

Educational attainment level and transition from education to work (based on EU-LFS)

Reference Metadata in Euro SDMX
Metadata Structure (ESMS)
Compiling agency: Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union

Eurostat metadata

Reference metadata

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1. Contact

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1.1. Contact organisation

Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union

1.2. Contact organisation unit	F3: Labour market and lifelong learning
1.5. Contact mail address	2920 Luxembourg LUXEMBOURG

2. Metadata update Top	
2.1. Metadata last certified	21/05/2024
2.2. Metadata last posted	21/05/2024
2.3. Metadata last update	21/05/2024

3. Statistical presentation Top	
3.1. Data description	
<p>The folder 'population by educational attainment level (edat1)' presents data on the highest level of education successfully completed by the individuals of a given population.</p> <p>The folder 'transition from education to work (edatt)' covers data on young people neither in employment nor in education and training – NEET, early leavers from education and training and the labour status of young people by years since completion of highest level of education.</p> <p>The data shown are calculated as annual averages of quarterly EU Labour Force Survey data (EU-LFS).</p> <p>Up to the reference year 2008, the data source (EU-LFS) is, where necessary, adjusted and enriched in various ways, in accordance with the specificities of an indicator, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • correction of the main breaks in the LFS series, • estimation of the missing values, i.e. in case of missing quarters, annual results and EU aggregates are estimated using adjusted quarterly national labour force survey data or interpolations of the EU-LFS data with reference to the available quarter(s). <p>Details on the adjustments are available in CIRCABC.</p> <p>The adjustments are applied in the following online tables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population by educational attainment level (edat1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Population by educational attainment level, sex and age (%) - main indicators (edat_ifse_03) - Population by educational attainment level, sex and NUTS 2 regions (%) (edat_ifse_04) <p><i>(Other tables shown in the folder 'population by educational attainment level (edat1)' are not adjusted and therefore the results in these tables might differ).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people by educational and labour status (incl. neither in employment nor in education and training - NEET) (edatt0) – all tables • Early leavers from education and training (edatt1) – all tables • Labour status of young people by years since completion of highest level of education (edatt2) – all tables <p>LFS ad-hoc module data available in the folder 'transition from education to work (edatt)' are not adjusted.</p> <p>The folder 'young people by educational and labour status (incl. neither in employment nor in education and training - NEET) (edatt0)' also presents one table with quarterly NEET data (lfsi_neet_q). Deviating from the NEET indicator calculation as provided in 3.4, the denominator in this table with quarterly data is the total population of the same</p>	

age group and sex which explains differences in results. For further information, see the ESMS on '[LFS main indicators](#)'.

3.2. Classification system

The classification of educational activities is based on the [International Standard Classification of Education \(ISCED\)](#). Data until 2013 are classified according to [ISCED 1997](#) and data as from 2014 according to [ISCED 2011](#) (coding of educational attainment).

In the online database, data on educational attainment are in general presented for three aggregates as follows:

- Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education: this aggregate refers to levels 0, 1 and 2 of the ISCED 2011 (online code ED0-2). Data up to 2013 refer to ISCED 1997 levels 0, 1 and 2 but also include level 3C short (educational attainment from ISCED level 3 programmes of less than two years).
- Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education: this aggregate corresponds to ISCED 2011 levels 3 and 4 (online code ED3_4). ISCED 2011 level 3 programmes of partial level completion are considered within ISCED level 3. Data up to 2013 refer to ISCED 1997 levels 3C long, 3A, 3B and 4.
- Tertiary education: this aggregate covers ISCED 2011 levels 5, 6, 7 and 8 (short-cycle tertiary education, bachelor's or equivalent level, master's or equivalent level, doctoral or equivalent level, online code ED5-8 'tertiary education'). Data up to 2013 refer to ISCED 1997 levels 5 and 6.

The aggregate 'Upper secondary, post-secondary non-tertiary and tertiary education (levels 3-8)' is additionally available in several tables.

