

1. EDUCATION LEVELS AND STUDENT NUMBERS

How many students enrol in vocational programmes?

- In just under half of OECD countries, the majority of upper secondary students attend pre-vocational and vocational programmes.
- Vocational qualifications are concentrated in engineering, manufacturing and construction at both the upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary levels.
- The 14 OECD countries for which data are available spend, on average, USD 925 more per student in upper secondary vocational programmes than in general programmes.

Significance

The increasing number of young people in upper secondary education means that countries have to cater to a more diverse student population at that level. In response, countries usually offer a variety of programmes, ranging from the largely academic to the largely vocational, which aim to prepare students to enter an occupation either directly or following further training (see definitions accompanying the table on the opposite page). Vocational programmes may be largely school-based or centred on apprenticeships in the workplace. This indicator shows the participation of students in vocational education and training at the upper secondary level.

Findings

At least 55% of upper secondary students are enrolled in pre-vocational or vocational programmes in most OECD countries that have dual system apprenticeship programmes (Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland) as well as Australia, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, Italy, Norway, the Slovak Republic and the United Kingdom.

While upper secondary students in many education systems can enrol in vocational programmes, some OECD countries delay vocational training until after graduation from upper secondary education. In Austria, Hungary and Spain, some vocational programmes are offered as advanced upper secondary programmes; in Canada and the United States, they are offered as post secondary education.

There is some form of apprenticeship system in most OECD countries. In Austria, Germany and Hungary, apprenticeship contracts are established between the student (not the vocational training school) and the enterprise. In the United States, there are apprentice-

ship programmes, but they are not part of the formal education system. There are no formal apprenticeship systems in Japan, Korea, Spain and Sweden.

Spending on students in vocational programmes tends to be higher than for general programmes (see Table C1.3 in *Education at a Glance 2008*). The 14 OECD countries for which data are available spent, on average, USD 925 more per student in upper secondary vocational programmes than in general programmes. This gap was even wider in countries with large school- and work-based apprenticeship programmes: Germany and Switzerland spent, respectively, USD 6 284 and USD 7 118 more per student in vocational programmes than in general programmes. Employers contribute a large part of these funds.

What about the educational performance of students in vocational education? In the PISA 2006 round, 15-year-old students in pre-vocational and vocational programmes scored on average 35 points below students in general programmes in testing for science competencies. When socio-economic factors were taken into account this gap narrowed to 24 score points (see Chart C1.1 in *Education at a Glance 2008*).

Definitions

Data on enrolment are for the 2005-06 school year; data on finance refer to the 2005 financial year. Both are based on the UOE data collection on education statistics administered annually by the OECD. Data on apprenticeship programmes (work-based learning) are based on a special survey conducted by the OECD in 2006.

Going further

For additional material, notes and a full explanation of sourcing and methodologies, see *Education at a Glance 2008* (Indicator C1).

Areas covered include:

- Upper secondary enrolment patterns and enrolment in vocational and pre-vocational programmes.
- Spending on vocation education and training.
- The PISA performance of students in general and vocational programmes.

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Table 1.3. **Upper secondary enrolment patterns, 2006**

This table shows the proportion of young people pursuing academic (general) or vocational programmes at upper secondary level.

	Distribution of enrolment by programme orientation	
	General	Pre-vocational and vocational
Australia	38.4	61.6
Austria	22.1	77.9
Belgium	30.6	69.4
Canada	94.6	5.4
Czech Republic	20.7	79.3
Denmark	52.2	47.8
Finland	34.6	65.4
France	56.9	43.1
Germany	40.6	59.4
Greece	66.1	33.9
Hungary	76.3	23.7
Iceland	63.3	36.7
Ireland	66.6	33.4
Italy	39.5	60.5
Japan	75.4	24.6
Korea	72.2	27.8
Luxembourg	37.1	62.9
Mexico	90.2	9.8
Netherlands	32.5	67.5
New Zealand	100.0	m
Norway	40.0	60.0
Poland	56.0	44.0
Portugal	68.5	31.5
Slovak Republic	26.3	73.7
Spain	57.5	42.5
Sweden	44.9	55.1
Switzerland	35.8	64.2
Turkey	63.7	36.3
United Kingdom	58.3	41.7
United States	100.0	m
OECD average	53.8	46.2

General programmes: Academically oriented, these programmes are not designed to prepare students specifically for occupations or for vocational education (less than a quarter of programme content is vocational or technical).

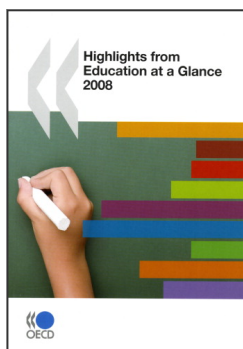
Pre-vocational or pre-technical: Aimed at preparing students for further vocational education and training and at introducing them to the world of work, but not at providing a qualification that can be used directly to enter the labour market (at least a quarter of programme content is vocational or technical).

Vocational: Designed to prepare students for direct entry into specific occupations.

Pre-vocational and vocational education and training can be either school-based, where no more than a quarter of the programme is presented outside the school environment, or combined school- and work-based, where at least a quarter of the programme content is presented outside the school environment, including through apprenticeships.

Please refer to the Reader's Guide for information concerning the symbols replacing missing data.

Source: OECD (2008), *Education at a Glance 2008*, Table C1.1, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/402134482176>.



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