COUNTRY NOTE

EDUCATION AT A GLANCE 2020

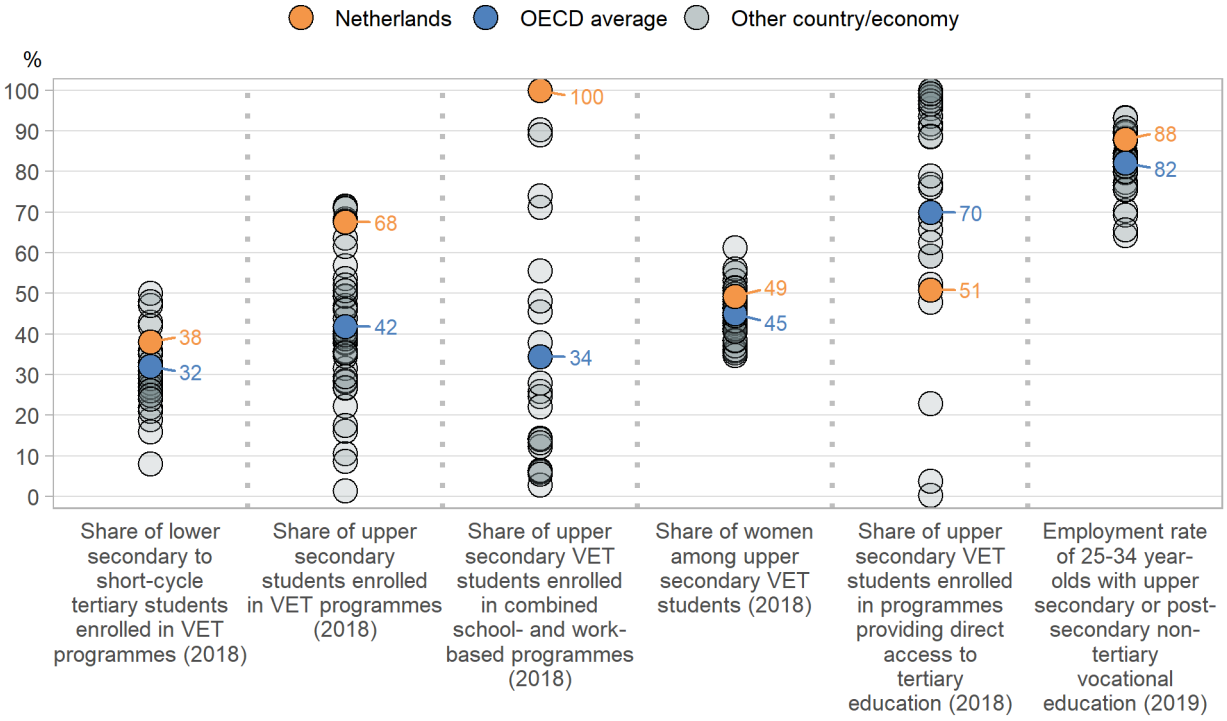
Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators is the authoritative source for information on the state of education around the world. It provides data on the structure, finances and performance of education systems in OECD and partner countries.

Netherlands

Participation and outcomes of vocational education and training

- Vocational education and training (VET) programmes attract a diverse range of students, including those seeking qualifications and technical skills to enter the labour market, adults wishing to increase their employability by developing their skills further, and students who may seek entry into higher education later on.
- About one in three students from lower secondary to short-cycle tertiary level are enrolled in a VET programme on average across OECD countries. However, there are wide variations across countries, ranging from less than 20% of students enrolled in vocational education to more than 45% in a few countries. In the Netherlands, 38% of students are enrolled in vocational programmes, higher than the OECD average (32%), with the majority of lower secondary to short-cycle tertiary VET students (88%) found in upper secondary education (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Snapshot of vocational education



Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. The years shown in parentheses is the most common year of reference for OECD and partner countries. Refer to the source table for more details.
Source: OECD (2020), indicator A3 and B7. See Education at a Glance Database. http://stats.oecd.org/ for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en).

