

Education at a Glance 2022

OECD Indicators



France

Highlights

- Between 2000 and 2021, the share of 25-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment in France increased by 19 percentage points (from 31% in 2000 to 50% in 2021). France is one of the 14 OECD countries where at least half of 25-34 year-olds have a tertiary education.
- In France, only 39% of 25-34 year-old women with below upper secondary attainment were employed in 2021, compared to 86% of those with tertiary attainment. In contrast, the figures were 62% and 89% for men the same age. All these figures are close to the OECD averages.
- In France, 88% of 25-64 year-olds with a tertiary ICT qualification in 2021 are employed (the OECD average is 90%), but ICT students made up only 3% of new entrants into tertiary education in 2020. This is below the OECD average of 6%.
- In 2020, only 36% of bachelor's students graduated within the theoretical programme duration. This figure increases to 71% after three additional years (the OECD averages are respectively 39% and 68%).
- In 2019, OECD countries spent on average 4.9% of their gross domestic product (GDP) on primary to tertiary educational institutions. In France, the corresponding share was 5.2%. The average expenditure per student in tertiary education in France was USD 18 136 in 2019, which is about USD 8 800 higher than that of the primary level and USD 4 700 higher than that of the secondary level. At 30%, the share of research and development (R&D) expenditure in tertiary education is close to the OECD average (29%).
- In France, a master's degree has been the required level of qualification since the 2010/11 school year to teach in pre-primary education, making France one of the countries requiring a particularly high level of qualification in 2021 (for most other countries, only a bachelor's degree is required to teach at this level).
- Despite an increase of 4% between 2015 and 2021 the statutory salaries of teachers with 15 years of experience (and the most prevalent qualifications, i.e. having passed the CRPE competitive examination) remained at USD 40 043 per year in France in 2020-2021, 19% below the OECD average of USD 49 245.
- The average real earnings of teachers (reflecting statutory salaries and additional work-related payments) remain below the earnings of workers with tertiary education in almost all OECD countries. In 2019 in France, teachers in lower secondary education earned 13% less than other workers aged 25-64 with tertiary attainment, those in pre-primary and elementary education 20% and 22% less respectively, and those in upper secondary education 3% less.
- For the 2020/2021 school year, the required annual teaching hours in France were 900 hours per year at pre-primary and primary level, and 720 hours at secondary level (general programmes) for *professeurs certifiés*. With the exception of the pre-primary level, these figures are above the OECD averages.

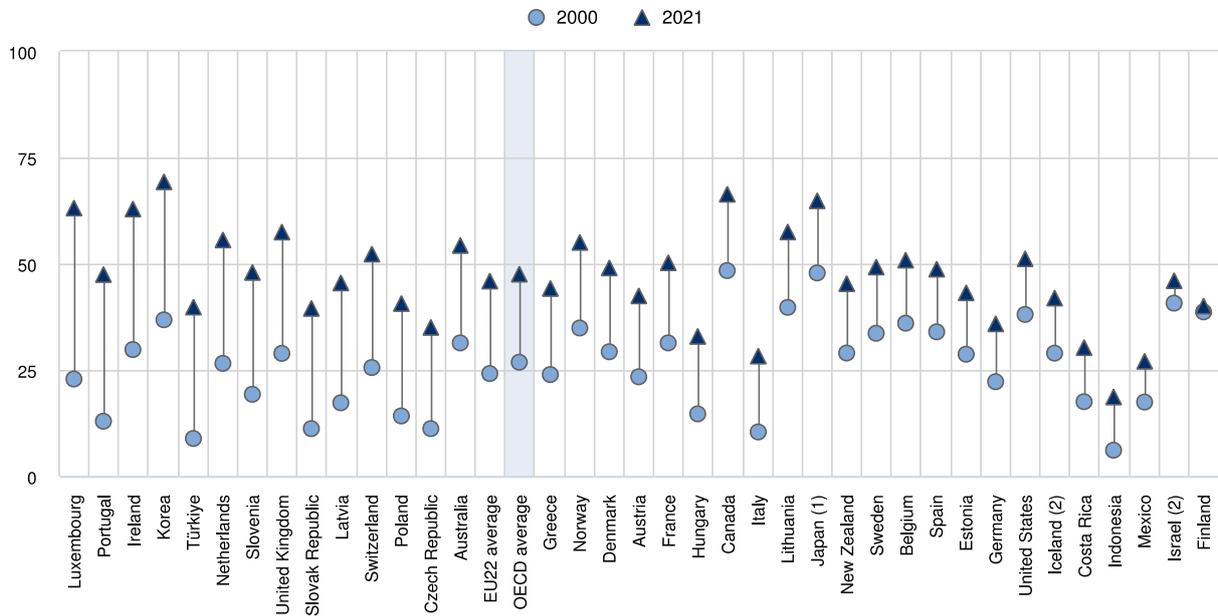
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, school closures in France were shorter than in many OECD countries. Pre-schools and primary schools were entirely closed for 29 days in 2020 and for 5 days in 2021, and stayed completely open in 2022, while lower secondary schools were entirely closed for 34 days in 2020 and 10 days in 2021, and stayed completely open in 2022.

