

Romania

This country note provides an overview of key characteristics of the education system in Romania based on Education at a Glance 2024. In line with the thematic focus of Education at a Glance 2024, it highlights issues of equity in education. Data in this note are provided for the latest available year as indicated in Education at a Glance 2024.

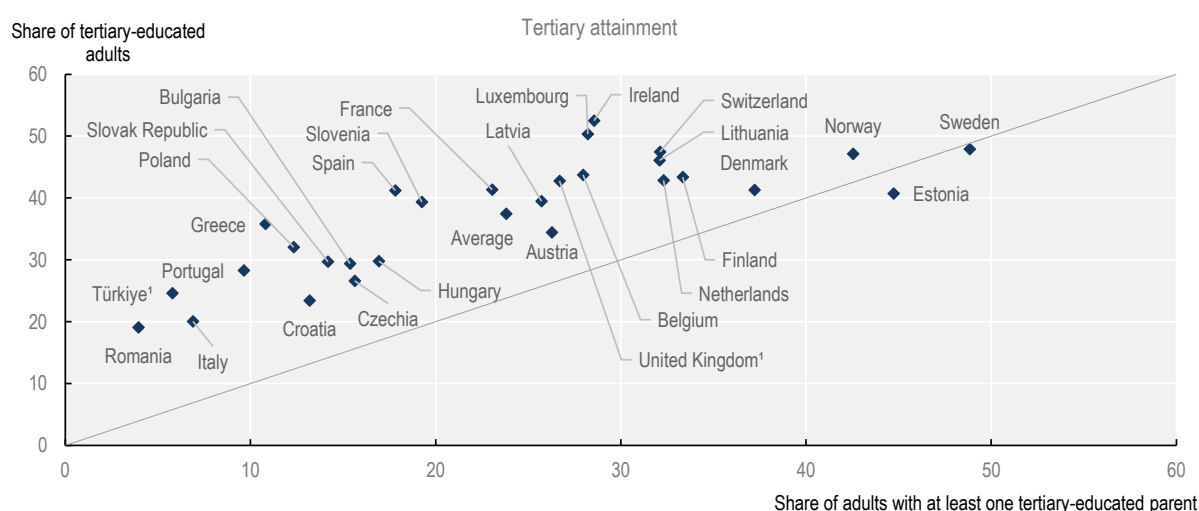
The output of educational institutions and the impact of learning

- Adults without upper secondary qualification are at considerable risk of poor social and labour-market outcomes throughout their lives. Reducing the share of young adults without an upper secondary qualification has been a priority in many countries and their share has decreased between 2016 and 2023 in 28 out of 35 OECD member countries. At 25%, it is 12 percentage points above the OECD average in 2023.
- The difficult labour-market situation faced by workers without an upper secondary qualification is reflected in employment rates among 25-34 year-olds. In Romania, 48% of 25-34 year-olds without an upper secondary qualification are employed, compared to 79% of those with an upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary qualification. The corresponding OECD averages are 61% and 79%, respectively.
- By almost all available measures, girls and women have better educational outcomes than boys and men, and in many cases the gap is widening. This is reflected in gender gaps in educational attainment. In all OECD member countries, women aged 25-34 are as likely or more likely than their male peers to have a tertiary qualification (54% compared to 41% on average across OECD countries). With a tertiary educational attainment rate of 26% for women and 19% for men, the gap is much narrower than the OECD average in Romania.
- Although girls and women clearly outperform boys and men in education, the picture is reversed when they enter the labour market; the key measures of labour-market outcomes are generally worse for women than for men. Women aged 25-34 are less likely to be employed than men, with the gap typically widest for those with below upper secondary educational attainment and narrowest for those with tertiary attainment. In Romania, only 30% of young women with educational attainment below upper secondary educational level are employed, while the corresponding share for young men is 65% (the corresponding OECD averages are 47% and 72%). In contrast, 86% of young women with a tertiary qualification are employed, while the corresponding share for young men is 93% (the corresponding OECD averages are 84% and 90%). However, tertiary attainment does not help to reduce the wage gap between men and women. Across the OECD, young women with a tertiary qualification earn on average 83% of the wage of their male peers, while the corresponding fraction is 88% in Romania. Among those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment, young women earn on average 84% of the wage of their male peers across the OECD and 90% in Romania.

