

Education indicators in Canada: An international perspective, 2018

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in The Daily, Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Just over two-thirds of Canadians in 2017 (68%), aged 25 to 64, had completed post-secondary education, 24 percentage points higher than the average for the 36 member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

A publication released today, [Education in Canada: an International Perspective](#), provides a large set of indicators on certain aspects of the educational systems in Canada's provinces and territories and places them in an international context.

Educational attainment of Canadians is higher than the OECD average

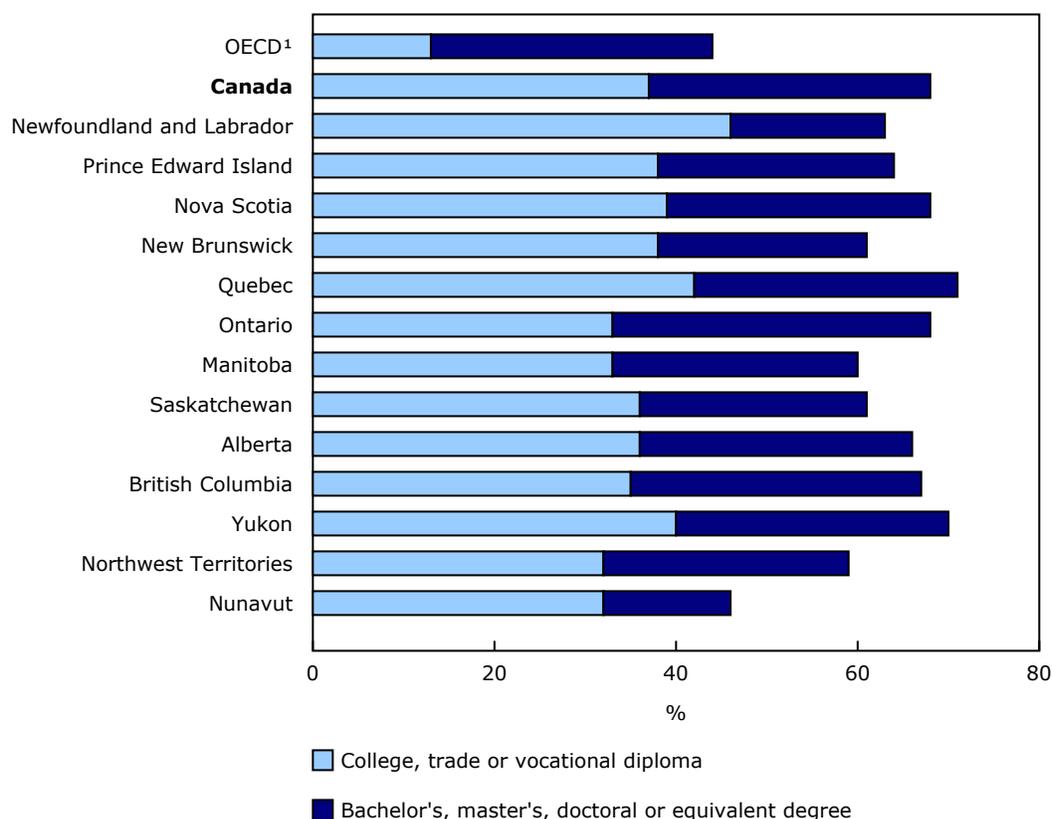
The proportion of Canadians who had a bachelor's degree or higher was 31%, matching the OECD average. Those who have completed other types of postsecondary education, including the college, trade or vocational levels, accounted for 37% of Canadians aged 25 to 64. This is partly a reflection of Canada's extensive network of colleges, a system not seen in most other OECD countries, where the comparable average was 13%.

In every province and territory, the proportion of 25- to 64-year-olds who had completed postsecondary education was higher than the OECD average (44%), ranging from 46% in Nunavut to 71% in Quebec.

In Canada, the percentage of women who have completed a postsecondary education (70%) was higher than that of men (65%). These proportions were both higher than the OECD average, where 47% of women had a postsecondary education in 2017 compared with 41% of men.



