

Latvia

Highlights

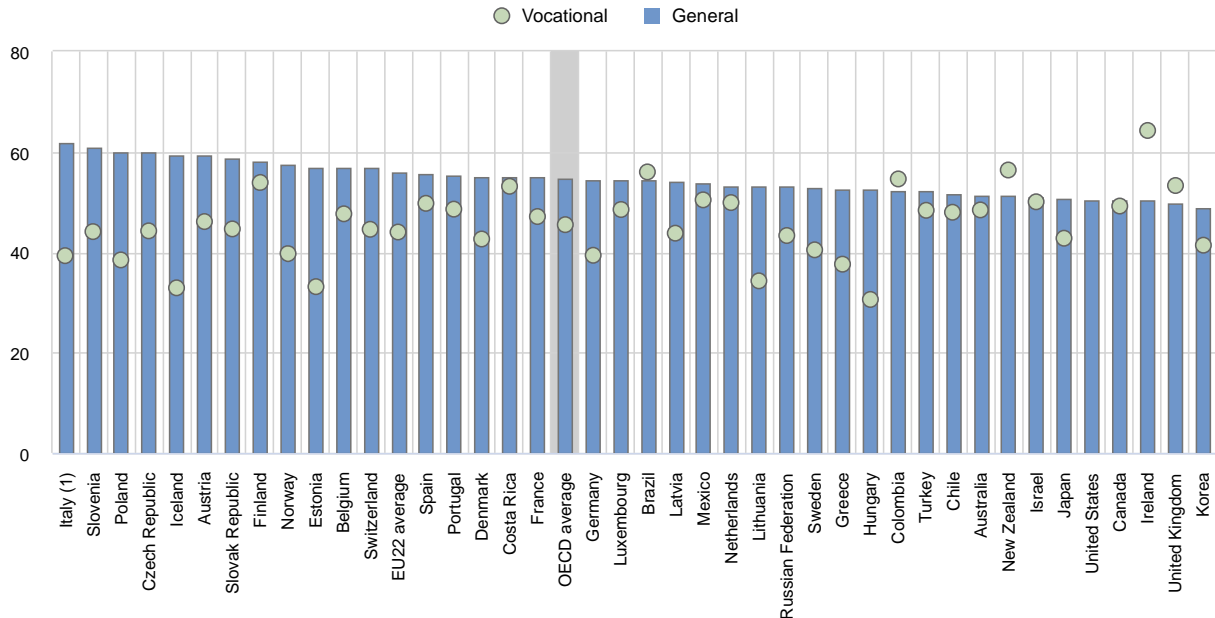
- In Latvia, among tertiary-educated adults, 88% of native-born adults and 79% of foreign-born adults are employed, a similar rate to the OECD average.
- Following efforts to contain the COVID-19 crisis, traditional classroom schooling was disrupted around the world. In Latvia, pre-primary schools did not close at all between 1 January 2020 and 20 May 2021. Meanwhile primary schools closed for 67 days, lower secondary for 74 days and upper secondary general schools for 105 days. In comparison, respective closures were 56, 79, 94 and 102 days on average across the OECD.
- Despite the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on employment, the share of NEETs among 18-24 year-olds did not change significantly in Latvia as in most OECD and partner countries between 2019 and 2020.
- Capital costs represent a higher-than-average share of expenditure on primary to tertiary institutions in Latvia, representing 17% of total spending on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary institutions compared to 8% on average across OECD countries.
- In 2018, Latvia allocated 74% of its current expenditure to staff compensation, the same as the average across OECD countries.
- Latvia has one of the lowest teacher salary costs per pupil in primary school, among OECD countries, mostly due to lower than average teacher salaries and shorter instruction time.

