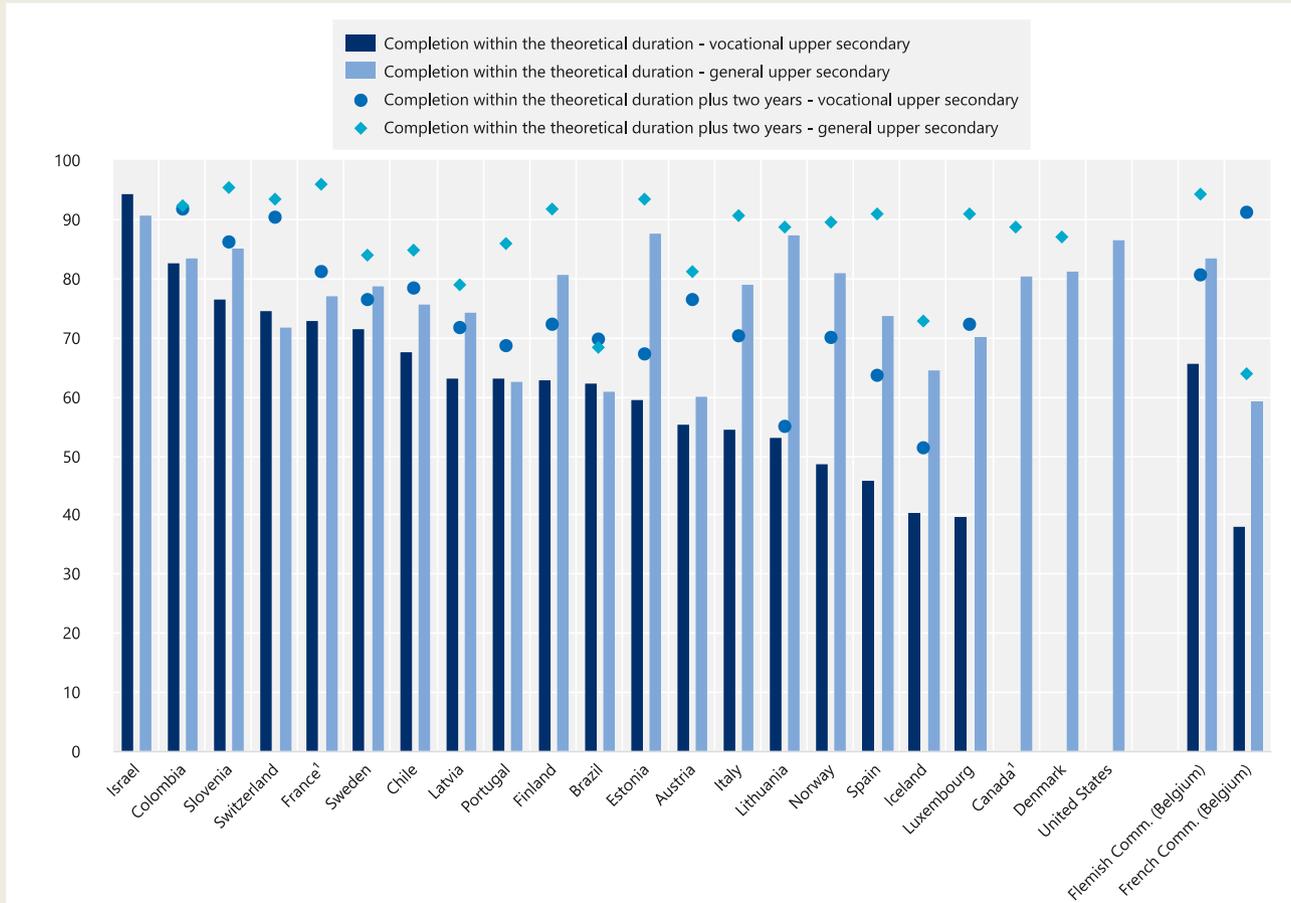
This indicator measures the proportion of students who have successfully completed upper secondary programmes, and how many are still in education or have dropped out at two specific points: the end of the theoretical duration of the programme they entered; and two years after the end of the theoretical duration. The difference between these two timeframes sheds light on the extent to which students tend to graduate “on time”. It also compares completion rates by gender and programme orientation. This indicator also examines the status of those completing upper secondary education in the year after graduation, including whether they are still in education and, if so, whether it is in a post-secondary or tertiary programme, or another upper secondary programme.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a substantial impact on global education systems. In 2020, students worldwide experienced total or partial school closures and had to adapt to alternative forms of education. Upper secondary completion rate is one of the education indicators that have been affected by various factors such as changes in graduation requirements, psychological and health conditions impacting academic performance, and challenges in fulfilling the work-based component of vocational education and training (VET)

programmes. The extensive analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on upper secondary completion rates can be accessed online in the Upper Secondary Education Systems Dashboard (Box B3.1).

Figure B3.1. Upper secondary completion rates, by timeframe and programme orientation on entry (2021)

In per cent, true cohort data only



Note: The data presented here come from an ad-hoc survey and only concern initial education programmes. The reference year (2021, unless noted otherwise) refers to the year of graduation two years after the theoretical duration.

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

Countries and other participants are ranked in descending order of the completion rate within the theoretical duration of vocational upper secondary students.

Source: OECD (2023), Table B3.1. For more information see Source section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#), (OECD, 2023_[1]).

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

Other findings

- For nearly all countries, the completion rate within the theoretical duration is higher for upper secondary general programmes than for vocational ones. In Lithuania, Luxembourg and Norway the gap in completion rates is at least 30 percentage points wider for general programmes than for vocational ones by the end of theoretical duration.

- On average, 5% of students who enter an upper secondary vocational programme is still in education two years after the end of the theoretical duration of the programme, while 23% have not graduated and are no longer enrolled.
- In some countries and other participants, upper secondary students can transfer between general and vocational programmes before graduating, meaning that they could graduate from a programme with a different orientation from the one they entered. In Chile, the Flemish and French Communities of Belgium about 20% of students who enter an upper secondary general programme graduate from a vocational. Similarly, in Brazil, Colombia, Latvia and Norway, at least 10% of upper secondary students graduate from a general programme after entering a vocational one.
- In all countries with available data, women have higher completion rates of upper secondary education than men. The gender gap decreases with time, as men take longer to complete their programmes.
- On average across countries, 56% of graduates from general programmes enrol in bachelor's education within a year of completing upper secondary education. Only in Canada, Colombia and Spain do a significant share – at least 15% – enrol in short-cycle tertiary education.

Note

The upper secondary completion rate is the percentage of students who enter an upper secondary programme for the first time and graduate from it within a given number of years after they entered. Restricting it to first time entrants to upper secondary education excludes adult education programmes and students enrolling in upper secondary education for a second time after their initial schooling. For example, this indicator does not capture students who enter a vocational upper secondary programme after completing a general upper secondary one.

Moreover, the drop-out rate, which is one of the key indicators of this analysis, should not be confused with the out-of-school rate (see Box A2.1. in Indicator A2). The drop-out rate refers to the share of students who leave a specific level of education without graduating from a first qualification at that level. The out-of-school rate is defined as the percentage of children in the official age range for a given level of education who are not enrolled in school.

Analysis

Completion rates by true cohort methodology

On average across the countries and other participants with true cohort data (see the *Definitions* and *Methodology* sections), 72% of students who enter upper secondary education graduate from any programme within the theoretical duration of the programme. Two years after the end of the theoretical duration, the average completion rate increases to 82% (Table B3.1). This delay in completion for some students may reflect various factors, including grade repetition, changes in programme choice or delayed fulfilment of the requirements for graduation.

In all countries and other participants with available information, except in Italy and Korea, academic performance is the primary requirement for graduating from any upper secondary programme. Performance is assessed in different ways in different countries. In Canada, students must complete a certain number of course credits, to obtain an upper secondary diploma. In Israel, students can study a subject for up to five study units, each unit bringing them to a higher level, and some students write research papers at this level. Nearly half of countries and other participants require students to pass an external examination, i.e. a national examination, to complete upper secondary education (e.g. in Austria, France and Slovenia). Vocational students are required to complete work-based learning in one-third of countries (Box B3.1).

Box B3.1. Interactive visualisations of the structure of upper secondary programmes

An interactive online platform is available to provide complementary contextual information on upper secondary programmes. It gives information on the different types of programmes, their duration, the starting age as well as information regarding selection mechanisms, graduation criteria, transition pathways and the impact of COVID-19 on completion rates of upper secondary education.

The platform can be accessed at [the Dashboard on Upper Secondary Education Systems](#).

Completion rates by programme orientation

Ensuring students complete their upper secondary education is a challenge in several countries, especially in vocational programmes. Less than 50% of vocational upper secondary students in the French Community of Belgium, Iceland, Luxembourg, Norway and Spain complete their studies by the end of the theoretical duration. After a further two years, however, completion rates are higher and reach 70% in Luxembourg and Norway. Completion rates among vocational students are relatively high in Colombia, France, Israel, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland, exceeding 70% at the end of theoretical duration. There is much less cross-country variation in the case of general programmes. Completion rates in general upper secondary education exceed 70% in all countries and other participants except in Austria, Brazil, the French Community of Belgium, Iceland and Portugal (Figure B3.1).