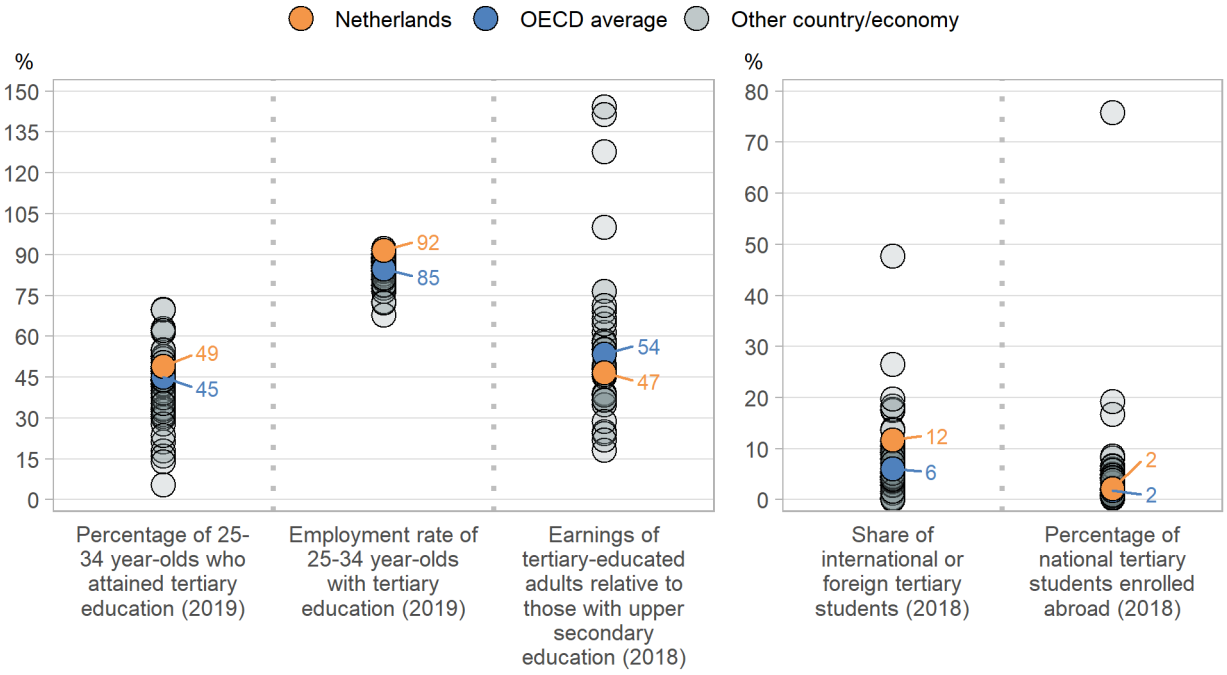
- VET is an important part of upper secondary education in most OECD countries. On average, 68% of all upper secondary students opt for VET programmes in the Netherlands, a higher proportion than the OECD average of 42% (Figure 1). Certain fields of study are more common than others at this level. In the Netherlands, the most common broad field is health and welfare with 24% of upper secondary vocational graduates earning a qualification in this field, compared to 13% on average across OECD countries.
- The organisation and delivery of upper secondary VET programmes varies considerably from country to country. In combined school- and work-based programmes, between 25% and 75% of the curriculum is taught as work-based learning, while the remainder is organised within the school environment. In the Netherlands, all upper secondary vocational students are enrolled in combined school- and work-based programmes, which is higher than the OECD average of 34% (Figure 1).
- The average age of enrolment in upper secondary vocational programmes across OECD countries (21 years) tends to be higher than for general programmes (17 years), a pattern also found in the Netherlands. The average age of enrolment in upper secondary education is higher for students in vocational programmes (23 years) than for students in general programmes (16 years). The share of upper secondary vocational students tends to increase with age. In the Netherlands, the share of upper secondary students enrolled in VET is 54% among 15-19 year-olds (OECD average: 37%), and 97% among 20-24 year-olds (OECD average: 62%).
- Vocational upper secondary students are typically less likely to complete their qualification than those from general programmes. The Netherlands follows this pattern as the completion rate for upper secondary education (within the theoretical duration of the programme) is lower among students enrolled in vocational programmes (66%) than among those in general ones (73%).
- To support upper secondary vocational students' transition to post-secondary education and improve their career prospects, many countries have created direct pathways from vocational programmes to higher levels of education. In the Netherlands, 51% of upper secondary vocational students are enrolled in programmes that offer the chance of direct access to tertiary education, lower than the OECD average of 70% (Figure 1).
- In 2019, 31% of 25-34 year-olds in the Netherlands held an upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary vocational qualification as their highest educational level while 8% held a general one. The employment rate of younger adults with a vocational upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education tend to be higher than the employment rate of those with general qualifications at this level (by 9 percentage points on average across OECD countries). The Netherlands follows this pattern, as 88% of 25-34 year-olds with an upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary vocational qualification are employed compared with 75% of those with a general qualification (Figure 1).
- Poorer labour-market prospects of VET qualifications combined with higher tertiary attainment may have contributed to the decline in the share of adults with an upper secondary vocational qualification across generations in many countries. In the Netherlands, among those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education as their highest attainment, 80% of 55-64 year-olds (older adults), compared with 80% of 25-34 year-olds (younger adults) held a vocational qualification. In comparison, the equivalent OECD averages are 72% for older adults and 59% for younger adults.
- On average across OECD countries, the ratio of students to teaching staff is similar in both upper secondary vocational and general programmes. In the Netherlands, there are 16 students for every teaching staff member in general programmes and 18 in vocational ones.

