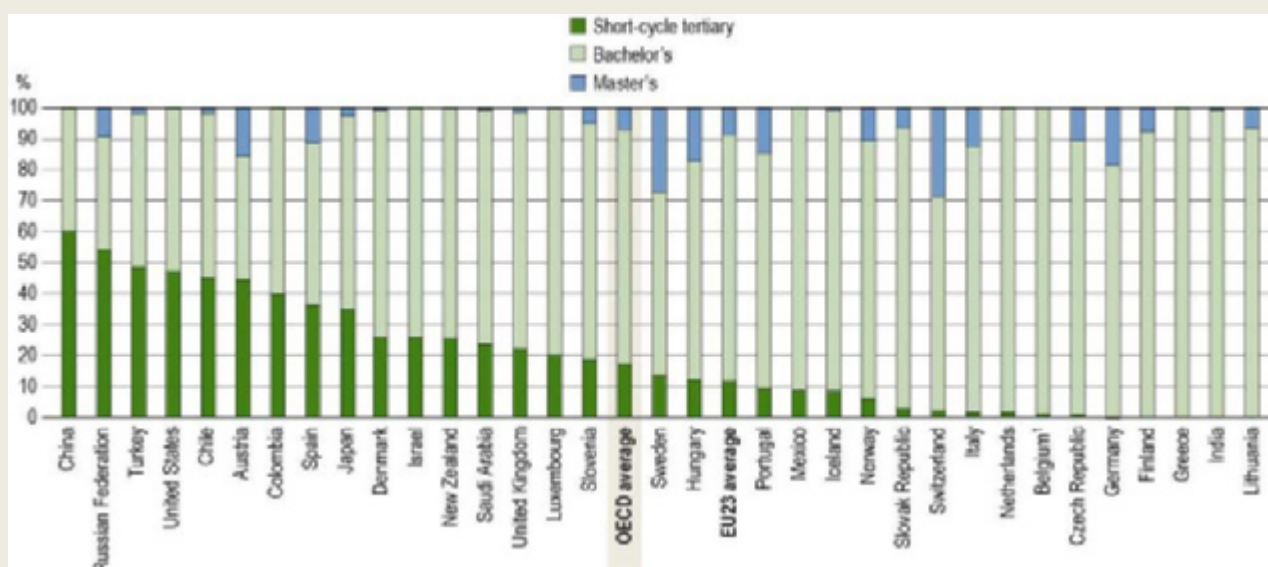


Indicator B4. Who is expected to enter tertiary education?

Highlights

- Bachelor's programmes are the most common entry route into tertiary education. In 2017, more than seven out of every ten first-time entrants into tertiary education were enrolled at bachelor's level, two at short-cycle tertiary level and less than one at master's level on average across OECD countries.
- Across OECD countries, the average age of new entrants was 22 at bachelor's level and 21 at master's long first degrees (LFDs) level, which is younger than new entrants to short-cycle tertiary programmes (25 years).
- Women outnumber men among new entrants to short-cycle tertiary, bachelor's programmes and master's LFDs. However, there are stark differences across fields of study: women are under-represented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) but over-represented in health and welfare.

Figure B4.1. Distribution of first-time entrants into tertiary education, by level of education (2017)



1. Short-cycle tertiary: data refers to the Flemish Community of Belgium only.

Countries are ranked in descending order of percentage of first-time entrants into short-cycle tertiary programmes in 2017.

Source: OECD / UIS / Eurostat (2019), Table B4.1. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>).

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Context

Access to tertiary education plays an essential role in developing young adults' skills so they can contribute fully to society. Yet students' profiles and academic aptitudes can be very diverse. Some people find academic learning unappealing, too long, too uncertain. Not all students develop skills at the same pace, and the

traditional route of only entering tertiary education following an upper secondary general programme is increasingly being challenged. At the same time, the sequencing of higher education within educational life cycles has also seen changes. Students are more likely to postpone entry to higher education, take a gap year, or alternate periods of employment with periods of study. Stimulating employment opportunities and burgeoning economies have prompted students in some countries to defer education in favour of learning in the workplace, particularly when financial support for study is limited. Lifelong learning is slowly emerging as the new vision for education, enabling individuals to continually update their skills to meet volatile and constantly evolving market demand.

To address the growing needs of a diverse population, some countries have progressively adapted their tertiary-level programmes to ensure more learning flexibility to suit a wide range of students' skills and learning aptitudes. This includes building more pathways between upper secondary and tertiary programmes, including those with a vocational orientation, but also expanding the types of programmes available to first-time tertiary students: short-cycle tertiary programmes, bachelor's programmes or long first degrees at master's level. Each education level and programme requires different skills at entry and addresses specific labour-market demands. Flexible entrance criteria can support lifelong learning and second-chance programmes can offer new opportunities to older students who might have dropped out of the education system or for those who wish to develop new skills. Providing a range of educational options adapted to the needs and ambitions of young adults also ensures a smoother transition from education to work.

The profile of first-time entrants to tertiary education provides an indication of the learning trajectories across various tertiary levels and programmes. It also provides information about equity in access to tertiary programmes. Entry rates estimate the proportion of people who are expected to enter a specific type of tertiary education programme at some point during their life. They provide some indication of the accessibility of tertiary education and the degree to which a population is acquiring high-level skills and knowledge. High entry and enrolment rates in tertiary education imply that a highly educated labour force is being developed and maintained.

Other findings

- On average across OECD countries, the share of international new entrants to master's LFDs is 15%, greater than for bachelor's programmes (8%) and much more than for short-cycle tertiary programmes (5%).
- On average across OECD countries, the share of female new entrants to bachelor's and short-cycle tertiary programmes is 53-54%, well below their share of 61% for master's LFDs.
- Based on current patterns, 58% of young adults on average across OECD countries are expected to enter a bachelor's or equivalent programme in their lifetime and 17% will enter a short-cycle tertiary programme.

Note

Short-cycle tertiary and master's long first degree programmes may not exist or are not prevalent in a number of educational systems. To ensure relevant cross-country comparisons, the analysis of the distribution of new or first-time entrants by gender, field of study or mobility at these levels of education only includes those countries where at least 10% of new or first-time tertiary entrants are enrolled in such programmes.

Entry rates are sensitive to changes in the education system, such as the introduction of new programmes. The rates can be very high, even exceeding 100%, during a period when there are unexpectedly high numbers of entrants. In some countries, high entry rates may reflect a temporary phenomenon, such as the effects of economic cycles and crises, university reforms driven by the Bologna Process or a surge in the number of international students. Government efforts to encourage older students to return to education through second-chance programmes can also boost entry rates.

