

## 5. THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

### How much time do teachers spend teaching?

- Public-school teachers teach an average of 1 001 hours per year at the pre-primary level, 782 hours at the primary level, 694 hours at the lower secondary level and 655 hours at the upper secondary level of education.
- The amount of teaching time increased or decreased by at least 10% between 2000 and 2012 in primary, lower secondary and/or upper secondary education in about one third of the countries with available data.
- The way teachers' working time is regulated varies significantly among countries, from hours per year to number of lessons per week.

#### Significance

This section examines the time teachers spend teaching and doing non-teaching work, such as preparing lessons and assessing students. Although working time and teaching time only partly determine teachers' actual workload, they do provide valuable insights into differences in what is required of teachers in different countries. Teaching hours and the extent of non-teaching duties may also affect the attractiveness of teaching as a profession. The amount of time that teachers spend teaching is also one of the factors that affect the financial resources countries need to allocate to education.

#### Findings

The average number of teaching hours in public pre-primary schools is 1 001 hours per year, but ranges from 532 hours in Mexico to over 1 500 hours in Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Public primary school teachers teach an average of 782 hours per year, but teaching time ranges from less than 570 hours in Greece and the Russian Federation to over 1 000 hours in Chile, Indonesia and the United States. The number of teaching hours in public lower secondary schools averages 694 hours per year, but ranges from 415 hours in Greece to over 1 000 hours in Argentina, Chile, Mexico and the United States. Teachers in public upper secondary schools teach an average of 655 hours per year, but this ranges from 369 hours in Denmark to over 1 000 hours in Argentina, Chile and the United States.

Pre-primary teachers are required to teach around 25% more hours than primary school teachers, on average; but the actual time during which teachers are required to be

working at school, or their total working time, is often equivalent for these two levels of education.

#### Trends

Teaching time varied by at least 10% for at least one level of education between 2000 and 2012 in about one third of the countries with available data. The number of teaching hours changed dramatically in a few countries: it increased by 26% in Spain at the secondary level. In contrast, net teaching time dropped by around 20% between 2000 and 2012 in Korea at primary level and by around 10% in Mexico (lower secondary level), in the Netherlands (lower and upper secondary levels) and in Scotland (primary level).

#### Definitions

Statutory teaching time is defined as the scheduled number of 60-minute hours per year that a full-time teacher teaches a group or class of students as set by policy. Working time refers to the number of hours that a full-time teacher is expected to work. According to a country's formal policy, it can refer to time directly associated with teaching as well as the hours devoted to teaching-related activities, such as preparing lessons, counselling students, correcting assignments and tests, and meeting with parents and other staff. Data are from the 2013 OECD-INES Survey on Teachers and the Curriculum and refer to the 2011-12 school year.

Information on data for Israel:  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

#### Going further

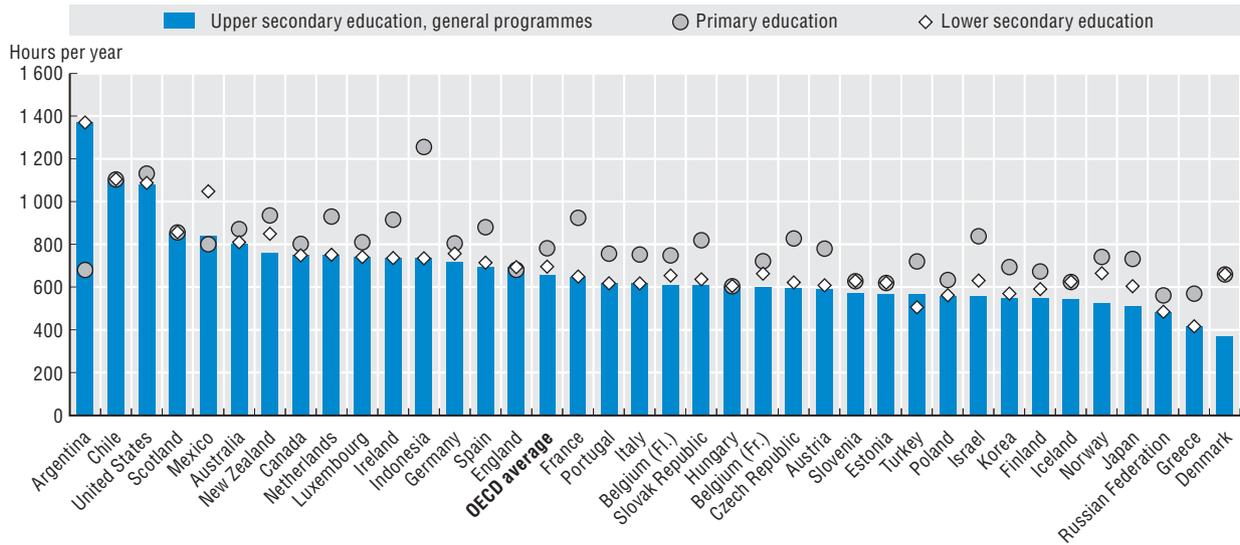
For additional material, notes and a full explanation of sourcing and methodologies, see *Education at a Glance 2014* (Indicator D4).