The rising demand for tertiary education

- The expansion of tertiary education is a worldwide trend. Between 2009 and 2019, the share of 25-34 year-olds with a tertiary degree increased in all OECD and partner countries. In the Netherlands, the share increased by 9 percentage points during this period, the same as the average increase across OECD countries (9 percentage points). In 2019, 49% of 25-34 year-olds had a tertiary degree in the Netherlands compared to 45% on average across OECD countries (Figure 2).
- From the gender perspective, younger women are more likely than younger men to achieve tertiary education in all OECD countries. In the Netherlands, 54% of 25-34 year-old women had a tertiary qualification compared to 44% of their male peers, while on average across OECD countries the shares are 51% of younger women and 39% of younger men.
- In the Netherlands, the average age of first-time entrants to tertiary education in 2018 was 20 years, lower than the OECD average of 22 years. 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.
- If current entry patterns continue, it is estimated that 49% of young adults will enter tertiary education for the first time in their life before the age of 25 on average across OECD countries (excluding international students). In the Netherlands, 53% of young adults will enter tertiary education by that age and most of them will enter at bachelor's or equivalent level.
- Short-cycle tertiary programmes are generally designed to be vocationally oriented and represent the second most common route of entry into tertiary education on average across OECD countries, after bachelor’s programmes. If current entry patterns continue, 2% of adults are expected to enter short-cycle tertiary education before the age of 25 in the Netherlands, compared to 10% on average across OECD countries. In the Netherlands, women make up 55% of students in such programmes, compared to 52% on average across OECD countries.
- Young people can face barriers to labour market entry as they transition from school to work, but higher educational attainment increases their likelihood of being employed and is associated with higher incomes. On average across OECD countries, the employment rate in 2019 was 61% for 25-34 year-olds without upper secondary education, 78% for those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education as their highest attainment and 85% for those with tertiary education. In the Netherlands, the shares are 64% for below upper secondary, 85% for upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary and 92% for tertiary attainment. Having a tertiary degree also carries a considerable earnings advantage in most OECD and partner countries. In the Netherlands, in 2018, 25-64 year-olds with a tertiary degree with income from full-time, full-year employment earned 47% more than full-time, full-year workers with upper secondary education compared to 54% on average across OECD countries (Figure 2).
- International student mobility has been expanding quite consistently in the past twenty years. In 2018, 5.6 million tertiary students worldwide had crossed a border to study, more than twice the number in 2005. In the Netherlands, the share of foreign or international students increased from 10% in 2014 to 12% in 2018. Meanwhile 2% of Dutch tertiary students are enrolled abroad (Figure 2). English-speaking countries are the most attractive student destinations overall in the OECD area, with Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States receiving more than 40% of all internationally mobile students in OECD and partner countries. Among students leaving the Netherlands to study, the most popular destination country is the United Kingdom.
- Beyond the economic and employment outcomes, higher educational attainment is related to greater social benefits. For example, those with a tertiary education are more likely to feel they have a say in what their government does. In 2018, on average across OECD countries

participating in the European Social Survey, 52% of tertiary-educated adults agreed with this sentiment compared to 26% of those with below upper secondary education. In the Netherlands, 74% of tertiary-educated adults feel this way compared with 32% of those with below upper secondary education.

