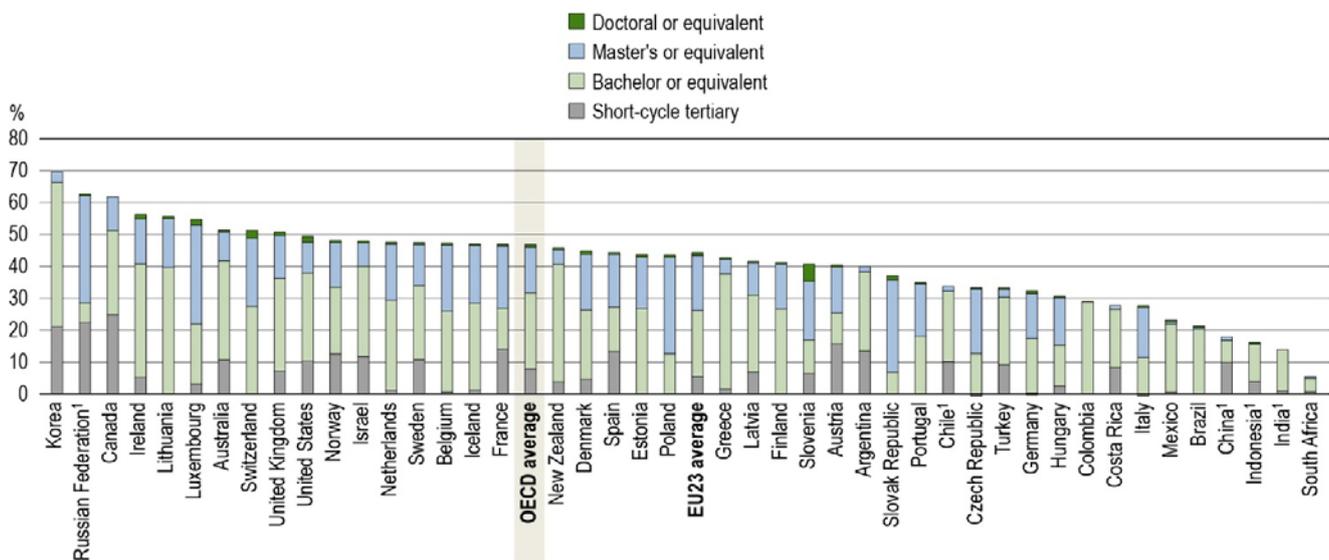


Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators (OECD, 2019^[1]) is the authoritative source for information on the state of education around the world. It provides data on the structure, finances and performance of education systems in OECD and partner countries.

The Netherlands

- Tertiary attainment among young adults increased by 8 percentage points between 2008 and 2018. Despite this increase in attainment, **higher education still delivers strong labour-market benefits** in the Netherlands.
- At tertiary level, students are as likely to drop out in their first year in the Netherlands as the OECD average, and **students generally take longer to complete their bachelor's studies than in many other countries**.
- Vocational education is a common track for upper secondary students **but gender plays a substantial role in field of study choice**.
- **Teachers have a heavier teaching load and larger classes, but are relatively well remunerated**. Secondary school teachers that stay in the profession enjoy particularly good salaries relative to other countries.

Figure 1. Distribution of 25-34 year-olds with tertiary education, by level of tertiary education (2018)



1. Year of reference differs from 2018. Refer to Table A1.1 for more details

Note: Some categories might be included in other categories. Please refer to Education at a Glance Database, <http://stats.oecd.org> for details. Countries are ranked in descending order of the total percentage of tertiary-educated 25-34 year-olds.

Source: OECD (2019), Education at a Glance Database, <http://stats.oecd.org>. See *Source* section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>).

Tertiary attainment has increased in the past decade, although rates remain below average for some levels and some fields of study

