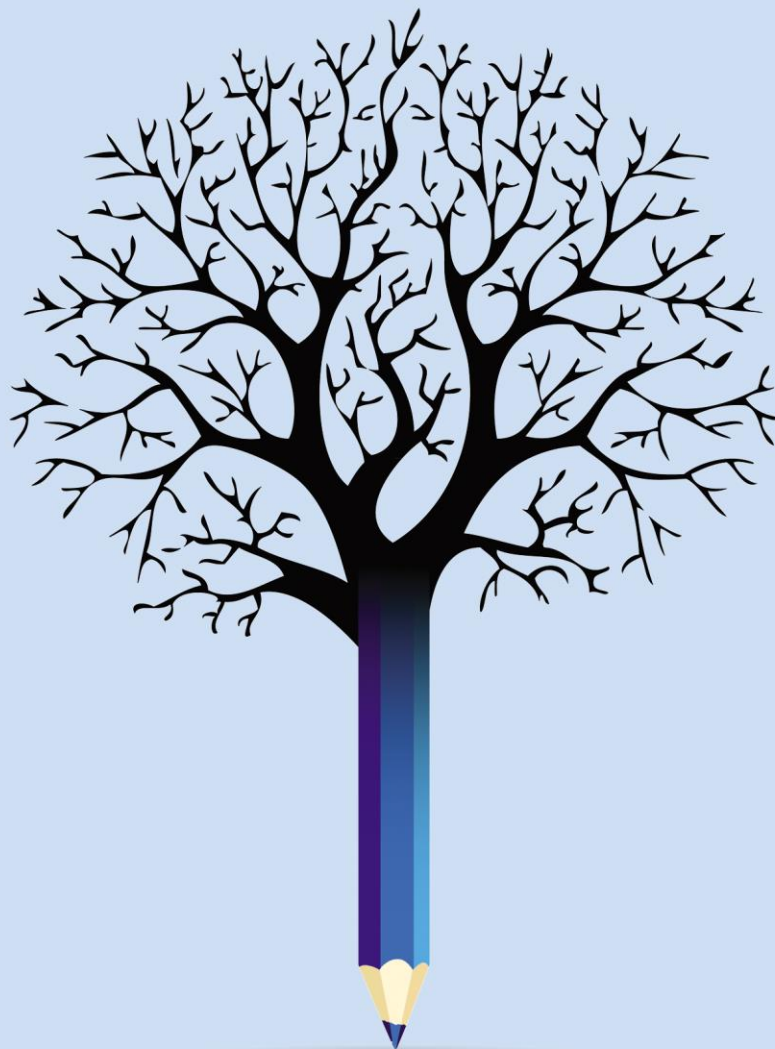




EDUCATION POLICY OUTLOOK **LUXEMBOURG**





EDUCATION POLICY OUTLOOK

This **policy profile on education** in Luxembourg is part of the *Education Policy Outlook* series, which presents comparative analysis of education policies and reforms across OECD countries. Building on the OECD's substantial comparative and sectorial policy knowledge base, the series offers a comparative outlook on education policy by providing analysis of individual countries' educational context, challenges and policies (education policy profiles), analysis of international trends and insight into policies and reforms on selected topics. In addition to country-specific profiles, the series also includes a recurring publication. The first volume, *Education Policy Outlook 2015: Making Reforms Happen*, was released in January, 2015.

Designed for **policy makers, analysts and practitioners** who seek information and analysis of education policy taking into account the importance of national context, the country policy profiles offer constructive analysis of education policy in a comparative format. Each profile reviews the current context and situation of the country's education system and examines its challenges and policy responses, according to six policy levers that support improvement:

- Students: How to raise outcomes for all in terms of 1) equity and quality and 2) preparing students for the future
- Institutions: How to raise quality through 3) school improvement and 4) evaluation and assessment
- System: How the system is organised to deliver education policy in terms of 5) governance and 6) funding.

Some country policy profiles contain spotlight boxes on selected policy issues. They are meant to draw attention to specific policies that are promising or showing positive results and may be relevant for other countries.

Special thanks to the Government of Luxembourg for its active input during consultations and constructive feedback on this report. We also thank the European Commission for its valuable analytical and financial support for development of 11 OECD-EU Country Profiles over the course of 2015-16.

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Sources: This country profile draws on OECD indicators from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Survey of Adult Skills of the Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) and the annual publication *Education at a Glance*, and refers to country and thematic studies such as OECD work on early childhood education and care, teachers, school leadership, evaluation and assessment for improving school outcomes, equity and quality in education, governing complex education systems, vocational education and training, and tertiary education. Much of this information and documentation can be accessed through the OECD Education GPS at <http://gpseducation.oecd.org>.

Most of the figures quoted in the different sections refer to Annex B, which presents a table of the main indicators for the different sources used throughout the country profile. Hyperlinks to the reference publications are included throughout the text for ease of reading, and also in the References and further reading section, which lists both OECD and non-OECD sources.

More information is available from the OECD Directorate for Education and Skills (www.oecd.org/edu) and its web pages on Education Policy Outlook (www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm), as well as on the EU Education and Training Monitor (http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/et-monitor_en.htm) and Eurydice (<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/pfifis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Luxembourg:Overview>).



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HIGHLIGHTS

Luxembourg's educational context

Students: Despite very high investment in education, Luxembourg performed below the OECD average in PISA 2012, and the impact of socio-economic background on mathematics performance is above the OECD average. Across PISA cycles, Luxembourg achieved improvements in reading, while performance in mathematics and science remained unchanged. Pre-primary education starts at age 3, with above-average enrolment rates for 4-year-olds. School attendance is compulsory from age 4 to age 16, including primary, lower secondary and parts of pre-primary and upper secondary levels. With a multilingual education system and a high share of students from immigrant backgrounds, some system-level practices (such as student selection, grade repetition, school choice and early student tracking at age 12) may hamper equity if not managed carefully. Attainment rates in upper secondary are above the OECD average. Luxembourg has above-average enrolment in upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) programmes, although completion rates in vocational programmes remain below the OECD average. A larger proportion of students than the OECD average attain tertiary education, partially due to the highly educated international population living in Luxembourg. At tertiary level, among OECD countries, Luxembourg has the largest share of international students and the largest share of national students enrolled in institutions abroad. Unemployment rates are lower than the OECD average for students at all levels of attainment when they reach the labour market.

Institutions: School autonomy is below the OECD average in Luxembourg for decisions on curriculum and assessment and on resource allocation (including hiring and dismissing teachers). All teachers are required to follow a pre-service teacher-training programme including a mandatory teaching practicum, pass a competitive examination to enter the profession, and do continuing education courses. School leaders do not have to undergo specific training. Teaching conditions for primary and secondary teachers include comparatively low class sizes, more teaching time than the OECD average, and the highest salaries among OECD countries. Teacher appraisal is not regulated by law, and there are no specific formal procedures or guidelines to evaluate the performance of permanent teachers. However, since 2015, all civil servants (including teachers) have to participate in assessments at least three times during their professional career. School evaluations consist mainly of internal school self-evaluations with strong national requirements and support mechanisms to help carry them out.

System: The central government is in charge of education and takes most schooling decisions at lower secondary level. The Ministry of National Education, Children and Youth (*Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse*, MENJE) is responsible for planning and managing school education and sets priorities for educational policy. Luxembourg has the highest per-student cost of teachers' salaries among OECD countries, from primary to upper secondary education. At tertiary level, financial support for study abroad has been important because there was no university in Luxembourg until 2003. State financial support exists for Luxembourg's higher education students and children of cross-border workers.

Key issues and goals

In a multilingual system, Luxembourg could further develop system-level policies to address high levels of grade repetition and support children from low-income and/or foreign-language families. Vocational education and training programmes should be further aligned to the needs of the labour market to facilitate smooth transition for students from school to work. To further strengthen the teaching profession, Luxembourg should develop an effective career structure as well as mechanisms that signal to teachers what is expected of them and support them to improve and evolve. Luxembourg also needs to improve the current system of evaluation and assessment and further build evaluation and assessment capacity in schools. Balancing autonomy, accountability and support to better meet the needs of students and schools and promote student achievement could also help improve Luxembourg's education system.