Figure 2. Snapshot of tertiary education



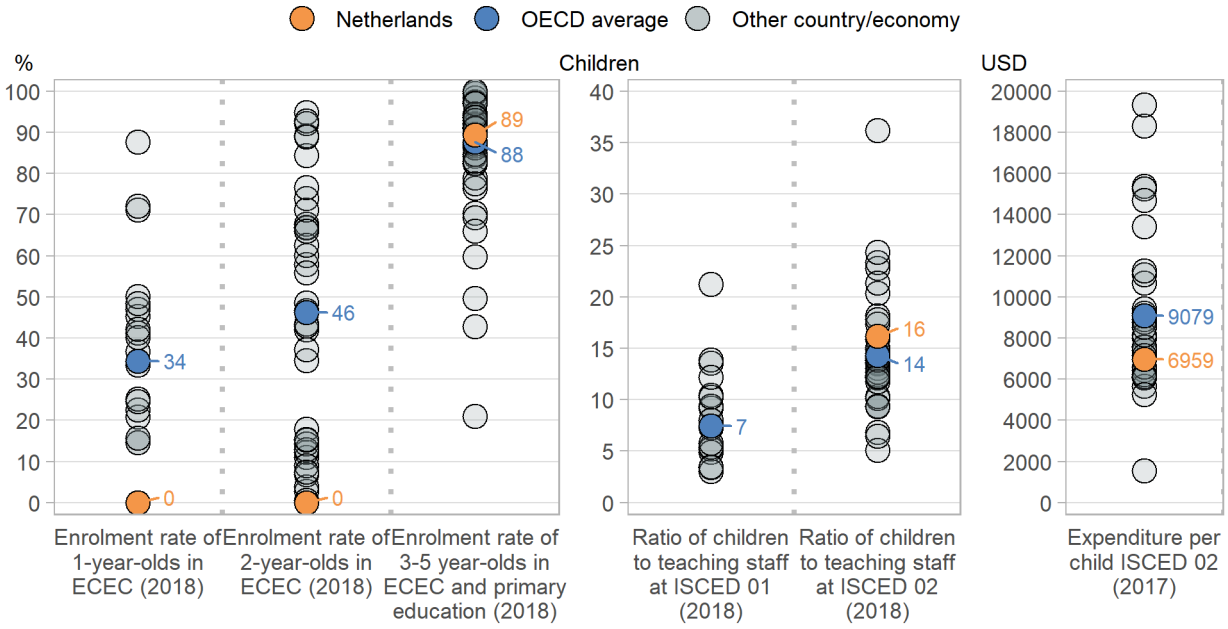
Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. The years shown in parentheses is the most common year of reference for OECD and partner countries. Refer to the source table for more details.
Source: OECD (2020), indicator A1, A3, A4 and B6. See Education at a Glance Database http://stats.oecd.org/for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en).

Starting strong

- Early childhood education and care (ECEC) has experienced a surge of policy attention in OECD countries in recent decades. In many OECD countries, ECEC begins for most children long before they turn 5 and there are universal legal entitlements to a place in ECEC services for at least one or two years before the start of compulsory schooling. While compulsory education begins at age 5 in the Netherlands, 89% of 3-5 year-olds in 2018 are enrolled in ECEC programmes and primary education in the Netherlands, compared to 88% on average across OECD countries (Figure 3).
- Public provision of early childhood education and care is an important factor in ensuring broad access to affordable ECEC. On average across OECD countries, more than one in two of the children in early childhood educational development services (ISCED 01) are enrolled in private institutions. Enrolment in private institutions is usually less common for 3-5 year-olds, who are usually enrolled in pre-primary education (ISCED 02), than for younger children. In the Netherlands, 28% of children attending pre-primary education are enrolled in private institutions, compared to one in three children on average across OECD countries.

- The workforce is at the heart of high-quality early-childhood education and care: stimulating environments and high-quality pedagogy are fostered by better-qualified practitioners and high-quality interactions between children and staff facilitate better learning outcomes. In that context, lower child-staff ratios are found to be consistently supportive of staff-child relationships across different types of ECEC settings (NICHD, 2002). In the Netherlands, the ratio of children for every full-time equivalent (FTE) teacher working in pre-primary education (ISCED 02) is 16 compared to 14 on average across OECD countries (Figure 3).
- Sustained public financial support is critical for the growth and quality of ECEC programmes. In 2017, annual total expenditure in pre-primary settings (ISCED 02) averaged USD 6 959 per child in the Netherlands, lower than the average across OECD countries (USD 9 079) (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Snapshot of early childhood education and care



Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. In the Netherlands, disadvantaged children, mostly from the age of 2 ½ to 4 years have access to formal ECEC-services, where formal educational programmes are offered. 98% of all children attend primary school from the age of 4. It is therefore that the Dutch ECEC-services don't apply to the scope of the ISCED 2011 classification. Annual expenditure per child is shown in equivalent USD converted using PPPs. The years shown in parentheses is the most common year of reference for OECD and partner countries. Refer to the source table for more details.
Source: OECD (2020), indicator B2. See Education at a Glance Database http://stats.oecd.org/ for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en).