- Educational attainment has increased massively in almost all OECD countries. Tertiary attainment in Romania has grown considerably over just one generation, similar to trends seen in most OECD and accession countries. At 19%, the proportion of adults with tertiary attainment is nearly four times higher than the 4% share of those with at least one tertiary-educated parent (Figure 1).
- Parents' education has a strong impact on the educational attainment of their children. In Romania, 90% of 25-64 year-olds who have at least one parent with tertiary attainment also attained a tertiary qualification. In contrast, 29% of 25-64 year-olds with parents with only an upper secondary qualification and 4% with parents without an upper secondary qualification have obtained a tertiary qualification themselves. This compares to the averages of 72%, 39% and 19%, respectively.

Figure 1. Educational attainment of adults and their parents, by educational attainment (2021)

Share of 25-64 year-olds and share of their parents with a given educational attainment level; in per cent



Source: OECD (2024), Table A1.4, available on line. For more information see *Education at a Glance 2024 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes* (<https://doi.org/10.1787/e7d20315-en>).

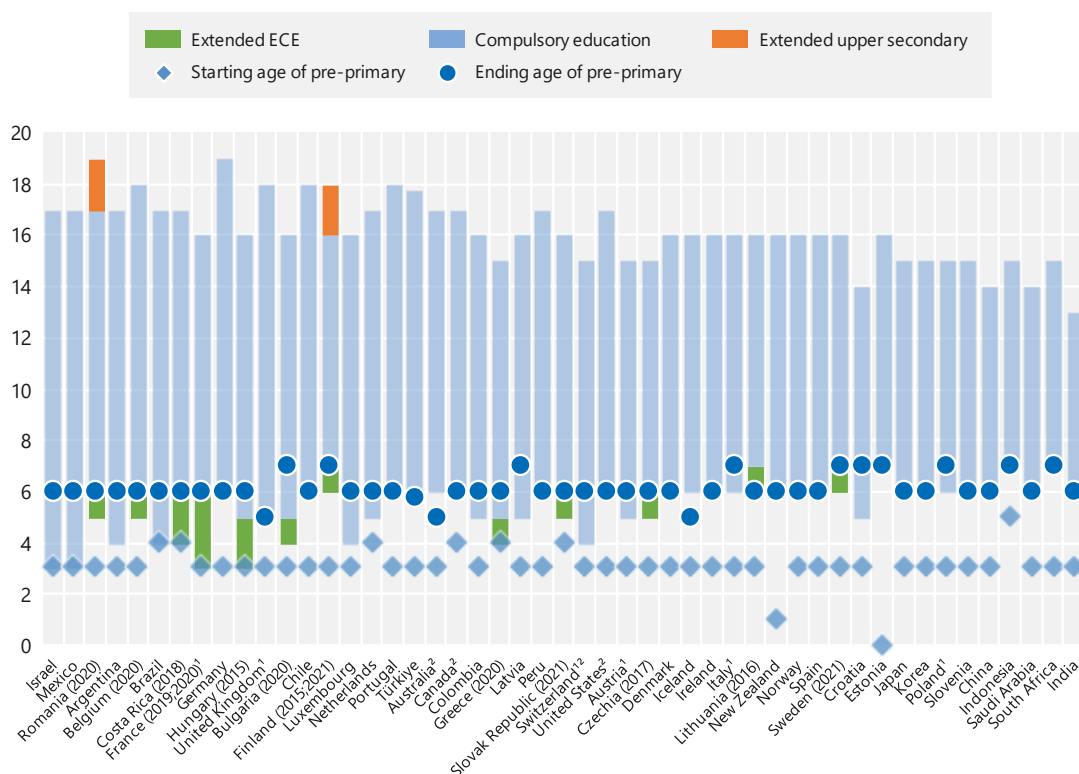
Access to education, participation and progression