Selected policy responses

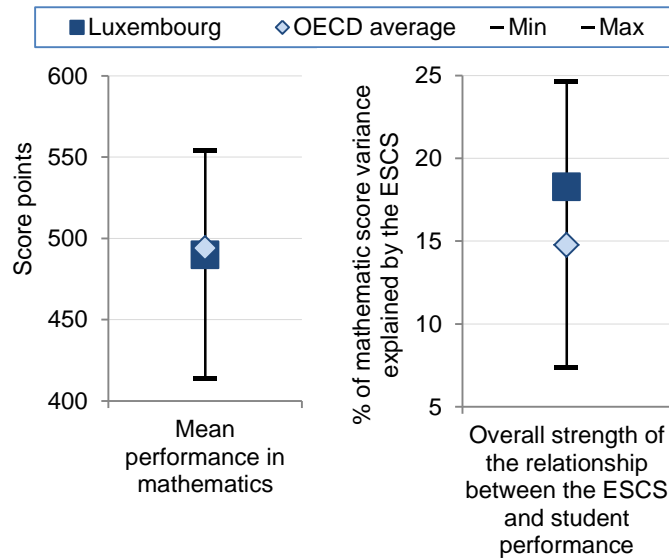
The [reform of vocational education and training](#) (2008, amended in 2014) aims to improve the quality of VET provision in secondary schools. Changes include the introduction of financial compensation during internships or apprenticeships and the extension of basic training to all trades and professions. Closer collaboration between the state and the business sector in the Committee for Vocational Training aims to ensure that VET programmes meet the needs of the labour market.

The [reform of fundamental education](#) (2009) introduced innovations in several policy areas, including the introduction of two-year learning cycles, an increase in school autonomy with additional pedagogical responsibility for teachers, more parental involvement, new approaches to student evaluation, and the expectation that all schools will prepare a school development plan (mainly at pre-primary and primary level).



Luxembourg achieved below-average scores in mathematics, reading and science in PISA 2012. Across PISA cycles, performance in reading improved, while performance in mathematics and science remained unchanged. The impact of students' socio-economic status on mathematics scores is above the OECD average (18.3%, compared to the OECD average of 14.8%) and increased between 2003 and 2012.

Figure 1. Performance of 15-year-olds in mathematics, relationship between student performance and economic, social and cultural status (ESCS) (PISA 2012) and performance of adults in literacy (PIAAC)

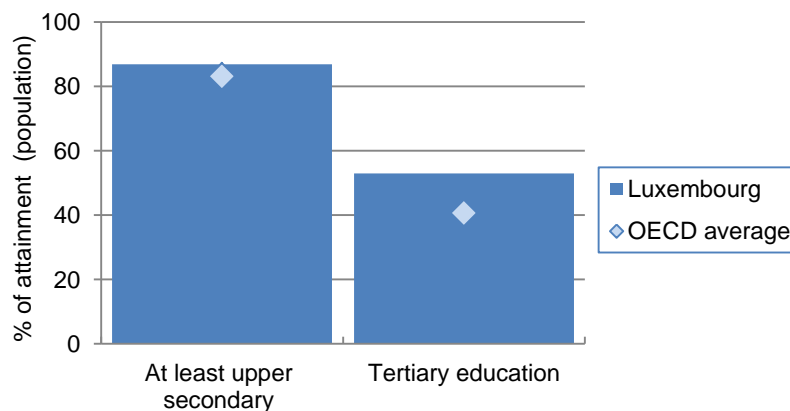


Note: "Min"/ "Max" refer to OECD countries with the lowest/highest values.

Source: PISA 2012 Results: What Students Know and Can Do (Volume I, Revised edition, February 2014): Student Performance in Mathematics, Reading, and Science, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264208780-en>.

In Luxembourg, the share of 25-34 year-olds with at least an upper secondary education is above the OECD average (87%, compared to the OECD average of 83%), and around 53% of 25-34 year-olds have attained tertiary education (compared to the OECD average of 41%) (Figure 2). This is the third highest attainment rate for this age group among OECD countries. Between 2000 and 2014, the tertiary attainment rate in Luxembourg has more than doubled. These attainment rates are linked to the high proportion of international students in Luxembourg (see Preparing students) and the highly educated foreign-born population living and working in the country. In fact, almost 60% of foreign-born residents aged 30-34 have a tertiary education, compared to 42.5% of native-born.

Figure 2. Upper secondary and tertiary attainment for 25-34 year-olds, 2014



Error! Hyperlink reference not valid. Source: OECD (2015), Education at a Glance 2015: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eaq-2015-en>.



**Spotlight 1. The European Union perspective:
Luxembourg's education and training system and the Europe 2020 Strategy**

In the European Union's growth and employment strategy, [Europe 2020](#), education and training is recognised as a key policy area in contributing to Europe's economic growth and social inclusion. The European Union set a two-fold target in education by 2020: reducing the rates of early school leaving below 10%, and reaching at least 40% of 30-34 year-olds completing tertiary or equivalent education. Countries set their own related national targets. The Europe 2020 goals are monitored by the EU's yearly assessment of the main economic and growth issues.

The [European Semester Country Report 2016](#) identified a number of key issues for Luxembourg in education:

- Students' performance in basic skills as measured by the 2012 OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is consistently below the EU average in mathematics, reading and science. Underperformance can be explained mainly by difficulties encountered by students who are socio-economically disadvantaged. Socio-economic status seems in turn correlated with migrant background. This is not only visible in skills acquisition but also in early school leaving, which is relatively high among students of migrant background. The tabled reform of secondary school education includes a series of measures to support disadvantaged students and reduce early school leaving.
- Luxembourg's trilingual tradition seems to add to the difficulties encountered by children from poor socio-economic backgrounds. Difficulties with the language of instruction can lead to failure in other disciplines for numerous students. To improve the chances of children of migrant background, various measures of linguistic support are foreseen in the 2015 draft bill on youth, including linguistic preparation starting at age 1 to age 3.
- Luxembourg has a very high participation rate in early childhood education and care (97.9% for the 4+ age group), which can be an effective way to reduce school failure in later years. Participation is anticipated to be further expanded by granting free access to early childhood education and care as of September 2016.
- Adapting provision of vocational education and training to constantly changing labour market needs is another challenge. Luxembourg has vocational training paths based on dual training, but some of these paths continue to be mainly school-based (23.5% of students in initial vocational education and training participate in combined work-based and school-based programmes compared to 26.5% in the European Union).
- The overall rate of adult participation in lifelong learning (14% in 2014) is above the EU average (9%) and close to the average target of 15% set in the Europe 2020 education and training strategic framework. Yet, participation in lifelong learning for adults with lower educational attainment stands at only 7.3%. In response, a campaign was started to encourage participation in adult education programmes.



EQUITY AND QUALITY: SYSTEMIC BARRIERS TO EQUITY

Luxembourg's overall performance in PISA 2012 is below the OECD average, and **equity indicators** for 15-year-olds are less favourable than in most other OECD countries. Student performance in PISA 2012 improved in reading compared to previous PISA cycles and remained unchanged in mathematics and science. The share of top performers is slightly below the OECD average (11.2% of students are at or above Level 5, compared to the OECD average of 12.6%). The share of low performers has increased since 2003 and is above the OECD average (24.3% of students are below proficiency Level 2, compared to the OECD average of 23.0%) (Figure 3). In PISA 2012, socio-economic background had more impact on student performance in Luxembourg (18.3%) than the OECD average (14.8%) (Figure 1). The difference in performance between schools explained by socio-economic status of students and schools is the largest across OECD countries. Gender differences in mathematics performance in PISA 2012 were also more pronounced in Luxembourg: boys outperformed girls in mathematics by 25 score points, compared to the OECD average of 12 score points.