Gender inequalities in education and outcomes

- The share of repeaters in lower and upper secondary education is generally low across OECD countries. In Latvia, 1.3% of students in lower secondary and 0.2% in upper secondary initial education repeated a grade in 2019, compared to 1.9% and 3% respectively on average across the OECD. Boys are more likely to repeat a grade at lower secondary initial education than girls. In Latvia, 64% of repeaters at lower secondary level were boys, higher than the OECD average of 61%. At upper secondary level, the share of boys repeating a grade in Latvia decreases to 60%, compared to 57% on average across OECD countries.
- Men are more likely than women to pursue a vocational track at upper secondary level in most OECD countries. This is also the case in Latvia, where 56% of upper secondary vocational graduates in 2019 were men (compared to the OECD average of 55%). Women are generally more likely to graduate from upper secondary general programmes. This is also the case in Latvia, where women represent 54% of graduates from upper secondary general programmes, compared to 55% on average across OECD countries (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Share of women among upper secondary graduates, by programme orientation (2019)

In per cent



1. Includes post-secondary non-tertiary level.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the share of women in general programmes.

Source: OECD (2021). Table B3.1. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterB.pdf).

- Tertiary education has been expanding in the last decades, and, in 2020, 25-34 year-old women were more likely than men to achieve tertiary education in all OECD countries. In Latvia, 55% of 25-34 year-old women had a tertiary qualification in 2020 compared to 34% of their male peers, while on average across OECD countries the shares were 52% among young women and 39% among young men.
- Gender differences in the distribution of tertiary entrants across fields of study are significant. Women tend to be under-represented in certain fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) across most OECD countries. On average, 26% of new entrants in engineering, manufacturing and construction and 20% in information and communication technologies were women in 2019. In Latvia, women represented 23% of new entrants in engineering, manufacturing and construction programmes and 20% in information and communication technologies in Latvia. In contrast, they represented 90% of new entrants to the field of education, a sector traditionally dominated by women. In Latvia, men represent 16% of teachers across all levels of education, compared to 30% on average across OECD countries.
- Young women are less likely to be employed than young men, particularly those with lower levels of education. Only 50% of 25-34 year-old women with below upper secondary attainment were employed in 2020 compared to 70% of men in Latvia. This gender difference is smaller than the average across OECD countries, where 43% of women and 69% of men with below upper secondary attainment are employed.
- In nearly all OECD countries and at all levels of educational attainment, 25-64 year-old women earn less than their male peers: their earnings correspond to 76%-78% of men's earnings on

average across OECD countries. This proportion varies more across educational attainment levels within countries than on average across OECD countries. Compared to other education levels, women with below upper secondary education have the lowest earnings relative to men with a similar education level, earning 70% as much, while those with tertiary education earn 80% as much.

- Women are generally more likely than men to participate in adult education in most OECD countries. This is the case in Latvia, where 52% of women participated compared to 43% of men in 2016. Costs were the most commonly reported obstacle for participation in adult education in Latvia both for women (60%) and men (48%), followed by schedule (44% of women and 48% of men). Family responsibilities were reported as barriers to lifelong learning by 35% of women compared to 24% of men.

Ensuring equal opportunities for students across socio-economic backgrounds

- Socio-economic status may impact significantly students' participation in education, particularly at levels of education that rely most heavily on private expenditure, such as early childhood education and care and tertiary education. This is less the case in Latvia at pre-primary level: in 2018, private sources accounted for 4% of total expenditure in pre-primary institutions, lower than the OECD average of 17%. At tertiary level, 31% of expenditure comes from private sources in Latvia, compared to 30% on average across OECD countries
- Across most OECD countries, socio-economic status influences learning outcomes more than gender and immigrant status. In Latvia, the proportion of children from the bottom quartile of the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS) achieving at least PISA level 2 in reading in 2018 was 22% lower than that of children from the top ESCS quartile, a smaller difference than the OECD average of 29%.
- International and foreign student mobility at tertiary level has risen steadily in Latvia from 5% of tertiary students in 2014 to 10% (about 8 400 students) in 2019. The largest share of international tertiary students studying in Latvia come from India. Students from lower-income countries are generally less likely to benefit from an experience studying abroad. In 2019, 29% of international students in OECD countries came from low and lower-middle income countries. In contrast, 51% of international students studying in Latvia come from low and lower-middle income countries.
- Large differences in educational attainment may lead to starker earnings inequality in many countries. In Latvia, 9% of 25-64 year-old adults with below upper secondary attainment earned at or below half the median earnings in 2019, below the OECD average of 27%.