- Early childhood education can help to reduce the developmental gaps that put some children at a disadvantage when they enrol in primary school. In most OECD countries, the large majority of children are enrolled in early childhood education one year before the start of primary education. In Romania, 81% of children in this age group are enrolled, compared with an OECD average of 96%.
- Although most children and youths participate in education in the years before and after compulsory education, not all do so. In order to increase enrolment in the early years or among youths, twelve OECD member and accession countries have increased the duration of compulsory education over the past decade. Romania is one of them as both the start and the end of compulsory education were extended by 1 and 2 years respectively. Until 2022, compulsory education in Romania lasted from the age of 5 to 19 for a total of 14 years, which was above the

OECD average of 11 years (Figure 2). Starting with the 2023-2024 school year, the starting age for compulsory education has been reduced to age 4.

Figure 2. Duration of compulsory education (2022)

In years



Note: The year in parentheses indicates when policy changes were made to the duration of compulsory education. In addition, extended ECEC/extended upper secondary refers to the extension in the duration of the relevant level since 2013.

1. There are other compulsory activities to complete by the end of compulsory education (see Table B2.1).
2. Starting age, ending age, and duration of compulsory education may vary at sub-national level.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the duration of compulsory education.

Source: OECD (2024), Table B2.1. For more information see Education at a Glance 2024 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/e7d20315-en>).

- Grade repetition is common in many countries to give students more time to master the content of a grade, although its effectiveness is debated. In Romania, 1.3% of primary, 2.7% of lower secondary and 0.1% of general upper secondary students repeat a grade in their current level of education, while the OECD average is 1.5% at primary, 2.2% at lower secondary and 3.2% at general upper secondary level. In Romania, the first two years of primary education are not possible to repeat. Women are significantly over-represented in tertiary education and the gap is widening in most countries. In Romania, 56% of new entrants to tertiary education are women, which is identical to the OECD average. As women are also more likely than men to complete tertiary education, the gap is even greater among graduates (see Education at a Glance 2022). However, there are large differences between fields of study in all OECD countries. In Romania,

21% of women entering tertiary education were studying science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields, while only 1% of men were entering education-related fields (compared to 15% and 4% respectively across the OECD).

- In most OECD countries, a large majority of 15-19 year olds are still enrolled in education, even though compulsory education usually ends before the age of 19. However, in most countries there are large differences in enrolment rates between sub-national regions. In Romania, 71% of 15-19 year olds are enrolled at national level, whereas in the region with the lowest enrolment rate, South - Muntenia, only 62% of this age group are enrolled.
- Across the OECD, 63% of students who graduated with a bachelor's degree did so from public institutions. However, private education is slowly becoming more common across all levels of tertiary education and the share of graduates from private institutions has grown by 3 percentage points between 2013 and 2022. In Romania, the share of bachelor's graduates from private institutions decreased from 26% to 16% over the same period.
- Many countries seek to attract internationally mobile tertiary students, as they often pay higher tuition fees and, if they decide to stay in the country after graduation, bring valuable skills to the labour market. Across the OECD, a total of 6% of all tertiary students are internationally mobile in 2022. In Romania, the share is 6%, up from 4% in 2013.