The output of educational institutions and the impact of learning

- Educational attainment has been increasing throughout the OECD, in particular at tertiary level. Between 2000 and 2021, the share of 25-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment increased on average by 21 percentage points. As France already had a high share of 25-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment in 2000, this share increased at a slower pace, by 19 percentage points (from 31% in 2000 to 50% in 2021) (Figure 1). Consequently, France is one of the 14 OECD countries where at least half of 25-34 year-olds have a tertiary education. France is also one of the 11 EU countries to have already reached the European objective of having at least 45% of 25-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment by 2030.
- Upper secondary attainment (*baccalauréat* or equivalent in France) is often seen as a minimum qualification for successful labour market participation. Although the general increase in educational attainment has seen a parallel decline in the share of 25-34 year-olds without upper secondary attainment, 14% of young adults across the OECD still left school in 2021 without an upper secondary qualification. In France, the share is lower than the OECD average (12%) and fell by 5 percentage points (like the OECD average) between 2011 and 2021.
- Higher educational attainment is often associated with better employment prospects and France is no exception. Employment prospects for those who drop out of school can be very precarious. In 2021, the employment rate among 25-64 year olds in France was 53% for those without upper secondary attainment, 74% for those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment, and 86% for those with tertiary attainment (the OECD averages are respectively 58%, 75% and 85%).
- While the positive link between educational attainment and employment rates holds for both men and women across the OECD, it is particularly strong for women. In France, only 39% of women aged 25-34 with below upper secondary attainment were employed in 2021, compared to 86% of those with tertiary attainment (the OECD averages are respectively 43% and 82%). In contrast, the figures were 62% and 89% for 25-34 year-old men (the OECD averages are respectively 69% and 88%).
- Across the OECD, the labour market benefits of tertiary attainment have proved especially strong during economic crises. However, this was not the case during the COVID-19 pandemic in France. Between 2019 and 2020, unemployment for 25-34 year-old workers with below upper secondary attainment fell by 4 percentage points, by 0.3 percentage points for workers with upper secondary attainment, and increased by 1 percentage point for workers with tertiary attainment (the OECD averages are respectively +1.8, +1.9 and +1.3 percentage points).

Figure 1. Trends in the share of tertiary-educated 25-34 year-olds (2000 and 2021)

In per cent



1. Data for tertiary education include upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary programmes (less than 5% of adults are in this group).

2. Year of reference differs from 2000: 2002 for Israel and 2003 for Iceland.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the difference in the share of tertiary-educated 25-34 year-olds between 2000 and 2021.

Source: OECD (2022), 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/EAG2022_X3-A.pdf).

- Educational attainment affects not just employment prospects, but also wage levels. On average across the OECD, 25-64 year-old workers in full-time employment with below upper secondary attainment earn 17% less than workers with upper secondary attainment, while those with tertiary attainment earn 55% more. In France, the earnings advantage of tertiary-educated workers is smaller than the OECD average. In 2018, workers with below upper secondary attainment only earned 10% less than workers with upper secondary attainment, while workers with tertiary attainment earned 49% more. That said, not all tertiary degrees provide the same earnings advantages: a 25-64 year-old worker with a bachelor's degree in France will earn 42% more than an adult with an upper secondary diploma or equivalent (the OECD average is 44%), while the earnings advantage is almost twice as much for workers with a master's degree (81% in France compared with an OECD average of 88%).

Access to education, participation and progress

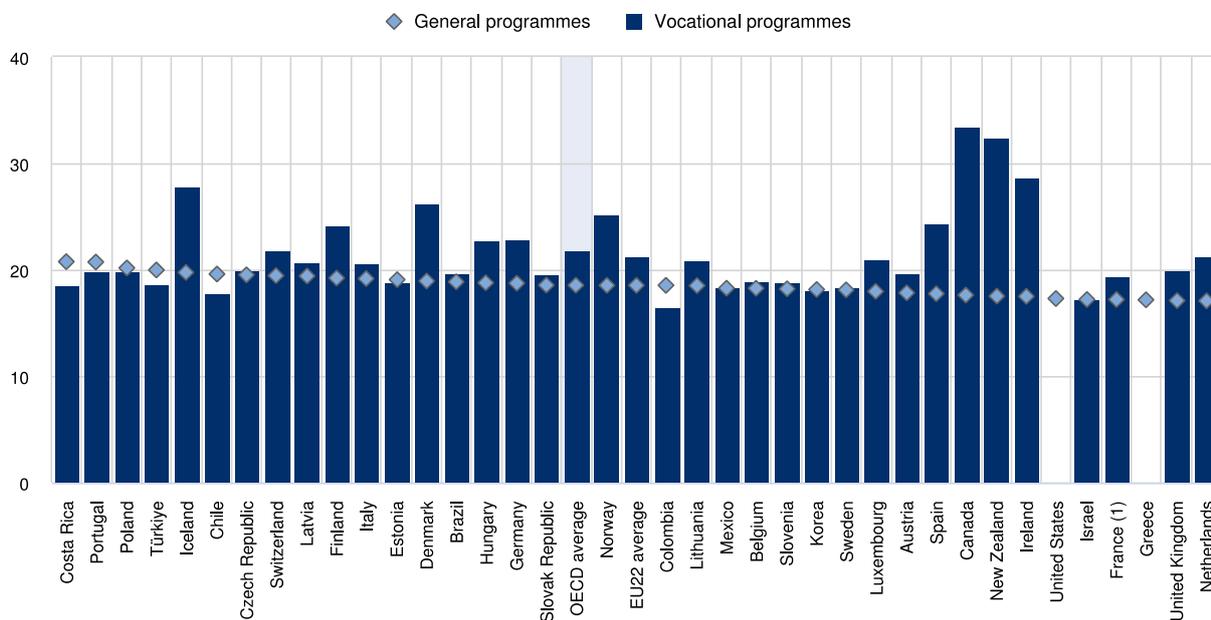
- In 2020, compulsory education in France began at the age of 3 and ended at the age of 16. The range of ages for which at least 90% of the population are enrolled is longer than the period of compulsory education and goes from the age of 3 to the age of 17. This is similar to most other OECD countries, where more than 90% of the population are also enrolled for longer than the period of compulsory education. France, however, is one of the rare countries to impose compulsory education as of the age of 3. In addition, since September 2020, young people in