Chart 1
Highest level of postsecondary education among 25-to-64-year-olds, 2017



1. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Source(s): *Education Indicators in Canada: An International Perspective, 2018 (81-604-X)* and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Looking at high school, in 2017, 9 out of 10 Canadians (91%) aged 25 to 64 had at least a high school diploma, well above the OECD average of 79%. Only the Czech Republic (94%) and Poland (92%) had higher proportions, while the United States had the same rate as Canada.

Within Canada, the proportion of 25- to 64-year-olds who had completed at least a high school diploma was also higher than the OECD average in every province and territory except Nunavut (60%).

Employment rates increase with higher educational attainment

In 2017, the employment rate for Canadians aged 25 to 64 who had not completed high school was 56%, just below the OECD average of 57%. By comparison, the employment rate among individuals of the same age group was highest for those who had a college or university credential at 82%. This was slightly below the OECD average of 85%.

For Canada and the OECD, the difference in employment rates between men and women in 2017 was less pronounced among those who obtained a university degree compared with those who had only graduated high school. Among those whose highest educational attainment was high school, employment rates were higher for men than for women, for both Canada (78% for men compared with 65% for women) and the OECD (82% for men compared with 68% for women).

Proportion of young Canadians not in education, employment or training is comparable to the OECD average

In 2018, 12% of Canadians aged 15 to 29 were not in education, employment or training (NEET), similar to the OECD average of 13%. This indicator has been published by the OECD for a number of years, as NEET youth could be at increased risk of low income and social exclusion. However, these youth could be in a NEET situation for many reasons, such as volunteering, providing community service, caring for children, or because they are permanently unable to work. In order to better measure these activities, Statistics Canada is revising the NEET indicator to make it more comprehensive and reflective of the activities young people are engaged in when not working or attending school.

Canada had a similar proportion of NEET youth to the United Kingdom (12%) and the United States (13%), but a higher proportion than Germany (9%) and a lower proportion than France (17%).

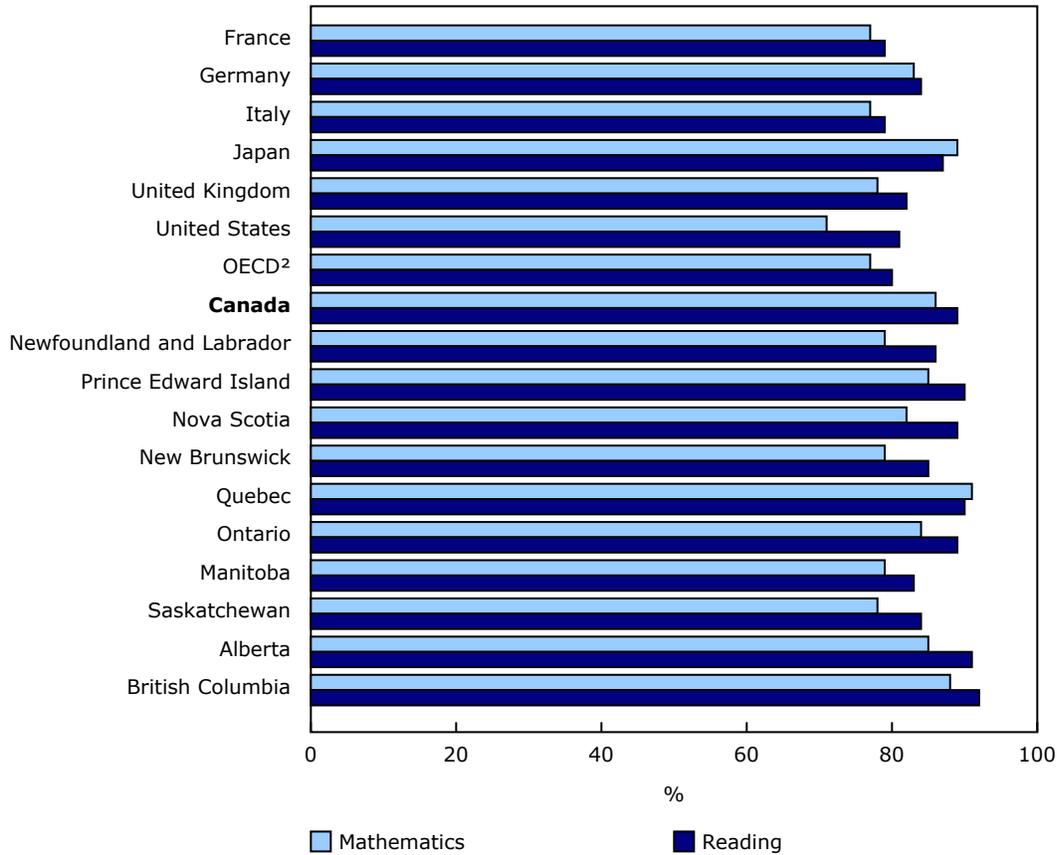
More students in Canada reach a minimum proficiency level in mathematics and reading, compared with the OECD average