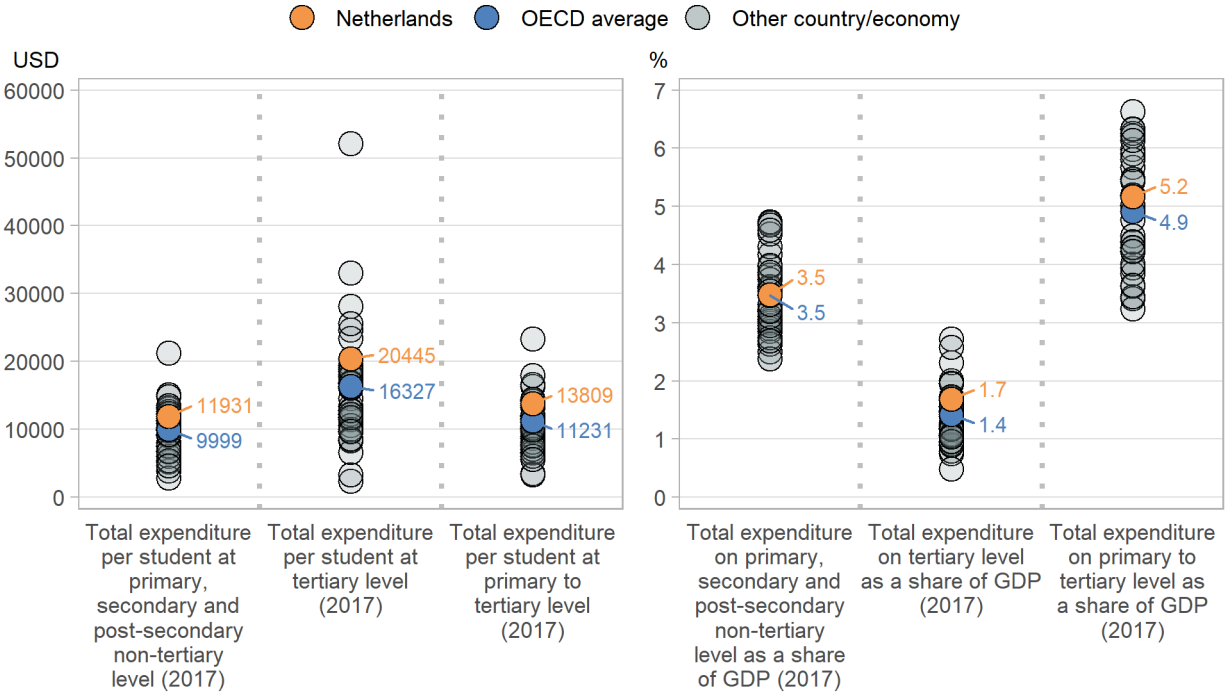
Investing in education

- Annual expenditure per student on educational institutions from primary to tertiary level provides an indication of the investment countries make in each student. In 2017, the Netherlands spent more on primary to tertiary educational institutions per full-time student than the OECD average, investing a total of USD 13 809 per student compared to USD 11 231 on average across OECD countries (Figure 4).
- The way education is provided influences how resources are allocated between levels of education and between public and private institutions. In 2017, the Netherlands spent USD 11 931 per student at non-tertiary level (primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education),

USD 1 933 higher than the OECD average of USD 9 999. At tertiary level, the Netherlands invested USD 20 445 per student, USD 4 118 more than the OECD average (Figure 4). Expenditure per student on private educational institutions is higher than on public institutions on average across OECD countries. This is also the case in the Netherlands, where total expenditure on public institutions from primary to tertiary level amounts to USD 12 905 per student, compared to USD 34 371 on private ones.