Analysis

Pathways of new and first-time entrants into tertiary education

Students may enter tertiary education at three levels: short-cycle tertiary (ISCED 5), bachelor's (ISCED 6) or master's level (ISCED 7). Each programme has specific entry requirements and develops a specific set of skills relevant to the labour market. Bachelor's programmes are the most common route into tertiary education, and exist in all OECD countries. Short-cycle tertiary programmes are often designed to provide participants with professional knowledge, skills and competencies. Typically, they are practically based, occupation-specific and prepare students to enter the labour market directly. Short-cycle tertiary programmes have the double advantage of offering reasonably priced higher education (as two-year programmes, their direct and foregone costs are lower than four-year programmes – see Indicator A5) and a readily employable qualification, but they do not exist in all countries.

First-time entry into tertiary education at master's level mainly comprises students entering master's long first degrees (LFDs) and students entering a master's programme without a bachelor's degree from the host country. Master's long first degrees are programmes of at least 5 years that prepare students for a first degree or qualification and have equivalent complexity of content to a master's programme. They include highly specialised fields such as medicine, dentistry or, in some cases, law and engineering (OECD/Eurostat/UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015^[1]). In the United Kingdom, where master's LFDs are not available, first-time tertiary entrants at master's level are students entering the level based on industry experience rather than academic qualifications.

Distribution of first-time tertiary entrants

The level at which students first enter tertiary education helps determine the length of their studies and the employment or further learning opportunities they will have access to following their degree. The distribution pattern of students across each tertiary entry-level programme depends on each programme's availability, capacity and entry requirements within the national education system.

On average across OECD countries, more than three-quarters of first-time tertiary entrants are enrolled in bachelor's programmes. However, the predominance of such programmes in the educational landscape varies greatly from country to country. In Belgium, Finland, Greece, Iceland, India, Lithuania, Mexico, the Netherlands and the Slovak Republic, more than 90% of first-time tertiary entrants enter bachelor's programmes. In other countries, first-time tertiary entrants are more evenly distributed across the various entry-level tertiary programmes. For example, in Austria, Chile, the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, Turkey and the United States, 45% or more of first-time entrants into tertiary education entered short-cycle programmes, more than twice the OECD average of 17%. Despite the benefits offered by these programmes, they do not exist in all countries. Where they do, they are not always very attractive to students. In 11 OECD member and partner countries where short-cycle tertiary programmes exist, less than 10% of first-time entrants into tertiary education enrol in them (Figure B4.1).

Master's programmes are the least common entry point into tertiary level. On average across OECD member and partner countries with available data, 7% of first-time entrants into tertiary education are in master's level programmes, but this exceeds 20% in Sweden and Switzerland. In most countries, the majority of first-time tertiary entrants at master's level enter through master's LFDs. The share of first-time tertiary entrants at master's level in countries where long first degrees are not available remains quite low: less than 2% in the United Kingdom (Figure B4.1).

Age of new entrants to each tertiary level

Various factors can influence the age distribution of new entrants to each tertiary level. A wide age distribution may reflect the existence of second chance and lifelong learning programmes characteristic of flexible pathways allowing for re-entry into the education system. Delayed entry can indicate difficulties in access to tertiary

education, either through selective entry requirements (see Indicator D6), *numerus clausus* (a fixed maximum number of entrants admissible to an academic institution), or financial challenges in affording the private costs associated with higher education (see Indicator C5). From an economic point of view, delayed entry into tertiary education can be costly to the public purse as adults postpone their entry into the labour market and hence the time when they are typically able to start contributing financially to society (see Indicator A5).

Box B4.1. Transition between upper secondary and tertiary education

The growing flexibility of tertiary educational systems is reflected in the increasing availability of new learning pathways and modalities. Part-time studies, online courses and allowing students to collect credits without the intention of completing a degree are some examples of how tertiary programmes have been adapting to a vision of education as lifelong learning. In this context, students in many countries may not be expected, or even encouraged, to follow a direct path from upper secondary to tertiary education.

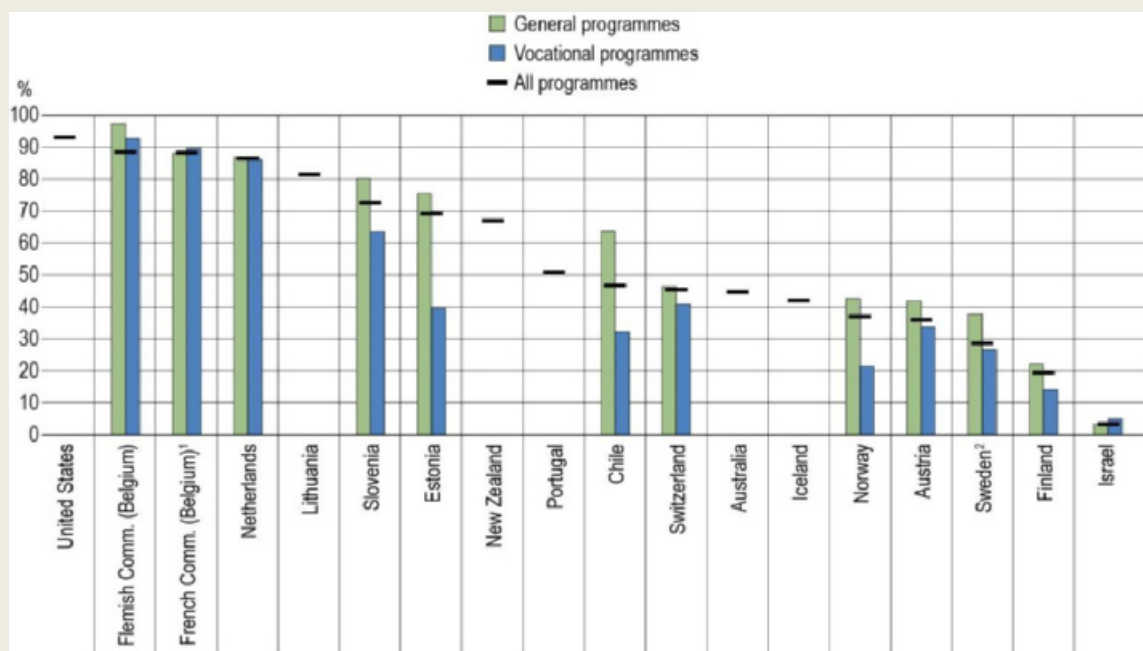
Figure B4.a shows the share of entrants to bachelor's programmes who did not take at least one gap year between upper secondary and tertiary education. In other words, it shows the share of entrants who moved directly from upper secondary to tertiary education without any significant break. The share varies considerably across countries, which highlights the diversity in the pool of tertiary entrants. While over 90% of those who enter bachelor's programmes in the United States do so right after upper secondary education, the same is true for only 20% of entrants in Finland and 3% of entrants in Israel.