Basic literacy and numeracy begin when children start school. The mandatory primary entry age for school in most provinces and territories in Canada is six years old. Even though schooling is not mandatory across most of the country for five-year-olds, 97% are in school (kindergarten or junior kindergarten), higher than both the OECD average (93%) and the proportion in the United States (91%).

A minimum proficiency level is a measure of skills in math and reading, assessed through tests such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). The most recent data from PISA show that the proportion of 15-year-olds who have achieved a minimum proficiency in mathematics (86%) and reading (89%) was higher in Canada compared with the OECD averages, which were 77% for mathematics and 80% for reading. Within Canada, Quebec held the highest proportion of 15-year-olds who have achieved a minimum proficiency in mathematics (91%), while Alberta had the highest proportion of 15-year-olds who have achieved a minimum proficiency in reading (91%).

Chart 2

Proportion of 15-year-olds with a minimum proficiency level (PISA¹ level 2) in mathematics and reading, 2015



1. Programme for International Student Assessment.

2. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Note(s): The territories did not participate in PISA 2015, and as a result are not represented in this indicator.

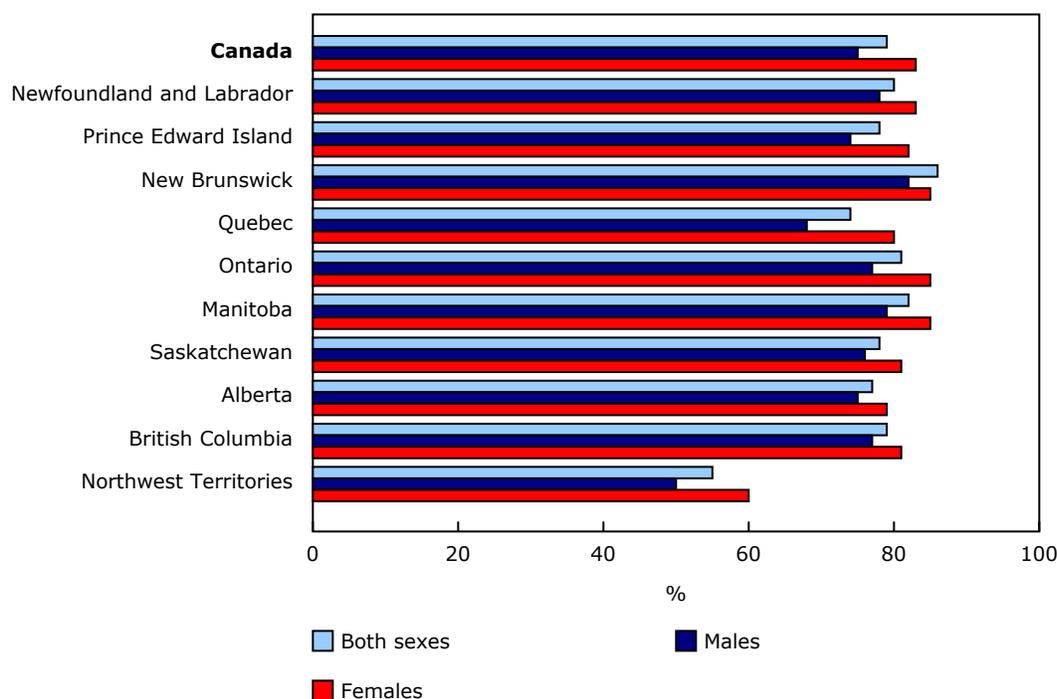
Source(s): *Education Indicators in Canada: An International Perspective, 2018 (81-604-X)* and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Both in Canada and in the OECD, on average, 15-year-old girls were more likely than boys of the same age to reach a minimum proficiency in reading, while a similar proportion of girls and boys reached minimum proficiency in mathematics.