France aged 16-18 who are not in employment are required to undertake training by various means: schooling, apprenticeships, internships, civic service, and social and vocational support and integration measures: (<https://www.education.gouv.fr/l-obligation-de-formation-des-16-18-ans-306954>).

- Education is compulsory from the age of 3 in France. However, despite the downturn in the number of 3-5 year-olds enrolled since 2014, the child-staff ratio remained high in 2020 in pre-primary education (23 students per staff compared to an OECD average of 15). However, France makes greater use of assistants (specialised pre-school helpers or ATSEM) than other countries, bringing the ratio down to 14 students per contact staff (compared to 10 across the OECD). Given that since 2010/11 a master's degree (and a successful result in the state civil service exam) are required in order to teach at pre-primary level, France is among the few countries requiring a particularly high level of qualification to teach at this level (for most other countries, only a bachelor's degree is required).
- The average age of graduation from general upper secondary programmes in 2020 varied from 17 to 21 years across OECD countries and was lowest in France (17 years). Differences in the average age of graduation from vocational upper secondary education are much larger and vary from 16 to 34 years across the OECD. These differences largely depend on whether vocational upper secondary students usually enrol in these programmes towards the end of their compulsory education or in mid-career. In France, the average age of graduation from vocational upper secondary education is 19 years, which is below the OECD average at 22 years (Figure 2).
- In almost all OECD countries, women made up the majority of those graduating from general upper secondary education in 2020. In France, the share is 55%, in line with the OECD average. In contrast, men were overrepresented among graduates of vocational upper secondary programmes in most OECD countries, as was the case in France where they made up 54% of all vocational upper secondary graduates, slightly below the OECD average (55%).
- In France, 56% of 18-24 year-olds were still in full- or part-time education or training in 2021, at either upper secondary or tertiary level (slightly above the OECD average of 54%). 14% of these students combined their education or training with some form of employment in France, compared to 17% on average across the OECD.
- One significant difference across countries' education systems lies in whether or not vocational upper secondary programmes provide access to tertiary education. In 12 OECD countries, all vocational upper secondary graduates have direct access to tertiary education. In France, two thirds of vocational upper secondary students are enrolled in programmes leading to the professional *baccalauréat*, which gives direct access to tertiary education. The others are enrolled in CAP vocational programmes and can (if they wish) continue their studies to obtain a professional *baccalauréat* once they have obtained their diploma. At the start of the 2021 school year, for example, 21% of CAP graduates (academic route) went on to a professional *baccalauréat* that gave them direct access to tertiary education (DEPP and SIES, 2022).

Figure 2. Average age of first-time upper secondary graduates, by programme orientation (2020)

In years



1. Average age is based on all graduates instead of first-time graduates.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the average age of first-time upper secondary graduates in general programmes

Source: OECD/Eurostat/UIS, Tables B3.1 and B3.2. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-B.pdf).

- As is the case in all OECD countries, a majority of students enrolled at tertiary level in France are bachelor's students (41%), which is nevertheless below the OECD average of 63%. However, the next most common enrolment level varies from country to country. In France, master's students make up the second largest group of tertiary students at 37% (the OECD average is 22%). This is also the case in 25 other OECD countries, while in the remaining 14 countries with available data, short-cycle tertiary students form the second largest group. In France, 20% of students enrolled in tertiary education are in short-cycle programmes (mainly in University Institutes of Technology - IUT, or Higher Technician Sections - STS), which is higher than the OECD average of 11%.
- At 30%, business, administration and law was the most popular field of study among new entrants into tertiary education in France in 2020 (which is the case in most OECD countries). Despite the growing need for digital skills and the good employment prospects of students with degrees in information and communication technologies (ICT), only a small fraction of entrants into tertiary education choose this field. In France, 88% of 25-64 year-olds with a tertiary ICT qualification were employed in 2021 (the OECD average is 90%), but ICT students made up only 3% of new entrants into tertiary education in 2020. This is below the OECD average of 6%.