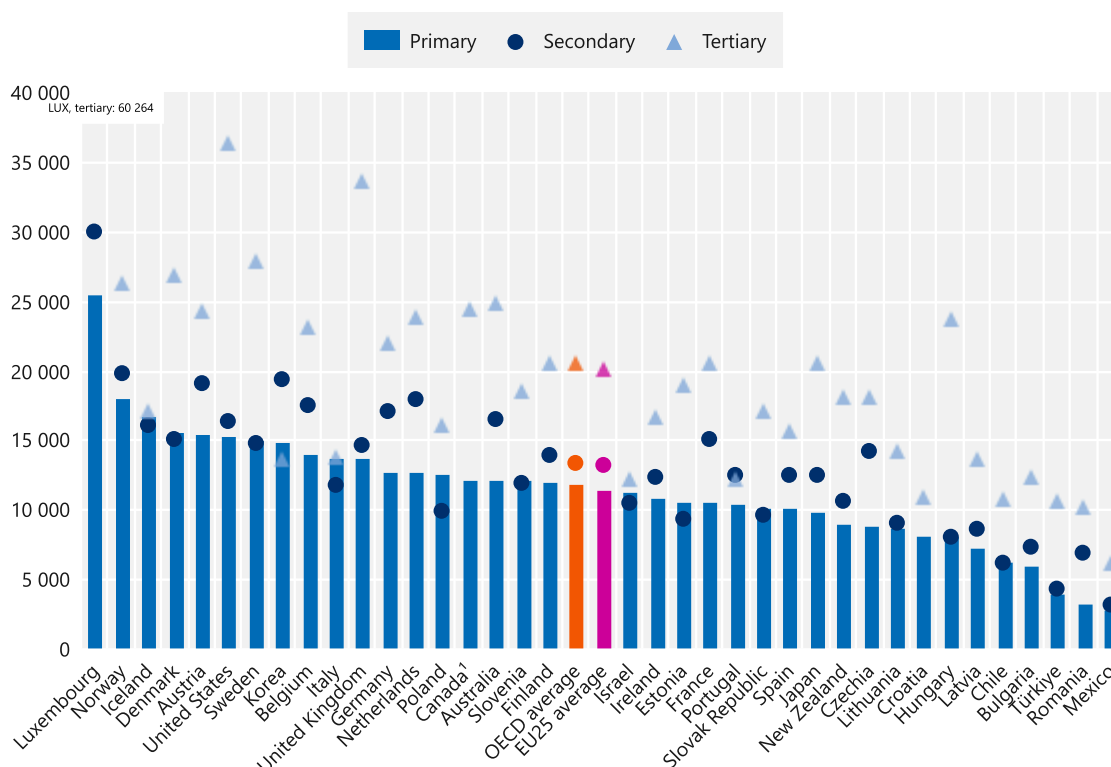
Financial resources invested in education

- The average annual expenditure per student from primary to tertiary education (including R&D) in Romania is USD 6 279 compared to an average of USD 14 209 in OECD countries. In most countries, expenditure increases by level of education. In Romania, spending per student is USD 3 346 in primary education, USD 6 885 in secondary education and USD 10 137 in tertiary education (Figure 3).¹
- In 2021, Romania spends 2.5% of its gross domestic product (GDP) on educational institutions at primary to tertiary levels (including R&D). This is less than the OECD average of 4.9% of GDP. On average across the OECD, the share of GDP dedicated to educational institutions (from primary to tertiary levels) has been broadly stable, with 4.9% in 2015 and 2021. However, trends vary considerably between countries. Romania is among the countries where expenditure as a share of GDP remained roughly constant at 2.5%. However, the gap as a percentage of GDP is expected to narrow in the coming years due to an overall increase in the education budget.
- Early childhood education has received much attention in recent years because of its importance, especially for children from disadvantaged families. In Romania, public investment in early childhood education relative to GDP has increased by 9% between 2015 and 2021. Across the OECD, it has increased on average by 9% over this period.

¹ All expenditure figures in this note are expressed in USD calculated based on purchasing power parity (PPP) exchange rates.

Figure 3. Total expenditure per full-time equivalent student in primary, secondary and tertiary education (2021)

In equivalent USD converted using PPPs, expenditure on educational institutions



1. Primary education includes pre-primary and lower secondary programmes.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the total expenditure per full-time equivalent student in primary education.

Source: OECD (2024), Table C1.1. For more information see *Education at a Glance 2024 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes* (<https://doi.org/10.1787/e7d20315-en>).

- Across the OECD, public authorities are responsible for the vast majority of spending on education, particularly at compulsory levels. In Romania, 98% of total expenditure on primary institutions comes from public sources, which is above the OECD average of 93%. Private expenditure makes up a greater share in pre-primary and tertiary education in many countries. In Romania, the share of public expenditure on pre-primary education is 96%, above the OECD average of 86%, while for tertiary education it is 92%, compared to an OECD average of 68%.
- The distribution of government expenditure on education by level of government differs between countries. In some countries, all final expenditure on primary education comes from central governments, whereas in other countries all final expenditure comes from local or regional governments. In Romania, the central government is responsible for 86% of final expenditure on primary education, while local governments are responsible for 14% of final expenditure on primary education.