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) can help to promote greater equity in the system. Provision for children under age 3 is provided in day-care centres (*crèches*) or day-care families (*assistance parentale*). Starting at age 3, children may participate in an optional early childhood programme (*enseignement précoce*), which municipalities must provide free of charge. Compulsory schooling starts at age 4, with pre-school education (*enseignement préscolaire*). About 71% of 3-year-olds and 99% of 4-year-olds were enrolled in early childhood education in 2013 (around the OECD average of 74% for 3-year-olds and above the OECD average of 88% for 4-year-olds). Provision of education at that level is mainly public. A large majority of students in pre-primary education (90%) attend public institutions, well above the OECD average of 61%.

With a multilingual education system, some **system-level** policies, such as early tracking, academic selection, school choice and grade repetition can hinder equity if not managed appropriately. Education is compulsory from age 4 to age 16 in Luxembourg, and is provided in different languages as students progress through the system. Pre-primary education is provided in Luxembourgish, primary education in German, and most of secondary education in French or German. Tertiary education is delivered in German, English and French. According to an [OECD study](#), some students, in particular newly arrived immigrant students, struggle with the multiplicity of languages of instruction. Tracking begins at age 12, when students enter secondary school (compared to the OECD average age of 14) and is based on student academic records and reports from previous schools. School choice is limited through geographical assignment at lower secondary level, but is common at upper secondary level. With 35% of 15-year-olds reporting that they have repeated at least one year in primary or secondary school, Luxembourg has the second highest rate of grade repetition among OECD countries (more than twice the OECD average of 13%). OECD evidence shows that grade repetition can be costly and may contribute to dropout.

Luxembourg should work to **reduce segregation** in schools related to students' backgrounds, such as immigrant or socio-economic status or language spoken at home. In 2012, almost half of the student population in Luxembourg had an immigrant background, compared to the OECD average of 11%. The difference in performance between students with immigrant and non-immigrant background in PISA 2012, after adjusting for socio-economic status, was lower than in other OECD countries (10 score points, compared to the OECD average of 21 score points) (Figure 3), but more students with an immigrant background attended disadvantaged schools in Luxembourg than in other OECD countries (58%, compared to the OECD average of 16%). According to a [national study](#), 14% of socio-economically disadvantaged students attended general secondary schools, compared to 46% of students with less disadvantaged socio-economic background. The study also found that students who speak neither Luxembourgish nor German at home face more educational inequality.

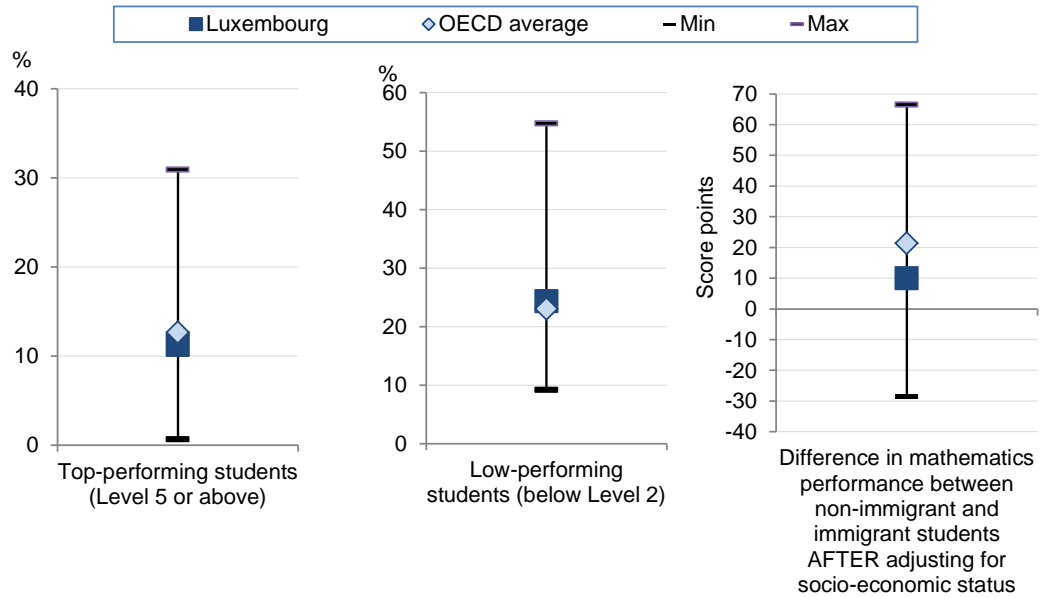
The challenge: Further addressing system-level policies, particularly grade repetition, and targeting support to children from low-income and foreign-language families.

Recent policies and practices

In reaction to the increased numbers of migrants and refugees arriving in Europe since mid-2015, a special [task force](#) organises formal and non-formal education and language support for refugee children and co-ordinates their integration into mainstream education. The main responsibilities of that task force include facilitating enrolment of refugees and language interpretation to help them integrate into their new learning environment, providing financial aid to local governments that serve refugees, translating official education attainment certificates, providing specific training to teachers of refugee students, and creating learning materials for the refugee population and their teachers.



Figure 3. Percentage of top and low performers and difference in mathematics performance between non-immigrant and immigrant students, PISA 2012



Note: "Min"/ "Max" refer to OECD countries with the lowest/highest values.

Source: OECD (2014), *PISA 2012 Results: What Students Know and Can Do (Volume I, Revised edition, February 2014): Student Performance in Mathematics, Reading and Science*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264208780-en>.



PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE: HIGH EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Labour market perspectives can play an important role in the decision to stay in education. In Luxembourg, employment rates for 25-64 year-olds for all levels of education are above the OECD average (76%, compared to the OECD average of 73%). Employment rates were highest among tertiary educated 25-64 year-olds with a master's degree or equivalent (89%, compared to the OECD average of 87%). Luxembourg also has the second lowest share of 15-29 year-olds not in education and not employed (8.2%) across all OECD countries.

Upper secondary education in Luxembourg consists of general and technical streams. This differentiation is based on an earlier separation of streams in lower secondary school, but transfers between streams (*passerelles*) are possible depending on the student's performance. At the end of general secondary education and some technical secondary programmes, students receive a secondary school diploma, required for entry into tertiary education. Upper secondary attainment rates of 25-34 year-olds are higher in Luxembourg than in other OECD countries (87%, compared to the OECD average of 83%). Career guidance is part of the curriculum in secondary education, including decision-making, career management skills and compulsory work experience.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Luxembourg is based on a dual system that includes school-based education, work-based learning in the private and public sector, and international co-operation with neighbouring countries. At upper secondary level, a larger share of students (mainly from migrant backgrounds) enrol in VET programmes than in other OECD countries (60%, compared to the OECD average of 46%). At the same time, completion rates in VET are low: 29% of students in vocational programmes complete their education in the expected time (compared to the OECD average of 64%) and, two years after the expected graduation time, completion rates remain below the OECD average (64%, compared to 79%). VET students can choose among three pathways that lead to higher education or training as a master craftsman (*maître-artisan*). At tertiary level, VET is delivered in short-cycle programmes that lead to a technical qualification (*brevet de technicien supérieur*, BTS). According to a [report by the European Commission](#), VET provision in Luxembourg does not sufficiently match young people's skills with the needs of the labour market.

Luxembourg has high attainment rates and high international student mobility in **tertiary education**, in part because it had no university until 2003 (See Governance). In 2012, 53% of Luxembourg's 25-34 year-olds attained tertiary education, compared to the average of 41% across OECD countries. Students with tertiary education can expect to earn on average 50% more than those with only upper secondary education (above the OECD average of 41%). Tertiary attainment has increased at a higher rate for younger cohorts, with a difference of 23 percentage points between 25-34 year-olds and 55-64 year-olds (compared to the OECD average difference of 16 percentage points). At tertiary level, among OECD countries, Luxembourg has the largest share of international students (44%, compared to the OECD average of 9%) and the largest share of national students enrolled in institutions abroad (68%, well above the OECD average of 2%).

The challenge: Increasing completion rates in upper secondary education and strengthening the link between VET and the labour market.

Recent policies and practices

The [reform of vocational education and training](#) (2008, amended in 2014) aims to improve the quality of VET provision in secondary schools. Changes include simplification of student progression and better access to modules preparing for technical studies in higher education; extension of basic training to all trades and professions; and the introduction of financial compensation during internships or apprenticeships. The state and the private sector collaborate in the Committee for Vocational Training to ensure that VET programmes meet labour market needs. Curricula are developed by National Training Commissions, which include representatives from secondary schools and the business sector.