- In most OECD countries, expenditure per upper secondary student varies according to programme orientation. Spending per student on upper secondary vocational programmes tends to be higher than for upper secondary general ones due to the higher cost of equipment, lower student-to-teacher ratios, and work-based requirements of such programmes. On average across OECD countries, expenditure per student in upper secondary vocational programmes was USD 1 470 higher than in general programmes in 2017. The Netherlands follows the same pattern: spending per student amounted to USD 15 776 in upper secondary vocational programmes, USD 4 411 higher than spending per student on general ones at the same level.
- The share of national wealth devoted to educational institutions is higher in the Netherlands than on average among OECD countries. In 2017, the Netherlands spent 5.2% of gross domestic product (GDP) on primary to tertiary educational institutions, which is 0.2 percentage points higher than the OECD average. Across levels of education, the Netherlands devoted the same share of GDP as the OECD average at non-tertiary levels and an above average share at tertiary level (Figure 4).
- Between 2012 and 2017, expenditure per student from primary to tertiary education increased by an average annual growth rate of 1.3% across OECD countries. In the Netherlands, expenditure on educational institutions grew at an average rate of 0.9% a year, while the number of students remained fairly stable. This resulted in an average annual growth rate of 0.9% in expenditure per student over this period.
- Tuition fees in public institutions in the Netherlands are about average for a bachelor's programme across countries with available data: national students are charged USD 2 577 per year for a bachelor's degree 19% more than they paid on average in 2007/08. While loans may reduce the upfront cost, students are required to repay them once they start work. In the Netherlands, students' average debt on graduation is USD 19 268.
- Capital costs represent a higher than average share of expenditure on primary to tertiary institutions in the Netherlands. At primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary level, capital costs account for 10% of total spending on educational institutions, 3 percentage points above the OECD average. At the tertiary level, capital costs represent 10%, the same as the average across OECD countries.
- Compensation of teachers and other staff employed in educational institutions represents the largest share of current expenditure from primary to tertiary education. In 2017, the Netherlands allocated 78% of its current expenditure to staff compensation, compared to 74% on average across OECD countries. Staff compensation tends to make up a smaller share of current expenditure on tertiary institutions due to the higher costs of facilities and equipment at this level. In the Netherlands, staff compensation represents 73% of current expenditure on tertiary institutions compared to 80% at non-tertiary levels. On average across OECD countries, the share is 67% at tertiary level and 77% at non-tertiary level.

Figure 4. Snapshot of the financial resources invested in educational institutions



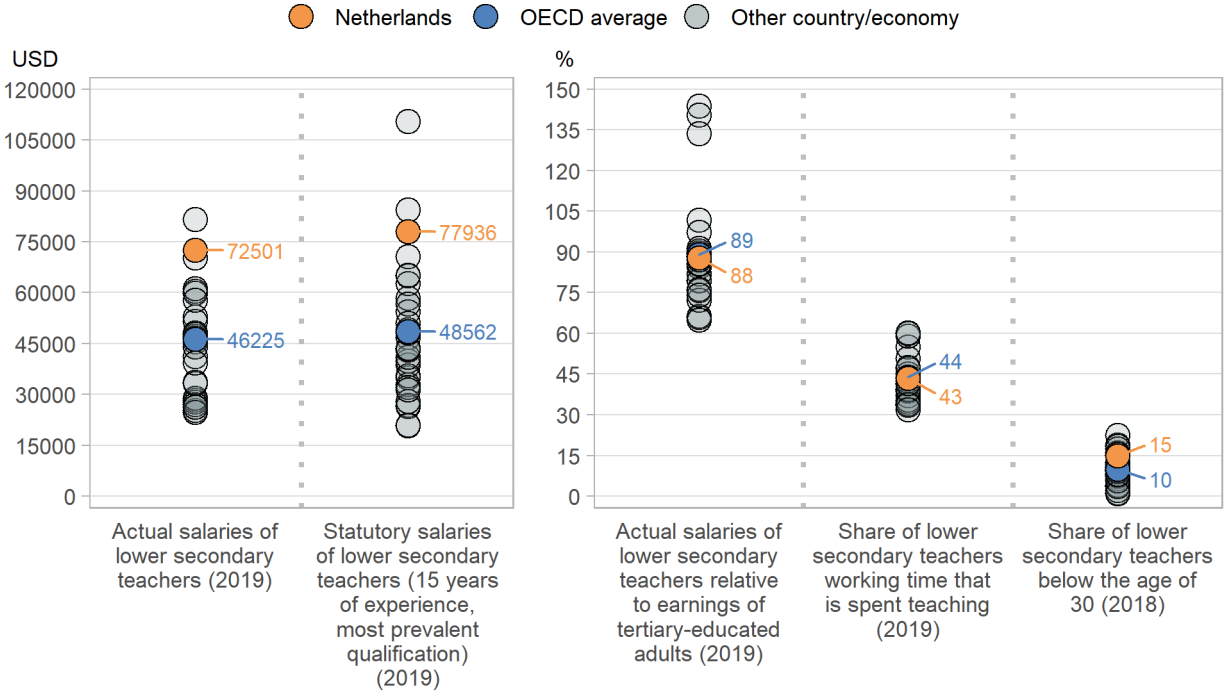
Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. Expenditure in national currencies is converted into equivalent USD by dividing the national currency figure by the purchasing power parity (PPP) index for GDP. The years shown in parentheses is the most common year of reference for OECD and partner countries. Refer to the source table for more details.
Source: OECD (2020), indicator C1 and C2. See Education at a Glance Database http://stats.oecd.org/ for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en).