- Overall, 38% of Dutch adults (25-64 year-olds) have a tertiary education, similar to the OECD average of 39%. However, tertiary educational attainment among younger adults has increased in the Netherlands in the past decade, and the share of 25-34 year-olds with tertiary education increased by 8 percentage points between 2008 and 2018 to 48%, above the OECD average of 44%.
- Despite rising attainment, a tertiary qualification still provides substantial benefits in the labour market. The employment advantage for 25-34 year-olds with a tertiary education was at 4 percentage points over the employment rate for their peers with upper secondary education¹ in 2008, and 7 percentage points in 2018. In addition, 21% of adults with tertiary education earn at least twice the median wage in the Netherlands, compared to just 5% of adults with upper secondary education and 2% of adults without upper secondary education. However, as is the case in many OECD countries, the earnings premium for higher education is lower for younger adults; tertiary-educated 25-34 year-olds earn 24% more on average than their peers with upper secondary education, while those aged 45-54 earn on average 74% more. This could reflect a reducing earnings premium over time, or alternatively suggest that higher education graduates are exposed to more opportunities to increase their earnings as they progress through their careers.
- The Netherlands has the same share of adults with master's qualifications as the OECD average (13%). However, despite a relatively high-performing higher education research and development (R&D) sector, the doctoral attainment rate is below the OECD average (OECD, 2019^[2]): in 2018, 0.7% of the population aged 25-64 had a doctorate, compared to the OECD average of 1.2%. Among younger adults, 0.6% have a doctoral degree, compared to the OECD average of 0.8% (Figure 1). The capacity to train doctoral students may be limited by the fact that in the Netherlands, only the university sector is permitted to provide doctoral level education (OECD, 2019^[2]).
- Unlike in neighbouring Germany, where 26% of tertiary graduates have studied engineering, manufacturing and construction, in the Netherlands just 11% have qualifications in this broad field, below the OECD average of 16%. A qualification in this field attracts above-average rewards in the Dutch labour market, with employment rates of 92%, compared to the OECD average of 89%. Similarly, just 4% of tertiary-educated adults in the Netherlands have a qualification in information and communication technologies (ICT), the same as the OECD average, despite graduates in this field enjoying very high employment rates in the Netherlands (93%, compared to the OECD average of 90%).
- The Netherlands has one of the more internationalised higher education systems in the OECD. For example, 9% of bachelor's students are international or foreign, compared to the OECD total share of 4%. A particularly high share of doctoral students in the Netherlands come from abroad, making up 43% of students at this level, the fourth highest proportion in the OECD. The overall share of international students in tertiary education has also been increasing rapidly in recent years, from 4% in 2010 to 11% in 2017, with the majority of international students (57%) coming from other European countries. The relatively high share of international students can be explained by the fact that, of all the non-English speaking countries, the Netherlands offers one of the highest proportions of tertiary academic programmes in English (Wächter and Maiworm, 2014^[3]). Students in the Netherlands are also more likely than average to spend a period of their studies abroad. In 2017 28% of graduates had been credit-mobile as part of their study programme (i.e. they had earned some credits towards their qualification in an institution in another country), well above the average of 12% across European OECD countries.

¹ Post-secondary non-tertiary education programmes are not specifically mentioned in this note as they are practically non-existent in the Netherlands. However, figures for the OECD average include both upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary levels of education.

Admission into tertiary education is open, but many students take a relatively long time to graduate

- The Netherlands is one of 14 OECD countries with open admissions to tertiary education, although there are “*numerus fixus*” (capacity constrained) programmes in some fields of study. There is a centralised application process (Studielink), where applicants can specify up to three preferences for programmes. This is a smaller number of choices than students get in many other OECD countries, which may be due to the generally open admissions policy (making additional choices unnecessary) and the strong policy focus on student guidance in recent years in the Netherlands. All students receive career orientation lessons as part of the standard curriculum in secondary school, while the recently implemented “Study Choice Check” programme makes it mandatory for higher education institutions to offer an evaluation of how well the skills and competencies of prospective students match the programme they are interested in (OECD, 2019^[2]). Students in secondary education (but not vocational education) need to take national examinations to enter tertiary education. For *numerus fixus* programmes institutions have autonomy to apply additional criteria for admission, such as application letters, grade point averages, interviews or past work experience. A minimum of two additional criteria must be applied.
- Almost all first-time tertiary entrants enrol in bachelor’s programmes in the Netherlands. Master’s long first degrees do not exist. Short-cycle tertiary programmes were introduced in recent years and attract 2% of first-time tertiary entrants, though enrolment is increasing quickly (OECD, 2019^[2]). In contrast, on average across OECD countries, 17% of first-time tertiary entrants enrol in short-cycle tertiary programmes and 7% in master’s long first degrees.
- Despite the heavy focus on guidance and matching skills to programmes, 12% of students in the Netherlands were no longer enrolled in tertiary education after their first year of study, the same proportion as the average for countries with available data. Students in the Netherlands are also less likely to complete their studies on time. Just 28% of bachelor’s students in 2017 had completed their programme within its theoretical duration, below the average of 39%. However, students do appear to catch up over the following years: 70% of bachelor’s students completed after three further years, more than the average of 67%. As in most other countries, there is a sizeable gender gap in completion rates, although it is larger in the Netherlands than in other countries. This is mostly due to the higher completion rate among women: 77% of women entering a bachelor’s programme in the Netherlands completed it within three years after the theoretical duration, compared to 72% on average among countries with available data. In contrast, 62% of men completed their degree within the same timeframe, similar to the average (61%).