The school of the second chance ([École de la deuxième chance](#), E2C, 2008) was introduced to provide additional opportunities for early school leavers (age 16-30) to obtain adequate qualifications to enter the labour market or continue on to higher education.

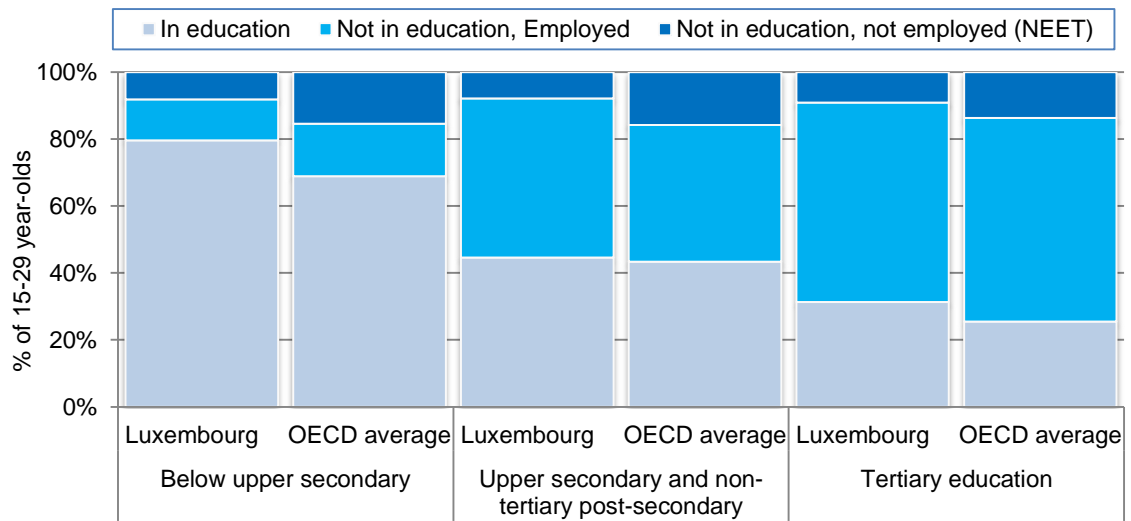
The national [Counselling Centre](#) (*Maison de l'orientation*, 2012) for educational and vocational guidance groups all counselling agencies to provide a coherent service to students and adults. To improve the counselling service in schools, the [Educational and Professional Orientation](#) pilot project (2015) was introduced in six upper secondary schools.

The [Luxembourg Youth Guarantee](#) (2014) was launched by the MENJE following [EU council recommendations](#). The scheme proposes individual programmes to 16-24 year-olds to continue their education or enter the labour market.

Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands have signed an [agreement on the recognition of higher education degrees](#) (2015). Holders of bachelor's or master's degrees will benefit from legal certainty of automatic recognition of their degree. This will facilitate mobility for study and work in the Benelux region.



Figure 4. Percentage of 15-29 year-olds in education and not in education, by educational attainment and work status, 2014



NEET: Neither Employed, nor in Education and Training (by higher education status)

Source: OECD (2015), *Education at a Glance 2015: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2015-en>.



SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: FAVOURABLE TEACHING CONDITIONS FOR A YOUNG TEACHING WORKFORCE

Learning environments in Luxembourg serve 98 000 students, according to a [2015 report from the MENJE](#). Luxembourg has 167 public fundamental schools and 42 secondary level institutions. Students have more hours of compulsory instruction per year in primary education (924 hours, compared to the OECD average of 804 hours) than in lower secondary education (845 hours, compared to the OECD average of 916 hours).

School leaders' roles vary according to education level. They do not have to undergo specific training for school leadership and, in fundamental education (pre-school and primary school), the career of school leader is not officially recognised. In fundamental schools, inspectors of the local education authority assume the role of school leaders for several schools. Requirements to become inspectors include at least five years of teaching experience, a master's degree in education, successful completion of the national recruitment examination and a two-year induction period. Inspectors are supported by the elected president of each school committee. School leaders in secondary schools report directly to the MENJE. They implement the national curriculum, prepare and implement school pedagogical projects and carry out internal school evaluations. The extent to which school leaders in Luxembourg engage in instructional leadership is below the OECD average (Figure 5). An [OECD study](#) recommends that Luxembourg give greater importance to initial preparation, professional development and evaluation of school leaders to reinforce their role as pedagogical leaders.

Luxembourg's **teachers** are increasingly younger than the OECD average. At lower secondary level, twice as many teachers are under age 30 than in other OECD countries. The proportion of lower secondary teachers over age 50 decreased by 2.6% between 2005 and 2013, while in other OECD countries with available data, the share of teachers over age 50 increased by 1.5%. To enter the profession, teachers in fundamental schools need a four-year teacher education degree, offered by the University of Luxembourg. Secondary teachers need a relevant higher education degree followed by a two-year programme in pedagogy. All teachers are required to demonstrate good knowledge of the three official languages (Luxembourgish, German and French). Access to the profession is granted only to teachers who pass the national recruitment examination and successfully complete a three-year probation period. Teachers are required to undertake eight hours of professional development each school year. The career structure is relatively flat, with few opportunities for promotion, recognition or more formally recognised responsibility, and the salary scale is based on years of service. Luxembourg could benefit from developing teaching standards and creating a career structure for teachers that sets out the stages of professional development.

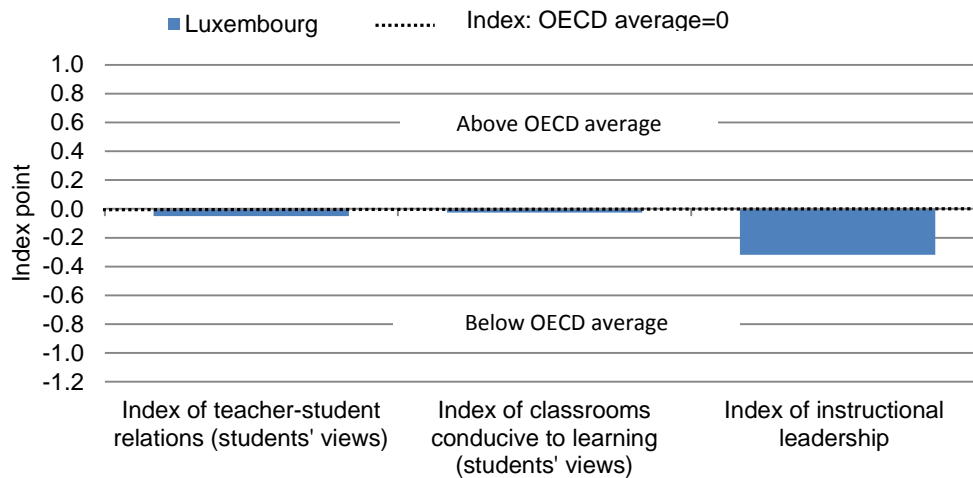
Teaching conditions in Luxembourg include lower average class sizes and higher overall teachers' salaries. Luxembourg's lower secondary schools have an average of 19 students per class (5 fewer students than the OECD average of 24). Primary education teachers' salaries increased by 40% from 2005 to 2013 (the largest increase among OECD countries), compared to the average increase of 3% across OECD countries. After 15 years of experience, upper secondary teachers in Luxembourg can expect to earn more than twice the average salary of their colleagues in other OECD countries. Teachers' salaries in Luxembourg are also well above the OECD average when compared to the earnings of other similarly educated workers. Primary teachers' average actual salaries (including benefits) amount to 109% of the average salary of a 25-64 year-old similarly educated worker (compared to the OECD average of 80%), while secondary teachers' salaries amount to 124% (compared to the OECD average of 86% at lower secondary level and 91% at upper secondary level).

The challenge: Developing an effective career structure and mechanisms that signal to teachers what is expected of them and support them to improve and evolve as professionals.