Working conditions of school teachers

- The salaries of school staff, and in particular teachers and school heads, represent the largest single expenditure in formal education. Their salary levels also have a direct impact on the attractiveness of the teaching profession. In most OECD countries and economies, statutory salaries of teachers (and school heads) in public educational institutions increase with the level of education they teach. In most OECD countries and economies, they also increase with experience. On average, statutory salaries of teachers with maximum qualifications at the top of their salary scales are 78-80% higher than those of teachers with the minimum qualifications at the start of their career at pre-primary (ISCED 02), primary and general lower and upper secondary levels. In the Netherlands, maximum salaries are 65% to 105% higher than minimum salaries at each level of education.
- Teachers' actual salaries reflect their statutory salaries and additional work-related payments. Average actual salaries depend also on the characteristics of the teaching population such as their age, level of experience and qualification level. In the Netherlands, teachers' average actual salaries amount to USD 59 814 at the pre-primary level (ISCED 02) (higher than the OECD average of USD 38 677), USD 59 814 at the primary level (higher than the OECD average of USD 43 942), USD 72 501 at the general lower secondary level (higher than the OECD average of USD 46 225) and USD 72 501 at the general upper secondary level (higher than the OECD average of USD 49 778) (Figure 5).

- Teachers' average actual salaries remain lower than those of tertiary-educated workers in almost all countries, and at almost all levels of education. Teachers' average actual salaries at pre-primary (ISCED 02), primary and general secondary levels of education are 80-94% of the earnings of tertiary-educated workers on average across OECD countries and economies. In the Netherlands, the proportion ranges from 73% at pre-primary level (ISCED 02) 73% at primary level to 88% at lower secondary level and 88% at the upper secondary level (Figure 5).
- The average number of teaching hours per year required of a typical teacher in public educational institutions in OECD countries tends to decrease as the level of education increases, from 993 hours at pre-primary level (ISCED 02), to 778 hours at primary level, 712 hours at lower secondary level (general programmes) and 680 hours at upper secondary level (general programmes). In the Netherlands, teachers are required to teach 930 hours per year at pre-primary level, 930 hours per year at primary level, 720 hours at lower secondary level (general programmes) and 720 hours at upper secondary level (general programmes).
- During their working time, teachers also perform various non-teaching tasks such as lesson planning and preparation, marking students' work and communicating or co-operating with parents or guardians. At the lower secondary level, teachers in the Netherlands spend 43% of their statutory working time on teaching, compared to 44% on average among OECD countries (Figure 5).
- Large proportions of teachers in many OECD countries will reach retirement age in the next decade, while the size of the school-age population is projected to increase in some countries, putting many governments under pressure to recruit and train new teachers. In the Netherlands, 15% of primary teachers are considered young teachers (under the age of 30), which is higher than the OECD average of 12%. On average across OECD countries, the proportion of young teachers decreases at other levels of education, to 10% in lower secondary education and 8% in upper secondary education. In the Netherlands, the proportion of young teachers remains the same as at lower secondary level and is 11% at upper secondary level (Figure 5). Between 2005 and 2018, the proportion of young teachers at upper secondary level increased by 1 percentage points in the Netherlands, whereas it fell by 4 percentage points on average across OECD countries during this period.

Figure 5. Snapshot of teachers' working conditions



Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. Teachers' salaries are shown in equivalent USD converted using PPPs. The years shown in parentheses is the most common year of reference for OECD and partner countries. Refer to the source table for more details.
Source: OECD (2020), indicator D3, D4 and D5. See Education at a Glance Database http://stats.oecd.org/ for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en).