Vocational education is a common upper secondary track, but there are substantial gender differences over fields of study

- Vocational education is the chosen pathway of just over half of upper secondary students in the Netherlands. In 2017 54% of all first-time upper secondary education graduates obtained a vocational qualification, higher than the OECD average share of 40%.
- Overall, exactly 50% of graduates from vocational upper secondary education are female. However, there are substantial gender gaps across the fields of study. In engineering, manufacturing and construction, only 10% of graduates are female while in health and welfare the share is 88%, despite the fact that the Netherlands has a much higher share of graduates from this field than most other OECD countries (23%, compared to the OECD average of 12%). This is a similar gender profile to most other OECD countries, and reflects the difficulty of breaking gender stereotypes in student choices, which are perpetuated by their abilities and beliefs at the time when they make their decisions (van der Vleuten et al., 2016^[4]).

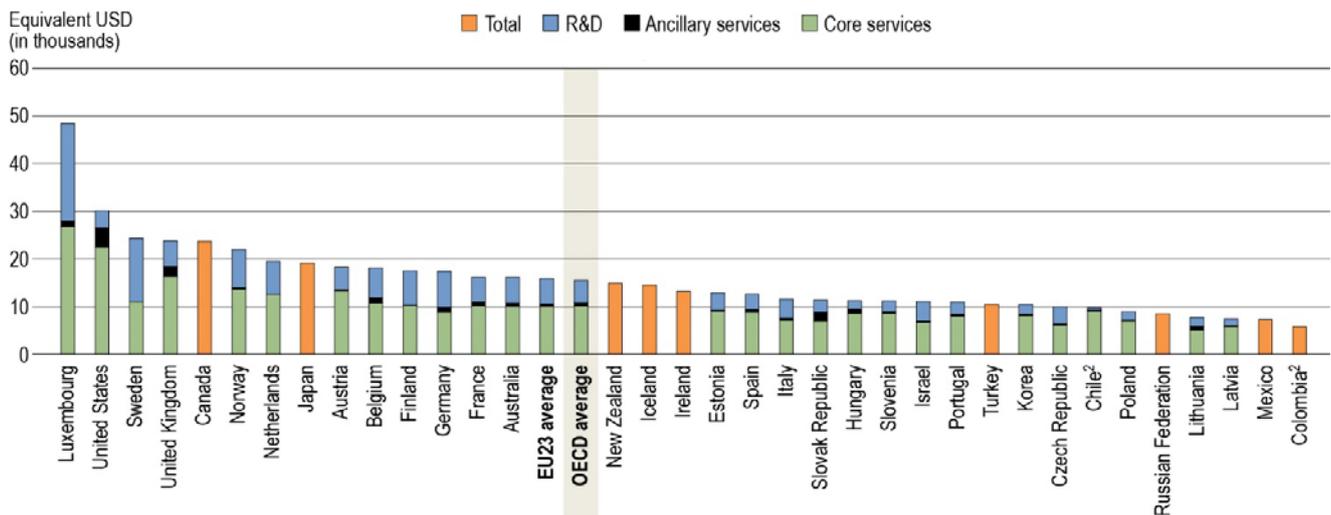
- One of the key characteristics of the Dutch education system is the separation of students during secondary education into three tracks: pre-vocational, general and pre-university. In the Netherlands, students in general and pre-university tracks have the option to continue into tertiary education, although the general qualification offers access to universities of applied sciences only. Pre-vocational students can only proceed to tertiary education after completing additional vocational study programmes. Relatively few students follow this path, however: although more than half of upper secondary graduates hold a vocational qualification, they make up only 24% of entrants to bachelor's programmes, one of the largest differences among countries with available data.