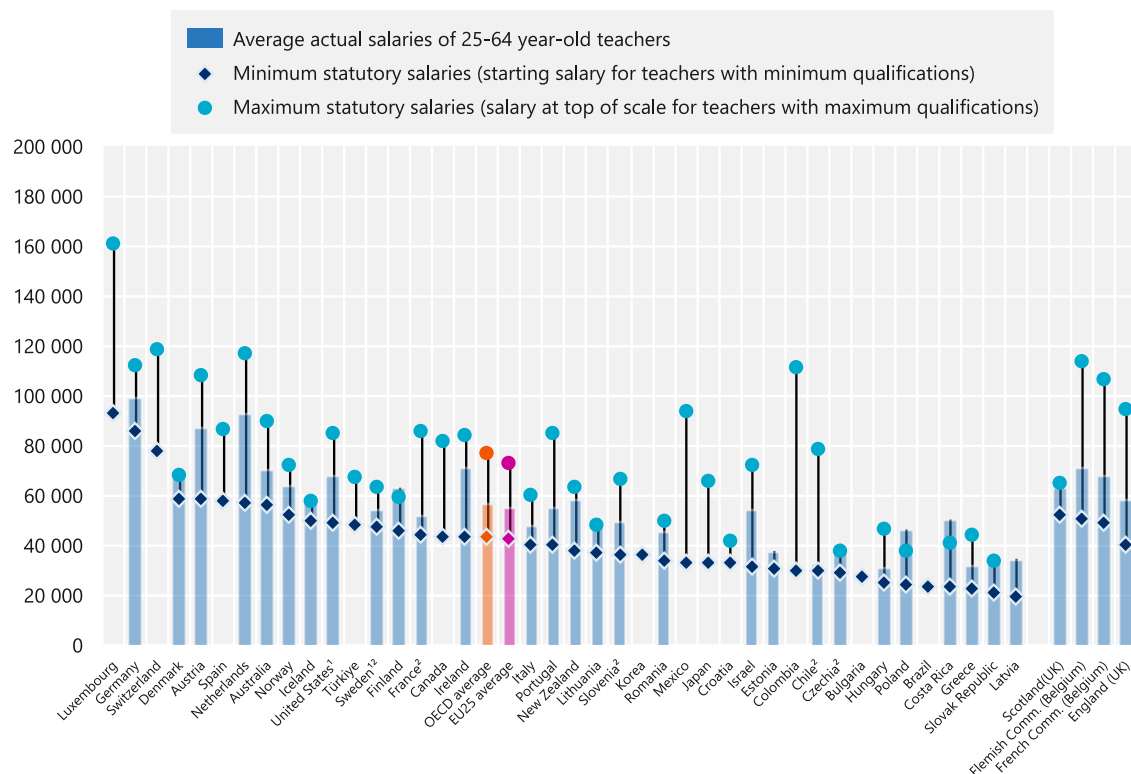
- Tuition fees are an important component of private expenditure on tertiary education, but they vary considerably across countries. In Romania, with USD 2 163 per year for national students in bachelor's programmes, they are in the middle of the range among OECD countries for which data are available.
- Governments have to decide how to allocate funds across policy areas. Education (including R&D) is a major expenditure item and accounts, in 2021, for 10.1% of all public expenditure on average across the OECD. In Romania, this share is lower with 6.4%.