Looking at gender differences across the provinces, a greater proportion of boys than girls in Newfoundland and Labrador and in Manitoba achieved the minimum proficiency in math. However, girls were more likely to reach the minimum proficiency for reading in all provinces.

Girls were also more likely to finish high school within the expected amount of time in every province and territory for which the data were available. In 2015, the proportion of Canadian students who completed high school in the expected time was 79%. This ranged from 55% in the Northwest Territories to 86% in New Brunswick.

Chart 3
On-time high-school graduation rate,¹ 2015/2016



1. Data for Nova Scotia, Yukon and Nunavut are not available.
 Source(s): *Education Indicators in Canada: An International Perspective, 2018 (81-604-X)*.

Parental educational attainment plays a larger role than gender in adult literacy and numeracy

A similar measure of literacy and numeracy is available for adults aged 25 to 64 from the Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies. These data show that more men than women achieved a minimum level of numeracy in Canada, while equal proportions of men and women achieved a minimum level of literacy.

In Canada, the education level of parents played a larger role than gender in determining the proportion of adults who achieved a minimum level of numeracy and literacy. Those whose parents had lower levels of educational attainment were less likely to reach minimum levels of numeracy or literacy.

Canadian teachers' salaries rank within top five of OECD countries

On one side of education, there are learners and their outcomes, while on the other side, there are the systems that provide this education and the teachers who deliver it. In 2016/2017, Canadian full-time teachers of grades 7 to 9 had the fourth-highest salaries (excluding social benefits and allowances, or any other additional payments) among the 36 OECD countries, after 15 years of experience (US\$65,474). The top three OECD countries were Luxembourg (US\$109,734), Germany (US\$76,838) and the Netherlands (US\$72,778).

In Canada, unlike other OECD countries where teachers' salary depends on experience and grade taught, salary does not vary by grade. In the provinces and territories, salaries for full-time teachers in primary and secondary institutions with 15 years of experience ranged from US\$54,450 in Nova Scotia to US\$82,544 in the Northwest Territories.

Canadian teachers spend more time teaching, on average, than their OECD counterparts. At the primary level, hours of teaching time were comparable between the OECD (784) and Canada (798) in 2016/2017.

For grades 7 to 9, these figures were 745 hours per year in Canada compared with the OECD average of 703 hours, while for grades 10 to 12, Canadian teachers taught an average of 746 hours, compared with 657 hours for the OECD.

Expenditure per student highest at the university level

With 5.9% of Canada's gross domestic product spent on educational institutions in 2015/2016 (3.4% for primary and secondary education, plus 2.4% for all postsecondary education), Canada allocated more than the OECD average of 5.1% (3.5% for primary and secondary education, and 1.6% for all postsecondary education).

In Canada, expenditure per student in 2015/2016 was lowest at the primary/secondary level (US\$10,639), higher at the college level (US\$12,995), and highest at the university level (US\$25,659).

For the OECD countries on average, the expenditures per student were similar to those in Canada at the primary and secondary (US\$9,401) as well as college (US\$11,022) levels. However, expenditure per student was lower than in Canada for universities (US\$16,518).

Note to readers

Education Indicators in Canada: An International Perspective, 2018, is the tenth in a series of reports designed to complement the annual report of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on education indicators, *Education at a Glance 2018: OECD Indicators*.

The 13 indicators presented in this 2018 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 2018: 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 2018 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 presents a selection of topics related to the educational Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Data for Canada, provinces and territories presented in the report were 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 2018: OECD Indicators*, available on the OECD website (www.oecd.org).

The publication *Education Indicators in Canada: An International Perspective, 2018* (81-604-X), is now available.

The public is also invited to [chat with an expert](#) on Thursday, December 13, from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m., Eastern Time.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).