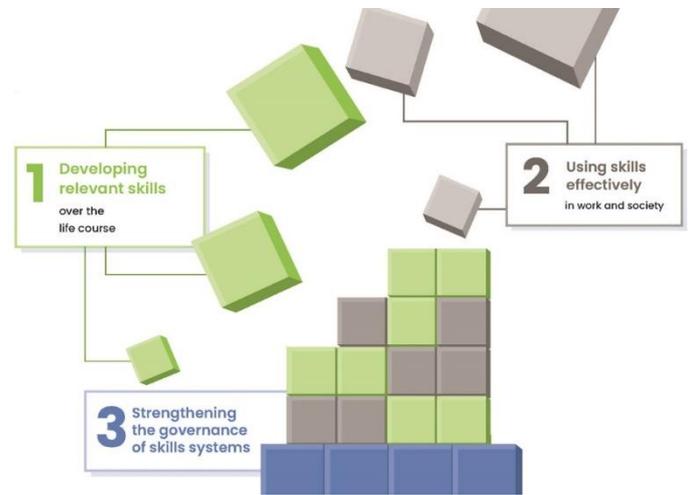




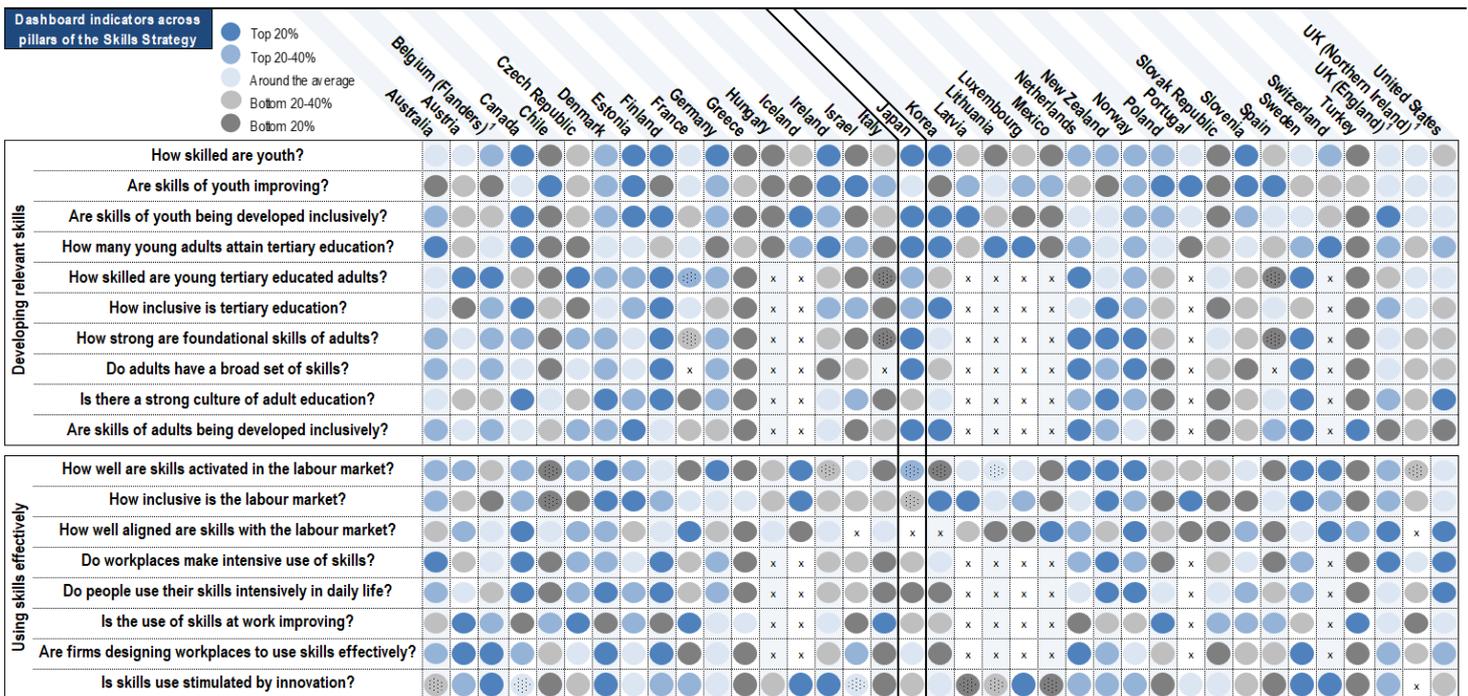
2019 OECD Skills Strategy: Japan

Since its launch in 2012, the OECD Skills Strategy has provided countries with a strategic and comprehensive approach to assessing their skills challenges and opportunities. The 2019 OECD Skills Strategy incorporates lessons learned from applying the OECD Skills Strategy framework in eleven countries, including new evidence about the implications of so-called megatrends, such as globalisation, digitalisation, population ageing or migration. It also accounts for new evidence about skills policies that work under the proper governance arrangements, including effective co-ordination and accountability mechanisms, efficient funding from different sources and information systems. This document describes the key findings for Japan.