Financial and human resources invested in education

- All OECD countries devote a substantial share of national output to educational institutions. In 2019, OECD countries spent on average 4.9% of their gross domestic product (GDP) on primary to tertiary educational institutions. In France, the corresponding share was 5.2%. In addition,

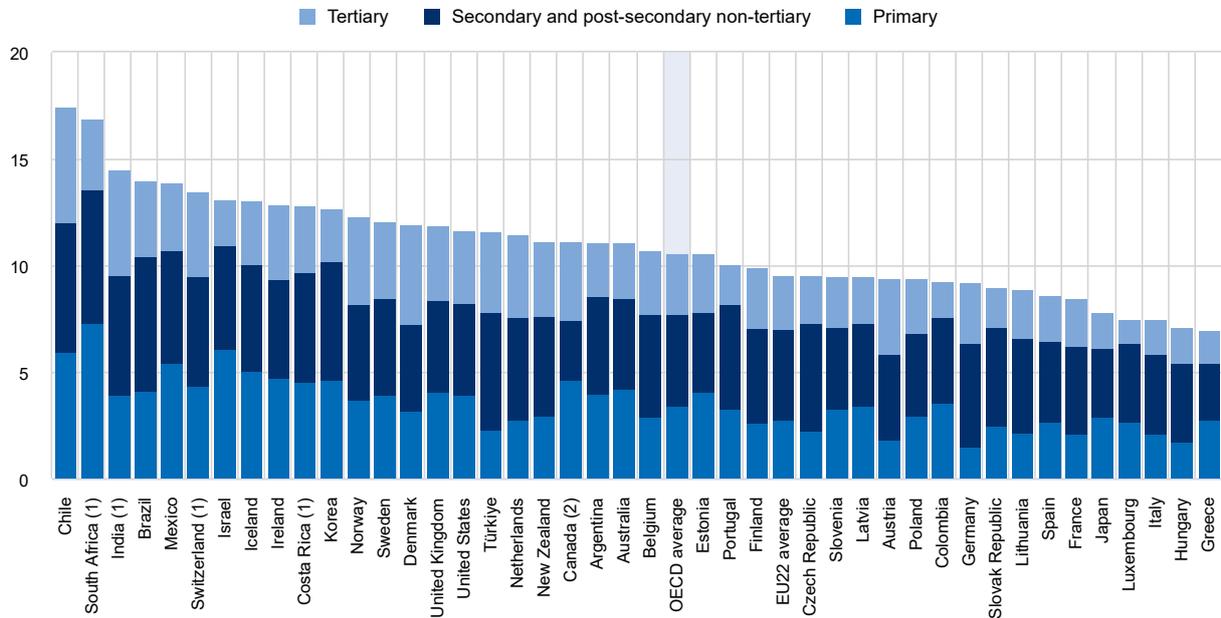
France spent an average of 0.7% of its (GDP) on pre-primary education in 2019, which is also higher than the OECD average of 0.6%.

- Although there is uncertainty about the likely overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education expenditure, governments have been and will be faced with difficult decisions about how to allocate resources between different public domains. Public funds are likely to be channelled in priority towards the economy and the health sector. In 2019, public spending on primary to tertiary education was 8.5% of total government expenditure in France, lower than the OECD average of 10.6% (Figure 3).
- Spending on educational institutions as share of GDP or public budgets are important measures of the importance that countries place on education in their budgeting decisions. However, they do not show the total amount of funding per student because GDP levels, public budgets and student numbers vary from country to country. Across primary to tertiary education, in 2019 OECD countries spent an average of USD 11 990 per student. In comparison, France spent USD 13 049 per student in 2019. Its cumulative expenditure on educating a student from the age of 6 to 15 was USD 109 584, which was slightly above the OECD average of USD 105 502.
- In France, expenditure per student for primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary levels was USD 11 728 in 2019, 9% higher than the OECD average of USD 10 722. In the same year, France still had a clear gap in the distribution of education expenditure per student between primary and secondary education (to the advantage of the latter), although the gap narrowed between 2016 and 2019. In France, expenditure per student is 4% higher than the OECD average in lower secondary education (equivalent to *collège*, USD 11 825 in France compared with an average of USD 11 417), and 34% higher in upper secondary education (including *lycées agricoles* and *centres de formation en alternance* (CFA), USD 15 725 in France compared with an average of USD 11 711). On the other hand, these values are 6% lower than the OECD average in primary education (USD 9 312 in France compared with an average of USD 9 923).¹

¹ These figures take into account the reforms of the 2018/2019 school year, notably the doubling of CP and CE1 classes in priority education. However, it should be pointed out that the reform of the doubling of classes follows a timetable spread over three years; the 2018 expenditure therefore only captures one phase of the reform.

Figure 3. Composition of total public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure (2019)

Primary to tertiary education (including R&D), in per cent



1. Year of reference differs from 2019. Refer to the source table for more details.

2. Primary education includes pre-primary programmes.

Countries are ranked in descending order of total public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2022), Table C4.1. See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-C.pdf).

