

Notes to maps of education systems

When reading these diagrams, the following methodological considerations must be taken into account:

- The diagrams represent education systems in 2023 unless specified otherwise.
- Programmes with enrolments accounting for 1% or less of the total number of students enrolled at the ISCED level are usually not included in the diagrams.
- The size of the graphical elements provides no indication of the size of the enrolment in the corresponding educational institutions.
- Programmes offering a part-time option are indicated in pink, but the number of graphical elements provides no indication of the number of years necessary to complete the part-time option.
- If a separate box for special needs education is not included in a diagram, special needs education may be integrated with mainstream programmes.
- The graphical element referring to adult education programmes provides no indication of the theoretical age of the students.
- All student flows are directed upwards from lower to upper levels of education unless specified otherwise.
- Student flows picture the typical possible pathways between programmes, some marginal options may not be displayed.
- Regarding special needs, each diagram refers of the country's specific definition.
- Adult Education it is defined as follows:

Adult education is specifically targeted at individuals who are regarded as adults by their society to improve their technical or professional qualifications, further develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge with the purpose to complete a level of formal education, or to acquire, refresh or update their knowledge, skills, and competencies in a particular field. This also includes what may be referred to as 'continuing education', 'recurrent education' or 'second chance education'.

In most countries adult education is not recognised as part of the formal education system and should therefore be excluded from this data collection. Formal adult education programmes included in this data collection may be designed as second chance programmes for youth or adults and offered in the same or similar formal settings as initial education. They do not have the same typical entry age as equivalent programmes in initial education and may have a different, usually shorter, duration.¹

- Part-time attendance is defined as follows:

Students enrolled in primary and secondary-level educational programmes are considered to participate part-time if they attend school for less than 75 per cent of the school day or week (as locally defined) and would normally be expected to be in the programme for the entire academic year. At the tertiary level, an individual is considered part-time if he or she is taking a course load or educational programme that requires less than 75 per cent of a full-time commitment of time and resources.²

- Dual (combined school- and work- based) programmes are defined as follows:

In combined school- and work-based programmes, instruction is shared between school and the workplace, although instruction may take place primarily in the workplace. Programmes are classified as combined school and work-based if less than 75 per cent of the curriculum is presented in the school environment or through distance education. Programmes that are more than 90 per cent work-based are excluded. Work-study programmes are combinations of work and education in which periods of both form part of an integrated, formal education or training activity. Examples of such programmes include the "dual system" in Germany; "apprentissage" or "formation en alternance" in France and Belgium; internship or co-operative education

¹ UOE data collection on formal education, Manual on concepts, definitions and classifications, June 2019, p.6

² Education at a Glance glossary, p.33. <https://www.oecd.org/education/EAG%20Glossary.pdf>.

in Canada; apprenticeship in Ireland; and “youth training” in the United Kingdom. See also General programmes, Programme orientation, School-based programmes and Vocational programmes³

- On compulsory education:

Theoretical starting ages refer to the ages as established by law and regulation for the entry to a programme, actual starting ages may vary depending on the programme.

Ending age of compulsory education is the legal age from which children are no longer compelled to attend school (e.g., 15th birthday). The ending age of compulsory schooling is thus different from the ending age of an educational programme.⁴

- In some countries, compulsory education can span up to an ending age or to the obtention of a specific qualification (as in Hungary). Some countries can also have compulsory training until a certain age (as in France⁵).
- *The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) helps students to move between countries and to have their academic qualifications and study periods recognised abroad. ECTS allows credits taken at one higher education institution to be counted towards a qualification studied for at another.⁶*

1. The ISCED classification

The classification of the levels of education used in the diagrams is based on ISCED 2011. The first ISCED classification was developed by UNESCO in the mid-1970s, and subsequently revised in 1997 and in 2011 to reflect changes in education and learning systems. ISCED 2011 is an instrument for compiling statistics on education internationally and distinguishes among 8 levels of education as described in the sequence.