This variation reflects important differences in institutional and social factors that are specific to each country. In many countries, it is common for students to enter military or civil service after upper secondary education. Students may also be led to take gap years because of highly selective tertiary entrance systems. In Finland, for example, it is common for students to apply several times before being accepted by some tertiary programmes (see Indicator D6), and the Finnish government has been actively trying to reduce the number of years between graduation from upper secondary and entry to tertiary education. In other countries, however, policies were put in place to actually encourage students to take gap years as a way to value students' experiences (e.g. work and civil or military service), before entering higher education. In Lithuania and Norway, students who have taken a gap year gain some advantage in the tertiary admission systems (e.g. bonus points are added to their competition score).

Entry into tertiary education can also be influenced by students' upper secondary programme orientation. In some countries, such as Estonia, Norway and Slovenia, entrants coming from vocational upper secondary programmes are considerably more likely to have taken at least one gap year before entering tertiary education than their peers with a general upper secondary degree. This could reflect the fact that students who complete a vocational upper secondary programme may choose to enter the labour market before pursuing a bachelor's programme. It may also be because some vocational upper secondary qualifications require students to take specific exams or supplementary courses before they can access tertiary education. In other countries, however, bachelor's students from general and vocational upper secondary education are equally likely to have taken gap years before entering the programme. This is the case, for example, in the Flemish and French communities of Belgium and in the Netherlands.

It is important, however, to look beyond averages when analysing students' transition from upper secondary to tertiary education. While flexibility and permeability may be important characteristics of education systems, country averages could mask underlying problems faced by disadvantaged students or at-risk groups during this transition period. It is also important to examine students' pathways after entering tertiary education, and how their educational and social background may influence their ability to succeed at this level (see Indicator B5).

Figure B4.a. Share of entrants to bachelor's programmes who entered directly from upper secondary education, by upper secondary programme orientation



How to read this figure: In Estonia, about 76% of entrants to bachelor's or equivalent programmes with a general upper secondary degree entered directly from upper secondary education. The same is true for about 40% of entrants with a vocational upper secondary education and 70% of all entrants (with general or vocational upper secondary degrees).

Note: Data in the figure come from an ad-hoc survey on tertiary completion rates, which followed a cohort of students from entry into bachelor's programmes until three years after the end of the programme's theoretical duration. The reference year for the completion rate survey is 2017, but the year of entry into bachelor's level depends on the theoretical duration of programmes available in each country. For nearly every country presented in the figure, the data refer to students who entered bachelor's programmes in the period between 2010 and 2012. For the United States, it refers to students who entered bachelor's programmes in 2003.

1. Data refer only to the *Hautes Écoles* (HE) and the *Écoles des arts* (ESA), representing about 60% of entrants to bachelor's or equivalent programmes

2. Data disaggregated by programme orientation is based on an entry cohort that excludes students with unknown upper secondary qualification and is therefore smaller than the total for "All programmes".

Countries are ranked in descending order of the share of students who entered tertiary education directly from upper secondary education, all programmes

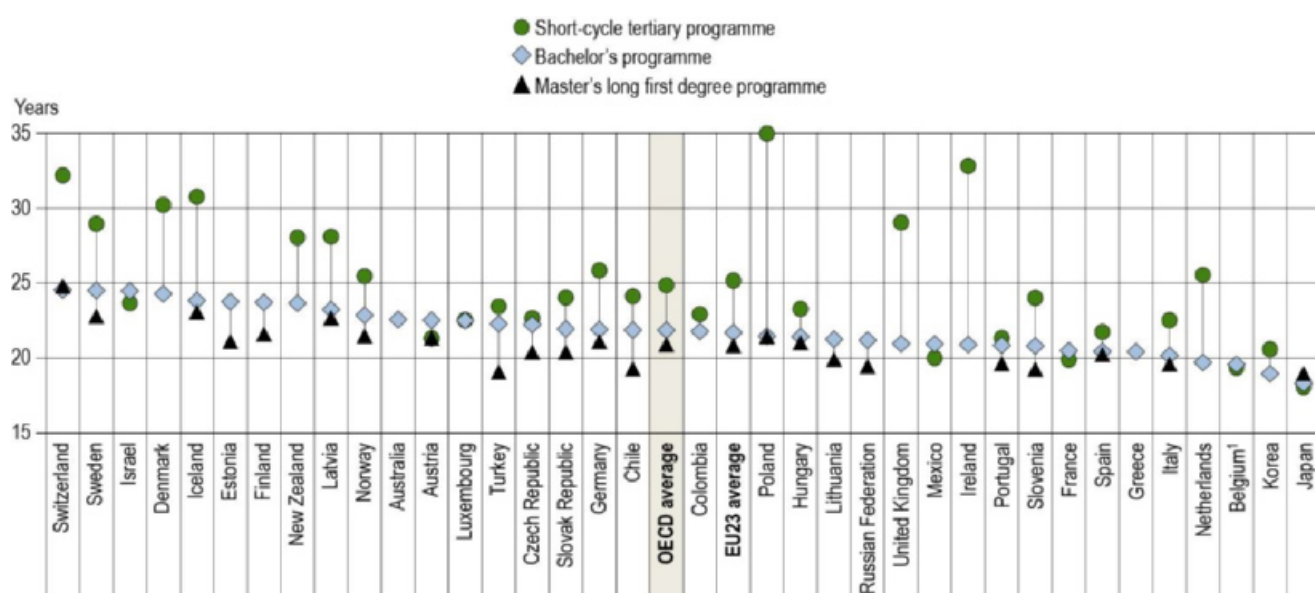
Source: Ad-hoc survey on tertiary completion rates OECD (2019). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>).

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The average age at entry to tertiary programmes also varies depending on the entry-level programme and the student profile each programme tends to attract. Students tend to think about enrolling in bachelor's or master's LFDs shortly after upper secondary school, while short-cycle tertiary programmes tend to attract older adults, potentially with some employment experience. On average across OECD countries, the average age of new entrants is 25 years for short-cycle tertiary programmes, 22 for bachelor's programmes and 21 for master's long first degrees. However, there are large disparities among countries. The average age of new entrants to bachelor's programmes varies from 18-19 in Japan and Korea to 24 and over in Sweden and Switzerland. The average age of new entrants to short-cycle tertiary programmes varies from 18 in Japan to 30 or older in Denmark, Iceland, Ireland, Poland and Switzerland (Figure B4.2).