Recent policies and practices

The Reform of Fundamental Education (2009) introduced various changes (see Spotlight 2).

The [Reform of the Public Service](#) (2015) has introduced an obligatory introductory training period of three years for all civil servants of the state administration, including teachers and socio-educational staff. In primary education, where this training period was not previously required, a three-year training course will be introduced for all teachers. In secondary and technical secondary education, the former two-year training period has been reorganised and extended to three years. The government has established the National Education and Training Institute ([Institut de formation de l'Éducation nationale](#), IFEN, 2015).

**Figure 5. The learning environment, PISA 2012**

Source: OECD (2013), *PISA 2012 Results: What Makes Schools Successful (Volume IV): Resources, Policies and Practices*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264201156-en>.

Spotlight 2. Reforming fundamental education

The Reform of Fundamental Education (2009) replaced the traditional organisation by academic year with two-year learning cycles. This new structure aims to help teachers adapt learning settings to their students' individual rhythms and needs and gives students more time to develop the required competences. This reform also introduced:

- greater school autonomy, allowing schools to develop individual initiatives and choose their didactic material
- the requirement to prepare a school development plan (mainly at pre-primary and primary level) defining schools' objectives according to student needs
- formal standards on information for parents aiming for greater parental involvement, including regular individual parent-teacher meetings
- evaluation of students both during and at the end of a learning cycle
- individual student portfolios documenting students' progress.

In 2012 an [evaluation of the Reform of Fundamental Education](#), conducted by the University of Luxembourg, administered an online survey and interviewed educational stakeholders in Luxembourg, including teachers, parents and inspectors. The evaluation team found positive perceptions on this reform, along with a need for adjustments on way the reform was implemented. The evaluation report included several recommendations for government action.

In response to a recommendation of the evaluation report, the MENJE developed a new model of [intermediary assessment report](#), through a consultative process involving pedagogical teams of fundamental schools. In 2014/15, the new intermediary assessment plans were piloted in 30 schools, and they are due to be introduced across the system in September 2016.



EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT TO IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES: FOCUS ON SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

Defining effective **evaluation and assessment** strategies is important to improve student outcomes and develop a better and more equitable school system. Responsibility for evaluation of the education system lies with the Ministry of National Education, Childhood and Youth. It steers the quality of the system by setting national curriculum and learning outcomes as well as monitoring the education system at different levels. A recent [OECD review](#) recommended that Luxembourg develop a more coherent evaluation and assessment framework, while building capacities throughout the education system.

System evaluations aim to provide evidence on the state of the education system. Within the MENJE, the service for co-ordination of educational and technological research and innovation (*Service de Coordination de la Recherche et de l'Innovation pédagogiques et technologiques*, SCRIPT) plays a major role in providing evidence for policy making at system and school levels. The Statistics and Analysis Department collects, compiles and reports core data on the education system. Luxembourg administers national standardised assessments to all students in Years 3 and 9 to monitor and boost student achievement. A report on the national standardised test results is published every three years. Luxembourg also participates in PISA.

School evaluations consist mainly of internal school evaluations, with strong national requirements and support mechanisms in place to help carry them out. As a result of increased pedagogical autonomy granted to schools in legislation enacted since 2004, internal school evaluation now plays a prominent role in assessing the quality of schools. External school evaluation in Luxembourg mainly monitor compliance with regulations.

The Agency for the Development of Quality in Schools (*Agence pour le développement de la qualité scolaire*, ADQS) was set up within the MENJE to enhance school evaluation capacity and support schools in establishing and monitoring their development plans. Fundamental schools are required to develop school development plans every three years, taking student performance data into account. School inspectors must approve the school development plans and assist school pedagogical teams in their annual evaluation of school progress against the plans. Secondary schools are also encouraged to set goals and action plans. The focus of internal evaluation is on school improvement, so results are for school use only..

The education system places importance on the trustworthiness and proficiency of teachers. **Teacher appraisal** is not regulated by law, and there are no formal procedures or guidelines to evaluate the performance of permanent teachers, although a new system introduced in 2015 will require all civil servants to be appraised at least three times during their career. The only existing requirement for teachers relates to the 24-month probationary period for new entrants to the teaching profession. In fundamental schools, inspectors provide schools with feedback on the quality of teaching and learning. In secondary schools, school leaders are expected to hold regular interviews with teachers to establish common objectives and monitor achievements.

Teachers' professional judgement plays the major role in **student assessment** in Luxembourg, for both student progression and summative assessment purposes. Student assessment comprises mainly of student tests developed by teachers. In fundamental schools, student assessment also includes alternative approaches, such as portfolios and observations. Since 2009, the introduction of centrally defined minimum competency levels for student learning have aimed to introduce more qualitative assessments of student learning. Performance in German, French and mathematics is the major determinant of students' orientation at the end of fundamental education and during secondary education. According to PISA 2012, 94% of Luxembourg students were in schools whose principals reported that they use assessment data to make decisions about students' retention or promotion (above the OECD average of 77%) (Figure 6).

The challenge: Developing a comprehensive evaluation and assessment system and further building capacity in schools.

Recent policies and practices

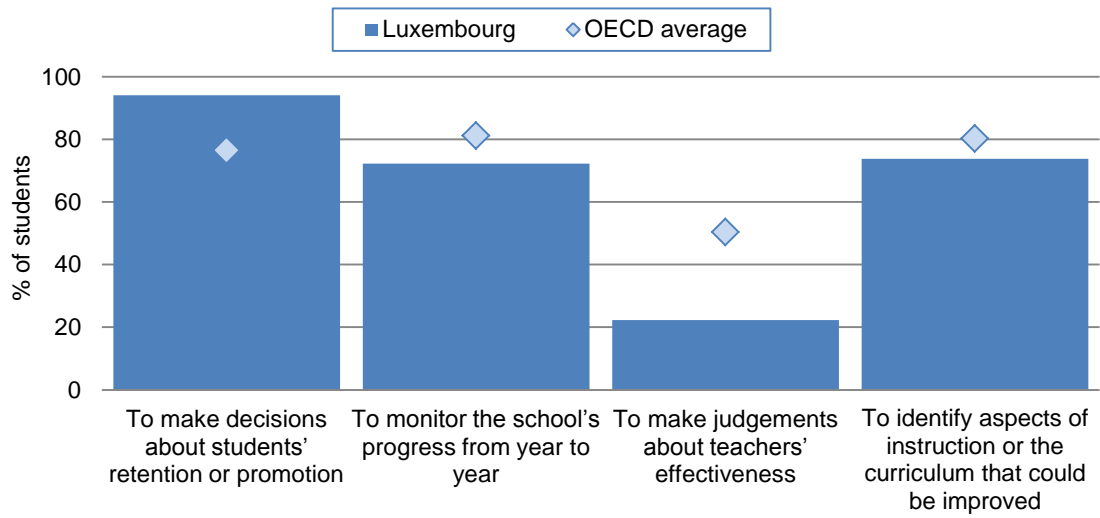
A new model of intermediary assessment reports (*bilans intermédiaires*) will be fully implemented in 2016 on the basis of teachers' feedback (see Spotlight 1).

The recently created [Luxembourg Centre for Educational Testing](#) (LUCET) aims to strengthen assessment and evidence-based policy and to advise the government on education reform.

An [education report](#), to be prepared every five years, will facilitate stocktaking of Luxembourg's education system and services as a basis for public discussion. The 2013/14 report was prepared by SCRIPT and the University of Luxembourg.



Figure 6. Percentage of students in schools where the principal reported assessments of students in national modal grade for 15-year-olds, PISA 2012



Source: OECD (2013), *PISA 2012 Results: What Makes Schools Successful (Volume IV): Resources, Policies and Practices*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264201156-en>.