The Netherlands invests relatively heavily in education, though expenditure per student has remained relatively static in recent years

- The Netherlands spends close to the OECD average on primary education per student (USD 8 609² compared to the OECD average of USD 8 470). However at secondary level the Netherlands spends 30% more per student. The higher expenditure on secondary education largely driven by higher expenditure per vocational student, which reached USD 14 530 in 2016, compared to the OECD average of USD 10 922. Given that slightly more than half of students in the Dutch secondary system are enrolled in vocational education, total spending on primary and secondary educational institutions is higher in the Netherlands (USD 11 121 per student) than on average across OECD countries (USD 9 357).

Figure 2. Total expenditure on educational institutions per full-time equivalent student by types of service (2016)

In equivalent USD converted using PPPs; tertiary education



2. Year of reference 2017.

Countries are ranked in descending order of total expenditure on educational institutions per full-time equivalent student.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2019), Table C1.2. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>).

² Values reported in equivalent US dollars (USD) have been converted using purchasing power parities (PPPs) for GDP.

- The Netherlands places a high priority on higher education research and development. Expenditure on R&D was USD 6 996 per student, the sixth highest level in the OECD and much higher than the OECD average of USD 4 500 (Figure 2). This investment pays off for the Netherlands in terms of research excellence; the Dutch R&D system is a relatively high performer in both the quantity and quality of its scientific production, and is an attractive destination for international researchers (OECD, 2019^[2]).
- Expenditure per student at primary and secondary education has remained relatively static in recent years, rising by just 2% between 2010 and 2016, in the context of a 3% fall in the number of students over the same period. At tertiary level there was a substantial increase in total expenditure on education institutions between 2010 and 2016, of 12% . However, full-time equivalent tertiary enrolments also increased by 12%, leading to overall expenditure per student remaining relatively static over this period, (rising by just 1%). In contrast, on average across the OECD as a whole, the number of tertiary students increased by 3%, while average expenditure increased by 9%, resulting in an average per-student increase in expenditure of 8%.

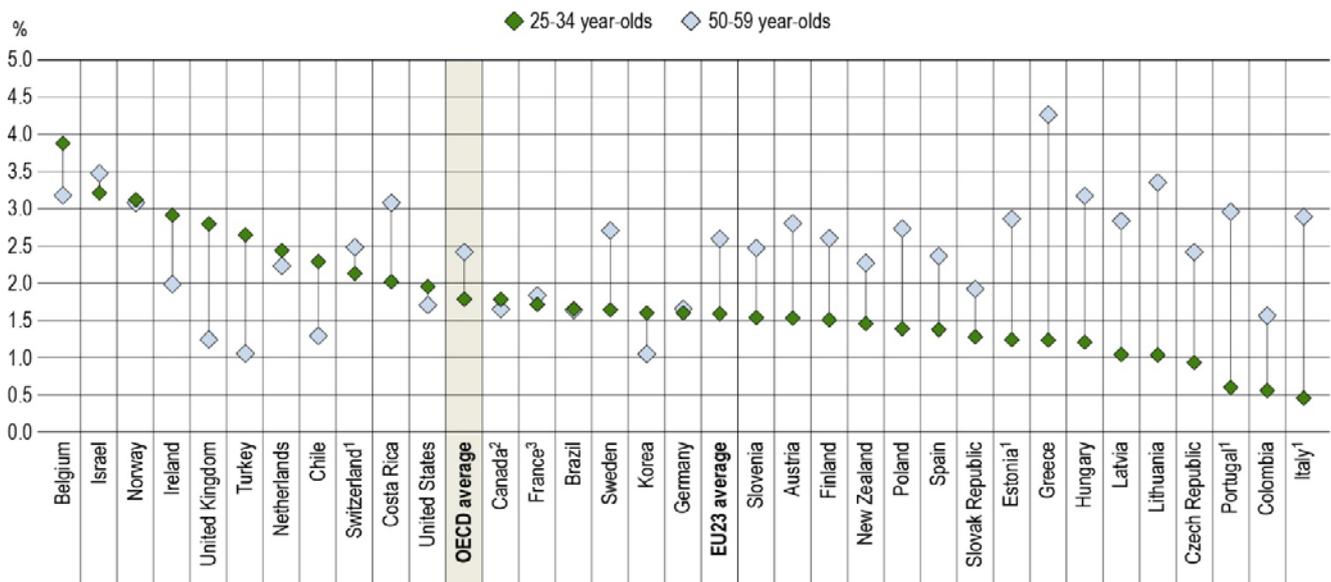
High rates of part-time study and participation in non-formal education may help to support lifelong learning