For the aggregate 'upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education' an additional breakdown by programme orientation (general, vocational) is available for the age group 15-34 as from 2014, and for all ages as from 2021 (online codes ED3_4GEN, ED3_4VOC).

For further information on educational attainment see [here](#).

ISCED 2011 categories for educational attainment at 1-digit level:

- Level 0 – Less than primary education
- Level 1 – Primary education
- Level 2 – Lower secondary education
- Level 3 – Upper secondary education
- Level 4 – Post-secondary non-tertiary education
- Level 5 – Short-cycle tertiary education
- Level 6 – Bachelor's or equivalent level
- Level 7 – Master's or equivalent level
- Level 8 – Doctoral or equivalent level

ISCED 1997 categories at 1-digit level:

- Level 0 – Pre-primary education
- Level 1 – Primary education or first stage of basic education
- Level 2 – Lower secondary or second stage of basic education
- Level 3 – (Upper) secondary education
- Level 4 – Post-secondary non-tertiary education
- Level 5 – First stage of tertiary education
- Level 6 – Second stage of tertiary education

For other classifications used in the EU-LFS, please refer to the ESMS on '[Employment and unemployment \(LFS\)](#)'.

3.3. Coverage - sector

As a general rule the EU-LFS covers all economic sectors.

3.4. Statistical concepts and definitions

The **educational attainment level** of an individual is the highest ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education) level successfully completed, the successful completion of an education programme being validated by a recognised qualification, i.e. a qualification officially recognised by the relevant national education authorities or recognised as equivalent to another qualification of formal education. In countries where education programmes, in particular those belonging to ISCED levels 1 and 2, do not lead to a qualification the criterion of full attendance of the programme and normally gaining access to a higher level of education may have to be used instead. When determining the highest level, both general and vocational education should be taken into consideration. The ISCED definition of education includes training. Data on educational attainment level exclude persons who did not answer to the question 'highest level of education or training successfully completed'.

Exposure of VET graduates (vocational education and training) **to work-based learning**: the indicator on **recent graduates from VET benefitting from exposure to work-based learning during their vocational education and training** is defined as follows:

- Denominator: people aged 20-34 with an upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education educational attainment of vocational orientation (ED3_4VOC) who had successfully completed their highest level of education in the last three years, regardless whether they are currently in any formal or non-formal education and training (i.e. in the last 4 weeks);
- Numerator: those of the denominator who indicated a work experience while studying of at least one month.

The indicator is based on data available in the table on population aged 20-34 with work experience while studying by sex, age, educational attainment level and years since completion of highest level of education (edat_lfs_9919). **Work experience while studying** refers to work experiences at a workplace in a market or non-market unit (i.e. in a company, government institution or non-profit organisation) that were part of the curriculum of the formal programme that led to the highest level of education successfully completed. It is not relevant if the work experience was a mandatory or voluntary part of the curriculum, but the work experience must have taken place at a workplace; purely school-based work experiences are not considered.

Early leavers from education and training denotes the percentage of the population aged 18 to 24 having attained at most lower secondary education and not being involved in further education or training. The numerator of the indicator refers to persons aged 18 to 24 who meet the following two conditions: (a) the highest level of education or training they have completed is ISCED 2011 level 0, 1 or 2 (ISCED 1997: 0, 1, 2 or 3C short) and (b) they have not received any education or training (i.e. neither formal nor non-formal) in the four weeks preceding the survey. The denominator in the total population consists of the same age group, excluding the respondents who have not answered the questions 'highest level of education or training successfully completed' and 'participation in education and training'.

The indicator on **young people neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET)** corresponds to the percentage of the population of a given age group and sex who is not employed and not involved in further education or training. The numerator of the indicator refers to persons who meet the following two conditions: (a) they are not employed (i.e. unemployed or inactive according to the International Labour Organisation definition) and (b) they have not received any education or training (i.e. neither formal nor non-formal) in the four weeks preceding the survey. The denominator in the total population consists of the same age group and sex, excluding the respondents who have not answered the question 'participation in regular (formal) education and training'. Due to no answers to the variable 'participation in education and training' or 'educational attainment level', certain breakdowns of NEET rates may not exactly sum up to the overall NEET rate for a given age group and sex.