The completion gap between general and vocational programmes is partly driven by selection or self-selection into vocational or general programmes. In general, students with weaker school performance are often guided into or opt for vocational programmes (Kis, 2020^[2]). However, unlike most countries, in Brazil, Israel and Switzerland, completion rates are higher for students in vocational programmes (Figure B3.1). In Brazil, public vocational schools are viewed as high-status institutions, face excess demand and many graduates continue to higher education (OECD, 2022^[3]). In Switzerland, the vocational education and training (VET) system is based on apprenticeships, shorter programmes have been developed for youth at risk of dropping out and there are various targeted measures to support completion (OECD, 2018^[4]).

Several countries provide data on completion patterns by type of vocational programme, distinguishing between programmes with or without direct access to tertiary education. In most countries with available data, students who entered programmes without direct access to tertiary education are less likely to complete than their peers in programmes with direct access to tertiary education. In Italy, for example, 53% of students who entered a vocational programme without direct access to tertiary education will have completed their studies by two years after the theoretical duration, compared to 71% of those in programmes with direct access to tertiary education. The only exception is Latvia, where the completion rates are 85% for vocational programmes without direct access, and 70% for those with. The size of the gap in completion rates between the two types of programmes within two years of the end of the theoretical duration varies considerably across countries, ranging from 28 percentage points in the French Community of Belgium to only 4 percentage points in Slovenia (Table B3.1).

The gap in completion rates between programmes with or without direct access to tertiary education also reflects a combination of selection and self-selection into upper secondary programmes. Some countries offer multiple vocational tracks at upper secondary level. Programmes with direct access to tertiary education tend to place more emphasis on general content and preparation for further studies. Students with weaker lower secondary school grades and those less interested in school-based forms of learning are more likely to choose or be guided towards vocational programmes without direct access to tertiary education, as these tend to have a stronger focus on occupational skills and a lighter academic workload. Some programmes in this category were explicitly designed for youth at risk of dropping out, such as two-year apprenticeships in Switzerland.

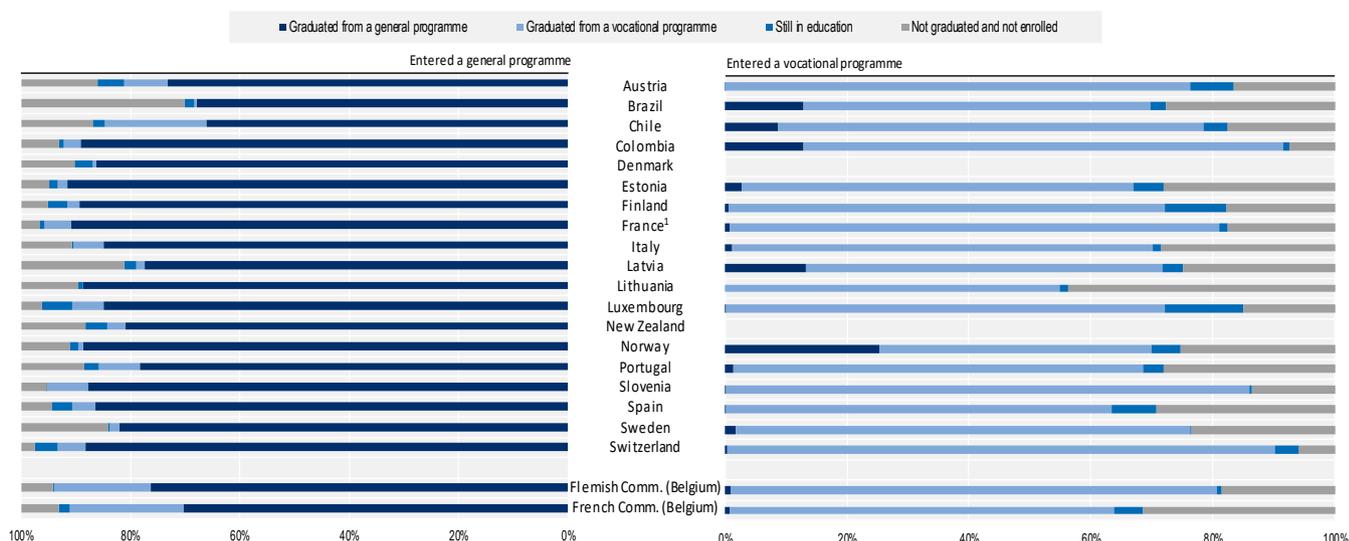
Completion rates by gender

In all countries with available data, female students have a higher completion rate of upper secondary education than males. This holds for both vocational and general programmes, with Lithuania and Sweden being the only exceptions for vocational programmes. On average, the gender gap in general and vocational programmes is the same and is 7 percentage points for both. The gender gap in completion rates is consistent for both timeframes (within the theoretical duration and plus two years), though the gap closes slightly two years after the theoretical duration, indicating that male students are more likely to delay graduation (Table B3.1).

Countries show different patterns in their gender gaps in completion rates by programme orientation. The gender gap is wider for vocational programmes in some countries (e.g. Norway and Spain), and in general programmes for others (e.g. Iceland and Israel). In Norway the gender gap in completion rates for vocational programmes is 20 percentage points and in Spain it is 11 percentage points, whereas it is reported around 7 percentage points for general programmes in both countries. On the other hand, in Iceland and Israel, the gender gap for general programmes is respectively 15 and 11 percentage points while it is respectively 8 and 4 percentage points for vocational programmes (Table B3.1).

Figure B3.2. Distribution of entrants to upper secondary education, by programme orientation and outcomes after the theoretical duration plus two years (2021)

In per cent



Note: The data presented here come from an ad-hoc survey and only concern initial education programmes. The columns for "not graduated and not enrolled" may include students who left the country before graduation. Students who continued their studies in the adult education system are included in the columns for "not graduated and not enrolled"

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

Countries and other participants are listed alphabetically.

Source: OECD (2023), Table B3.2. For more information see [Source section](#) and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#). (OECD, 2023₍₁₎)

StatLink  <https://stat.link/gl28r7>

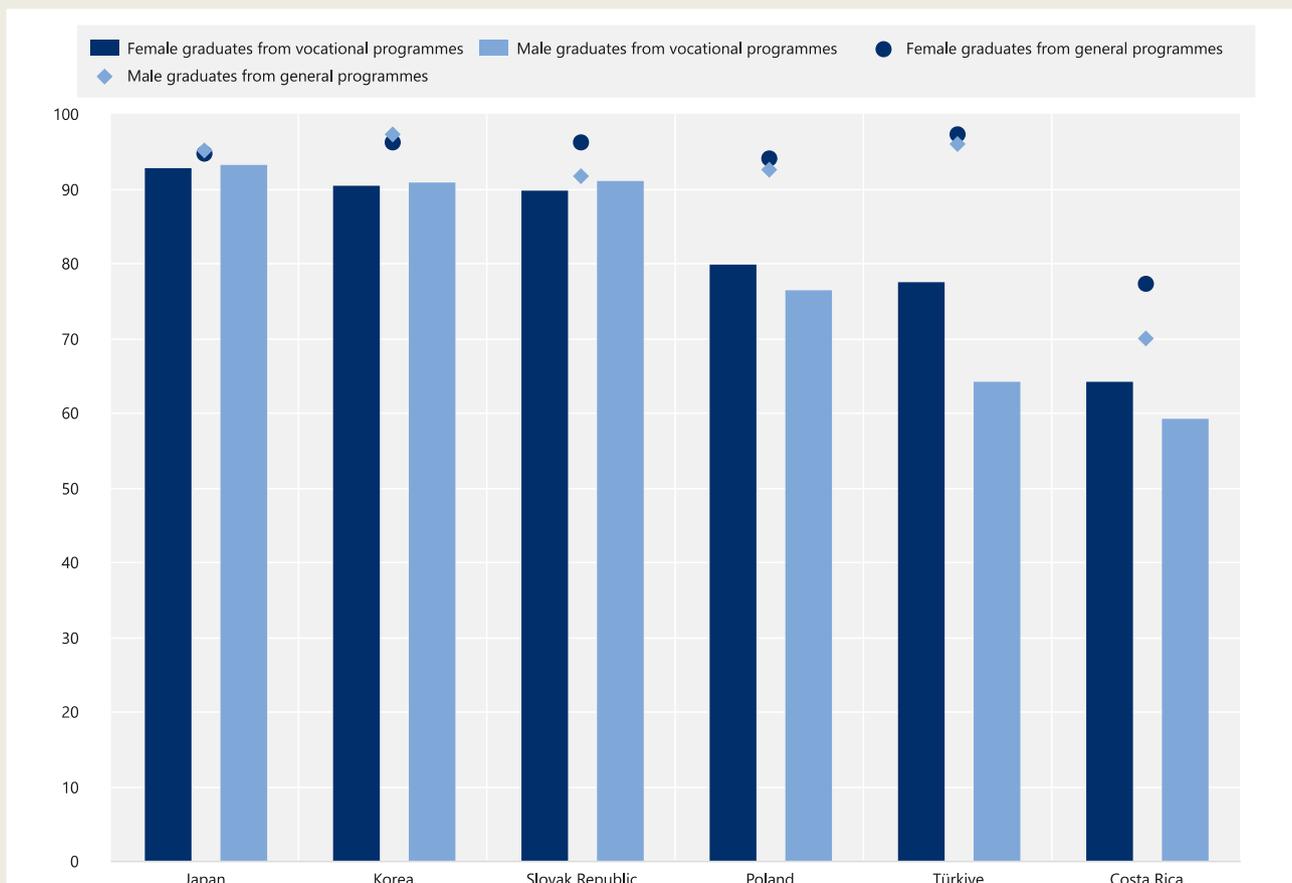
Box B3.2. Completion rates using the cross cohort methodology

The true cohort method for computing completion rates follows a cohort of students over time and records if and when they complete the programme. In contrast, the cross cohort method covers all graduates in a given year – with no limitation on the time it took them to complete the programme. The two methodologies are therefore not comparable. The cross-cohort completion rate relies on the assumption of constant student flows and is therefore sensitive to changes in the student population and it tends to overestimate completion rates in general. It is still used because it has the advantage that it does not require longitudinal data tracking students over time, unlike the true cohort methodology.