- In contrast to lower levels of education, spending on tertiary education varies widely across OECD countries. Expenditure per student at tertiary level in France is higher than at other levels of education, as is the case in almost all other OECD countries. The average expenditure per student in France is USD 18 136 per year, which is about USD 8 800 higher than that of the primary level and USD 4 700 higher than that of the secondary level. While expenditure per student at tertiary level in France is above the OECD average, it is similar to many other countries (such as Germany and Finland for example). The average expenditure at tertiary level in OECD countries is driven up by high values in a few countries. At 30%, the share of research and development (R&D) expenditure in France is close to the average across OECD countries (29%).
- Public funding dominates non-tertiary education (primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary) in all OECD countries, even after transfers to the private sector. In 2019, private funding in France accounted for 9% of expenditure at primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary levels (the OECD average is 10%). In contrast, private expenditure at tertiary level was higher in all OECD countries. In France, the share of private expenditure at tertiary level reached 23%, which was below the OECD average (31%), after public-to-private transfers. The latter accounted for 3% of expenditure on educational institutions at this level.
- Compensation of teachers and other staff employed in educational institutions represents the largest share of current expenditure from primary to post-secondary non-tertiary education. In 2019, France allocated 81% of its current expenditure to staff compensation, compared to 78% on

average across OECD countries. A significant proportion of this expenditure in primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education in France is devoted to non-teaching staff (21%).

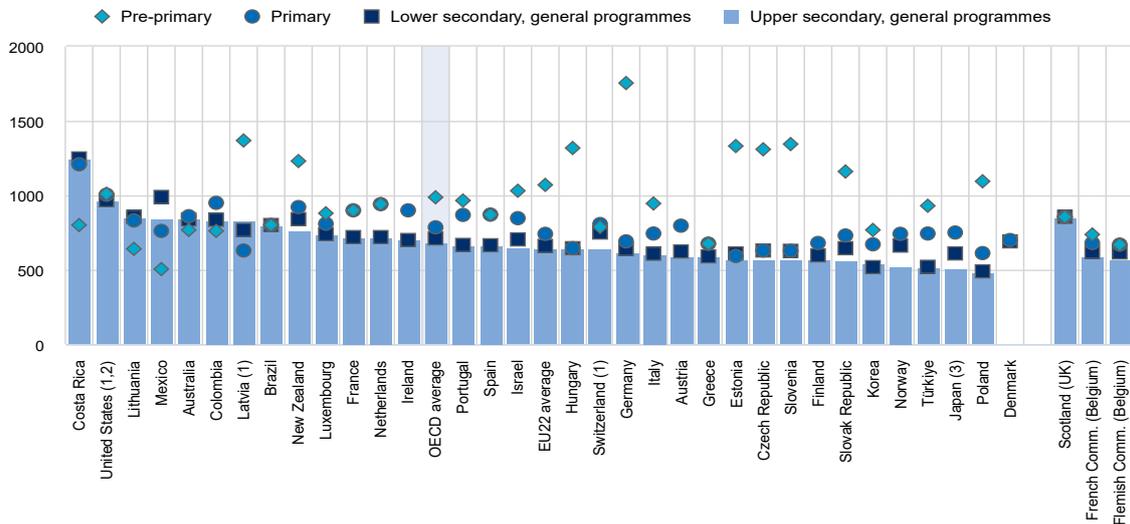
Teachers, the learning environment and the organisation of schools

- The salaries of teachers are an important determinant of the attractiveness of the teaching profession, but they also represent the single largest expenditure item in formal education. In most OECD countries, the statutory salaries of teachers in public educational institutions increase with the level of education they teach, and also with experience. Actual salaries (reflecting statutory salaries and additional work-related payments) also increase with the level of education. On average across OECD countries, actual salaries for teachers aged 25-64 range from USD 41 941 per year at the pre-primary level to USD 53 682 at the upper secondary level. In 2019, actual salaries in France averaged USD 44 064 (or EUR 37 328 when the figure is converted to euros using purchasing power parities) – at pre-primary level per year (above the OECD average) and USD 53 716 (or EUR 45 505) at upper secondary level (in line with the OECD average).
- Between 2015 and 2021, on average across OECD countries, the statutory salaries of teachers at lower secondary level (general programmes) with 15 years of experience and the most prevalent qualifications (i.e. a CAPES certificate in France) increased by 3% in real terms. In France, salaries at this level increased by 4%, comparable to the OECD average. In 2021, the statutory salaries of teachers at lower secondary level with the same levels of experience and qualification amounted to USD 43 133 (or EUR 35 490 when the figure is converted to euros using purchasing power parities), 16% below the OECD average (USD 51 246). The gap with the OECD average is slightly wider in primary education. For example, the annual statutory salary of primary school teachers with 15 years' experience (and the most common qualifications, namely a CRPE) remained at USD 40 043 (or EUR 32 948) in France in 2020-2021, 19% below the OECD average of USD 49 245.
- In France, the salary progression of teachers (with the most prevalent qualification) from the beginning of their career to the top of the salary scale (i.e. the last step of the “*hors classe*” category) is higher than the OECD average (72-77% increase depending on the level of education taught, compared to an OECD average of 60-64%). However, it takes 35 years of experience for teachers to go from starting salary to the highest salary in France, compared with an average of 26 years in OECD countries, and statutory teacher salaries in France remain below the OECD average at every stage of the career at all levels of education except pre-primary. The gap is greater with 10 and 15 years' experience than at the beginning or end of the career. Depending on the level of education at which teachers teach, the statutory salaries of teachers with the most prevalent qualifications were lower than average in 2021, by 5-10% at the beginning of their careers, 12-20% after 10 and 15 years of experience, and 2-6% at the top of the salary scale, except in pre-primary education where salaries at the top of the scale are 3% higher than the OECD average.
- Teachers' average actual salaries remain lower than earnings of tertiary-educated workers in almost all OECD countries, and at almost all levels of education. This is also the case in France. In 2019, teachers in France earned less than other tertiary-educated workers aged 25-64, regardless of the level at which they taught: 13% less at lower secondary level, 20% and 22% less respectively at pre-primary and primary, and 3% less at upper secondary level.
- In 2019, the actual salaries of the heads of lower secondary schools in France were significantly higher than the actual salaries of teachers as well as being higher than the earnings of other tertiary educated workers (by 32%). This is similar to most OECD countries, where school heads tend to earn well above the average earnings of tertiary educated workers