The indicator **employment rates of recent graduates** is defined as the percentage of the population aged 20-34 with at least upper secondary education, who were employed (ILO definition), not in further education or training (i.e. neither formal nor non-formal) during the last four weeks preceding the survey and who successfully completed their highest educational attainment 1, 2 or 3 years before the survey. The indicator is based on data available in the table on employment rates by year since completing the highest level of education (edat_lfse_24).

Education/training received means participation in formal and non-formal education and training. Formal education is defined by ISCED as *'education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned through public organisations and recognised private bodies, and – in their totality – constitute the formal education system of a country. Formal education programmes are thus recognised as such by the relevant national education or equivalent authorities, e.g. any other institution in cooperation with the national or sub-national education authorities.'* Non-formal education and training is defined as any institutionalised, intentional and organised/planned learning activities outside the formal education system. According to the classification of learning activities (CLA 2016), non-formal education and training comprises courses, seminars and workshops, private lessons or instructions and guided on-the-job training. However, non-formal education as measured in the EU-LFS excludes guided on-the-job training. The information collected covers both job-related (professional) and non-job-related (personal, social, 'leisure') education and training activities.

For further information on concepts and definitions used in the EU-LFS please consult the [EU-LFS \(Statistics Explained\) - Methodology](#).

3.5. Statistical unit

Persons.

3.6. Statistical population

The EU-LFS results cover the total population usually residing in Member States, except for persons living in collective or institutional households.

For further information, please refer to the ESMS on '[Employment and unemployment \(LFS\)](#)'.

3.7. Reference area

Please refer to the ESMS on '[Employment and unemployment \(LFS\)](#)'.

3.8. Coverage - Time

Please refer to the ESMS on '[Employment and unemployment \(LFS\)](#)'.

3.9. Base period

Not applicable.

4. Unit of measure [Top](#)

Number of persons (thousands), percentages.

5. Reference Period [Top](#)

Please refer to the ESMS on '[Employment and unemployment \(LFS\)](#)'.

6. Institutional Mandate [Top](#)

6.1. Institutional Mandate - legal acts and other agreements

Please refer to the ESMS on '[Employment and unemployment \(LFS\)](#)'.

6.2. Institutional Mandate - data sharing

Not applicable.

7. Confidentiality [Top](#)

7.1. Confidentiality - policy

[Regulation \(EC\) No 223/2009 on European statistics](#) (recital 24 and Article 20(4)) of 11 March 2009 (OJ L 87, p. 164), stipulates the need to establish common principles and guidelines ensuring the confidentiality of data used for the production of European statistics and the access to those confidential data with due account for technical developments and the requirements of users in a democratic society.

7.2. Confidentiality - data treatment

Please refer to the ESMS on '[Employment and unemployment \(LFS\)](#)'.

8. Release policy [Top](#)

8.1. Release calendar

LFS educational data are up-dated four times a year:

- in April, along with the release of annual LFS data
- in June, at the date of the release of LFS quarter 1 data
- in September, at the date of the release of LFS quarter 2 data
- in December, at the date of the release of LFS quarter 3 data

8.2. Release calendar access

The LFS release calendar is available [here](#).

8.3. Release policy - user access

In line with the European Union legal framework and the [European Statistics Code of Practice](#) Eurostat disseminates European statistics on Eurostat's website (see item 10 - 'Accessibility and clarity') respecting professional independence and in an objective, professional and transparent manner in which all users are treated equitably. The detailed arrangements are governed by the [Eurostat protocol on impartial access to Eurostat data for users](#).

9. Frequency of dissemination [Top](#)

Annual.

