

Education indicators in Canada: An international perspective, 2014

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Almost 9 out of 10 people (89%) in Canada aged 25 to 64 had completed at least high school in 2012, higher than the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average of 75%. Among reporting countries, only the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, both at 92%, as well as Estonia and Poland, each with a 90% rate, posted higher proportions. The figure for the United States (89%) matched Canada's.

On a national basis, British Columbia (91%), Ontario (91%) and Alberta (90%) were all above the Canadian average. In all other jurisdictions except Nunavut (57%), the proportion of 25- to 64-year-olds that had completed at least high school ranged from 81% in the Northwest Territories to 88% in Saskatchewan.

Canada had a high level of postsecondary attainment compared with most other OECD countries. In 2012, almost two-thirds (65%) of Canadians aged 25 to 64 had completed a postsecondary education. Overall, the proportion of individuals who had a university degree (bachelor's to PhD) was 28%, ranking eighth among OECD countries. Those attaining a postsecondary education at the college, trade, vocational or university certificate below bachelor's level accounted for 37% of Canadians aged 25 to 64. This is partly a reflection of Canada's extensive network of colleges, one not seen in most other OECD countries.

Higher levels of education are generally linked to improved employment prospects. In 2012, the employment rate for adults aged 25 to 64 who had not completed high school (upper secondary education) was 56% in Canada, similar to the OECD average of 55%. In comparison, the employment rate among the same age group was highest for individuals who had a college or university credential at 82%, similar to the OECD average. In general, differences in employment rates associated with different levels of education were less pronounced in Western Canada than in Eastern Canada.

The resources devoted to education vary across the OECD, as measured by the share of gross domestic product (GDP). In 2010, Canada spent 6.4% of GDP on education compared with the OECD average of 6.1%. Nationally, the share of GDP devoted to educational institutions varied from 5.0% in Alberta (which has a relatively high GDP) to 9.9% in Nunavut.

Current expenditure reflects spending on school resources that are used each year for the operation of schools and excludes capital spending. These expenditures accounted for a substantial proportion of educational spending in Canada and staff compensation is the largest single component. Staff compensation accounted for 77.5% of current expenditure at the primary and secondary levels in Canada in 2010, a level mirrored in all other OECD countries. At the tertiary (college and university) level, staff compensation accounted for 65.2% of current expenditure.

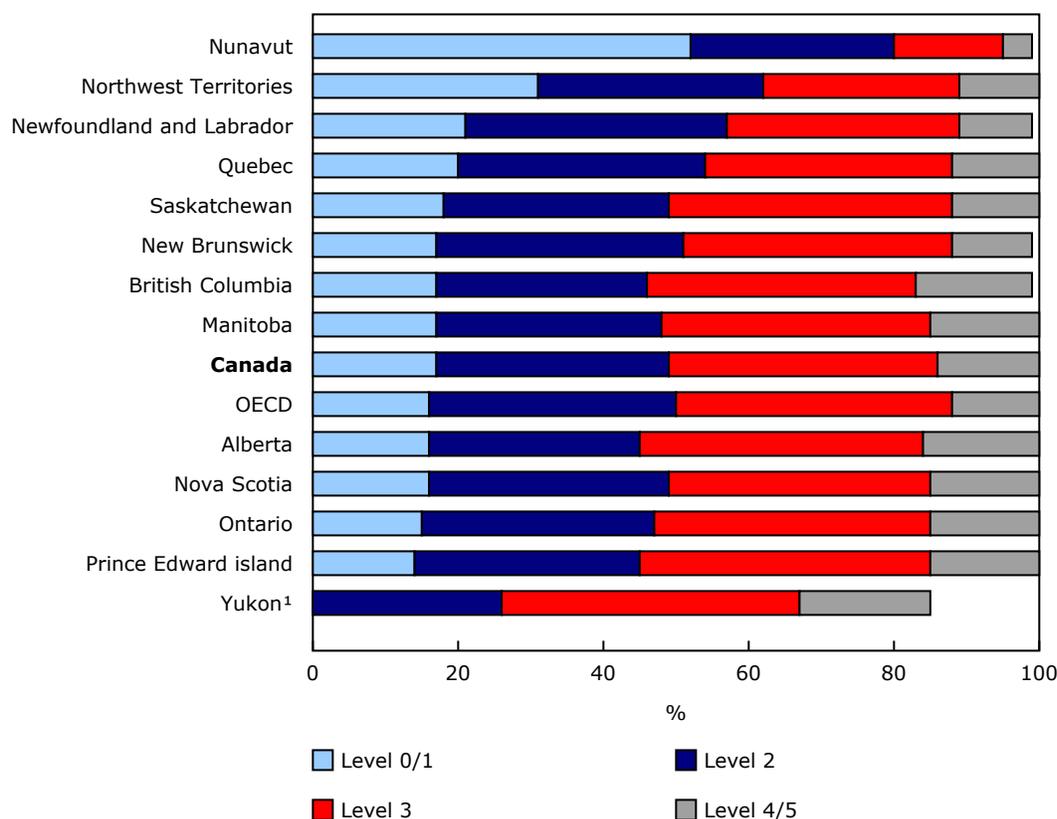
Teachers in Canada reached the top of their salary scales more quickly than their counterparts in other OECD countries. Information collected on teachers' salaries reveals that in Canada, except for Quebec, teachers reach the top or near the top of pay scales after 10 years experience, typically making around one-and-a-half times their starting salaries. In comparison, the OECD average for the length of time to reach the top of the pay scale is 24 years.