- Attracting, retaining and developing quality school heads is essential for improving the quality of learning environments. School heads have different statuses in France depending on the level of education taught in their institution. Indeed, pre-primary and primary school heads are teachers; they have less autonomy/responsibility and are paid on the salary scales of teachers, whereas secondary school heads, who pass a specific competitive examination, are paid on the specific scales of management staff. In terms of figures, school heads in France in 2019 aged 25-64 received an actual salary that was almost 26% lower than that of school heads in lower secondary education (USD 54 318 per year as opposed to USD 72 948). However, a law passed in December 2021 aims to recognise the position of school head and improve the working conditions of head teachers, to better reflect recent developments that have increased their responsibilities and workload. It gives this position functional authority.
- The average number of teaching hours per year required from a typical teacher in public educational institutions in OECD countries tends to decrease as the level of education increases. This is also the case in France. Based on official regulations for the 2020/2021 school year, annual teaching hours in France are 900 hours per year at pre-primary level and primary level for *professeurs des écoles*, and 720 hours at lower secondary level (general programmes) for *professeurs certifiés*. With the exception of the pre-primary level, teachers in France spend more time teaching than the OECD average (987 hours at pre-primary level, 784 hours at primary level, 711 hours at lower secondary level (general programme) and 684 hours at upper secondary level (all programmes) (Figure 4).
- In 2021, the duration of initial teacher education for primary and lower secondary teachers ranged from 2.5 years to 6.5 years across OECD countries. In fewer than two-thirds of countries with comparable data, the duration of initial teacher education is shorter for pre-school teachers than for lower secondary teachers in general subjects. This is not the case in France, where initial teacher education lasts 5 years for prospective teachers, regardless of the level of education taught.
- As is the case in almost all OECD countries, a tertiary degree (a master's or equivalent diploma in France) is awarded to prospective teachers of all levels of education upon completion of their initial teacher training. In almost half of the 36 countries and other participants with data, graduates of initial teacher education for pre-primary, primary and lower secondary teachers can immediately start teaching in schools and acquire a full teaching qualification. In France, graduates of initial teacher education programmes still have to pass a competitive examination and complete a 12-month probationary period (as an *enseignant fonctionnaire stagiaire*, at the end of which a jury determines whether or not they can officially obtain teacher status and become fully qualified teachers).
- Continuing professional development is compulsory for all teachers of general programmes in most countries with data, and France is no exception. At secondary level (and at the other levels of education), professional development activities are compulsory for all teachers in France.

Figure 4. Teaching time of teachers, by level of education (2021)

Net statutory teaching time in hours per year, in public institutions



1. Actual teaching time (in Latvia except for pre-primary level).
2. Reference year differs from 2021. Refer to the source table for details.
3. Average planned teaching time in each school at the beginning of the school year.

Countries and other participants are ranked in descending order of the number of teaching hours per year in general upper secondary education

Source: OECD (2022), Table D4.1. See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2022_X3-D.pdf).

Focus on tertiary education

- In France, in 2021, 14% of 25-64 year olds had a short-cycle tertiary qualification, 12% had a bachelor's degree and 14% had a master's. This is different from the OECD average, where bachelor's degrees are most common (19%), followed by master's degrees (14%) and short-cycle tertiary qualifications (7%). As in all OECD countries, only a small fraction of the population holds a doctoral degree: the share is 1% in France.
- The international mobility of students has risen steadily over the past 20 years. In 2020, 6.4 million tertiary students around the world had crossed a border in order to study, over twice as many as in 2007. These internationally mobile students represent only 7% of students at bachelor's level or equivalent in France, but 13% at master's level or equivalent and 38% at doctoral level (the OECD averages are respectively 5%, 14% and 24%).
- On average, tertiary attainment generates a wide range of labour-market benefits, including high employment rates. Yet, there are significant differences depending on the field of study. In 2021, employment rates in France were highest among tertiary-educated 25-64 year-olds who studied engineering, manufacturing and construction or information and communication technologies (88%), and lowest among those who studied arts and humanities, social sciences, journalism and information (81%). However, these differences need to be put into perspective. Although employment rates vary according to the field of higher education, they are always higher than for those with only upper secondary attainment. Even among 25-64 year-olds with tertiary attainment in the field with the lowest employment rate in France, this was 6.7 percentage points higher than among those with upper secondary attainment (all fields combined).