The 2019 OECD Skills Strategy



OECD Skills Strategy Dashboard: summary indicators of skills performance



Notes: Indicators are selected, aggregated and normalised in a way to ensure that a higher value and being among the “Top 20%” reflects better performance. Colours in the dashboard represent the quintile position of the country in the ranking, with dark grey indicating performance at the bottom, and dark blue indicating performance at the top of the ranking. The “x” indicates insufficient or no available data for the underlying indicators, and dotted circles indicate missing data for at least one underlying indicator. Only OECD sources have been used (see OECD (2019) for overview).

1. For Belgium (Flanders), United Kingdom (England and Northern Ireland), a combination of regional (PISA and PIAAC) and national data have been used.

Note on Israel: The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and are under the responsibility of 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.

Japan’s skills performance

The Skills Strategy Dashboard provides a snapshot of Japan’s comparative skills performance. Japan is a top performer in developing the skills of youth. Among OECD countries, Japan had the highest PISA scores in 2015 in mathematics and science, while it was 6th in reading. The

scores are still slightly improving over the past PISA cycles. These skills are also being developed inclusively across students with different socio-economic backgrounds. The tertiary attainment rate among 25 to 34 year olds is the third highest across OECD countries and these tertiary educated

adults have comparatively high skills in literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments.

Adults in general have one of the highest literacy and numeracy scores. However, Japan ranks in the bottom 40% for the strength of its adult learning culture. The participation rate in formal and/or non-formal adult education and the willingness of Japanese adults to participate in adult education are both below the OECD average. A significant share of adults also reported facing barriers to adult education participation.

Japan is generally successful at activating the skills of its workforce, with employment and labour force participation rates above the OECD average. However, there is a significant gap in the employment rate between male and female.

While the use of reading at work is slightly above the OECD average, the use of numeracy and ICT at work falls below the OECD average. The same skills applied at home are used less frequently than in most OECD countries. Across generations, the use of skills at work does not seem to be improving. The intensity of skills use could be enhanced by the increased adoption of high-performance workplace practices, which in Japan is only around the OECD average.

The strength of the innovation system is also crucial for skills use. However, Japan's performance is uneven. Japan is the leading OECD country, when it comes to registering patents. Japan is also above OECD average in the number of researchers per 1000 employed. However, Japan performs poorly in international co-authorship and co-invention, ranking close to the bottom or at the bottom of OECD countries.

Japan has taken important steps to respond to many of these challenges. The Council for *Designing 100-Year Life Society* was launched in 2017, convening stakeholders to discuss how to address the challenges due to a rapidly ageing population, including the need for adults to continuously upskill. The *Japan Revitalization Strategy* (revised in 2014) has been established to promote a more active participation of women in society and economic life and to increase women's employment rate from 70% in 2013 to 73% by 2020.

Still, Japan could benefit from a renewal of its strategic vision for the future to ensure that all of its people have the skills to respond to the challenges and opportunities of a complex and rapidly changing world. A whole-of-government approach is needed to achieve this aim.

Key recommendations for improving the performance of countries' skills system

Developing relevant skills over the life course: Making skills systems responsive

- Making each stage of learning a foundation for success in the next
- Enabling policies to support learning in adulthood
- Supporting teachers to become lifelong learners
- Financing adult learning
- Harnessing the power of technology as a tool for learning

Using skills effectively in work and society: Making the most of everyone's potential

- Make full use of everyone's skills
- Making the most of migrants' skills
- Activating skills to build more inclusive and cohesive societies
- Making intensive use of skills in work
- Aligning skills with the needs of the economy and society
- Aligning skills policies with industrial and innovation policies

Strengthening the governance of skills systems: Tackling increased complexity

- Promoting co-ordination, co-operation and collaboration across the whole of government
- Engaging stakeholders throughout the policy cycle
- Building integrated information systems
- Aligning and co-ordinating financing arrangements

Further reading

- OECD (2019), *OECD Skills Strategy 2019: Skills to shape a better future*, OECD Publishing, Paris, [//doi.org/10.1787/9789264313835-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264313835-en).
- OECD (2019), *OECD Skills Outlook 2019: Thriving in a Digital World*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/df80bc12-en>.
- OECD (2017), *OECD Economic Surveys: Japan 2017*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/22212302>.
- OECD (forthcoming), *Strengthening the Governance of Skills Systems*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

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