- As in most other OECD countries, participation in formal educational activities is low among adults over 30 in the Netherlands. Just 6% of 30-39 year-olds and 2% of 40-64 year-olds are students, the same as the OECD average. At the same time, the Netherlands provides many options for part-time study at tertiary level, which can support lifelong learning by allowing older adults to combine study with other commitments. While the share of bachelor's students in part time education (13%) is below the OECD average (16%), almost three-quarters of adults on short-cycle tertiary education programmes study part time (72%), much higher than the OECD average of 26%. At master's level, 35% of students study part time, compared to the OECD average of 21%.
- Participation in non-formal learning activities appears to be relatively commonplace in the Netherlands. It is above the OECD average for all levels of educational attainment, genders and age groups. Participation is particularly high among adults with tertiary education, with 80% of adults reporting participation, compared to 62% on average, the second highest participation rate among countries with available data.

Teaching continues to be an attractive profession, and teachers are well rewarded although they face relatively longer hours and larger classes

- The Netherlands appears to be more successful than many OECD countries in attracting new teachers into the profession. The share of primary and secondary teachers under the age of 30 is 14%, higher than the OECD average share of 10%. However, while the overall national picture indicates a stronger than average supply of new teachers, teacher shortages are an ongoing policy challenge in many regions of the Netherlands (Eurydice, 2018^[5]). In addition, as in many other countries, teacher attrition in the early years of the career is an important challenge for the Netherlands (den Brok, Wubbels and van Tartwijk, 2017^[6]). While the estimated share of teachers in the population aged 25-34 is higher than average in the Netherlands (2.4% compared to the OECD average of 1.8%), the estimated share of teachers in the population aged 50-59 is slightly below average (2.2% compared to the OECD average of 2.4%) (Figure 3)

Figure 3. Share of primary and secondary teachers in the population, by age groups (2017)



1. Upper secondary includes programmes outside upper secondary level.

2. Primary includes pre-primary education

3. Public and government-dependent private institutions only.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the share of teachers among 25-34 year-olds.

Source: OECD/UIS/Eurostat (2019), Education at a Glance Database, <http://stats.oecd.org>. See Source section for more information and Annex 3 for notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>).

- The Netherlands is also notable for having a more balanced gender profile of teachers than is the case across the OECD in general. At pre-primary level, 88% of teachers are female, compared to 97% on average across OECD countries. The share of female teachers in secondary education is 53%, much lower than the OECD average share (69% of lower secondary teachers and 60% of upper secondary teachers). An exception is at primary level, where 87% of teachers are female, compared to the OECD average of 83%.
- Primary school teachers in particular appear to have a heavier teaching load than their counterparts in most other OECD countries. They teach for 147 hours more per year than the OECD average (930 hours, compared to 783 hours), the fifth highest teaching load among OECD countries. They also teach larger classes than average, with 23 students per class in public primary schools compared to the OECD average of 21. On the other hand, statutory salaries for primary school teachers are substantially higher than the OECD average; primary school teachers earn over USD 9 000 more than average on entry into the profession and over USD 17 000 more with 15 years of teaching experience.
- Secondary teachers in general programmes also have more teaching hours than the average, although the difference is not as great as for primary school teachers (41 hours more than the OECD average of lower secondary school teachers and 83 hours more than the OECD average of upper secondary school teachers). Secondary school teachers are also relatively well paid in the Netherlands; starting statutory salaries for public secondary teachers are above the OECD average (by almost USD 9 000 more than the OECD average for lower secondary teachers and more than USD 7 000 above the OECD average of upper secondary teachers). Secondary teachers also have a more progressive salary structure; after 15 years of experience secondary school teachers earn USD 76 006, more than USD 26 000 above the OECD average.

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For more information on Education at a Glance 2019 and to access the full set of Indicators, visit www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm.

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.

Explore, compare and visualise more data and analysis using: 

<http://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?primaryCountry=NLD&treshold=10&topic=EO>.

<p>Questions can be directed to:</p> <p>Marie-Helene Doumet Directorate for Education and Skills marie-helene.doumet@oecd.org</p>	<p>Country note author:</p> <p>Gillian Golden Directorate for Education and Skills gillian.golden@oecd.org</p>
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On 25 May 2018, the OECD Council invited Colombia to become a Member. While Colombia is included in the OECD averages reported in this note, at the time of its preparation, Colombia was in the process of completing its domestic procedures for ratification and the deposit of Colombia's instrument of accession to the OECD Convention was pending.