Structural factors, such as admission procedures, the typical age at which students graduate from upper secondary education, or cultural perceptions of the value of professional or personal experiences outside of education may explain the differences in the average age of entry to tertiary education across countries. Traditionally, students entered tertiary programmes immediately after completing upper secondary education, and this remains true in many cases. However, in a few countries, less than 25% of entrants to bachelor's programmes enrol straight after upper secondary (Box B4.1). This is the case in Israel, for example, where military service is compulsory. In Finland and Sweden, admissions are also restricted for many programmes and fields of study resulting in more than 60% of applicants being rejected (see Indicator D6). Countries with lower average entry ages are also those where enrolment into tertiary programmes is more likely to follow directly after graduation from upper secondary level. In some cases, this is facilitated by tertiary systems with open admissions, such as in the Netherlands. In others, direct entry following upper secondary has also been fuelled by tertiary expansion policies and a strong culture valuing academic achievement and educational attainment. For instance in Japan, an increase in tertiary capacity since the 1970s, combined with specific policies to promote tertiary attainment following the Japan Revitalisation Strategy, have led to higher enrolment rates in spite of selective admission systems (OECD, 2009^[2]).

Figure B4.2. Average age of new entrants by level of education (2017)



Note: Data for master's long first degree may rely on small sample sizes.

1. Short-cycle tertiary: data refers to the Flemish Community of Belgium only.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the average age for new entrants into bachelor's programmes in 2017.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2019), Table B4.1. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>).

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Upper secondary programme orientation and the tertiary programme students enter also strongly influence the average age of entry to tertiary level. In some countries, these programmes are specifically designed for adults with work experience and may have specific entry requirements. For instance in Denmark, the *Akademiuddannelser*, requires two years relevant work experience. Furthermore, these programmes tend to appeal more to upper secondary vocational students who are more likely to delay entrance to tertiary education because of their strong employment prospects from their upper secondary qualification.

Share of international students among new entrants at tertiary level

International students provide an additional income stream for educational institutions and contribute to the economy of their host country (García, De and Villarreal, 2014^[3]). Beyond the economic benefits, interaction between domestic and international students promotes cultural understanding (culture, politics, religion, ethnicity and worldview), and dialogue, all essential to navigating an increasingly globalised economy. On average across OECD countries, international students make up 5% of new entrants to short-cycle tertiary programmes, rising to 8% for bachelor's programmes and 15% for master's LFDs. The more limited share of international students in short-cycle tertiary programmes could be due to the smaller number of countries providing such qualifications. In contrast, bachelor's and master's programmes are recognised qualifications with good employment prospects in all OECD countries.

Some countries are better than others at attracting international students. The share of international students among new entrants to short-cycle tertiary programmes ranges from close to zero in Chile, Colombia, Sweden and Turkey to 24% in New Zealand and 35% in Iceland. The share of international students among new entrants to bachelor's programme ranges from 2% or less in Chile, Colombia, Korea, Mexico and Spain to more than 30% in New Zealand. The total share of international students entering a master's LFD programme ranges from 3% or less in Chile, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden to 27% or more in the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Latvia and the Slovak Republic.

Distribution of new entrants by level of education and gender

Equal opportunities for both men and women to enter tertiary education can contribute to stronger, better and fairer growth by raising the overall level of human capital and labour productivity (OECD, 2011^[4]). However, the expansion of tertiary education in OECD countries over the past decades has benefited women more than men: 51% of 25-34 year-old women now have a tertiary degree on average across OECD countries, up from 40% in 2008. In contrast, 38% of 25-34 year-old men were tertiary educated in 2018, an increase of 7 percentage points since 2008 (see Indicator A1).

The gender divide is set to keep on growing as women also outnumber men among new entrants to each tertiary level. On average across OECD countries, women represent 53% of new entrants at short-cycle tertiary level, 54% at bachelor's level, and 61% at master's level. At bachelor's and master's level in all countries, the share of women is close to 50% or above. In some countries, men are particularly under-represented even at bachelor's level, which represents the most common entry route into tertiary education. In Iceland and Sweden, they make up less than 40% of new entrants at this level. Short-cycle tertiary or master's LFD levels are more influenced by gender due to their specific focus on certain fields of study which tend to be associated with male or female occupations. Master's LFDs, which generally cover health or science programmes, tend to have a lower enrolment rate among men, who make up 30% or less of the new entrants to the level in Slovenia, and Switzerland. In contrast, men represent 60% or more of new entrants into short-cycle tertiary programmes in Slovenia. These programmes are also strongly dominated by men in Italy, Mexico, Norway and Portugal although they account for less than 10% of all first-time tertiary entrants (Table B4.1).

While many countries have promoted higher educational attainment for men and provided incentives to pursue higher education, men have not responded. This may be partly due to the critical years before tertiary education, when boys are more likely to struggle academically, repeat a grade, or drop out of school (OECD, 2017^[5]; OECD, 2018^[6]). This may also reflect differences in educational pathways at lower levels; for example, vocational training tends to appeal to men more than women in some countries (see Indicator B3). Students from vocational upper secondary programmes are indeed less likely to enter tertiary education, particularly at bachelor's level: only 28% of entrants to a bachelor's programme graduated from an upper secondary vocational programme on average across countries with available data (see Indicator B5). Short-cycle tertiary programmes provide more educational opportunities at tertiary level for students from vocational tracks, but the availability of such programmes is limited in a number of countries.

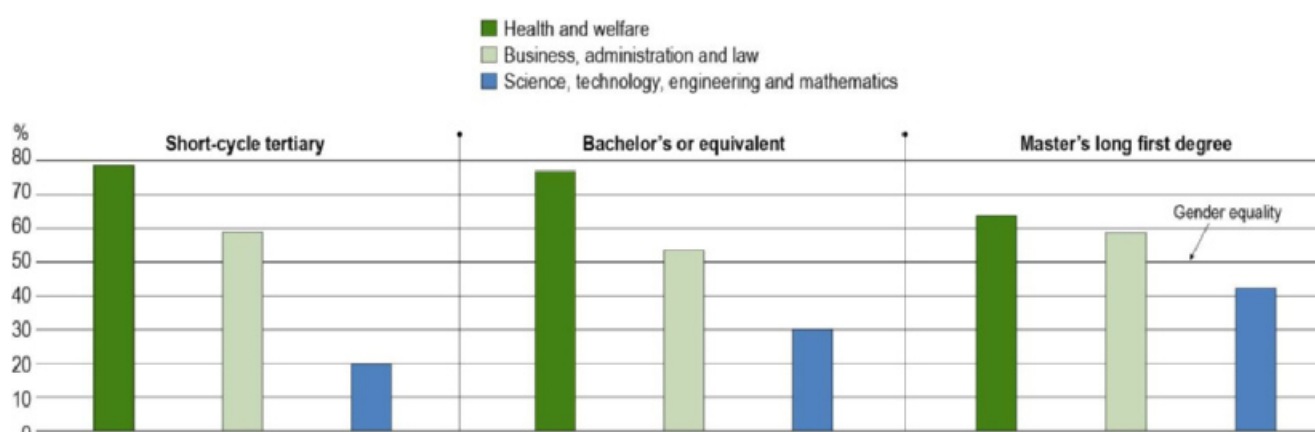
Fields of study of new entrants to each tertiary level