Although the true cohort and cross cohort methods produce different results, they show similar patterns. Figure B3.3 shows completion rates in the countries using cross cohort methodology by gender and programme orientation. In all these countries, completion rates are higher for general programmes, although the disparity between the two tends to be smaller than for countries with true cohort data. Moreover, the gender gap in completion rates is negligible in Japan, Korea and the Slovak Republic and although there is a gender gap in favour of female students in Costa Rica, Poland and Türkiye, it is smaller than the gender gaps seen in the true cohort dataset.

Figure B3.3. Upper secondary completion rates, by gender and programme orientation (2021)

In per cent, cross cohort data only



Note: The data presented here come from an ad-hoc survey. For cross cohort data, the reference year is 2021.

Countries and other participants are ranked in descending order of the completion rate of female vocational programme graduates.

Source: OECD (2023), Table B3.1 For more information see Source section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#). (OECD, 2023^[1]).

StatLink  <https://stat.link/97fsr0>

Transfers between programmes

Many countries aim to ensure permeability between different types of programmes, allowing students to transition to another programme if it better suits their interests and abilities. Moving from a vocational to a general programme may appeal to learners who have their eyes set on tertiary education and are not interested (or have not found a suitable programme) in a specific occupational area. Conversely, moving to a vocational programme can be an attractive option for students less interested in academic forms of learning but attracted by hands-on learning. One of the main benefits of being able to track individual students in a longitudinal dataset is the ability to analyse their distinct educational pathways.

Figure B3.2 examines the situation of upper secondary students two years after the end of their theoretical programme. It shows whether they graduated and, if so, from which programme, as well as the share of students who are still in education without having graduated and those who have dropped out. Unsurprisingly, most students graduate from the same programme orientation as the one they entered. Nevertheless, completion and transition patterns reveal some intriguing variations across and within countries. For instance, in Norway, one-quarter of students who entered a vocational programme have graduated from a general one two years after theoretical duration, while 45% have graduated from a vocational programme, 25% have dropped out and 5% are still in upper secondary education. This may reflect Norway's 2+2 apprenticeship system where students mostly pursue school-based VET for two years, followed by two years spent in a company. VET students who cannot find a place for the work-based part of the programme, and VET students who instead wish to obtain a general diploma, commonly transition to a general programme, which explains the large share of students who enter vocational education but graduate from general education. Conversely, transfers from general to vocational programmes are more common in the Flemish Community of Belgium, as a result of certification system which allows students in general programmes who obtained a grade A at the end of the school year to continue whatever programme they wish, including vocational programmes. In contrast, the same freedom is not available to students in vocational programmes.

Transition from vocational programmes with direct access to tertiary education to vocational programmes without such access (as observed in the Flemish Community of Belgium, France, Slovenia and Switzerland, for example) reflects students moving from more academically demanding vocational programmes to programmes with a stronger emphasis on occupational training and less on general subjects. Such transitions may be helpful in preventing students from dropping out, by offering VET students who might be struggling with the academic demands of their programme an alternative way to complete upper secondary education.

Still in education

In half of the countries and other participants with available data, at least 15% of students take up to two years longer than the theoretical end of the programme to graduate, for both general and vocational programmes (Table B3.2). Such delayed completion may be due to various factors. One is grade repetition, which may apply to general and vocational programmes. Another factor might be students “stopping-out” – withdrawing temporarily from a programme, either to return to the same programme or transfer to another one that better matches their interests or abilities (Wydra-Somaggio, 2021^[5]). For example, in Germany, approximately one-quarter of apprentices terminate their vocational education and training early (BIBB, 2019^[6]), but only a small share of them permanently drop out. Other factors can contribute to longer periods of study. In Finland, for instance, upper secondary programmes are flexible and students are able to schedule their own study programme according to their needs. This may increase the number of students who take longer to complete the programme: in vocational upper secondary education, students have a personal competence development plan which enables them to study according to their individual development needs while in general upper secondary education, it is relatively common for students to plan their study programmes to take 4 years instead of the typical duration of 3 years.

Two years after the theoretical end of their programme, the proportion of students who have not yet completed and are still in education is non-negligible. This is particularly common in vocational programmes. In Austria, Finland, Iceland, Luxembourg and Spain, for example, 7% or over of those who entered a vocational programme

are still in education two years after the end of the theoretical duration of their programme (Table B3.2). One implication is that, whatever the completion rates shown, ultimately a larger share of young people are likely to achieve an upper secondary qualification than Figure B3.2 suggests. Some of them will have needed more than the additional two years covered by this survey, while others may graduate through second chance and adult education programmes.

Drop-outs

Overall, two years after the theoretical duration, the share of students who drop out is higher than the share of students who are still in education in all countries except Luxembourg and Switzerland for general programmes. The proportion of students who drop out from vocational programmes exceeds 10% in all countries except in Colombia (7%) and Switzerland (6%). Drop-out rates are relatively high in some countries, with at least one in four VET students dropping out in Brazil, Estonia, the French Community of Belgium, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Portugal and Spain (Table B3.2). High drop-out rates are worrying, as young people who fail to complete upper secondary education are most at risk of becoming NEET (neither employed nor in formal education or training). Supporting completion of upper secondary education is therefore essential for preventing young people from becoming not in employment education or training (NEET) (OECD, 2022^[7]) (see Indicator A2).

Research has explored the reasons underlying students' decisions to drop out. For example, Doll, Eslami and Walters (2013^[8]) highlighted the importance of identifying push-out and pull-out factors. Push-out factors may arise within the school environment – strict academic performance policies may result in poor grades, or discipline policies or bullying may lead to students dropping out. Pull-out factors arise when students have an illness or must work for financial concerns or experience family changes such as having a child. In addition to these two factors, Doll and colleagues (2013^[8]) identified a third category: fall-out factors. These factors may emerge when students fail to make adequate academic progress and consequently lose motivation and interest in continuing their studies. These three factors could be contributing to high drop-out rates, though they cannot account for every case. According to a study from Norway (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020^[9]), school performance in lower secondary education is the most significant determinant of who will not complete upper secondary education. Similarly, a study from Sweden found that previous school performance was a major driver of completion. In fact, the completion gap between vocational and general programmes disappeared when grades obtained in lower secondary education were taken into account (Skolverket, 2022^[10]).