Education and migration background

- On average across the OECD, foreign-born adults (25-64 year-olds) account for 22% of all adults with below upper secondary attainment, 14% of those attaining upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment, and 18% of tertiary-educated adults. However, in Latvia, the share of foreign-born adults among all adults with a given level of educational attainment is the highest among adults with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment (11% in 2020).
- Foreign-born adults have more difficulty finding a job than their native-born peers, as they face various challenges, such as discrepancies in credential recognition, skills and language. Thus, foreign-born workers are likely to have a lower reservation wage (the lowest wage rate at which a worker would be willing to accept a particular type of job), and this implies that they are more likely to accept any job they can get. This may explain the fact that, in many countries, the employment rate for foreign-born adults with low educational attainment is higher than the rate for their native-

born peers. On average across OECD countries, among adults without upper secondary attainment, 57% of native-born adults are employed, compared to 61% of foreign-born adults. In Latvia, however, the employment rate of foreign-born adults without upper secondary attainment was 56% in 2020, lower than that of their native-born peers (65%).

- The likelihood of being employed increases with the level of educational attainment, but foreign-born adults with tertiary attainment generally have lower employment prospects than their native-born peers. On average across OECD countries, 86% of native-born tertiary-educated adults are employed compared to 79% for foreign-born tertiary-educated adults. In Latvia, among tertiary-educated adults, 88% of native-born adults and 79% of foreign-born adults are employed. Since foreign-born adults who arrived in the country at an early age have spent some years in the education system of the host country and gained credentials recognised by the host country, their labour-market outcomes are better than of those who arrived at a later age with a foreign qualification. In Latvia, among foreign-born adults with tertiary attainment, 80% of those who arrived by the age of 15 are employed, while 78% of those who arrived in the country at age 16 or later are employed.
- In many OECD countries, foreign-born adults earn less than native-born adults. This pay gap may narrow with higher levels of educational attainment. On average across OECD countries, foreign-born adults with below secondary attainment working full-time earn 89% as much as their native-born peers, while this gap disappears among tertiary-educated adults. In Latvia, in 2019, among adults with below upper secondary attainment, the earnings of foreign-born full-time workers represented 97% that of their native-born peers, 94% among adults with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment, and 93% among those with a tertiary-education.