- Despite the labour market advantages of a tertiary degree, many tertiary students do not graduate on time (i.e. within the theoretical programme duration) or do not graduate at all. In 2020 in France, 36% of bachelor's students graduated within three years (the OECD average is 39%). Across the OECD, the completion rate within the theoretical programme duration ranges from 12% to 69%. Completion rates three years after the theoretical programme duration are significantly higher in most countries and the differences between OECD countries somewhat narrower. In France, 71% of bachelor's students have graduated within three years after the end of the theoretical programme duration, compared to 68% on average across the OECD. In 2020, students enrolled in short courses (IUT and STS) in France were more likely to complete their studies than those enrolled in a bachelor's degree (success rate of 64% at the end of the two-year programme and 79% after three additional years).
- In all OECD countries, tertiary completion rates are higher for women than for men. In France in 2020, 74% of women graduated within three years after the end of the theoretical programme duration at bachelor's level, compared to 67% of men (the OECD averages are respectively 73% for women and 61% for men). On average across the OECD, there is little systematic difference between the completion rates of public and private institutions, but the figures differ from country to country. In France, 70% of bachelor's students graduate from public institutions within three years after the end of the theoretical programme duration, while the share is 81% for private institutions (the OECD average is 67% for both public and private institutions).
- In most OECD countries including France, tertiary-educated adults have higher rates of participation in non-formal education and training than those with a lower level of educational attainment. In 2021, 14% of 25-64 year-olds with tertiary attainment in France had participated in non-formal education and training in the four weeks prior to being surveyed, compared to 4% of their peers with below upper secondary attainment (the OECD averages are respectively 16% and 4%).
- Entering tertiary education often means costs for students and their families, in terms of tuition fees, foregone earnings and living expenses, although they may also receive financial support to help them afford it. However, public policies on tuition fees and financial support for students differ greatly across countries. In France, tuition fees are comparatively low. In the 2019/2020 school year, public institutions charged tuition fees of USD 230 national students at bachelor's level and of USD 329 at master's level, with 34% of students receiving grants or means-tested subsidies to support their studies. While the use of student loans is relatively low, the proportion of students exempted from tuition fees was 76% at short-cycle tertiary level, 42% at bachelor's level and 31% at master's level.
- Compared to staff at primary and secondary level, staff at tertiary level tend to start their careers relatively late due to the length of the education they need to qualify. In France, over the 2019/2020 school year, only 10% of academic staff at short-cycle tertiary level (OECD average of 7%) and 12% at the combined bachelor's, master's and doctoral level (OECD average of 9%) were aged under 30. In contrast, the share of academic staff aged 50 or over was 37%, which is 3 percentage points below the OECD average.

The state of education during the COVID-19 pandemic

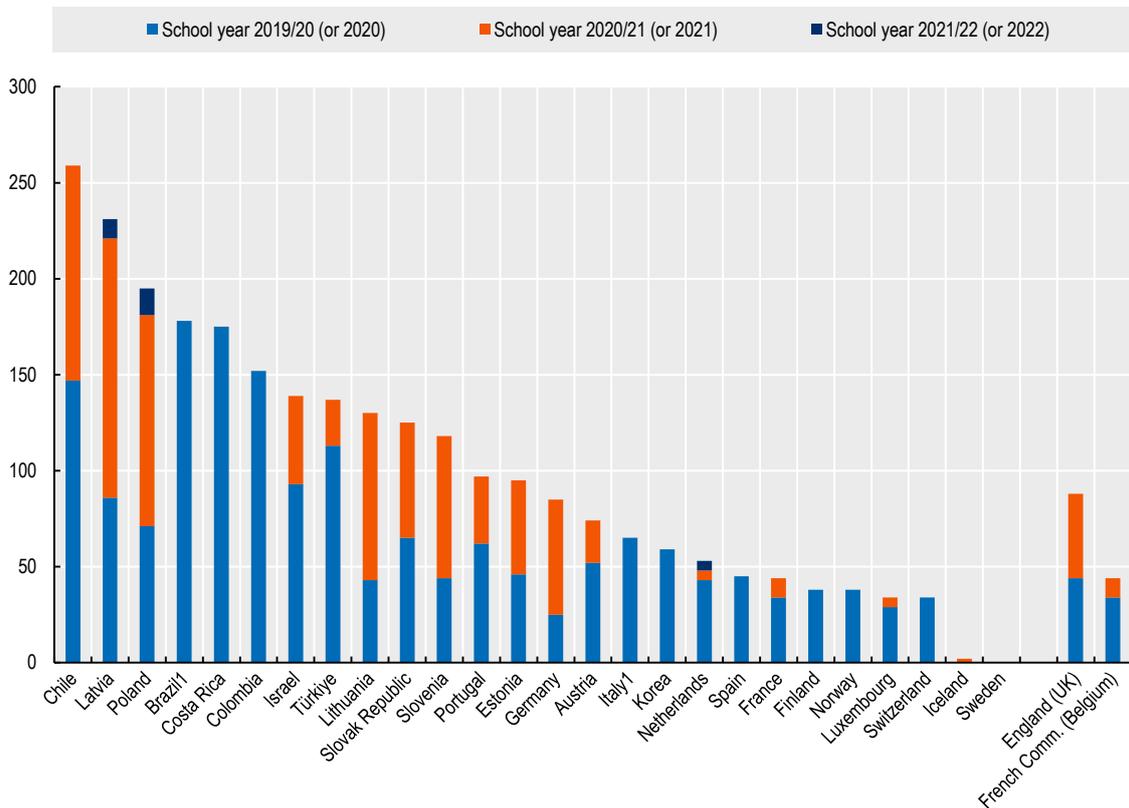
- The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted traditional schooling in 2020 and the first half of 2021, leading to school closures across all OECD countries. While most shut down their premises entirely in the wake of the pandemic in 2020, by 2021 the situation had improved, and returned to normal in most countries in 2022. In France, pre-schools and primary schools were entirely closed for 29 days in 2020 and for 5 days in 2021, and stayed completely open in 2022, while lower secondary schools