Students' choice of field of study is guided by career opportunities and their aspirations after education. The largest share of new entrants, one in four on average across OECD countries and across all tertiary levels, entered the broad field of business, administration and law in 2017 (OECD, 2019^[7]). In only six OECD countries were different field of study more popular among new entrants: Belgium and Finland (health and welfare), Israel (education), Italy (arts and humanities), and Korea and Sweden (engineering, manufacturing and construction).

Promoting the broad field of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) has become a priority in many countries (OECD, 2017^[8]). In addition to building the skills to drive innovation in technology and research, science-related competencies such as problem solving and quantitative analysis are considered essential in today's unpredictable and data-driven economy and are in high demand in the labour market. On average across OECD and partner countries, 27% of new entrants into bachelor's programmes enrol in a STEM field, with the largest shares in Germany (40%), the Russian Federation (35%), and Austria, Greece and Korea (34%) (Table B4.2). Of those, adults who studied information and communication technologies (ICT) and engineering, construction and manufacturing reap the greatest benefits in terms of employment (see Indicator A3) and earnings (see Indicator A4). In spite of these strong labour-market outcomes, these fields still attract a smaller share of students. On average across OECD countries and across all tertiary levels, 16% of new entrants enrol in engineering, manufacturing and construction and 5% in ICT (OECD, 2019^[7]).

Figure B4.3. Share of women first-time new entrants by level of education and field of study (2017)

OECD average



Source: OECD / UIS / Eurostat (2019), Table B4.2. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>).

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Entry patterns by field of study reveal a strong gender bias. While the share of women new entrants has now overtaken that of men, women are still under-represented in STEM fields of study and over-represented in health and welfare across all tertiary levels. However, the gender difference varies across educational pathways and tends towards greater gender equality among new entrants into master's LFDs in both these fields (Figure B4.3).

On average across OECD countries in 2017, 20% of new entrants to short-cycle tertiary programmes and 30% of new entrants to bachelor's programmes in STEM fields were women. Only master's LFD programmes achieved anything approaching gender parity in STEM fields, with 42% of women on average across OECD countries, although this ranges from 33% in Sweden to 58% in Hungary and Italy (Table B4.2).

At the other end of the spectrum, women dominate in other fields of study such as health and welfare, although their share tends to decrease with each additional educational level: women represent 79% of new entrants to

health and welfare short-cycle tertiary programmes, compared to 77% at bachelor's level and 64% for master's long first degrees. Health and welfare mainly includes nursing and welfare in short-cycle tertiary or bachelor's programmes but mainly medical studies in master's LFD programmes (Box B4.2).

Box B4.2. Graduates in health and welfare

The fields of study aggregated under health and welfare include a wide range of programmes: dental studies, medicine, nursing and midwifery, medical diagnostic and treatment technology, therapy and rehabilitation, pharmacy, etc. Some of these programmes require extensive studies, such as dental studies and medicine, while others are more variable in length, such as nursing or welfare. Therefore, some of these programmes are offered at short-cycle or bachelor's level while others are exclusively offered through master's long first degrees. However, there are large differences among countries on the programmes offered to students at various levels.

Figure B4.b Share of health and welfare graduates among all tertiary graduates, by field of study and tertiary level (2017)

On average across OECD countries



Note: Other health and welfare includes: medical diagnostic and treatment technology, therapy and rehabilitation, traditional and complementary medicine and therapy, health and welfare not further defined, and health and welfare not elsewhere classified.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2019) and OECD/ILO/UIS (2019). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>).

StatLink  <https://doi.org/10.1787/888933978189>

On average across OECD countries, health and welfare represents 19% of graduates from short-cycle tertiary of which half come from nursing and midwifery programmes (Figure B4.b). Some countries offer programmes at this level for only a few subjects. This is the case in Belgium and Poland where short-cycle programmes are exclusively dedicated to nursing (in Belgium) and welfare (in Poland). Medicine and dental studies, which are often considered longer studies, are offered as short-cycle tertiary programmes in some countries: the

field of medicine accounted for 10% of short-cycle tertiary graduates in Latvia and 2-3% in Colombia and Spain, while 2-3% of short-cycle tertiary graduates specialised in dental studies in Korea and Sweden.

Medicine and dental studies make up the largest share of graduates from master's long first degree programmes: 34% for medicine and 7% for dental studies. Pharmacy, the third most prevalent field of study contributes 6% of graduates (Figure B4.b). Again, there are large variations among countries. In Chile, Finland and Iceland, all master's long first degrees are in health but few students attend these programmes. In Japan, Latvia, the Slovak Republic and Turkey, more than 80% of graduates from master's long first degrees studied health.

Health and welfare fields are less commonly pursued through bachelor's programmes although this may differ by country: 15% of bachelor's graduates earned a degree in health and welfare on average across OECD countries, rising to 30% or more Belgium and Denmark.

Entry rates into tertiary education

If current entry patterns continue, it is estimated that 65% of young adults will enter tertiary education for the first time in their life on average across OECD countries. Chile (85%), New Zealand (89%), the Russian Federation (88%), Saudi Arabia (87%) and Switzerland (82%) have the highest first-time tertiary entry rates among OECD and partner countries with available data. The rates in these countries are typically inflated by a larger population of older students and international students or a high rate of entry into short-cycle tertiary education (Table B4.3).

Comparing the first-time entry rate of adults under the age of 25 with total first-time entry rates for a population (excluding international students) provides a sense of general accessibility versus delayed entrance into tertiary education. For example, first-time entry rates for adults under 25 are similar in Austria and Switzerland (47%, compared to the OECD average of 49%), but the total first-time entry rate in Switzerland is 14 percentage points higher than in Austria, suggesting that the lower entry rate for those under 25 is more a question of deferred entrance in Switzerland and of access in Austria. This is also corroborated by the average age of new entrants to each tertiary level shown in Figure B4.2.