Teachers in Canada do, however, spend more time teaching on average than their OECD counterparts. For example, Canada's primary teachers averaged 799 hours per year in 2011/2012, compared with an average of 782 for the OECD countries overall. Differences are also seen at the lower secondary level (generally grades 7 to 9), with 744 hours per year in Canada versus the OECD average of 694 hours. At the upper secondary level (generally grades 10 to 12), Canadian teachers taught an average of 747 hours, compared with 655 hours for the OECD average.



Canada compares favourably to the OECD average in terms of literacy. In Canada, nationally, and for most of the provinces and territories, the percentage of those who performed at the highest level of literacy was at or above the OECD average in 2012. The percentage of Canadians performing at the highest level of numeracy was at or above the OECD average in roughly half of the jurisdictions and in Canada overall. However, Canada had a slightly higher proportion of adults performing at the lowest numeracy level, 23% versus the OECD average of 20%.

Chart 1
Literacy proficiency levels of 25- to 64-year-olds, 2012



1. Level 0/1 data are not available for Yukon, as they are too unreliable to be published.

Note(s): Percentages may not add up to 100 as a result of rounding. Literacy was measured on a continuous scale ranging from 0 to 500 and can be reported as the distribution of the population across five proficiency levels from 1 to 5 with an additional category, 'below level 1.' Level 1 corresponds to respondents displaying the lowest level of ability. Levels 4 and 5 were combined to include those with the highest level of ability.

Source(s): Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); Statistics Canada, *Education Indicators in Canada: An International Perspective*, 2014 (81-604-X).

As might be expected in Canada and across jurisdictions, individuals who had higher proficiency levels in literacy and numeracy were also more likely to be employed. It is notable, though, that employment rates for men with lower levels of literacy were fairly high in Saskatchewan (84%), British Columbia (82%) and Alberta (81%). This was not the case for women with lower levels of literacy.

Note to readers

Education Indicators in Canada: An International Perspective, 2014, is the sixth in a series of reports designed to complement the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) annual report on education indicators, *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators*.

The 12 indicators presented in this 2014 Canadian compendium represent a selection of indicators that were developed to align with the definitions and methodologies used by the OECD in its most recent report, *Education at a Glance 2014: OECD Indicators*. Data for Canada and its provinces and territories were drawn from several data sources and various reference years, as required to provide comparisons with OECD figures.

The 2014 indicator set for Canada, the provinces and territories captures information on educational attainment, graduation and completion rates at the secondary level, labour market outcomes, expenditures per student, expenditures on education, international students, transitions to the labour market, and the learning environment and organization of schools. It also features a new indicator that presents a selection of topics related to a recent assessment of adult literacy and numeracy, *Skills in Canada: First Results from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (89-555-X)*.

The information contained in the report was prepared by the Canadian Education Statistics Council, a partnership between Statistics Canada and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. The report is part of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program of Statistics Canada.

Data for the OECD member countries are from the OECD publication *Education at a Glance 2014: OECD Indicators*, available on the [OECD Web site \(www.oecd.org\)](http://www.oecd.org).

The publication *Education Indicators in Canada: An International Perspective, 2014 (81-604-X)*, is now available from the *Browse by key resource* module of our website under *Publications*.

The public is also invited to [chat with an expert](#) on Wednesday, December 17, 2014, from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m., Eastern Time.

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