Areas covered include:

- Organisation of teachers' working time.
- Trends of number of teaching hours per year, by level of education.

Figure 5.7. Annual teaching hours by education level, 2012

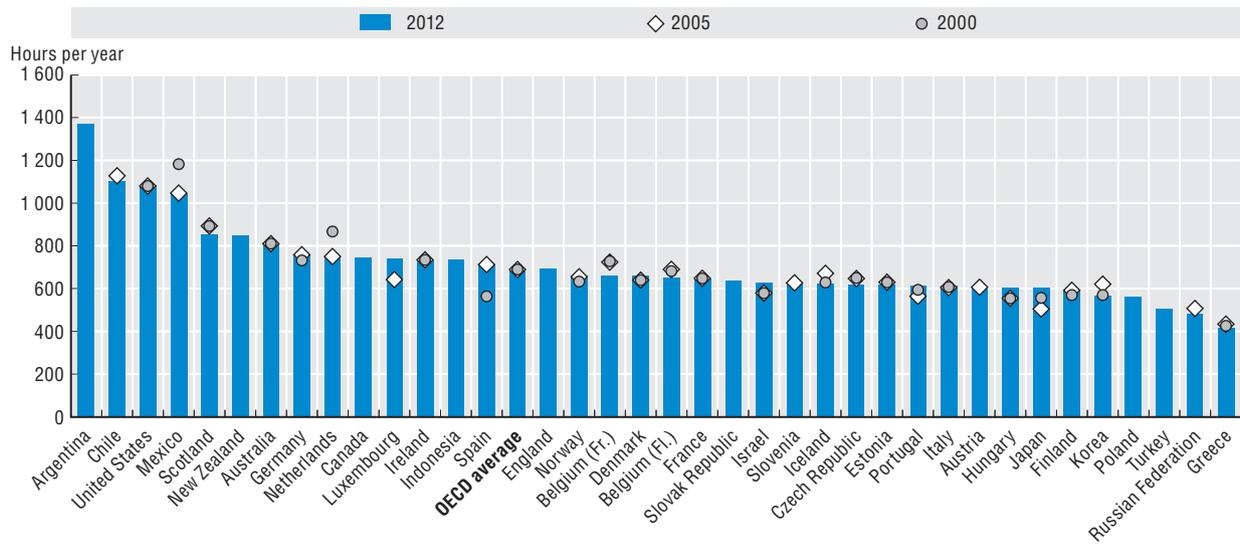
This figure shows the variation in annual teaching hours for teachers in different levels of education.



Source: OECD (2014), Education at a Glance 2014, Chart D4.2, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933120081>.

Figure 5.8. Trends in annual teaching hours in lower secondary education (2000, 2005, 2012)

This figure shows the trends in the number of hours teachers actually spent teaching.



Source: OECD (2014), Education at a Glance 2014, Chart D4.1, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933120062>.



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