International students can significantly affect tertiary entry rates. For example in Australia, an attractive destination country for international students, the entry rate for bachelor's programmes falls from 94% to 77% when international students are excluded, although it still has the highest entry rate in bachelor's programmes across OECD countries. Conversely, Luxembourg has the lowest entry rate across OECD countries (12% when international students are removed), due to the large proportion of its citizens studying abroad.

Definitions

Entry rate is the sum of age-specific entry rates, calculated by dividing the number of entrants of a certain age in a certain education level by the total population of that age.

Entry rate adjusted for international students is the entry rate calculated when excluding international students in the numerator of each age-specific entry rate.

First-time tertiary-level entry rate is an estimated probability, based on current entry patterns, that a young adult will enter tertiary education for the first time.

First-time entrants into tertiary education are students who are enrolling in tertiary education for the first time, without previous education at any other tertiary level. They may enter tertiary education at different levels through short-cycle tertiary (ISCED 5), bachelor programmes (ISCED 6) or master's programmes. **First-time entrants to a master's programme** can include entrants to a master's long first degree (ISCED 7-LFD); entrants to a stage of a programme at ISCED level 7 insufficient for level or partial level completion; foreign students entering a master's programme (programme normally following a bachelor's) but without having completed a bachelor's

degree in the host country; and students authorised to enter a master's programme after validation of acquired experience (VAE).

International students are those students who left their country of origin and moved to another country for the purpose of study. International students enrolling for the first time in a programme are often considered first-time entrants in that country.

Master's long first degree (LFD) is a master's programme (ISCED 7-LFD) of 5 to 7 years that prepares for a first degree or qualification that is equivalent to master's level programme in terms of their complexity of content. This includes highly specialised fields such as medicine, dentistry or, in some cases, law and engineering.

New entrants to a tertiary level of education are students who are enrolling for the first time at that tertiary level but may have previously entered and completed a degree in another tertiary level of education.

Tertiary-level entry rate is an estimated probability, based on current entry patterns, that a young adult will enter tertiary education during his or her lifetime.

Methodology

Compared to enrolment, entry rates measure the inflow to education during a specific period and represent the percentage of an age cohort who are expected to enter a tertiary programme during their lifetime. The net entry rate for a specific age is obtained by dividing the number of new entrants of that age for each type of tertiary education by the total population in the corresponding age group. The sum of net entry rates is calculated by adding the rates for each year of age. The result represents an estimate of the probability that a young person will enter tertiary education in his or her lifetime if current age-specific entry rates continue.

International students are a significant share of the total student population in some countries, and their numbers can artificially inflate the proportion of today's young adults who are expected to enter a tertiary programme. When international students are excluded from the calculation, the percentage of expected new entrants into tertiary programmes can change significantly.

For more information, please see the *OECD Handbook for Internationally Comparative Education Statistics 2018: Concepts, Standards, Definitions and Classification* (OECD, 2018^[9]) and Annex 3 for country-specific notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>).

Source

Data refer to the academic year 2016/17 and are based on the UNESCO-UIS/OECD/EUROSTAT data collection on education statistics administered by the OECD in 2018. Data on the share of entrants to bachelor's programmes who entered directly from upper secondary education, by upper secondary programme orientation refer to the academic year 2016/17 and were collected through a special survey undertaken in 2018. Data for some countries may have a different reference year. For details, see Annex 3 at <https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>.

Note regarding data from Israel

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and are under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

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Indicator B4 Tables

- Table B4.1** Profile of first-time entrants into tertiary education (2017)
- Table B4.2** Distribution of new entrants by field of study, gender and tertiary level (2017)
- Table B4.3** First-time entry rates, by tertiary level (2017)

Cut-off date for the data: 19 July 2019. Any updates on data can be found on line at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-data-en>. More breakdowns can also be found at <http://stats.oecd.org/>, Education at a Glance Database.

StatLink: <https://doi.org/10.1787/888933980982>

Table B4.1. Profile of first-time entrants into tertiary education (2017)

	Distribution of first-time entrants into tertiary education at:			Profile of first-time entrants into:								
				Short-cycle tertiary programmes			Bachelor's programmes			Master's long first degree (LFD) programmes		
	Short-cycle tertiary level	Bachelor's level	Master's level	Average age	Share of women	Share of international students	Average age	Share of women	Share of international students	Average age	Share of women	Share of international students
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	
OECD												
Countries												
Australia	m	m	m	m	m	m	23	57	19	a	a	a
Austria	45	40	15	21	53	2	23	55	22	21	59	20
Belgium ¹	1	99	a	19	87	5	20	55	8	a	a	a
Canada	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Chile	45	53	2	24	54	1	22	52	1	19	61	1
Colombia	40	60	a	23	48	0	22	54	0	a	a	a
Czech Republic	1	89	10	23	62	5	22	58	12	20	63	28
Denmark	26	74	0	30	47	11	24	57	8	m	m	m
Estonia	m	m	m	a	a	a	24	57	6	21	60	9
Finland	a	93	7	a	a	a	24	54	7	22	55	0
France	m	m	m	20	50	m	20	57	m	m	m	m
Germany	0	82	18	26	67	0	22	49	6	21	62	39
Greece	a	100	a	a	a	a	20	52	3	a	a	a
Hungary	12	71	17	23	65	1	21	54	8	21	57	28
Iceland	9	91	1	31	54	35	24	61	11	23	62	0
Ireland	m	m	m	33	56	4	21	51	5	m	m	m
Israel	26	74	a	24	50	m	24	59	4	a	a	a
Italy	2	86	12	23	28	7	20	53	6	20	65	5
Japan	35	63	2	18	61	m	18	45	m	19	49	m
Korea	m	m	m	21	51	0	19	50	2	a	a	a
Latvia	m	m	m	28	59	2	23	51	9	23	65	44
Lithuania	a	94	6	a	a	a	21	52	4	20	67	18
Luxembourg	20	80	a	23	52	12	22	49	29	a	a	a
Mexico	9	92	a	20	40	0	21	51	0	a	a	a
Netherlands	2	98	a	26	50	0	20	53	14	a	a	a
New Zealand	25	75	a	28	55	24	24	58	30	a	a	a
Norway	6	84	10	25	21	1	23	57	4	21	56	2
Poland	a	m	m	35	76	a	21	53	m	21	65	m
Portugal	9	76	14	21	36	3	21	57	5	20	51	6
Slovak Republic	3	91	6	24	67	1	22	56	6	20	65	34
Slovenia	18	77	5	24	39	3	21	56	5	19	70	8
Spain	36	53	11	22	45	1	20	56	2	20	67	12
Sweden	14	59	27	29	49	0	24	61	5	23	52	3
Switzerland	2	69	29	32	65	a	25	49	10	25	80	17
Turkey	48	50	2	23	50	0	22	50	3	19	53	7
United Kingdom	22	77	1	29	58	3	21	56	16	a	a	a
United States	47	53	a	23	54	3	m	m	m	a	a	a
OECD average	17	76	7	25	53	5	22	54	8	21	61	15
EU23 average	12	80	9	25	55	4	22	54	9	21	62	18
Partners												
Argentina	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	a	a	a
Brazil	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
China	60	40	a	m	50	m	m	55	m	m	m	m
Costa Rica	m	m	m	m	60	m	m	53	m	a	a	a
India	a	100	0	a	a	a	m	47	m	m	36	m
Indonesia	m	m	m	m	63	m	m	m	m	a	a	a
Russian Federation	54	37	9	m	52	2	21	53	7	19	50	10
Saudi Arabia	24	76	1	m	23	m	m	50	m	m	45	m
South Africa	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	a	a	a
G20 average	28	67	5	m	49	m	m	52	m	m	53	m