GOVERNANCE: MOVING TOWARDS GREATER AUTONOMY

The **education system** in Luxembourg has some pedagogical measures that have been decentralised in recent years (see Evaluation and assessment). The Ministry of National Education, Childhood and Youth (*Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse*) is in charge of public education, including vocational education and training. It plans and administers all teaching in public schools, including managing the curriculum, diplomas, access to public schools and staff appointments. The Ministry of Higher Education and Research (*Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche*, MESR) sets the framework for higher education. Other bodies that shape education policy include:

- The Higher Council for National Education (*Conseil supérieur de l'Éducation nationale*) is the advisory body of the MENJE. It provides recommendations on all matters related to education reforms, teaching and learning.
- The National School Commission includes representatives of mayors, teachers, parents, district administrators, teachers' unions and the MENJE. It develops proposals for reforms, research and teacher training for the MENJE.
- The National Commissions for Programmes (*Commissions nationales des programmes*) comprise separate commissions for every subject taught in secondary schools. Each secondary school is represented on every commission. The National Commissions for each subject are responsible for proposing the school curriculum and teaching materials.
- SCRIPT (*Service de Coordination de la Recherche et de l'Innovation pédagogiques et technologiques*) is an entity under the authority of the MENJE. It implements pedagogical and technological innovation and research, ensures quality of education in schools and colleges and delivers continuous training for teachers and other educational staff of schools.
- A *College of Inspectors* groups all 21 inspectors, and meetings are held every fortnight to discuss and exchange on national reforms and policies relating to fundamental schools. Similarly, the College of Directors regularly brings together all directors of schools and deputy-directors of secondary schools at meetings to exchange and consult on national education policies.
- The *National Institute for the Development of Continuous Vocational Training* (*Institut national pour le développement de la formation professionnelle continue*, INFPC) is a state institution under the supervision of MENJE. Its main aims are the promotion of training by developing different information tools and working directly with the social partners of the VET sector.

Luxembourg **public schools** have less autonomy over resource allocation and curriculum and assessment than schools in other OECD countries. Lower secondary schools take fewer decisions than the OECD average (13%, compared to the OECD average of 41%). **Fundamental schools** are grouped in 21 local education authorities (*arrondissements*) and managed jointly by the state and municipalities. Each education authority is led by an inspector. The law provides some autonomy to fundamental schools to organise learning. **Public secondary schools** are directly managed by the MENJE, which appoints school leaders and sets the legal and financial framework.

Tertiary education in Luxembourg comprises the University of Luxembourg (created in 2003) and several private and public research-oriented institutions that provide higher academic education, as well as technical secondary schools that deliver higher secondary technical education. The University of Luxembourg has high autonomy and is steered by several authorities and committees. The Board of Governors decides on the university's general policies and strategies and controls the university's activities. Executive decisions are taken by the rectorat supported by the Scientific Consultancy Commission and the University Council. Technical secondary schools are governed similarly to secondary schools.

The challenge: Balancing autonomy, accountability and support to better meet the needs of students and schools and to promote student achievement.

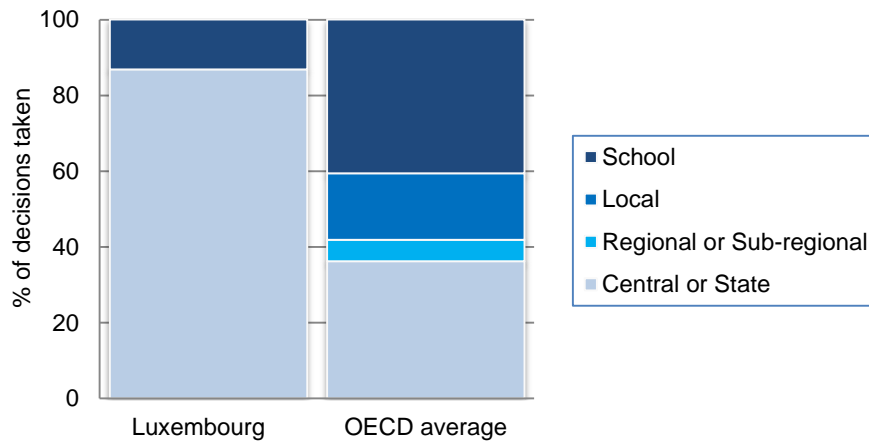
Recent policies and practices

As part of the Reform of Fundamental Education (2009), school administration is ensured by a partnership of municipal authorities, teaching staff and parents (see Spotlight 3). The reform introduced standards on providing information to parents on their children's progress, and parent representatives are consulted on decisions concerning school organisation.

The departments in charge of Childhood and Youth (formerly part of the Ministry of Family Affairs and Integration) were transferred to the MENJE in 2014 to improve coherence between school education and non-formal education (including early childhood education and care).



Figure 7. Percentage of decisions taken in public lower secondary schools at each level of government, 2011



Source: OECD (2012), *Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2012-en>.

Spotlight 3. Promoting partnerships to improve school education

As part of the Reform of Fundamental Education (2009), which focuses mainly on pre-primary and primary education, school administration is ensured by a partnership of municipal authorities, teaching staff and parents. Under this reform, each school sets up its own School Committee, composed of elected members from its teaching staff. These committees issue proposals on school organisation and budget, prepare the school development plan and determine the needs for teacher training. Parents' representatives meet with the School Committee at least three times a year for discussions or organise joint events.

The Municipal Council decides on organisational issues and provides funds for school infrastructure. The Municipal School Commission is the platform for co-operation among schools, parents and communal authorities. It gives its opinion on school development plans and budget proposals, monitors implementation of success plans and organises extra-curricular activities. The National School Commission is the platform for co-operation at the national level. Schools are supervised by inspectors appointed by the MENJE. The inspectors co-ordinate activities of the School Committees' presidents, run the Commission for School Inclusion and issue instructions to the multi-professional teams.



FUNDING: INVESTING IN THE EARLY STAGES OF EDUCATION

Luxembourg's **investment in educational institutions** from pre-primary to tertiary education is below the OECD average (4.4% of GDP, compared to the OECD average of 5.9% of GDP) (Figure 8).

Annual expenditure per student at the primary and secondary levels in 2012, however, was well above the OECD average. Expenditure per student in primary education was more than twice the OECD average (USD 20 020, compared to the OECD average of USD 8 247). Similarly, at the secondary level, expenditure per student in Luxembourg was twice that of other OECD countries (USD 20 247 at lower secondary, compared to the OECD average of USD 9 627 and USD 20 962 at upper secondary level, compared to the OECD average of USD 9 876). Luxembourg has, by far, the highest salary cost of teachers per student among OECD countries from primary to upper secondary education. For example, at primary level, the salary cost per student in equivalent USD (converted using PPP for private consumption) is USD 11 674 (about four times the OECD average of USD 2 677). Therefore high teacher salaries, coupled with lower student ratios due to demography, explain the high levels of investment per student.

The **source of funding** for schools varies depending on the type of school. Fundamental public schools are funded by the MENJE and local education authorities. The MENJE covers staff costs, based on a quota of teaching lessons allocated to each school, taking into account socio-economic indicators. Services going beyond that quota, infrastructure and school equipment are funded by local authorities. Secondary schools are directly funded by the state and, as secondary schools are separately managed state bodies (*services de l'État à gestion séparée*), they manage their financial resources autonomously. Funds are allocated to secondary schools according to a budget plan compiled by the school leader. The allocation of funds also has to be approved by the school's Education Council. Parents receive an allowance until children reach age 18, based on the number of children in the family and their age. The MENJE finances building costs and teachers in technical secondary schools (which also provide higher education VET), as well as all costs related to school education and initial VET. The MESR finances all other expenses related to short-cycle higher education programmes. Non-public schools may also apply for state subsidies. The amount they can apply for varies depending on whether the school follows the national curriculum. International schools do not receive any state subsidies.

The **University of Luxembourg** does not charge tuition fees and is mainly funded by the state. The amount of state funding the university receives depends on the four-year plan established by the university. Funds allocated comprise basic financing, financing based on objectives and financing based on innovation. The university also generates income from other sources, such as education and research activities or donations.