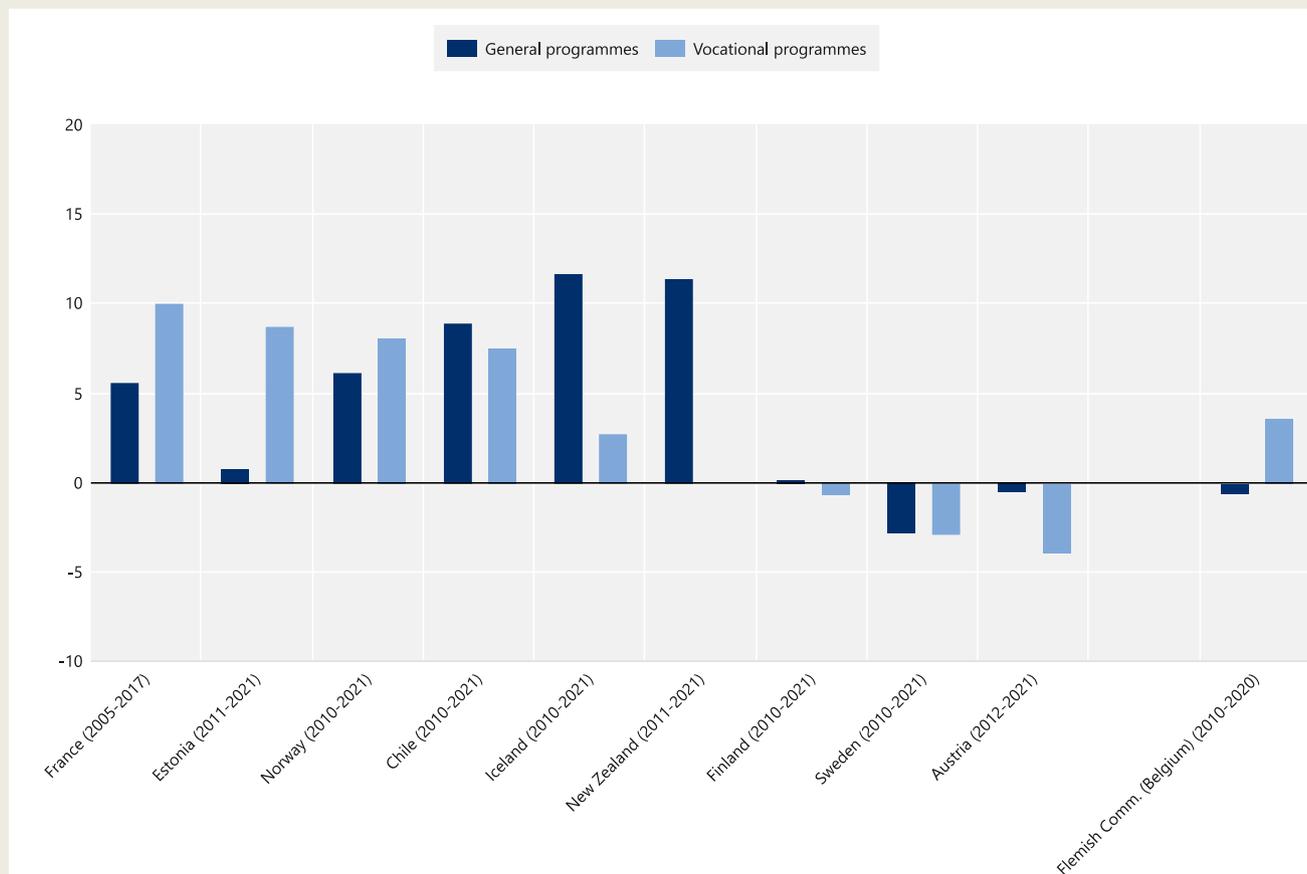
Box B3.3. Trends in completion rates

Trend data can shed light on how completion rates have evolved in recent years. Figure B3.4 shows trends in completion rates broken down by programme orientation. The reference years used for comparison in each country vary according to data availability (as indicated next to the country name). As a result, no cross-country comparisons can be drawn from these data.

Nevertheless, this analysis can provide relevant information on the evolution of completion rates within each country and on how the pattern differs by programme orientation. In Estonia, the Flemish Community of Belgium, France and Norway, for instance, completion rates for vocational programmes have increased considerably more than for general programmes. In contrast, Chile and Iceland have experienced greater increases in completion rates for general programmes compared to vocational programmes. In Finland, completion rates for both orientations have remained relatively stable, while they have been falling for both orientations in Austria and Sweden (Figure B3.4). In Sweden, the decrease in the completion rates for both programme orientation can be partially attributed to the 2011 reform of upper secondary education, in which stricter completion requirements were implemented.

Figure B3.4. Change in the share of students completing upper secondary education within the theoretical duration plus two years, by programme orientation (2010 and 2021)

In percentage points



Note: The data presented here come from an ad-hoc survey and show the change in completion rates by programme orientation over around 10 years.

Countries and other participants are ranked in descending order of the change in the completion rate for vocational programmes.

Source: OECD (2023), Table B3.1. For more information see Source section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#). (OECD, 2023^[1]).

StatLink  <https://stat.link/hsrw51>

Transition after upper secondary education

Many countries have sought to increase progression to tertiary levels, including among VET graduates. Bridges have been established to avoid dead ends, connecting vocational programmes without direct access to tertiary education or to higher-level programmes. One challenge is that some pathways are rarely taken, rendering some programmes dead ends in practice. Data on the status of graduates one year after graduation can help explore to what extent those bridging options are pursued in practice – for example identifying graduates of vocational programmes without direct access to tertiary education who enter a bridging programme in upper secondary education. Given the small number of students in some of the relevant programmes, analysis based on longitudinal data is particularly helpful. It provides a fine-grained picture of transition patterns, exploring whether graduates enter an education programme and, if they do, whether that is at post-secondary or tertiary level, or another upper secondary programme. Due to data limitations, disaggregated information on graduates from upper secondary education who are no longer enrolled is not available for all countries. The labour force status

of upper secondary graduates one year after graduation is only available for Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, presented in Box B3.4.

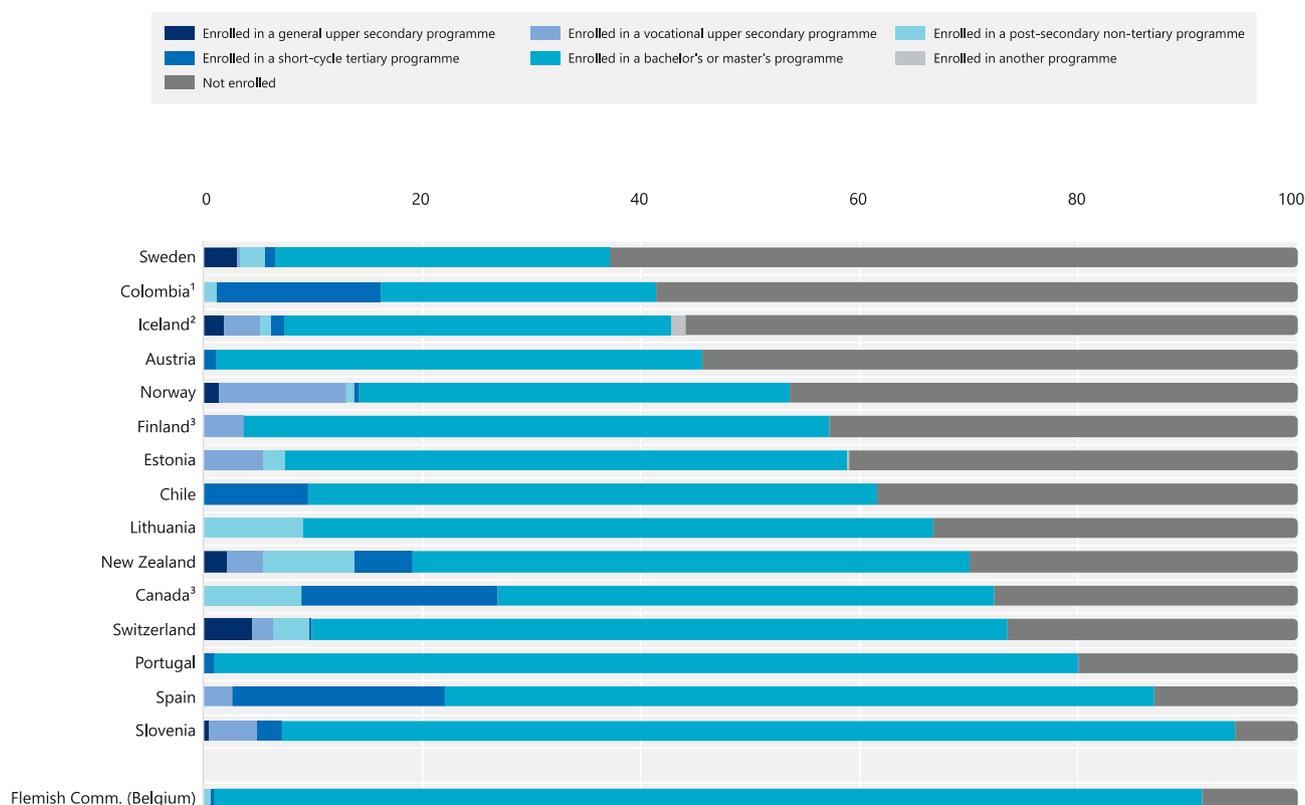
Transition after upper secondary education by programme orientation

Transition after general upper secondary

Figure B3.5 depicts the paths taken by graduates of general programmes one year after completing upper secondary education. According to the figure, most of these graduates are pursuing tertiary education. They are mostly enrolled in bachelor's degree programmes or above; the share of graduates pursuing short-cycle tertiary programmes is relatively low (also, as noted in Indicator B4, not all countries have short-cycle tertiary programmes). For instance, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, 90% of graduates from general upper secondary programmes are continuing their education with a bachelor's or master's level programmes.

Figure B3.5. Status of graduates from upper secondary general programmes in the year after their graduation (2020)

In per cent



Note: The data presented here come from an ad-hoc survey and only concern initial education programmes.

1. Data for vocational graduates are included in the data for graduates of general programmes.
2. Other type of programme shows students who have received a public student loan to study abroad in the autumn of 2019 and are not students in schools in Iceland.
3. Year of reference differs from 2020. Refer to the source table for more details.

Countries and other participants are ranked in descending order of the share of upper secondary general programme graduates who are not enrolled in any programme one year after graduation.

Source: OECD (2023), Table B3.3. For more information see *Source* section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#) (OECD, 2023^[1]).

StatLink  <https://stat.link/q08lrt>

However, there are countries where short-cycle tertiary programmes, which are mostly vocational, are relatively popular. For instance, in the year after their upper secondary graduation, 19% of general upper secondary graduates in Spain are enrolled in a short-cycle tertiary programme, followed by 18% in Canada and 15% in Colombia (Figure B3.5). This reflects the different functions of short-cycle tertiary programmes in different countries. In Canada, for example, colleges offering short-cycle tertiary education are very popular and play a key role in preparing young people for entry into the labour market. Contrary to vocational orientation of short-cycle degrees in most countries, in Canada, general or combined general-vocational programmes are offered within the short-cycle tertiary education (see Annex 1, Table A1.3).

The share of graduates who are not enrolled one year after graduation from general upper secondary education varies significantly across countries, ranging from 6% in Slovenia to 63% in Sweden (Figure B3.5). In Sweden, 75% of general upper secondary graduates who are not enrolled in any ISCED programme one year after their graduation are employed while only 5% are unemployed and the remainder are inactive or unknown (Box B3.4).