COVID-19: 18 months into the pandemic

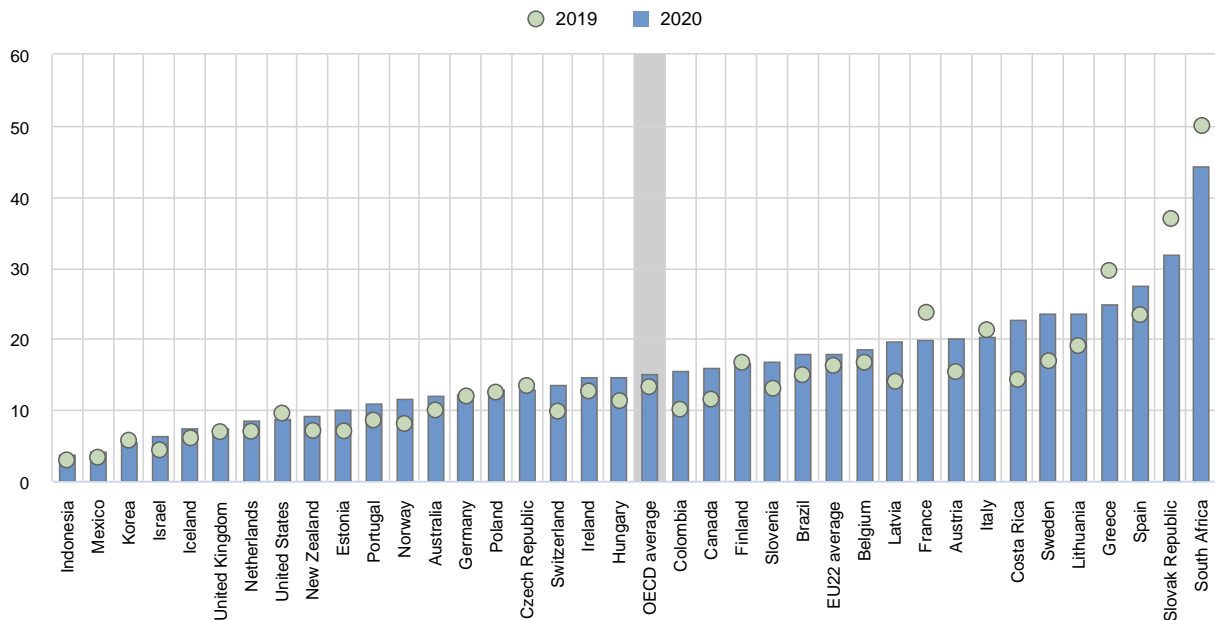
- The spread of COVID-19 has continued to impede access to in-person education in many countries around the world in 2021. By mid-May 2021, 37 OECD and partner countries had experienced periods of full school closure since the start of 2020. The number of instructional days when schools were fully closed since the start of 2020 due to the pandemic (excluding school holidays, public holidays and weekends) varies significantly between countries and increases with the level of education. Latvia follows this pattern. In Latvia, pre-primary schools did not close at all between 1 January 2020 and 20 May 2021. Meanwhile primary schools closed for 67 days, lower secondary for 74 days and upper secondary general schools for 105 days. In comparison, respective closures were 55, 78, 92 and 101 days on average across the OECD.
- In many countries, schools did not fully close but remained open with reduced capacity. Schools at upper secondary (general) level in Latvia, for instance, experienced 38 days of partial opening between January 2020 and May 2021, all of which took place in 2021. This was lower than the total number of days of partial opening in the OECD on average (57 days), where there were 27 days of partially open instruction in 2020, and 30 days in 2021.
- During periods of full school closure in 2020, 21 OECD and partner countries have opted to keep upper secondary general schools virtually open as a national level strategy, including Latvia. However, 4 countries, excluding Latvia, deployed distance learning strategies that were not equivalent to a full replacement for each day of in-person instruction. The way that online platforms have operated during school closures has varied between countries. In Latvia, decisions on how online platforms should operate were made at the local level from primary to tertiary education.
- The impact of COVID-19 and school closures on educational equity has been a concern for many countries. 30 out of the 36 OECD and partner countries surveyed, including Latvia, declared that additional measures were taken to support the education of children who might face additional barriers to learning during the pandemic. 22 of these countries, including Latvia, stated that they

had subsidised devices for students to help them access education. Measures to encourage disadvantaged or vulnerable students to return to school after closures were also implemented in 29 OECD and partner countries, including in Latvia.