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.

Key Facts for the Netherlands in Education at a Glance 2019

Source	Main topics in <i>Education at a Glance</i>	Netherlands		OECD average		EU23 average	
Tertiary education							
Educational attainment of 25-64 year-olds							
2018							
Table A1.1	Short-cycle tertiary	2%		7%		5%	
	Bachelor's or equivalent	22%		17%		14%	
	Master's or equivalent	13%		13%		15%	
	Doctoral or equivalent	1%		1%		1%	
Tertiary attainment of 25-34 year-olds, by gender							
2008							
Table A1.2	Men	37%	43%	31%	38%	28%	36%
	Women	42%	52%	40%	51%	38%	50%
	Total	40%	48%	35%	44%	33%	43%
Distribution of first-time tertiary entrants by education level							
2017							
Table B4.1	Short-cycle tertiary	2%		17%		12%	
	Bachelor's or equivalent	98%		76%		80%	
	Master's or equivalent	**		7%		8%	
Share of international or foreign students, by education level¹							
2017							
Table B6.1	Bachelor's or equivalent	9%		4%		7%	
	Master's or equivalent	17%		13%		13%	
	Doctoral or equivalent	43%		22%		22%	
	All tertiary levels of education	11%		6%		9%	
Employment rate of 25-64 year-olds, by educational attainment							
2018							
Table A3.1	Short-cycle tertiary	88%		82%		82%	
	Bachelor's or equivalent	89%		84%		84%	
	Master's or equivalent	91%		88%		88%	
	Doctoral or equivalent	96%		92%		93%	
	All tertiary levels of education	90%		85%		86%	
Employment rate of tertiary-educated 25-64 year-olds, by field of study							
2018							
Table A3.4	Education	88%		84%		85%	
	Business and administration and law	91%		86%		87%	
	Engineering, manufacturing and construction	92%		89%		89%	
	Health and welfare	88%		87%		88%	
Relative earnings of full-time full-year 25-64 year-old workers, by educational attainment (upper secondary education = 100)							
2017							
Table A4.1	Short-cycle tertiary	132		120		121	
	Bachelor's or equivalent	132		144		138	
	Master's, doctoral or equivalent	184		191		174	
	All tertiary levels of education	150		157		152	
Upper secondary and vocational education and training (VET)							
Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment rate							
2018							
Table A1.2	Share of 25-34 year-olds with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary as their highest attainment	40%		41%		44%	
Percentage of first-time upper secondary graduates with a vocational qualification							
2017							
Table B3.1	Vocational programmes	54%		40%		46%	
Age at graduation from upper secondary education, by programme orientation							
2017							
Figure B3.1	General programmes	17		18		19	
	Vocational programmes	21		21		21	
Share of women among upper secondary graduates, by programme orientation							
2017							
Figure B3.2	General programmes	52%		55%		56%	
	Vocational programmes	50%		46%		46%	
Employment, unemployment and inactivity rates of 25-34 year-olds, with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education							
2018							
Table A3.3	Employment rate	85%		78%		79%	
	Unemployment rate	3%		7%		8%	
	Inactivity rate	13%		16%		14%	
Total expenditure on upper secondary educational institutions, in USD² per full-time equivalent student, by programme orientation							
2016							
Table C1.1	General programmes	USD 10 593		USD 9 397		USD 9 671	
	Vocational programmes	USD 14 530		USD 10 922		USD 11 320	
Early childhood education and care (ECEC)							
Enrolment rate of 3-5 year-olds in education							
2017							
Table B2.2	ECEC and primary education	94%		87%		90%	
Share of children enrolled in private institutions							
2017							
Table B2.3	Pre-primary level (ISCED 02)	30%		34%		27%	
Ratio of children to teaching staff							
2017							
Table B2.3	Pre-primary level (ISCED 02)	**		16		15	
Expenditure on children aged 3-5 enrolled in education							
2016							
Table B2.4	Annual expenditure per child, in USD ² per child	USD 6 538		USD 8 141		USD 8 926	