Transition after vocational upper secondary

Figure B3.6 illustrates the different pathways chosen by graduates of vocational upper secondary programmes one year after graduation. Continuation patterns for these graduates vary greatly depending on the potential pathways in the national education systems. It is therefore crucial to analyse these specific pathways in each country when interpreting the distribution of enrolments in various programmes after graduation.

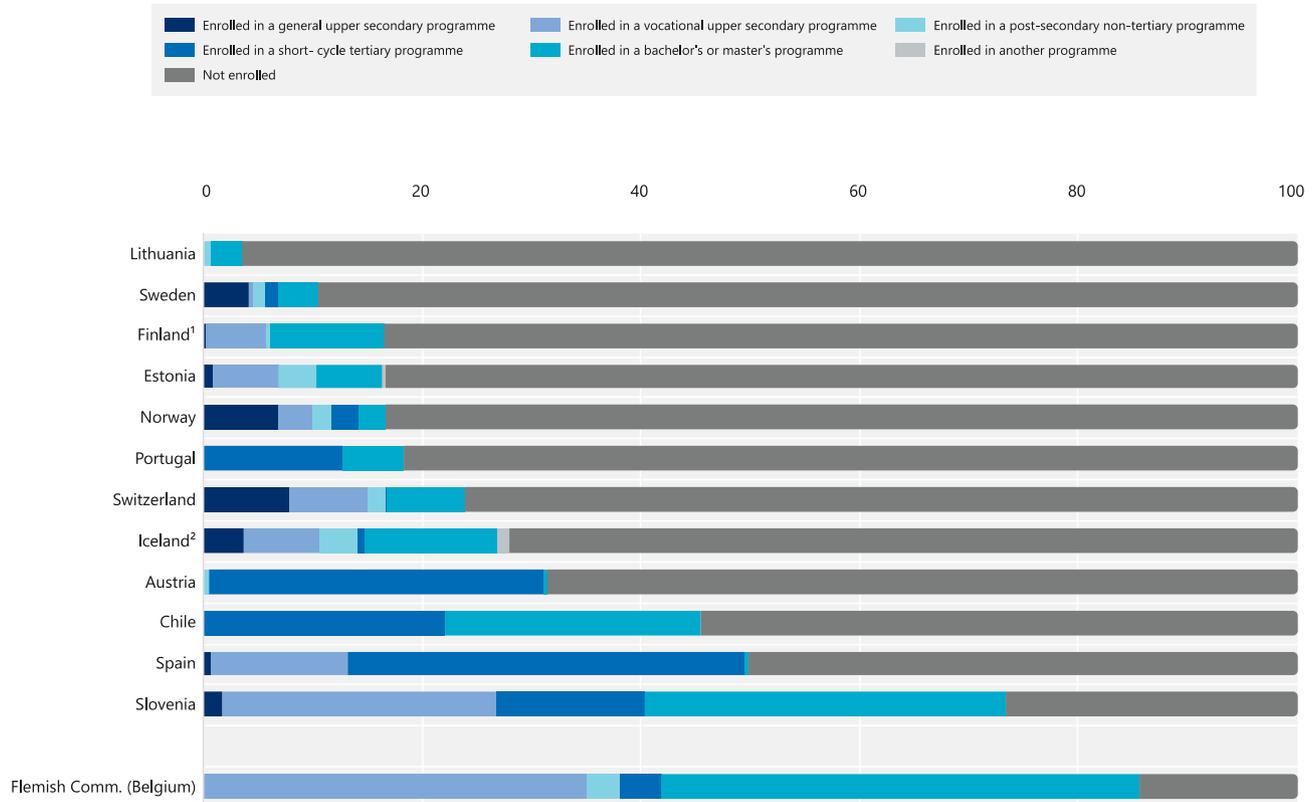
For instance, in Austria and Spain, vocational upper secondary graduates only have direct access to short-cycle tertiary programmes, not to bachelor's programmes. Accordingly, progression from VET to short-cycle tertiary education is common: 31% of such graduates in Austria and 36% in Spain continue their studies in short-cycle tertiary programmes. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, graduates of the BSO (*Beroepssecundair onderwijs* – vocational secondary education) who have completed the second year of the third stage, must complete an additional year of study as a bridge to be eligible for tertiary education. This explains why 35% of upper secondary vocational graduates are enrolled in upper secondary vocational programmes – they largely include BSO graduates pursuing a 7th year of BSO to gain eligibility for tertiary education (Figure B3.6).

Moreover, some upper secondary graduates may not enrol in short-cycle tertiary programmes immediately but wait until later in their career. Since the scope of the data presented here is limited to initial education, adult entrants into short-cycle tertiary level are not covered (see Indicator B4).

Overall, vocational upper secondary graduates are less likely to be enrolled in any education programme one year after graduation than their peers who graduated from general programmes (Table B3.3). This is hardly surprising, as vocational programmes are designed to prepare students for entry into the labour market in a specific occupation or sector. In some countries the share of VET graduates not enrolled in education one year after graduation is very high, reaching 96% in Lithuania and 89% in Sweden. Whether not being in education is a positive or a negative outcome depends on what graduates are doing instead and whether they are able to access and successfully pursue further learning opportunities later in their careers.

Figure B3.6. Status of graduates from upper secondary vocational programmes in the year after their graduation (2020)

In per cent



Note: The data presented here come from an ad-hoc survey and only concern initial education programmes.

1. Year of reference differs from 2020. Refer to the source table for more details.

2. Other type of programme shows students who have received a public student loan to study abroad in the autumn of 2019 and are not students in schools in Iceland.

Countries and other participants are ranked in descending order of the share of upper secondary vocational programme graduates who are not enrolled in any programme one year after graduation.

Source: OECD (2023), Table B3.3. For more information see *Source* section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#), (OECD, 2023^[1])

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

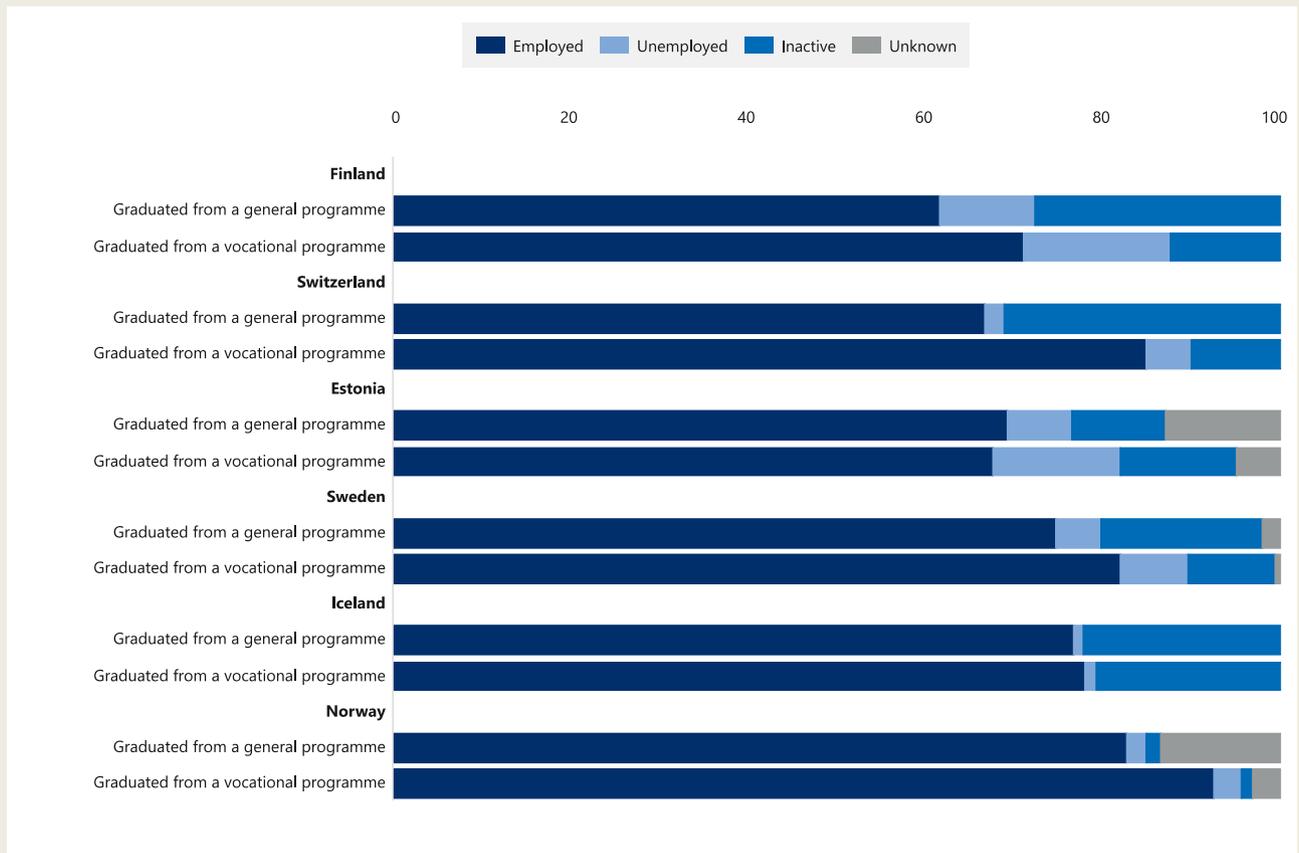
Non-enrolment may be driven by a high share of VET graduates successfully finding employment. Data on the labour force status of graduates are available for some countries: for instance, in Sweden 82% of upper secondary vocational graduates who are not enrolled one year after graduation are employed (Box B3.4). According to the European Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) 2022, in Lithuania, 72% of VET graduates start to work in the 1-3 years after their graduation from upper secondary education (EUROSTAT, 2021^[11]). More broadly, some higher vocational programmes are designed to build on a period of relevant work experience. In some countries a common progression route for VET graduates is to work for a few years in their target occupation, then improve their skills through tertiary programmes. For example, in Switzerland, relevant work experience is formally required for professional bachelor's and master's degrees.