Teachers, the learning environment and the organisation of schools

- Across the OECD, 18 out of 21 countries with available data on secondary education report that they face shortages of fully qualified teachers at the start of academic year 2022/2023. Romania faces teacher shortages at all levels of education in some but not all subjects, including mathematics, natural sciences, physical education and health, arts, other subjects.
- In 2023, actual salaries of lower secondary teachers in Romania reached USD 45 602 (compared to USD 56 462 on average across OECD countries), 37% higher than the minimum statutory salary (starting salary with minimum qualifications) of USD 33 267. The difference between actual salaries and the minimum statutory salaries results partly from the structure of the teacher population (by qualification and experience) as this affects the level of statutory salaries, but also from the amount of additional work-related payments (bonuses and allowances for performing certain tasks) (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Lower secondary teachers' average actual salaries compared to the statutory minimum and maximum salaries (2023)

Annual salaries of teachers in public institutions, in equivalent USD converted using PPPs for private consumption



Note: Actual salaries include bonuses and allowances.

1. Actual salaries for minimum and maximum statutory salaries.

2. Year of reference for actual salaries differs from 2023. Refer to the source table for more information.

Countries and other participants are ranked in descending order of the starting salaries for teachers with the minimum qualifications.

Source: OECD (2024), Table D3.3 and the OECD Data Explorer, <https://data-explorer.oecd.org/>. For more information see *Education at a Glance 2024 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes* (<https://doi.org/10.1787/e7d20315-en>).

- The work of teachers consists of a variety of tasks including teaching, but also preparing lessons, grading assignments and communicating with parents. The number of hours that teachers are contractually obliged to teach varies greatly across countries. In Romania, teachers at lower secondary level have to teach 513 hours annually. This is below the OECD average of 706 hours per year.
- Student-teacher ratios vary between countries and between levels of education. On average across the OECD, there are 14 students per teacher in primary education, 13 students in lower secondary education and 13 students in upper secondary education. In Romania, the corresponding numbers are 18 in primary education, 11 in lower secondary education and 13 in upper secondary education. While lower student teacher ratios allow teachers to focus more on the needs of the individual, they require higher overall spending on teacher salaries and have to be weighed against alternative spending priorities.



- Between 2013 and 2022, the average age of teachers has increased across the OECD. In lower secondary education, 36% of teachers are 50 years or older, compared to 35% in 2013. Romania has fewer teachers aged 50 or older, with only 26% of teachers being in this age category, up from 25% in 2013.
- Most education systems involve students and parents in the governance of public schools. In most countries, it is compulsory for parents' representatives to be included in the governing board of public schools. Student participation is less widespread, but still common. In Romania, the participation of parents in governing body of public schools is required, and the participation of students is also required.

More information

For more information on Education at a Glance 2024 and to access the full set of indicators, see: <https://doi.org/10.1787/c00cad36-en>.

For more information on the methodology used during the data collection for each indicator, the references to the sources and the specific notes for each country, see Education at a Glance 2024: Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes (<https://doi.org/10.1787/e7d20315-en>).

For general information on the methodology, please refer to the *OECD Handbook for Internationally Comparative Education Statistics 2018* (<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264304444-en>).

Updated data can be found online at <http://data-explorer.oecd.org/s/5q> and by following the StatLinks  in the publication.

Explore, compare and visualise more data and analysis using the Education GPS: <https://gpseducation.oecd.org/>.

Questions can be directed to the Education at a Glance team at the OECD Directorate for Education and Skills: EDU.EAG@oecd.org.

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Member countries of the OECD.

This document, as well as any data and map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and 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.



Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

This work is made available under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence. By using this work, you accept to be bound by the terms of this licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Attribution – you must cite the work.

Translations – you must cite the original work, identify changes to the original and add the following text: *In the event of any discrepancy between the original work and the translation, only the text of original work should be considered valid.*

Adaptations – you must cite the original work and add the following text: *This is an adaptation of an original work by the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed in this adaptation should not be reported as representing the official views of the OECD or of its Member countries.*

Third-party material – the licence does not apply to third-party material in the work. If using such material, you are responsible for obtaining permission from the third party and for any claims of infringement.

You must not use the OECD logo, visual identity or cover image without express permission or suggest the OECD endorses your use of the work.

Any dispute arising under this licence shall be settled by arbitration in accordance with the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) Arbitration Rules 2012. The seat of arbitration shall be Paris (France). The number of arbitrators shall be one.