- Countries have faced difficult decisions on how to best manage their resources to ensure that students can continue to access quality education in the safest possible conditions and to minimise disruption to learning. Before the pandemic, total public expenditure on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education in Latvia reached 2.7% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2018, which was lower than the OECD average of 3.2%. About two-thirds of OECD and partner countries reported increases in the funding allocated to primary and secondary schools to help them cope with the crisis in 2020. Compared to the previous year, Latvia reported an increase in the fiscal year education budget for primary and lower secondary general education in both 2020 and 2021.
- 20 OECD and partner countries, although not Latvia, stated that the allocation of additional public funds to support the educational response to the pandemic in primary and secondary schools was based on the number of students or classes. To ensure resources were targeted to those that needed them most, the allocation of additional funds in Latvia was based on the socio-economic characteristics of schools and special education needs.
- Countries' approach to prioritise teachers in vaccination campaigns against COVID-19 has varied. In total, 19 OECD and partner countries, including Latvia, have prioritised teachers as part of the government's plans to vaccinate the population (as of 20 May 2021).
- The impact of the pandemic on the economy has raised concerns about the prospects of young adults, especially those leaving education earlier than others. In Latvia, the unemployment rate among 25-34 year-olds with below upper secondary attainment was 19.7% in 2020, an increase of 6 percentage points from the previous year. This was a higher increase than the OECD average, where the youth unemployment rate of 15.1% in 2020 represented an increase of 2 percentage points from 2019 (Figure 2).
- At the same time, the number of adults participating in formal and/or non-formal education and training decreased by 27% on average between the second quarter of 2019 and the second quarter of 2020 (i.e. during the peak of the first wave of COVID-19 in many OECD countries). Similarly, the participation of adults in formal and/or non-formal education and training in this period decreased by 44% in Latvia following the widespread lockdown restrictions and the interruption of onsite learning. However, data suggest that participation in formal and non-formal education and training increased again in Latvia during the third and fourth quarter of 2020.
- Despite the impact of the crisis on employment, the share of NEETs among 18-24 year-olds did not greatly increase in most OECD and partner countries during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. On average, the share of 18-24 year-old NEETs in OECD countries rose from 14.4% in 2019 to 16.1% in 2020. In Latvia, the share of 18-24 year-old NEETs was 10.9% in 2019, which decreased to 10.7% in 2020.

Figure 2. Trends in unemployment rates of 25-34 year-olds with below upper secondary attainment (2019 and 2020)

In per cent



Compare your country: <https://www.compareyourcountry.org/education-at-a-glance-2021/en/2/3044+3045+3046/trend//OAVG>

Countries are ranked in ascending order of the unemployment rate of 25-34 year-olds with below upper secondary attainment in 2020.

Source: OECD (2021), Table A3.3. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterA.pdf).

Investing in education

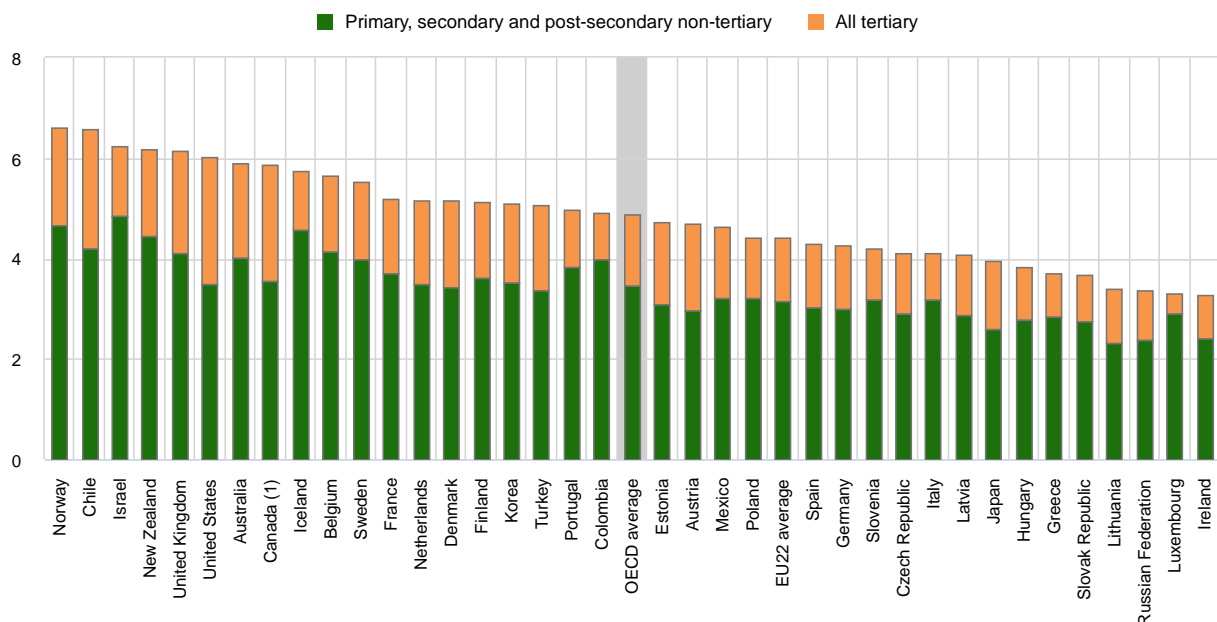
- Annual expenditure per student on educational institutions provides an indication of the investment countries make on each student. After accounting for public-to-private transfers, public expenditure on primary to tertiary educational institutions per full-time student in Latvia was USD 6 450 in 2018 (in equivalent USD converted using PPPs for GDP) compared to USD 10 000 on average across OECD countries.
- Expenditure on core educational services such as instruction and teaching make up the largest share of education expenditure. However, ancillary services (such as student welfare) and research and development (R&D) activities also influence the level of expenditure per student. In primary to tertiary education, 90% of institutions' expenditure per student is devoted to core educational services in Latvia (compared to 89% on average across OECD countries). This share is generally lower at the tertiary level, including in Latvia where 71% of total expenditure is devoted to core educational services.
- The provision of education across public and private institutions influences the allocation of resources between levels of education and types of institution. In 2018, Latvia spent USD 7 076 per student at primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education, USD 3 378 lower than the OECD average of USD 10 454. At tertiary level, Latvia invested USD 10 309 per student, USD 6 756 less than the OECD average. Expenditure per student on public educational institutions is higher than on private institutions on average across OECD countries. However, this is not the