Box B3.4. Labour force status of upper secondary graduates one year after their graduation

For those students who do not immediately pursue further studies, countries should ensure that upper secondary education prepares them for entry into the labour market, as well as for higher education. In light of the high rates of non-enrolment one year after graduating from upper secondary education, particularly among vocational graduates, employment status is an important indicator of effectiveness. Relevant data have been provided by Estonia, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, enabling to monitor the status of graduates who are not in education to be explored.

Figure B3.7. Labour-market status one year after completing upper secondary education, by programme orientation (2020)

In per cent of upper secondary graduates not enrolled in any ISCED programme



How to read this figure: In Switzerland, 67% of graduates who are not enrolled in any ISCED programme one year after graduating from general upper secondary education are employed, while 2% are unemployed.

Note: The data presented here come from an ad-hoc survey. Each category represents a share of graduates of upper secondary education not enrolled in education one year after graduation.

Countries are ranked in ascending order of the share of employed graduates within not enrolled general graduates one year after their graduation from upper secondary education.

Source: OECD (2023). For more information see *Source* section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#), (OECD, 2023^[1]).

StatLink  <https://stat.link/pi91xb>

In these countries, the majority of upper secondary graduates who are not in education are in employment, for both programme orientations (Figure B3.7). In Norway, for instance, 93% of graduates from vocational programmes are employed, compared to 83% of those from general ones. Overall, VET graduates are more

likely to be employed one year after graduation except in Estonia, where they are slightly less likely. At the same time, they are also more likely to be unemployed in all countries with available data. Finland and Switzerland have relatively large shares of graduates who are inactive (e.g. not in education nor in labour market), particularly for graduates from upper secondary general programmes. In Finland, for instance, the gap years between upper secondary and tertiary level are common, mainly due to restricted entry to tertiary education (*numerus clausus*) or voluntary breaks to decide on what career to pursue.

Transition after upper secondary education by gender

On average across countries with available data, 58% of female general upper secondary graduates enrol in a bachelor's degree, compared to 53% of male graduates. The gender gap reaches 34 percentage points in Austria and 15 percentage points in Canada. Progression to short-cycle tertiary education is only significant in a few countries (e.g. Canada, Chile, Colombia and Spain), with similar enrolment patterns across both genders (Table B3.3).

The gender disparity in enrolment patterns among graduates from upper secondary is greater for general programmes than for vocational ones. However, male graduates of vocational programmes are more likely to enrol in a short-cycle tertiary programme than their female peers in most countries with available data. In Spain, for example, 39% of male vocational graduates enrol in short-cycle tertiary programmes after completing upper secondary education, compared to only 33% of female vocational graduates (Table B3.3).

Given the relatively high share of upper secondary graduates who are not enrolled in any education after graduation, it is also important to apply a gender lens to this group. The share of male graduates who are not enrolled is higher than for their female peers for both programme orientations in most countries, except in Chile, Colombia, Iceland, Italy and Sweden for general programmes and in Chile, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain for vocational programmes. In Austria, where 40% of female graduates are not enrolled after completing a general upper secondary programme compared to 75% of their male counterparts, the gender disparity in non-enrolment is the largest (Table B3.3). Young men in Austria frequently perform their mandatory military or community service after graduating from upper secondary education, which explains part of this gender gap.

Definitions

The **true cohort** method requires following an entry cohort through a specific time frame, which in the case of this survey corresponds to the theoretical duration N and the theoretical duration plus two years ($N+2$). Only countries with longitudinal surveys or registers are able to provide such information. Panel data can be available in the form of an individual student registry (a system including unique personal ID numbers for students) or a cohort of students used for conducting a longitudinal survey.

The **cross cohort** method only requires the number of new entrants to a given ISCED level and the number of graduates N years later, where N corresponds to the theoretical duration of the programme. Under the assumption of constant student flows (constant increase or decrease in the number of students entering a given ISCED level throughout the years), the cross cohort completion is closer to a total completion rate (i.e. the completion rate of all students, regardless of the time it took them to graduate). As such, in countries where a large share of students do not graduate “on time” given the theoretical duration of the programme, the cross cohort completion may be more comparable to longer time frames than the true cohort completion.

The **theoretical duration of studies** is the regulatory or common-practice time it takes a full-time student to complete a level of education. True cohort completion is measured within two timeframes: by the end of the theoretical duration and by the end of the theoretical duration plus two years. The theoretical duration always refers to the programme in which the student originally entered upper secondary education. This means that even if a student transfers to a different programme with a different duration they will still be registered according

to the programme in which they originally entered the level. Please see (OECD, 2023^[1]), [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#), for information on each country's theoretical duration for general and vocational upper secondary programmes.

The **programme orientation** can refer either to the programme in which the student originally entered upper secondary education or to the programme from which the student graduated. Both types of analysis are included in the indicator. The titles, subtitles or axis titles of the figures (and tables) will clarify which programme is being disaggregated by programme orientation. Only programmes sufficient for level completion are included. Four programme orientations are considered in the analysis:

- general programmes (ISCED-P 343 and 344)
- vocational programmes without access to tertiary education (ISCED-P 353)
- vocational programmes with access to tertiary education (ISCED-P 354)
- combined vocational programmes (ISCED-P 353 and 354).

The **reference year** for the survey is 2021 and refers to the academic year 2020/21 in countries where the academic year runs from September to June. For countries submitting data based on the true cohort method, the reference year should be two years after the end of the theoretical duration of the programme. For example, if a programme has a duration of two years, the cohort reported must have entered upper secondary education in the academic year 2017/18. Their status is then recorded by the end of the theoretical duration of the programme (academic year 2018/19) and two years later (academic year 2020/21). For countries submitting cross cohort data, the year of reference corresponds to the reference year for the graduate data which is 2021 here.

The share of students who are **still in education** corresponds only to those still pursuing the original degree or that have transferred to another degree but have not yet completed it.

Drop-out rate refers to the share of students who leave the specified level of education without graduating from a first qualification at the level. **Stop-out** refers to withdraw temporarily from a programme.

Push-out factors refer to the factors that push students out of school by creating a compelling school environment, such as strict school performance policies, discipline policies and bullying, consequently resulting in drop-out.

Pull-out factors refer to the factors that pull students away from school due to financial concerns, family changes or illnesses, consequently resulting in drop-out.

Fall-out factors refer to the factors that fall students out of school such as low academic performance in school, disengagement and apathy against schoolwork, consequently resulting in drop-out.

Employed individuals are those who, during the survey reference week, were either working for pay or profit for at least one hour or had a job but were temporarily not at work.

Unemployed individuals are those who, during the survey reference week, were without work, actively seeking employment and currently available to start work.

Inactive individuals are those who, during the survey reference week, were outside the labour force and classified neither as Employed nor as unemployed. individuals enrolled in education are also considered as Inactive if they are not looking for a job.

Methodology

The completion rate for both true cohort and cross cohort methods is calculated as the number of graduates divided by the number of entrants N or $N+2$ years before (where N is the theoretical duration of the programme).

For countries that submit longitudinal data it is also possible to calculate the share of students still in education and the share of students who have neither graduated nor are still enrolled – all of which is calculated within the timeframes of N and N+2. Both shares are calculated by dividing the number of students in the given situation by the number of new entrants N or N+2 years before.

For countries and other participants that submitted transition data one year after graduation, enrolment rates for each ISCED level and the share of not enrolled graduates were calculated by dividing number of students in the given category by total number of graduates one year before. The labour force status of upper secondary graduates was calculated as a share of graduates who are not enrolled one year after upper secondary education.

For more information see the [OECD Handbook for Internationally Comparative Education Statistics](#) (OECD, 2018_[12]) and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#). (OECD, 2023_[1])

Source

Data on completion rates refer to the academic year 2020/2021 and were collected through a special survey undertaken in 2022. Data for some countries may have a different reference year. Countries submitted data using either the true cohort or cross cohort methodology. For more information see [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#) (OECD, 2023_[1]).