Note: Columns 1 to 3 refer to first-time entrants into tertiary education by level attended. Columns 4 to 12 refer to new entrants in each ISCED level. See *Definitions and Methodology* sections for more information. Data and more breakdowns available at <http://stats.oecd.org/>, Education at a Glance Database.

1. Short-cycle tertiary: data refers to the Flemish Community of Belgium only.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2019). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>).

Please refer to the *Reader's Guide* for information concerning symbols for missing data and abbreviations.

StatLink  <https://doi.org/10.1787/888933978056>

Table B4.2. Distribution of new entrants by field of study, gender and tertiary level (2017)

	Short-cycle tertiary						Bachelor's or equivalent						Master's long first degree (LFD)					
	Health and welfare		Business, administration and law		Science, technology, engineering and mathematics		Health and welfare		Business, administration and law		Science, technology, engineering and mathematics		Health and welfare		Business, administration and law		Science, technology, engineering and mathematics	
	Share of new entrants	Share of women	Share of new entrants	Share of women	Share of new entrants	Share of women	Share of new entrants	Share of women	Share of new entrants	Share of women	Share of new entrants	Share of women	Share of new entrants	Share of women	Share of new entrants	Share of women	Share of new entrants	Share of women
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	
OECD																		
Countries																		
Australia	m	m	m	m	m	m	21	75	25	50	21	33	a	a	a	a	a	a
Austria	4	68	25	61	34	17	6	78	15	56	34	35	23	53	64	60	0	a
Belgium ¹	100	87	0	a	0	a	26	74	23	49	19	20	a	a	a	a	a	a
Canada	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Chile	22	83	22	62	28	12	18	77	23	56	30	22	100	61	0	a	0	a
Colombia	4	66	48	62	33	27	8	75	34	59	26	32	a	a	a	a	a	a
Czech Republic	0	a	0	a	0	a	14	86	19	62	30	33	53	64	22	50	0.2	0
Denmark	3	86	55	47	14	23	28	79	22	49	20	31	m	m	m	m	m	m
Estonia	a	a	a	a	a	a	11	90	21	64	32	34	41	67	0	a	36	32
Finland	a	a	a	a	a	a	22	83	21	52	31	22	100	55	0	a	0	a
France	13	85	39	56	28	20	9	80	25	59	25	36	m	m	m	m	m	m
Germany	0	a	0	a	28	33	5	80	23	54	40	26	16	65	25	59	19	47
Greece	a	a	a	a	a	a	8	71	20	50	34	33	a	a	a	a	a	a
Hungary	6	84	49	70	10	14	7	82	19	59	31	26	41	56	20	58	3	58
Iceland	0	a	6	42	16	43	12	86	17	58	28	37	100	62	0	a	0	a
Ireland	11	68	25	52	32	29	14	80	19	48	31	29	m	m	m	m	m	m
Israel	3	82	2	82	59	26	7	81	15	58	28	36	a	a	a	a	a	a
Italy	0	a	17	36	52	14	9	57	16	45	30	36	37	64	46	62	7	58
Japan ²	25 ^a	69 ^a	12 ^a	61 ^a	15 ^a	16 ^a	9 ^a	71 ^a	28 ^a	31 ^a	19 ^a	17 ^a	96 ^a	48 ^a	0	a	0	a
Korea	22	72	11	62	28	14	12	69	14	50	34	31	a	a	a	a	a	a
Latvia	24	89	34	63	19	14	6	84	25	54	32	25	94	65	0	a	0	a
Lithuania	a	a	a	a	a	a	14	87	25	57	33	23	59	70	22	62	7	55
Luxembourg	28	74	36	55	22	12	12	47	20	63	20	24	a	a	a	a	a	a
Mexico	7	60	34	60	53	24	11	69	36	54	29	30	a	a	a	a	a	a
Netherlands	10	80	51	47	12	5	17	78	28	44	20	26	a	a	a	a	a	a
New Zealand	8	85	25	56	21	26	12	79	22	54	28	42	a	a	a	a	a	a
Norway	0	100	0	56	66	5	16	84	19	51	16	31	13	75	17	67	34	40
Poland	100	76	0	a	0	a	8	74	19	57	32	33	33	64	34	58	0	42
Portugal	9	86	19	55	44	13	14	81	27	58	21	33	30	72	0	a	55	36
Slovak Republic	32	83	14	69	12	39	13	77	18	59	27	29	86	66	0	a	0	a
Slovenia	2	79	18	70	45	16	11	77	17	60	29	29	63	75	0	a	20	56
Spain	15	74	20	56	31	11	11	74	22	54	24	31	74	70	0	a	16	51
Sweden	4	82	30	78	46	23	17	82	14	59	21	35	12	67	15	53	37	33
Switzerland	26	86	48	69	11	12	16	77	30	44	27	22	0	a	0	a	0	a
Turkey	11	67	32	46	18	29	11	67	32	46	18	29	89	55	0	a	0	a
United Kingdom	31	76	32	56	14	18	11	78	20	51	32	39	a	a	a	a	a	a
United States	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	a	a	a	a	a	a
OECD average	17	79	24	59	26	20	13	77	22	54	27	30	55	64	13	59	11	42
EU23 average	21	80	24	58	23	19	13	77	21	55	28	30	51	65	17	58	13	43
Partners																		
Argentina	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	a	a	a	a	a	a
Brazil	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	a	a	a	a	a	a
China	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Costa Rica	1	75	31	70	31	39	11	67	30	58	28	31	a	a	a	a	a	a
India	a	a	a	a	a	a	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Indonesia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	a	a	a	a	a	a
Russian Federation	14	84	24	68	35	25	1	80	25	55	35	29	36	65	11	56	25	21
Saudi Arabia	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
South Africa	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	a	a	a	a	a	a
G20 average	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m

Note: See *Definitions* and *Methodology* sections for more information. Data and more breakdowns available at <http://stats.oecd.org/>, Education at a Glance Database.