case in Latvia, where total expenditure on primary to tertiary public institutions amounts to USD 7 061 per student, compared to USD 10 286 on private institutions.

- Between 2012 and 2018, expenditure per student from primary to tertiary education increased at an average annual growth rate of 1.6% across OECD countries. In Latvia, expenditure on educational institutions grew at an average annual rate of 2.3%, while the number of students fell on average by 0.6% per year over this period. This resulted in an average annual growth rate of 3% in expenditure per student over this period.
- Among OECD countries, Latvia was among the countries that spent the lowest proportion of its GDP on primary to tertiary educational institutions. In 2018, Latvia spent 4.1% of GDP on primary to tertiary educational institutions, which is 0.8 percentage points lower than the OECD average. Across levels of education, Latvia devoted a lower share of GDP than the OECD average at both non-tertiary and tertiary levels (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Total expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (2018)

In per cent



Compare your country: <https://www.compareyourcountry.org/education-at-a-glance-2021/en/5/3059+3060+3061+3062+3063+3064/default>

1. Primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education includes pre-primary programmes.

Countries are ranked in descending order of total expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP.

Source: OECD (2021), Table C2.1. See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterC.pdf).

- Capital costs represent a higher-than-average share of expenditure on primary to tertiary institutions in Latvia. At primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary level, capital costs account for 17% of total spending on educational institutions, 9 percentage points above the OECD average (8%). At the tertiary level, capital costs represent 17%, higher than the average across OECD countries of 11%.
- Compensation of teachers and other staff employed in educational institutions represents the largest share of current expenditure from primary to tertiary education. In 2018, Latvia allocated

74% of its current expenditure to staff compensation, the same as the average across OECD countries. Staff compensation tends to make up a smaller share of current expenditure on tertiary institutions due to the higher costs of facilities and equipment at this level. In Latvia, staff compensation represents 65% of current expenditure on tertiary institutions compared to 77% at non-tertiary levels. On average across OECD countries, the share is 68% at tertiary level and 77% at non-tertiary level.