References

- BIBB (2019), *Datenreport zum Berufsbildungsbericht 2019*, Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, Bonn, https://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/bibb_datenreport_2019.pdf. [6]
- Doll, J., Z. Eslami and L. Walters (2013), “Understanding why students drop out of high school, according to their own reports: Are they pushed or pulled, or do they fall out? A comparative analysis of seven nationally representative studies”, *SAGE Open*, Vol. 3/4, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013503834>. [8]
- EUROSTAT (2021), *Eurostat - Labour force survey*, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/main/data/database?node_code=employ (accessed on 22 May 2023). [11]
- Kis, V. (2020), “Improving evidence on VET: Comparative data and indicators”, *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, No. 250, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/d43dbf09-en>. [2]
- Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2020), *The Norwegian Education Mirror, 2019*, Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, <https://www.udir.no/in-english/education-mirror-2019/> (accessed on 9 May 2023). [9]
- OECD (2023), *Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/d7f76adc-en>. [1]
- OECD (2022), *Education at a Glance 2022: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/3197152b-en>. [7]
- OECD (2022), *Engaging Employers in Vocational Education and Training in Brazil: Learning from International Practices*, OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/d76a2fe6-en>. [3]

- OECD (2018), *OECD Handbook for Internationally Comparative Education Statistics 2018: Concepts, Standards, Definitions and Classifications*, OECD Publishing, Paris, [12]
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264304444-en>.
- OECD (2018), *Seven Questions about Apprenticeships: Answers from International Experience*, OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training, OECD Publishing, Paris, [4]
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264306486-en>.
- Skolverket (2022), *Grundskolebetygens Betydelse för Resultaten i Gymnasieskolan*, Swedish National Agency for Education, [10]
<https://www.skolverket.se/publikationsserier/rapporter/2022/grundskolebetygens-betydelse-for-resultaten-i-gymnasieskolan>.
- Wydra-Somaggio, G. (2021), “Early termination of vocational training: Dropout or stopout?”, *Empirical Research in Vocational Education and Training*, Vol. 13/1, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40461-021-00109-z>. [5]

Indicator B3 Tables

Tables Indicator B3. Who is expected to complete upper secondary education?

Table B3.1	Completion rates of entrants to upper secondary education, by timeframe, programme orientation on entry and gender (2021)
Table B3.2	Distribution of entrants to upper secondary education, by programme orientation on entry, outcome and timeframe (2021)
Table B3.3	Status of upper secondary graduates in the year after their graduation, by gender and programme orientation (2020)

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

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 B3.1. Completion rates of entrants to upper secondary education, by timeframe, programme orientation on entry and gender (2021)

Completion rate of full-time students, graduating from any programme

	General programmes			Vocational programmes			Vocational programmes without direct access to tertiary education			Vocational programmes with direct access to tertiary education			Total upper secondary		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
True cohort – Completed upper secondary by theoretical duration															
OECD countries	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
Austria	55	64	60	51	61	55	68	36	54	51	61	55	52	62	57
Brazil	56	66	61	59	65	62	a	a	a	59	65	62	56	66	61
Canada ¹	77 ^d	84 ^d	81 ^d	x(1)	x(2)	x(3)	x(1)	x(2)	x(3)	a	a	a	77	84	81
Chile	72	79	76	65	71	68	a	a	a	65	71	68	70	78	74
Colombia	81	86	84	80	85	83	a	a	a	80	85	83	81	86	83
Denmark	79	84	81	m	m	m	a	a	a	m	m	m	79	84	81
Estonia	87	89	88	58	63	60	a	a	a	58	63	60	75	84	80
Finland	80	81	81	62	64	63	a	a	a	62	64	63	69	72	70
France ¹	74	80	77	70	77	73	59	66	61	77	81	79	72	79	76
Iceland	56	71	64	38	46	40	38 ^d	46 ^d	40 ^d	x(7)	x(8)	x(9)	51	68	60
Israel	85	97	91	92	97	94	80	85	81	94	97	95	88	97	92
Italy	76	81	79	51	60	55	19	21	19	53	62	57	60	73	66
Latvia	71	78	74	60	68	63	80	67	73	59	68	62	67	75	71
Lithuania	85	90	88	55	50	53	a	a	a	55	50	53	76	83	80
Luxembourg ²	67	73	70	37	43	40	37	34	36	37	47	42	45	54	50
New Zealand	71	79	75	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	71	79	75
Norway	77	84	81	41	61	49	a	a	a	41	61	49	58	75	67
Portugal	57	67	63	58	70	63	a	a	a	58	70	63	57	68	63
Slovenia	83	87	85	74	80	77	73	73	73	75	82	78	77	83	80
Spain	70	77	74	42	53	46	38	41	39	43	55	48	57	70	64
Sweden	76	81	79	72	71	72	a	a	a	72	71	72	75	79	77
Switzerland	69	74	72	72	79	75	67	75	70	72	79	75	71	77	74
United States	m	m	87	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	m	m	87
Other participants															
Flemish Comm. (Belgium)	78	88	84	61	72	66	55	64	59	66	77	71	69	81	75
French Comm. (Belgium)	51	67	59	33	44	38	29	32	30	37	53	45	45	61	54
Average	72	80	77	59	66	62	55	54	54	61	68	64	67	76	72
True cohort - Completed upper secondary education by the theoretical duration plus two years															
OECD countries	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
Austria	78	83	81	73	81	76	69	38	56	73	81	76	74	82	78
Brazil	64	73	68	67	72	70	a	a	a	67	72	70	64	73	68
Canada ¹	86 ^d	91 ^d	89 ^d	x(1)	x(2)	x(3)	x(1)	x(2)	x(3)	a	a	a	86	91	89
Chile	82	87	85	76	82	78	a	a	a	76	82	78	80	86	83
Colombia	91	93	92	90	93	92	a	a	a	90	93	92	91	93	92
Denmark	85	88	87	m	m	m	a	a	a	m	m	m	85	88	87
Estonia	92	94	93	66	69	67	a	a	a	66	69	67	82	89	86
Finland	90	93	92	71	73	72	a	a	a	71	73	72	78	83	80
France ¹	95	96	96	79	85	81	69	77	72	84	87	86	88	93	90
Iceland	65	79	73	50	55	51	50 ^d	55 ^d	51 ^d	x(7)	x(8)	x(9)	61	76	69
Israel	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Italy	90	91	90	68	73	70	50	59	53	70	74	71	76	84	80
Latvia	75	82	79	68	77	72	88	83	85	66	76	70	73	81	77
Lithuania	86	91	89	57	52	55	a	a	a	57	52	55	78	84	81
Luxembourg ²	90	91	91	69	76	72	63	61	63	72	81	77	75	82	78
New Zealand	82	87	84	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	82	87	84
Norway	87	92	89	68	73	70	a	a	a	68	73	70	77	85	81
Portugal	84	88	86	64	75	69	a	a	a	64	75	69	76	84	80
Slovenia	94	96	95	85	88	86	83	83	83	85	90	87	87	92	89
Spain	89	92	91	60	69	63	51	52	51	63	72	67	76	85	81
Sweden	81	86	84	76	76	76	a	a	a	76	76	76	80	84	82
Switzerland	92	94	93	89	92	90	79	85	81	90	93	91	89	93	91
United States	m	m	m	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	m	m	m
Other participants															
Flemish Comm. (Belgium)	93	95	94	78	84	81	66	75	70	87	91	89	85	90	88
French Comm. (Belgium)	88	94	91	59	69	64	47	51	49	71	82	77	79	88	83
Average	85	89	87	71	76	73	66	66	66	73	78	75	79	86	82
Cross cohort															
OECD countries	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
Costa Rica	70	77	74	59	64	62							67	73	70
Japan	95	95	95	93	93	93							95	94	94
Korea	97	96	97	91	90	91							96	95	96
Poland	93	94	93	77	80	78							82	88	85
Slovak Republic	92	96	94	91	90	91							91	92	92
Türkiye	96	97	97	64	78	70							78	88	82
Average	90	93	92	79	83	81							85	88	87

Note: See StatLink and Box B3.5 for the notes related to this Table.

Source: OECD - ad-hoc survey on upper secondary completion rates (2023). For more information see Source section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#), (OECD, 2023_[11]).

StatLink  <https://stat.link/26ld3m>

Table B3.2. Distribution of entrants to upper secondary education, by programme orientation on entry, outcome and timeframe (2021)