1. Short-cycle tertiary: data refers to the Flemish Community of Belgium only.

2. All fields of study include the field Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2019). See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>).

Please refer to the *Reader's Guide* for information concerning symbols for missing data and abbreviations.

StatLink  <https://doi.org/10.1787/888933978075>

Table B4.3. First-time entry rates, by tertiary level (2017)

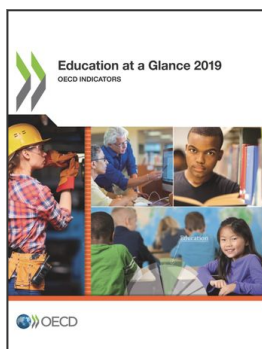
	Short-cycle tertiary			Bachelor's level			Master's level			Doctoral level			First-time tertiary			
	Total	Excluding international students		Total	Excluding international students		Total	Excluding international students		Total	Excluding international students		Total	Excluding international students		
		Total	Younger than 25 years		Total	Total		Younger than 25 years	Total		Total	Younger than 30 years		Total	Total	Younger than 25 years
		(1)	(2)		(3)	(4)		(5)	(6)		(7)	(8)		(9)	(10)	(11)
OECD																
Countries																
Australia	m	m	m	94	77	61	33	15	8	3.3	2.0	0.8	m	m	m	
Austria	34	34	29	43	34	29	24	16	14	3.1	1.9	1.3	68	54	47	
Belgium ¹	1	1	1	81	74	72	30	26	25	0.9	0.5	0.4	76	69	67	
Canada	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	
Chile	46	45	31	58	58	48	11	11	5	0.4	0.4	0.2	85	85	70	
Colombia	21	21	14	31	31	23	8	8	3	0.1	0.1	0.0	51	51	37	
Czech Republic	1	0	0	58	51	45	29	23	22	3.3	0.3	m	64	54	48	
Denmark	29	26	10	68	63	47	36	28	24	3.1	1.9	1.1	79	72	53	
Estonia	a	a	a	64	60	47	30	25	18	2.0	1.5	0.9	m	m	m	
Finland	a	a	a	57	53	42	14	10	5	2.2	1.6	0.6	59	52	43	
France	29	m	m	55	m	m	42	m	m	2.5	m	m	m	m	m	
Germany	0	0	0	49	46	39	30	22	20	3.8	3.2	2.7	60	53	45	
Greece	a	a	a	72	70	64	22	22	12	2.8	2.8	1.3	47	45	40	
Hungary	5	5	4	31	28	26	16	13	11	1.7	1.4	1.0	43	39	35	
Iceland	9	6	2	61	54	42	32	28	14	2.6	1.6	0.4	65	56	43	
Ireland	14	13	5	73	69	61	33	25	14	3.2	2.1	1.2	m	m	m	
Israel	20	m	m	54	52	35	24	22	9	1.9	1.8	0.6	67	m	m	
Italy	1	1	1	43	41	37	26	24	22	1.4	1.2	0.9	50	48	43	
Japan	28	m	m	49	m	m	8	m	m	1.2	1.0	m	79	m	m	
Korea	32	32	29	58	57	56	13	12	6	3.4	3.0	1.2	m	m	m	
Latvia	28	27	15	77	70	56	29	23	18	2.1	1.9	1.0	m	m	m	
Lithuania	a	a	a	72	70	62	23	20	17	1.5	1.4	0.8	77	74	66	
Luxembourg	4	4	3	17	12	11	15	3	3	1.8	0.3	0.2	21	17	15	
Mexico	4	4	4	47	46	39	6	6	3	0.6	0.6	0.2	51	51	43	
Netherlands	2	2	1	61	53	51	23	16	15	1.4	0.7	0.6	62	54	52	
New Zealand	31	24	11	76	54	41	12	8	4	3.1	1.4	0.6	89	61	48	
Norway	5	5	3	65	62	52	29	28	22	2.8	2.0	0.8	70	68	58	
Poland	0	0	0	71	m	m	34	m	m	1.9	m	m	77	73	66	
Portugal	6	6	5	49	46	42	36	32	27	3.8	2.6	1.2	62	59	55	
Slovak Republic	1	1	1	48	46	41	33	31	28	2.2	2.0	1.4	53	49	44	
Slovenia	25	24	19	73	69	65	29	28	25	3.0	2.8	1.6	74	70	67	
Spain	31	31	27	49	48	44	19	15	13	3.8	3.1	1.8	79	74	68	
Sweden	9	9	3	44	41	30	31	25	20	2.2	1.3	0.6	63	56	41	
Switzerland	2	2	1	62	55	40	23	15	13	4.7	2.0	1.5	82	68	47	
Turkey	50	49	35	51	49	39	11	10	9	1.0	0.9	0.5	m	m	m	
United Kingdom	16	15	8	66	56	49	29	17	11	4.0	2.3	1.5	74	66	53	
United States	39	38	29	m	m	m	14	12	7	1.3	0.9	0.5	49	47	44	
OECD average	17	15	10	58	53	45	24	19	14	2.3	1.6	0.9	65	58	50	
EU23 average	12	11	7	57	52	46	27	21	17	2.5	1.7	1.1	63	57	50	
Partners																
Argentina	m	m	m	m	m	m	5	m	m	0.6	m	m	m	m	m	
Brazil	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	
China	40	m	m	38	m	m	4	m	m	0.4	m	m	67	m	m	
Costa Rica	6	m	m	44	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	
India	a	a	a	46	m	m	10	m	m	m	m	m	42	m	m	
Indonesia	5	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	
Russian Federation	48	47	m	52	48	47	25	23	23	2.0	1.8	m	88	m	m	
Saudi Arabia	20	m	m	66	m	m	2	m	m	0.3	m	m	87	m	m	
South Africa	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	
G20 average	24	m	m	55	m	m	17	m	m	2	m	m	66	m	m	

1. Short-cycle tertiary: data refers to the Flemish Community of Belgium only.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2019). See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>).

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

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