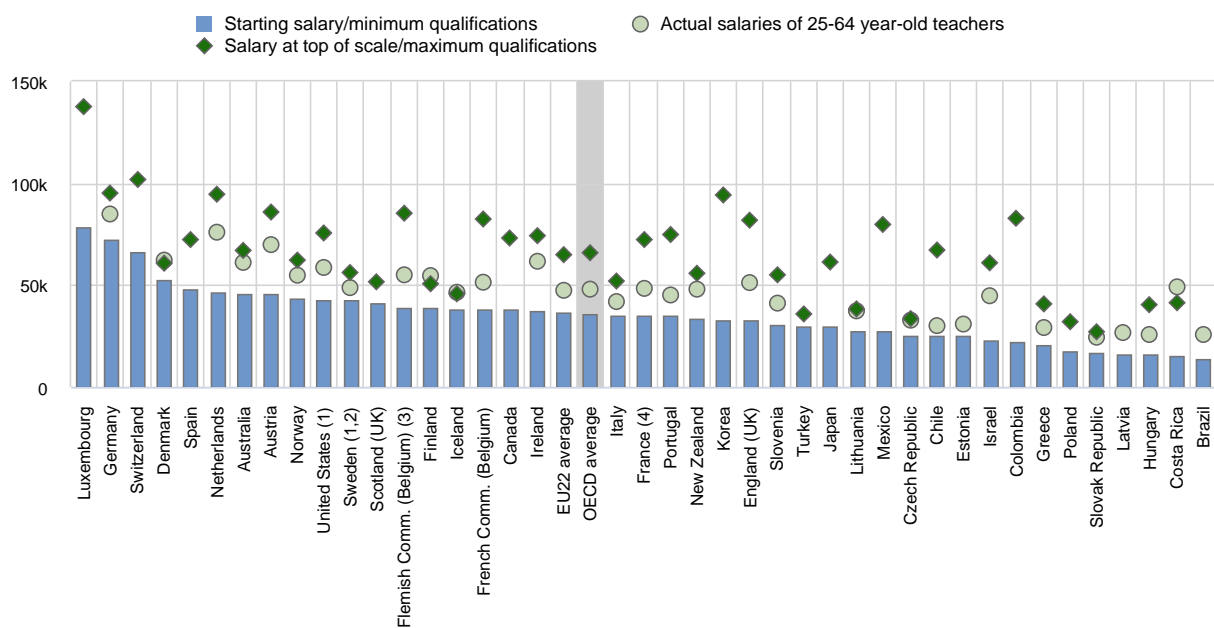
Working conditions of school teachers

- Teachers' actual salaries reflect their statutory salaries and additional work-related payments. Average actual salaries also depend on the characteristics of the teaching population such as their age, level of experience and qualification level. In Latvia, teachers' actual salaries depend on the type of education institution and the type of education programme: they amount to USD 21 089 (after conversion to USD using PPPs for private consumption) at the pre-primary level (ISCED 02), USD 27 047 at the primary level, USD 26 678 at the general lower secondary level and USD 29 209 at the general upper secondary level. On average across OECD countries, teachers' average actual salaries were USD 40 707, USD 45 687, USD 47 988 and USD 51 749 at the pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary level respectively (Figure 4).
- The cost of teachers' salaries per student is analysed using four factors: teachers' salaries, instruction time of students, teachers' teaching time and theoretical class size. Different combinations of these four factors lead to different levels of teacher salary costs per student. Latvia has one of the lowest teacher salary costs per pupil in primary school, among OECD countries, mostly due to lower than average teacher salaries and shorter instruction time.
- Teachers' average actual salaries remained lower than those of tertiary-educated workers in almost all countries, and at almost all levels of education. Teachers' average actual salaries at pre-primary (ISCED 02), primary and general secondary levels of education were between 81% and 96% of the earnings of tertiary-educated workers on average across OECD countries and economies. In Latvia, the proportion ranged from 107% to 148% at pre-primary, primary and general secondary levels of education.
- However, there are significant differences in relative salaries of teachers between men and women due to the gender gap in earnings on the labour market (statutory salaries are equal for male and female teachers in public educational institutions). Compared to salaries of tertiary educated workers, average actual salaries of teachers are higher for women, and lower for men. In Latvia, the proportion ranges from 150% to 162% for women (98% to 110% on average across OECD countries and economies), and from 118% to 129% for men (76% to 85% on average across OECD countries and economies) in primary and general secondary education.
- Women are over-represented among primary, lower secondary and upper secondary teachers (representing respectively 82%, 68% and 60% of teachers at these levels on average across OECD countries in 2019). However, women are under-represented in tertiary education (44% of tertiary teachers on average). In Latvia, the proportion of female teachers ranged from 92% at the primary level to 84% at lower secondary level, 81% at upper secondary level, and 55% at the tertiary level in 2019.
- 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: it ranged from 989 hours at pre-primary level (ISCED 02), to 791 hours at primary level, 723 hours at lower secondary level (general programmes) and 685 hours at upper secondary level (general programmes) in 2020. In Latvia, teachers are required to teach 1 368 hours per year at pre-primary level, 640 hours per year at primary level, 768 hours at lower secondary level (general programmes) and 726 hours at upper secondary level (general programmes).