True cohort data only

	Status by the end of theoretical duration of the programme							Status by the end of the theoretical duration of the programme plus two years								
	Graduated				Still in education	Not graduated and not enrolled	Total	Graduated				Still in education	Not graduated and not enrolled	Total		
	From general programmes	From vocational programmes		Total				From general programmes	From vocational programmes		Total					
		Sufficient for level completion, without direct access to tertiary education	Sufficient for level completion, with direct access to tertiary education		Sufficient for level completion, without direct access to tertiary education	Sufficient for level completion, with direct access to tertiary education										
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)=(5)+(6)+(7)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)=(13)+(14)+(15)	
General programme entrants																
OECD countries																
Austria	57	0	3	3	60	29	11	100	73	0	8	8	81	5	14	100
Brazil	61	m	0	0	61	18	21	100	68	m	0	0	68	2	30	100
Canada ^{1,2}	81	a	a	a	81	m	m	m	89	a	a	a	89	m	m	m
Chile	60	a	15	15	76	18	6	100	66	a	19	19	85	2	13	100
Colombia	81	a	2	2	84	10	6	100	89	a	3	3	92	1	7	100
Denmark	81	0	0	0	81	9	9	100	86	0	1	1	87	3	10	100
Estonia	88	a	0	0	88	8	4	100	92	a	2	2	93	2	5	100
Finland	80	a	1	1	81	16	3	100	89	a	2	2	92	3	5	100
France ¹	76	0	1	1	77	22	1	100	91	1	4	5	96	1	3	100
Iceland	m	m	m	m	64	16	20	100	m	m	m	m	73	8	19	100
Israel	85	0	5	5	91	0	9	100	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Italy	77	0	2	2	79	12	9	100	85	0	5	6	90	0	9	100
Latvia	74	0	0	0	74	8	18	100	78	1	0	1	79	2	19	100
Lithuania	88	a	0	0	88	3	10	100	89	a	0	0	89	1	10	100
Luxembourg ³	69	0	1	1	70	26	4	100	85	0	6	6	91	6	4	100
New Zealand	74	1	0	1	75	20	5	100	81	3	0	3	84	4	12	100
Norway	81	a	0	0	81	7	12	100	89	a	1	1	89	2	9	100
Portugal	63	a	0	0	63	35	2	100	78	a	7	7	86	3	11	100
Slovenia	83	0	1	2	85	12	3	100	88	1	6	7	95	0	5	100
Spain	74	0	0	0	74	23	3	100	87	0	4	4	91	4	6	100
Sweden	78	a	1	1	79	7	14	100	82	a	2	2	84	0	16	100
Switzerland	71	0	1	1	72	25	3	100	88	0	5	5	93	4	3	100
Other participants																
Flemish Comm. (Belgium)	71	0	12	12	84	13	3	100	76	1	17	18	94	0	6	100
French Comm. (Belgium)	52	1	6	7	59	37	4	100	70	2	19	21	91	2	7	100
Average	75	0	2	2	76	16	8	100	83	1	5	5	87	3	10	100
Vocational programme entrants																
OECD countries																
Austria	0	0	55	55	55	36	9	100	0	0	76	76	76	7	17	100
Brazil	8	m	54	54	62	27	11	100	13	m	57	57	70	3	28	100
Canada ^{1,2}	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Chile	7	a	61	61	68	24	8	100	9	a	70	70	78	4	18	100
Colombia	8	a	75	75	83	11	6	100	13	a	79	79	92	1	7	100
Denmark	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Estonia	1	a	58	58	60	16	24	100	3	a	64	64	67	5	28	100
Finland	0	a	63	63	63	24	13	100	1	a	72	72	72	10	18	100
France ¹	0	26	47	73	73	19	8	100	1	30	50	80	81	1	18	100
Iceland	m	m	m	m	40	23	37	100	m	m	m	m	51	14	35	100
Israel	11	4	79	84	94	0	5	100	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Italy	0	2	52	54	55	19	26	100	1	2	67	69	70	1	28	100
Latvia	9	5	49	55	63	11	26	100	13	6	52	58	72	3	25	100
Lithuania	0	a	53	53	53	3	44	100	0	a	55	55	55	1	44	100
Luxembourg ³	0	20	20	40	40	45	15	100	0	36	36	72	72	13	15	100
New Zealand	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Norway	23	a	25	25	49	24	27	100	25	a	45	45	70	5	25	100
Portugal	0	a	63	63	63	25	12	100	1	a	67	67	69	3	28	100
Slovenia	0	24	53	77	77	16	8	100	0	28	58	86	86	0	14	100
Spain	0	9	37	46	46	34	19	100	0	12	51	63	63	7	29	100
Sweden	1	a	71	71	72	8	20	100	2	a	75	75	76	0	24	100
Switzerland	0	8	66	75	75	20	6	100	0	9	80	90	90	4	6	100
Other participants																
Flemish Comm. (Belgium)	1	31	34	65	66	21	13	100	1	38	41	80	81	1	18	100
French Comm. (Belgium)	0	17	21	38	38	41	21	100	1	29	34	63	64	5	31	100
Average	4	12	53	60	62	21	17	100	5	17	61	69	73	5	23	100

Note: See StatLink and Box B3.5 for the notes related to this Table.

Source: OECD - ad-hoc survey on upper secondary completion rates (2023). For more information see Source section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#), (OECD, 2023_[1]).

StatLink  <https://stat.link/r23atw>

Table B3.3. Status of upper secondary graduates in the year after their graduation, by gender and programme orientation (2020)

Any ISCED and/or non-ISCED programme

	Enrolled in an upper secondary general programme		Enrolled in an upper secondary vocational programme		Enrolled in a post-secondary non-tertiary programme		Enrolled in a short-cycle tertiary programme		Enrolled in a bachelor's or master's degree programme		Enrolled in another type of programme		Not enrolled	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	General programme graduates													
OECD countries	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Austria	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	24	58	0	0	75	40
Canada ¹	m	m	m	m	9	9	19	17	38	53	a	a	35	20
Chile	a	a	a	a	a	a	10	9	54	50	a	a	36	41
Colombia ²	0 ^d	0 ^d	0 ^d	0 ^d	1 ^d	2 ^d	15 ^d	14 ^d	26 ^d	25 ^d	0 ^d	0 ^d	58 ^d	59 ^d
Estonia	0	0	6	5	1	2	a	a	48	54	0	0	44	38
Finland ^d	0	0	2	5	0	0	a	a	55	53	a	a	43	42
Iceland ³	2	2	4	3	1	1	1	1	36	35	1	1	54	57
Italy ⁴	0	0	0	0	m	m	m	m	76	74	a	a	24 ^d	26 ^d
Lithuania	0	0	0	0	11	8	m	m	52	63	0	0	38	29
New Zealand	2	2	5	2	10	6	5	6	47	55	a	a	31	29
Norway	2	1	10	13	1	1	0	0	37	41	0	0	50	43
Portugal	0	0	a	a	a	a	1	1	77	80	a	a	21	19
Slovenia	1	1	4	5	a	a	3	2	87	88	0	0	6	5
Spain	0	0	3	3	m	m	21	18	62	67	0	0	14	12
Sweden	3	4	0	0	3	1	1	1	30	31	0	0	63	63
Switzerland	3	5	2	2	3	4	0	0	62	65	0	0	30	23
Other participants														
Flemish Comm. (Belgium)	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	89	91	m	m	10	8
Average	1	1	2	2	3	2	5	5	53	58	0	0	37	33
	Vocational programme graduates													
OECD countries	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Austria	0	0	0	0	0	1	25	37	0	0	0	0	74	62
Canada ¹	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Chile	a	a	a	a	a	a	23	22	24	23	a	a	54	55
Colombia ²	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Estonia	1	1	6	6	3	4	a	a	6	6	0	0	84	82
Finland ^d	0	0	4	7	0	0	a	a	10	11	a	a	86	81
Iceland ³	3	4	8	5	5	1	0	1	8	20	1	2	75	67
Italy ⁴	0	0	2	1	m	m	m	m	26	32	a	a	73 ^d	67 ^d
Lithuania	0	0	0	0	1	1	m	m	2	5	0	0	98	94
New Zealand	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Norway	4	11	4	3	0	3	4	1	2	3	0	0	86	80
Portugal	0	0	a	a	a	a	15	11	5	6	a	a	80	83
Slovenia	1	3	29	20	a	a	16	11	28	39	0	0	27	27
Spain	1	1	15	10	m	m	39	33	0	0	0	0	45	56
Sweden	3	7	0	1	1	1	2	0	1	7	0	0	93	84
Switzerland	7	9	8	6	1	3	0	0	6	8	0	0	77	74
Other participants														
Flemish Comm. (Belgium)	0	0	35	36	4	2	3	4	41	47	m	m	17	11
Average	1	2	7	6	1	1	10	9	11	14	0	0	65	62

Note: See StatLink and Box B3.5 for the notes related to this Table.

Source: OECD - ad-hoc survey on upper secondary completion rates (2023). For more information see Source section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#), (OECD, 2023^[1])

StatLink  <https://stat.link/4spdqz>

Box B3.5. Notes for Indicator B3 tables

Table B3.1. Completion rates of entrants to upper secondary education, by timeframe, programme orientation on entry and gender (2021)

The data presented in this table only concern initial education programmes so do not include adult education. For true cohort data, the reference year (2021, unless noted otherwise) refers to the year of graduation by the theoretical duration plus two years.

1 Year of reference differs from 2021: 2020 for Canada; 2017 for France.

2 The data concern only pupils in the public educational system.

Table B3.2. Distribution of entrants to upper secondary education, by programme orientation on entry, outcome and timeframe (2021)

The data presented in this table only concern initial education programmes, so do not include adult education. For true cohort data, the reference year (2021, unless noted otherwise) refers to the year of graduation by the theoretical duration plus two years. Students who continued their studies in the adult education system are included in the columns for “not graduated and not enrolled”.

1 Year of reference differs from 2021: 2020 for Canada; 2017 for France.

2 Quebec vocational graduates included in general programme data.

3 The data concern only pupils in the public educational system.

Table B3.3. Status of upper secondary graduates in the year after their graduation, by gender and programme orientation (2020)

The data presented in this table only concern initial education programmes, so do not include adult education. The reference year is 2020, unless noted otherwise.

1 Year of reference differs from 2020: 2018 for Canada; 2021 for Finland.

2 Data for vocational graduates are included in the data for graduates of general programmes.

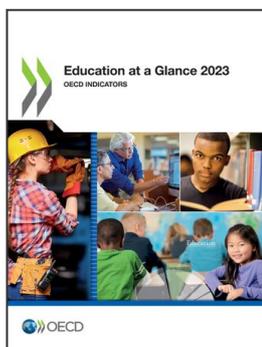
3 Other type of programme shows students who have received a public student loan to study abroad in the autumn of 2019 and are not students in schools in Iceland.

4 Data presented in the category "not enrolled" (see columns 13 & 14) includes enrolments into post-secondary non-tertiary and short-cycle tertiary.

For more information see *Definitions, Methodology and Source* sections and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#) (OECD, 2023^[1]).

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.



From:
Education at a Glance 2023
OECD Indicators

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/e13bef63-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2023), "Who is expected to complete upper secondary education?", in *Education at a Glance 2023: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/df5faf52-en>

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>.