As there was no university in Luxembourg until 2003, **financial support for study abroad** has been important. State financial support is available for all higher education students regardless of their age, performance, socio-economic background or the country in which they are pursuing their studies, for the normal duration of a study programme plus one year. Actual costs incurred by students and their socio-economic background are considered in calculating the amount of the grant. Children of cross-border workers are eligible for financial support, and specific aid is also available based on social criteria. In 2014/15, the basic grant per academic year amounted to EUR 2 000 with no conditions. Students attending higher education in another country and having accommodation expenses obtain an addition EUR 2 000 per academic year. Students may also obtain grants of up to EUR 3 000 based on social criteria, family allowances of up to EUR 500 and registration fees. Each student is also awarded a loan of EUR 6 500. The total financial support that students can receive per academic year is EUR 17 000.

The challenge: Ensuring that sufficient funding is targeted to socio-economically disadvantaged schools.

Recent policies and practices

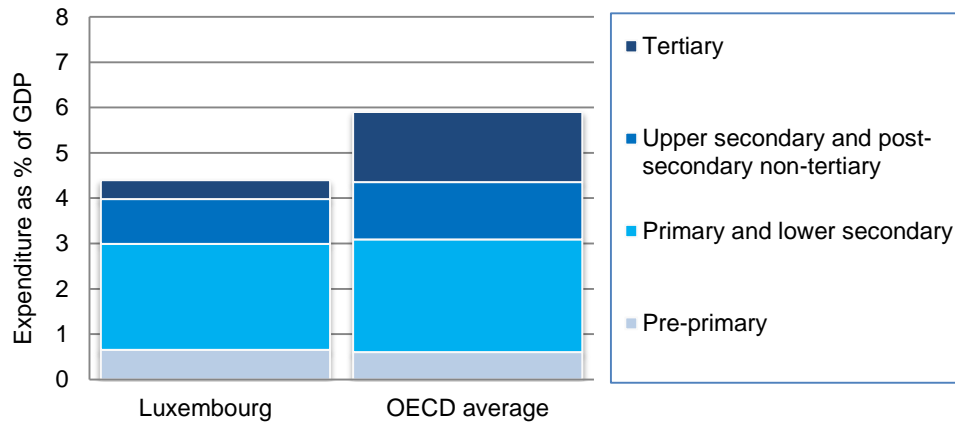
The Reform of Fundamental Education (2009) introduced a new approach to allocating funding to municipalities. The new allocation is designed to favour disadvantaged students.

Financing rules on separately managed state bodies (*services de l'État à gestion séparée*) apply to secondary schools. Their resources comprise a state subsidy, the balance carried over from the previous year, income from services provided or other operating revenues and donations and legacies (*Loi portant sur l'organisation des lycées et lycées techniques*, 2004).

The [reform of the financial aid system for students](#) (*Loi concernant l'aide financière de l'Etat pour études supérieures*, 2014) lowered the annual sum paid to all students regardless of background, with topped up funding subject to eligibility criteria and means-testing. The revised system focuses more on students with disadvantaged backgrounds.



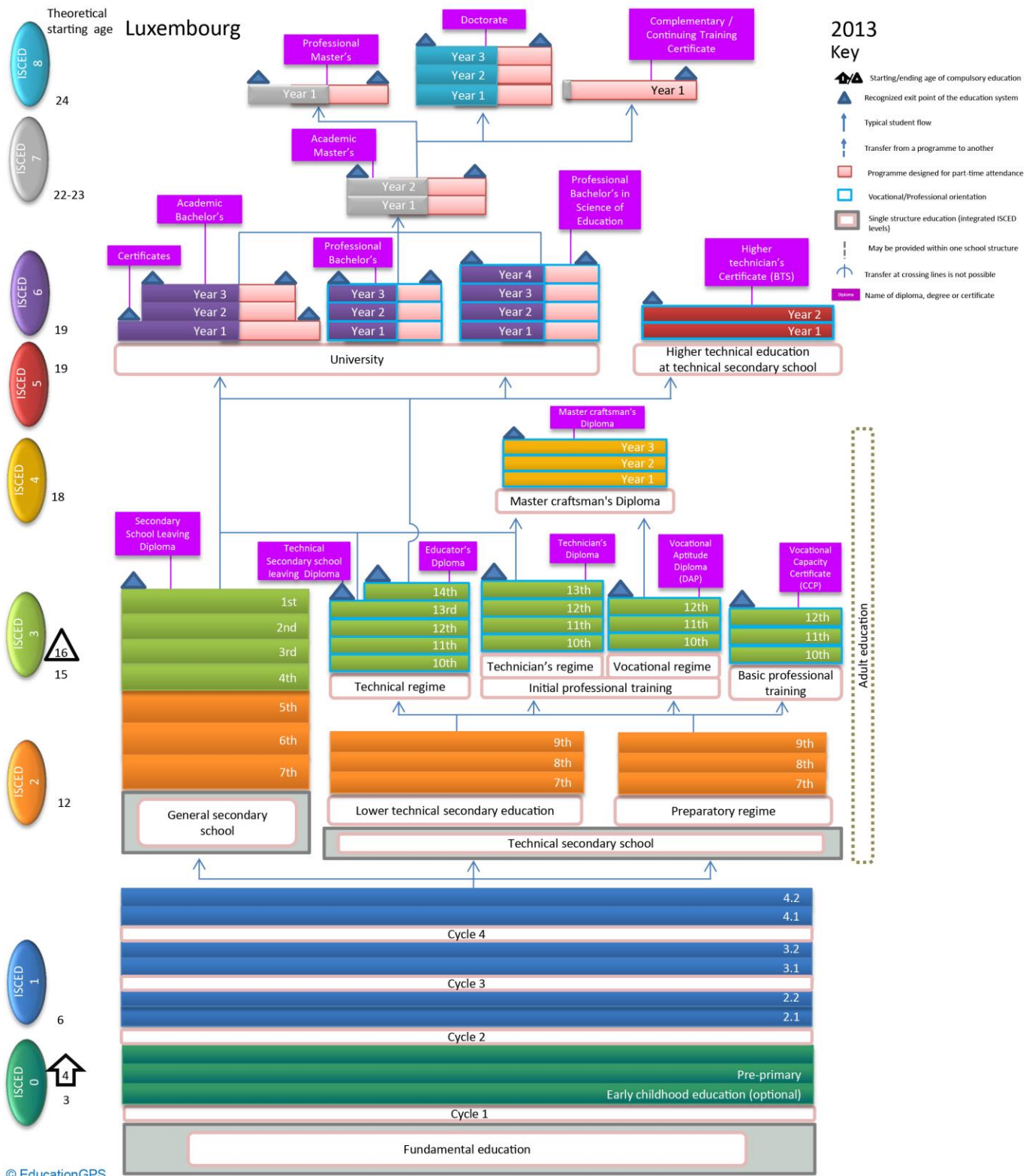
Figure 8. Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP, by level of education, 2012



Source: OECD (2015), *Education at a Glance 2015: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2015-en>.



ANNEX A: STRUCTURE OF LUXEMBOURG'S EDUCATION SYSTEM



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Source: OECD (2012-13), "Luxembourg: Overview of the education system", *OECD Education GPS*, http://gpseducation.oecd.org/Content/MapOfEducationSystem/LUX/LUX_2011_EN.pdf.