- During their working time, teachers also perform various non-teaching tasks such as lesson planning and preparation, marking students' work and communicating or co-operating with parents or guardians. At the lower secondary level, teachers in Latvia spend 58% of their statutory working time on teaching, compared to 44% on average among countries with available data.
- In primary and secondary education, about 35% of teachers on average across OECD countries will reach retirement age in the next decade, while the size of the school-age population is projected to increase in some countries, putting many governments under pressure to recruit and train new teachers. In 2019, 39% of primary teachers in Latvia were at least 50 years old, which was higher than the OECD average of 33%. On average across OECD countries, the proportion of teachers aged at least 50 years old increases with higher levels of education taught, to 36% in lower secondary education and 40% in upper secondary education. In Latvia, this proportion varies from 50% at lower secondary level to 51% at upper secondary level.

Figure 4. Lower secondary teachers' average actual salaries compared to the statutory starting and top of the scale salaries (2020)

Annual statutory salaries of teachers in public institutions, in equivalent USD converted using PPPs



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Note: Actual salaries include bonuses and allowances.

1. Actual base salaries.
2. Salaries at the top of the scale and the minimum qualifications, instead of the maximum qualifications.
3. Salaries at the top of the scale and the most prevalent qualifications, instead of the maximum qualifications.
4. Includes the average of fixed bonuses for overtime hours.

Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of starting salaries for lower secondary teachers with the minimum qualifications.

Source: OECD (2021), Table D3.3 and Education at a Glance Database, <http://stats.oecd.org>. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3_ChapterD.pdf).

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More information

For more information on Education at a Glance 2021 and to access the full set of Indicators, see: <https://doi.org/10.1787/b35a14e5-en>

For more information on the methodology used during the data collection for each indicator, the references to the sources and the specific notes for each country, see Annex 3 (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3.pdf).

For general information on the methodology, please refer to the OECD Handbook for Internationally Comparative Education Statistics: Concepts, Standards, Definitions and Classifications (<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264304444-en>).

Updated data can be found on line at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-data-en> and by following the *StatLinks 2* under the tables and charts in the publication.

Data on subnational regions for selected indicators are available in the *OECD Regional Statistics (database)* (OECD, 2021). When interpreting the results on subnational entities, readers should take into account that the population size of subnational entities can vary widely within countries. For example, regional variation in enrolment may be influenced by students attending school in a different region from their area of residence, particularly at higher levels of education. Also, regional disparities tend to be higher when more subnational entities are used in the analysis.

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The data on educational responses during COVID-19 were collected and processed by the OECD based on the Survey on Joint National Responses to COVID-19 School Closures, a collaborative effort conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS); the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the World Bank; and the OECD.

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