Source	Main topics in <i>Education at a Glance</i>	Netherlands		OECD average		EU23 average	
Social outcomes and adult learning							
Participation in formal and/or non-formal education, by educational attainment³		2016					
Table A7.1	Below upper secondary	38%		n.a.		26%	
	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	63%		n.a.		44%	
	Tertiary	81%		n.a.		66%	
Participation in cultural or sporting activities in the last 12 months, by educational attainment⁴		2015					
Table A6.1	Below upper secondary	78%		n.a.		56%	
	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	90%		n.a.		77%	
	Tertiary	97%		n.a.		92%	
Financial resources invested in education							
Total expenditure on educational institutions, by level of education²		2016					
		USD/student	% GDP	USD/student	% GDP	USD/student	% GDP
Table C1.1 and C2.1	Primary	USD 8 609	1.2%	USD 8 470	1.5%	USD 8 548	1.3%
	Lower secondary	USD 12 831	1.2%	USD 9 884	0.9%	USD 10 302	0.9%
	Upper secondary	USD 13 196	1.1%	USD 10 368	1.1%	USD 10 308	1.0%
	Tertiary (including R&D)	USD 19 513	1.7%	USD 15 556	1.5%	USD 15 963	1.2%
Share of expenditure on educational institutions, by final source of funds		2016					
		Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private
Table C3.1	Primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	88%	12%	90%	10%	92%	8%
	Tertiary (including R&D)	67%	29%	66%	32%	73%	24%
Total public expenditure on primary to tertiary education		2016					
Table C4.1	As a percentage of total government expenditure	11.8%		10.8%		9.6%	
Teachers, the learning environment and the organisation of schools							
Actual salaries of teachers and school heads in public institutions relative to earnings of full-time, full-year workers with tertiary education		2017					
		Teachers	School heads	Teachers	School heads	Teachers	School heads
Table D3.2a	Pre-primary	0.71	1	0.78	**	0.78	1.16
	Primary	0.71	1	0.84	1.25	0.85	1.24
	Lower secondary (general programmes)	0.89	1.25	0.88	1.34	0.89	1.34
	Upper secondary (general programmes)	0.89	1.25	0.93	1.43	0.95	1.43
Annual statutory salaries of teachers in public institutions, based on most prevalent qualifications, at different points in teachers' careers²		2018					
		Starting salary	Salary after 15 years of experience	Starting salary	Salary after 15 years of experience	Starting salary	Salary after 15 years of experience
Table D3.1a	Pre-primary	USD 42 133	USD 63 413	USD 31 276	USD 42 078	USD 30 615	USD 41 354
	Primary	USD 42 133	USD 63 413	USD 33 058	USD 45 947	USD 32 987	USD 45 748
	Lower secondary (general programmes)	USD 43 132	USD 76 006	USD 34 230	USD 47 675	USD 34 261	USD 47 772
	Upper secondary (general programmes)	USD 43 132	USD 76 006	USD 35 859	USD 49 804	USD 35 104	USD 49 875
Organisation of teachers' working time in public institutions over the school year		2018					
		Net teaching time	Total statutory working time	Net teaching time	Total statutory working time	Net teaching time	Total statutory working time
Tables D4.1a and D4.1b	Pre-primary	930 hours	1 659 hours	1 024 hours	1 613 hours	1 062 hours	1 550 hours
	Primary	930 hours	1 659 hours	783 hours	1 612 hours	754 hours	1 539 hours
	Lower secondary (general programmes)	750 hours	1 659 hours	709 hours	1 634 hours	673 hours	1 572 hours
	Upper secondary (general programmes)	750 hours	1 659 hours	667 hours	1 629 hours	643 hours	1 558 hours
Percentage of teachers who are 50 years old or over		2017					
Table D5.1	Primary to upper secondary	39%		36%		39%	
Share of female teachers, in public and private institutions		2017					
Table D5.2	Primary	87%		83%		87%	
	Lower secondary	53%		69%		72%	
Total number of compulsory instruction time, by level of education		2019					
Table D1.1	Primary	5 640 hours		4 568 hours		4 258 hours	
	Lower secondary	3 000 hours		3 022 hours		3 002 hours	
	Upper secondary	2 553 hours		**		**	
Average class size by level of education		2017					
Table D2.1	Primary	**		21		20	
	Lower secondary	**		23		21	

The reference year is the year cited or the latest year for which data are available.

1. For some countries, data on foreign students are provided instead of international students.

2. Values reported in equivalent US dollars (USD) have been converted using purchasing power parities (PPPs) for GDP

3. EU23 average refers to the average of OECD countries that participated in the Adult Education Survey (AES).

4. EU23 average refers to the average of OECD countries that participated in the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions 2015.

** Please refer to the source table for details on these data.

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>.