ANNEX B: STATISTICS

#	List of key indicators	Luxembourg	Average or total	Min OECD	Max OECD
Background information					
<i>Political context</i>					
1	Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP, 2012 (EAG 2015)	3.7%	4.8%	3.5%	7.7%
<i>Economy</i>					
2	GDP per capita, 2012, in equivalent USD converted using PPPs (EAG 2015)	91 754	n/a	16 767	91 754
3	GDP growth 2013 (OECD National Accounts)	4.3%	1.2%	-3.2%	4.3%
<i>Society</i>					
4	Population density, inhab/km ² , 2014 (OECD Statistics)	212.6	142	3.1	507
5	Population aged less than 15 as a percentage of total population, 2010 (OECD Factbook 2014)	17.7%	18.6%	13.1%	29.6%
6	Foreign-born population as a percentage of total population, 2013 or latest available year (OECD Factbook 2015)	43.7%	n/a	0.3%	43.7%
Education outcomes					
7	Mean performance in mathematics (PISA 2012)	490	494	413	554
8	Annualised change in mathematics performance across PISA assessments (PISA 2012) ^{4,5}	-0.3	-0.3	-3.3	4.2
9	Annualised change in reading performance across PISA assessments (PISA 2012) ^{4,5}	0.7	0.3	-2.8	4.1
10	Annualised change in science performance across PISA assessments (PISA 2012) ^{4,5}	0.9	0.5	-3.1	6.4
11	Enrolment rates of 3-4 year-olds in early childhood education and primary education as a percentage of the population of the same age group, 2013 (EAG 2015)	85%	81%	22%	100%
12	% of 25-64 year-olds whose highest level of attainment is lower secondary education, 2014 (EAG 2015)	11%	15%	0.4%	33%
13	% of 25-34 year-olds whose highest level of attainment is at least upper secondary education, 2014 (EAG 2015)	87%	83%	46%	98%
14	% of 25-34 year-olds whose highest level of attainment is tertiary education, 2014 (EAG 2015)	53%	41%	24%	68%
15	% of 25-64 year-olds whose highest level of attainment is vocational upper-secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education, 2014 (EAG 2015)	8%	26%	6%	67%
Unemployment rates of 25-34 year-olds by educational attainment, 2014 (EAG 2015)					
16	Below upper secondary	14.2%	19.1%	4.7%	55.9%
	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	4.2%	10.2%	3.7%	36%
	Tertiary education	5.4%	7.5%	2.9%	32.5%
Students: Raising outcomes					
<i>Policy lever 1: Equity and quality</i>					
17	First age of selection in the education system (PISA 2012)	13	14	10	16
Students performing at the highest or lowest levels in mathematics (%), (PISA 2012)					
18	Students performing below Level 2	24.3%	23%	9.1%	54.7%
	Students performing at Level 5 or above	11.2%	12.6%	0.6%	30.9%
Variance in mathematics performance between schools and within schools as a percentage of the OECD average variance in mathematics performance (PISA 2012)					
19	Between-schools percentage of variance	53%	37%	6%	65%
	Within-schools percentage of variance	77%	63%	34%	90%
20	% of students reporting that they have repeated at least a grade in primary, lower secondary or upper secondary schools (PISA 2012)	34.5%	12.4%	0.0%	36.1%



#	List of key indicators	Luxembourg	Average or total	Min OECD	Max OECD
21	Percentage of variance in mathematics performance in PISA test explained by ESCS (PISA 2012) ⁴	18.3%	14.8%	7.4%	24.6%
22	Score difference in mathematics performance in PISA between non-immigrant and immigrant students AFTER adjusting for socio-economic status (PISA 2012) ⁴	10	21	-29	66
23	Score differences between boys and girls in mathematics (PISA 2012) ⁴	25	11	-6	25
<i>Policy lever 2: Preparing students for the future</i>					
Adjusted mean proficiency in literacy among adults on a scale of 500 (Survey of Adult Skills, 2012)					
24	Among 16-65 year-olds (adjusted)	m	270.7	249.4	293.6
	Among 16-24 year-olds (adjusted)	m	278.0	260.0	297.0
Upper secondary graduation rates in % by programme of orientation, 2013 (EAG 2015)					
25	General programmes	31%	52%	19%	82%
	Pre-vocational/ vocational programmes	43%	46%	4%	93%
First-time graduation rates, by tertiary ISCED level, 2013 (EAG 2015)					
26	Short tertiary (2-3 years), ISCED 5	2%	11%	0%	28%
	Bachelor's or equivalent, ISCED 6	9%	36%	9%	61%
	Master's or equivalent, ISCED 7	5%	17%	3%	40%
	Doctorate or equivalent, ISCED 8	0.8%	1.7%	0.2%	3.6%
27	% of 15-29 year-olds not in education, employment or training, 2012 (EAG 2015)	8%	16%	7%	32%
Institutions: Improving schools					
<i>Policy lever 3: School improvement</i>					
28	Mean index of teacher-student relations based on students' reports (PISA 2012)	-0.05	0.00	-0.42	0.47
29	Mean index of disciplinary climate based on students' reports (PISA 2012)	-0.02	0.00	-0.33	0.67
% of teachers above the age of 50 by education level, 2013 (EAG 2015)					
30	Primary education	19%	31%	16%	57%
	Lower secondary education	17%	34%	17%	63%
	Upper secondary education	30%	38%	26%	73%
Number of teaching hours per year in public institutions by education level, 2013 (EAG 2015)					
31	Primary education	810	772	569	1 129
	Lower secondary education, general programmes	739	694	415	1 129
	Upper secondary education, general programmes	739	643	369	1 129
Ratio of actual teachers' salaries to earnings for full-time, full-year adult workers similarly educated, 2013 (EAG 2015)					
32	Primary education	1.09	0.78	0.52	0.99
	Lower secondary education, general programmes	1.24	0.80	0.52	1.01
	Upper secondary education, general programmes	1.24	0.82	0.48	1.20
33	Growth rate of teachers' salaries between 2005 and 2013 in lower secondary education, 2013 (EAG 2015)	15%	2%	-32%	31%
34	% of lower secondary education teachers who report a "moderate" or "large" positive change on their knowledge and understanding of their main subject field(s) after they received feedback on their work at their school (TALIS 2013)	NP	53.5%	26.7%	86.2%



#	List of key indicators	Luxembourg	Average or total	Min OECD	Max OECD
<i>Policy lever 4: Evaluation and assessment to improve student outcomes</i>					
35	Percentage of lower secondary education principals who report that they use student performance and student evaluation results (including national/international assessments) to develop the school's educational goals and programmes (TALIS 2013)	NP	88.8%	58.5%	99.5%
% of students whose school principals reported that assessments are used for the following purposes (PISA 2012)					
36	To make decisions about students' retention or promotion	94%	77%	1%	98%
	To monitor the school's progress from year to year	72%	81%	48%	100%
	To make judgements about teachers' effectiveness	22%	50%	14%	88%
	To identify aspects of instruction or the curriculum that could be improved	74%	80%	49%	99%
% of lower secondary education teachers reporting appraisal/feedback from the school principal on their work with this frequency (TALIS 2013)					
37	Once every two years or less	NP	33.9%	3.2%	88.8%
	Once per year	NP	41.5%	9.5%	82.1%
	Twice or more per year	NP	24.7%	1.0%	49.6%
Systems: Organising the system					
<i>Policy lever 5: Governance</i>					
% of decisions taken at each level of government in public lower secondary education, 2011 (EAG 2012)					
38	Central or state government	87%	36%	0%	87%
	Regional or sub-regional government	m	6%	0%	36%
	Local government	m	17%	0%	100%
	School government	13%	41%	5%	86%
<i>Policy lever 6: Funding</i>					
Annual expenditure per student by educational institutions, for all services, in equivalent USD converted using PPPs for GDP, 2012 (EAG 2015)					
39	Pre-primary education	19 719	8 008	3 416	19 719
	Primary education	20 020	8 247	2 577	20 020
	Secondary education	20 617	9 518	2 904	20 617
	Tertiary education	32 876	15 028	7 779	32 876
Relative proportions of public and private expenditure on educational institutions, 2012 (EAG 2015)					
40	Public sources	97%	83%	60%	98%
	All private sources	3%	17%	2%	40%
	Index of change in expenditure on educational institutions, public sources, (constant prices, 2005=100)	96	114	75	165
	Index of change in expenditure on educational institutions, all private sources, (constant prices, 2005=100)	m	137	76	538
Notes					
1. The average, total, minimums and maximums refer to OECD countries except in TALIS and the Survey of Adult Skills, where they refer to participating countries.					
2. "m": included when data is not available.					
3. "NP": included if the country is not participating in the study.					
4. Statistically significant values of the indicator are shown in bold (PISA 2012 only)					
5. The annualised change is the average annual change in PISA score points from a country's/economy's earliest participation in PISA to PISA 2012. It is calculated taking into account all of a country's/economy's participation in PISA. See www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results-overview.pdf .					
6. "n/a": included when the category is not applicable.					



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How to cite this document:
OECD (2016), Education Policy Outlook: Luxembourg, available at: www.oecd.org/education/policyoutlook.htm



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