were entirely closed for 34 days in 2020 and 10 days in 2021, and stayed completely open in 2022 (Figure 5).

- Teacher absences also affected the regular operation of schools during the pandemic, whether due to COVID-19 infections or because of precautionary quarantine. However, only approximately half of countries collected information on teacher absenteeism. France collected such data and it showed that teacher absenteeism remained at an equivalent level over the 3 school years covered by the pandemic compared to the absenteeism observed in the 2018/19 school year.
- National examinations have also been affected by the pandemic. At general upper secondary level, 16 OECD countries postponed their national examinations in 2020, while 8 countries even cancelled them entirely. In 2021, national examinations were postponed in 9 countries and cancelled in 4 countries. France cancelled its national examinations in 2019/20, but an alternative evaluation method meant that students were assessed for their diploma.

Figure 5. School closures due to COVID-19 (2020, 2021 and the first quarter of 2022)

Number of instruction days of full closure of lower secondary schools excluding school holidays, public holidays and weekends.



Note: The data underlying this report were produced through the Survey on Joint National Responses to COVID 19, a collaborative effort conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank (WB), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Data for other levels of education are available at <https://www.oecd.org/education/Results-4th-wave-COVID-Survey-OECD-database.xlsx>.

1. Data for 2021 and 2022 are missing.

Countries and other participants are ranked in descending order of the total number of days lower secondary schools were fully closed during the school years 2019/20 (2020), 2020/21 (2021) and 2021/22 (2022).

Source: OECD/UIS/UNESCO/UNICEF/WB.

- Since 2020, France, through the Evaluation Directorate (DEPP) of the Ministry of Education, has carried out numerous studies to shed light on the health crisis and its consequences. Various approaches were used (new studies, analysis of existing schemes, modification of surveys already planned). In this way, it was possible to report on teaching and learning conditions in the face of the health crisis and to evaluate certain impacts on the educational pathways and professional integration of pupils and apprentices. With regard to the challenges posed by the health crisis in terms of social inequalities, these approaches have focused in particular on documenting the differences observed according to the socio-demographic situations of pupils and the characteristics of their schooling context (DEPP, 2022).
- In 2021/2022 school year, national programmes to support students affected by the pandemic were implemented in France from primary to tertiary level. At primary and upper secondary level, this included increased instruction time through summer schools.
- The increased digitalisation of education has been a major consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic in many OECD countries. At lower secondary level, France responded to the pandemic with an enhanced provision of in-service and pre-service digital training via distance learning to teachers, and digital training to students.
- The challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic have created additional costs for education systems. Preliminary budget estimates for 2021 suggest that, compared to 2020, the education budget at pre-primary to tertiary level in France remained almost unchanged in nominal terms.
- The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on adult learning in most OECD countries. In 2020, the share of adults who participated in a formal or non-formal education and training activity in the four weeks prior to being surveyed decreased by 2 percentage points on average across OECD countries compared with 2019. In France, from 2019 to 2020, the share of adults participating in a formal or non-formal education and training activity fell by 7 percentage points.
- Young adults who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) for prolonged periods are at risk of adverse economic and social outcomes in both the short and the long term. After remaining constant during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the share of 18-24 year-olds who are NEET in France declined in 2021. The share of NEET among young adults was 17.5 % in 2019 and 2020, and 16.0% in 2021 (the OECD averages were respectively 16.6% in 2020 and 15.1% in 2021).

References

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More information

For more information on Education at a Glance 2022 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/EAG2022_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*  under the tables and charts in the publication.

Data on subnational regions for selected indicators are available in the *OECD Regional Statistics* (database) (OECD, 2022). 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 Joint Survey on 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.

<p>Questions can be directed to:</p> <p>Directorate for Education and Skills:</p> <p>Etienne.Albiser@OECD.org;</p> <p>mailto:Eric.Charbonnier@OECD.org;</p> <p>Corinne.Heckmann@OECD.org</p>	<p>Country Note Authors:</p> <p>Etienne Albiser (OECD Analyst)</p> <p>Eric Charbonnier (OECD Analyst)</p> <p>Corinne Heckmann (OECD Analyst)</p>
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