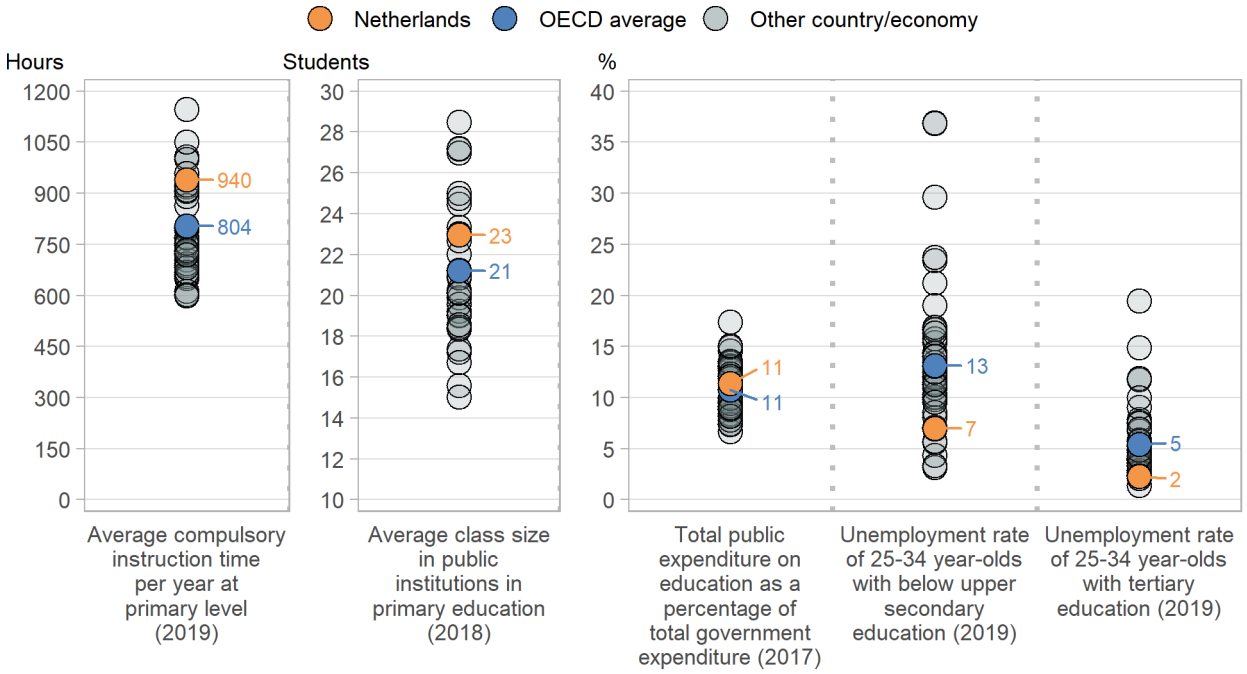
The impact of COVID-19 on education

- The global 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has sent shockwaves around the world. In a first effort to contain the virus, many countries have imposed a lockdown and schools and/or universities have closed for several months across all OECD and partner countries. In the Netherlands, the closures were nationwide from 16 March 2020 and schools started progressively reopening on 11 May 2020. By the end of June, the Netherlands had experienced 15 weeks of effective school closures in some form, compared to 14 weeks on average across OECD countries (UNESCO, 2020). However, the actual impact in some countries may have been less severe as some of these periods included scheduled school breaks.
- While there is uncertainty about the likely overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education expenditure, governments will face difficult decisions on the allocation of resources, as government funds are injected into the economy and the health sector. In 2017, public spending on primary to tertiary education as a share of government expenditure in the Netherlands was 11%, the same as the OECD average of 11% (Figure 6).
- As unemployment rises, private funding of education may also be at risk. The impact may be most severe in those countries and levels of education that rely most heavily on household expenditure, in particular early childhood education and care and tertiary education. This is less the case in the Netherlands. In pre-primary education (ISCED 02), private sources accounted for 11% of total expenditure in the Netherlands in 2017, lower than the OECD average of 17%. At tertiary level,

30% of total expenditure comes from private sources, compared to 29% on average across OECD countries.

- Unemployment may increase, as the economy struggles to cope with the reduced activity that resulted from the lockdown. Those with lower educational attainment are the most vulnerable, as they are the most unlikely to benefit from remote working. In 2019, before the pandemic hit, 7% of young adults with below upper secondary education in the Netherlands were unemployed compared to 2% of tertiary-educated 25-34 year-olds (Figure 6). In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, the unemployment of young adults without an upper secondary education increased by 1.5 percentage points between 2008 and 2009 in the Netherlands compared to 0.8 percentage points among those with tertiary education.

Figure 6. Snapshot of indicators relevant to the impact of COVID-19 on education



Note: Only countries and economies with available data are shown. The years shown in parentheses is the most common year of reference for OECD and partner countries. Refer to the source table for more details.
Source: OECD (2020), indicator A3, D1, D2, and C4. See Education at a Glance Database http://stats.oecd.org/ for more information and Annex 3 for notes (https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en).

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More information

For more information on Education at a Glance 2020 and to access the full set of Indicators, visit www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm

For more information on to the methodology used during the data collection for each indicator, the references to the sources and the specific notes for each country, visit Annex 3 of the publication (https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en).

For general information on methodology, please refer to the OECD Handbook for Internationally Comparative Education Statistics: Concepts, Standards, Definitions and Classifications (https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264304444-en).

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.

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The calculation on the number of weeks of school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic is based on data from UNESCO (UNESCO, 2020). For general information on the methodology considered for the data, please refer to the methodological note.

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