³ Education at a Glance glossary, p.3. <https://www.oecd.org/education/EAG%20Glossary.pdf>.

⁴ Op. cit., p.4.

⁵ Decree n° 2020-978 of August 5, 2020 relating to training obligation for young people aged sixteen to eighteen (in French), <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000042211037?r=wex5clfpY0>













⁶ European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, ECTS users' guide 2015, Publications Office, 2017, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/87192>

ISCED 2011 classification

ISCED 2011 levels	Description
ISCED 0	Early childhood education: Refers to programmes with an intentional education component aimed at developing cognitive, physical and socio-emotional skills for participation in school and society. They are grouped into two categories: ISCED 010, early childhood educational development - programmes designed for younger children (between the ages of 0 and 2); ISCED 020, pre-primary - programmes designed for children from the age of 3 to the start of primary education (ISCED level 1).
ISCED 1	Primary education: Designed to provide a sound basic education in reading, writing and mathematics and a basic understanding of some other subjects.
ISCED 2	Lower secondary education: Completes provision of basic education, usually in a more subject-oriented way with more specialist teachers. In some countries, the end of this level marks the end of compulsory education.
ISCED 3	Upper secondary education: Final stage of secondary education in most countries. Stronger subject specialisation than at lower secondary level, with teachers usually more qualified.
ISCED 4	Post-secondary non-tertiary education: Internationally, this level straddles the boundary between upper secondary and post-secondary education, even though it might be considered upper secondary or post-secondary in a national context. Programme content may not be significantly more advanced than that in upper secondary, but they serve to broaden the knowledge of participants who have already completed an upper secondary programme.
ISCED 5, 6, 7, and 8 (see below)	Tertiary education
ISCED 5	Short-cycle tertiary: Programmes are more complex than those in ISCED 3 and 4, and typically shorter than those in ISCED 6. They are designed to deepen knowledge by imparting new techniques, concepts and ideas not generally covered in upper secondary education. By comparison, ISCED level 4 programmes serve to broaden knowledge and are typically not significantly more advanced than programmes at ISCED level 3.
ISCED 6	Bachelor's or equivalent level: Designed to provide participants with intermediate academic and/or professional knowledge, skills and competencies, leading to a first degree or equivalent qualification. They are typically offered by universities and equivalent tertiary educational institutions.
ISCED 7	Master's or equivalent level: Programmes designed to provide participants with advanced academic and/or professional knowledge, skills and competencies, leading to a second degree or equivalent qualification. They may have a substantial research component, but do not yet lead to a doctoral qualification. The cumulative duration of studies at the tertiary level is usually five to eight years or even longer and can be provided entirely within ISCED 7. Access to this level may be possible, in some cases, directly from ISCED 3 and 4.
ISCED 8	Doctoral or equivalent level: Programmes that lead directly to the award of an advanced research qualification, e.g. Ph.D. The theoretical duration of these programmes is three years, full-time, in most countries, although the actual enrolment time is typically longer. Programmes are devoted to advanced study and original research. Doctoral programmes exist in both academic and professional fields.

More detailed information about ISCED and the criteria used to classify programmes can be found here: *ISCED 2011 Operational Manual: Guidelines for Classifying National Education Programmes and Related Qualifications*” (<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264228368-en>)
OECD. *Education at a Glance 2020: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en>

Key

	Starting/ending age of compulsory education
	Ending age of compulsory training
	Recognized exit point of the education system
	Typical student flow
	Transfer from a program to another
	Program designed for part-time attendance
	Vocational/Professional orientation (according to national definition at the tertiary level)
	This program can be offered via dual (school- and work-based) as well as non-dual learning
	Single structure education (integrated ISCED levels)
	May be provided within one school structure
	Transfer at crossing lines is not possible
	Name of diploma, degree or certificate
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
NQF L	National Qualifications Framework - Level
2023	Reference year (school year 2022/2023 in the northern hemisphere)

* **Theoretical starting ages** refer to the ages as established by law and regulation for the entry to a programme, actual starting ages may vary depending on the programme.