10. Accessibility and clarity [Top](#)

10.1. Dissemination format - News release

Ad-hoc news releases when required.

10.2. Dissemination format - Publications

The results are published in Statistics explained, in main [Eurostat publications](#) and in several social publications of the European Commission.

10.3. Dissemination format - online database

Please consult free data on-line or refer to ESTAT-LFS-USER-SUPPORT@ec.europa.eu

10.4. Dissemination format - microdata access

EU-LFS anonymised microdata are available for research purposes. Please refer to access to microdata .
10.5. Dissemination format - other
See http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat .
10.6. Documentation on methodology
For a detailed description of the methods and concepts used, as well as for other documents related to the EU-LFS, consult the EU-LFS webpage .
10.7. Quality management - documentation
For information on quality documentation please consult the EU-LFS webpage .

11. Quality management Top
11.1. Quality assurance
Please refer to the ESMS on ' Employment and unemployment (LFS) '.
11.2. Quality management - assessment
EU-LFS statistics have overall a high quality. For further information please refer to the ESMS on ' Employment and unemployment (LFS) '.

12. Relevance Top
12.1. Relevance - User Needs
'Early leavers from education and training', 'tertiary educational attainment' and 'exposure of VET graduates to work-based learning' are important policy indicators. For these indicators, the Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030) defines EU-level targets. Indicators on educational attainment and transition from education to work are also used to monitor the European pillar of social rights and the sustainable development goals .
12.2. Relevance - User Satisfaction
Please refer to the ESMS on ' Employment and unemployment (LFS) '.
12.3. Completeness
Please refer to the ESMS on ' Employment and unemployment (LFS) '.

13. Accuracy Top
13.1. Accuracy - overall
Please refer to the ESMS on ' Employment and unemployment (LFS) '.
13.2. Sampling error
Please refer to the ESMS on ' Employment and unemployment (LFS) '.
13.3. Non-sampling error
Please refer to the ESMS on ' Employment and unemployment (LFS) '.

14. Timeliness and punctuality Top
14.1. Timeliness
Annual averages are released approximately 4 months after the end of the reference

year.
14.2. Punctuality
Please refer to the ESMS on ' Employment and unemployment (LFS) '.

15. Coherence and comparability Top
15.1. Comparability - geographical
Please refer to the ESMS on ' Employment and unemployment (LFS) '.
15.2. Comparability - over time
<p>Introduction of the ISCED 2011 classification: data up to 2013 are based on ISCED 1997, as from 2014 ISCED 2011 is applied. Online tables present data for three aggregates (see 3.2 above), and at this level of aggregation data are directly comparable for all available countries except Austria and Estonia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level shift break in Austria is due to the reclassification of a programme spanning levels: the qualification acquired upon successful completion of higher technical and vocational colleges is allocated in ISCED 2011 to ISCED level 5; under ISCED 1997 the same qualification was reported on ISCED level 4, but earmarked as equivalent to tertiary education. • The level shift break in Estonia is due to the reclassification of a programme that can last between 6 months and 3.5 years: the qualification acquired upon successful completion of 'vocational courses based on basic education' is allocated in ISCED 2011 to ISCED level 2; under ISCED 1997 this was reported as level 3. <p>For further information on comparability of the EU-LFS in general please refer to the ESMS on 'Employment and unemployment (LFS)'.</p>
15.3. Coherence - cross domain
<p>Not applicable; there is no alternative source to calculate the same indicators with the same definitions.</p> <p>For further information on coherence of the EU-LFS in general please refer to the ESMS on 'Employment and unemployment (LFS)'.</p>
15.4. Coherence - internal
<p>The indicators 'early leavers from education and training', 'tertiary educational attainment', 'exposure of VET graduates to work-based learning' as well as other educational data presented in this domain are based on EU-LFS data. They are therefore coherent with the main LFS results on employment and unemployment.</p> <p>For further information please refer to the ESMS on 'Employment and unemployment (LFS)'.</p>

16. Cost and Burden Top
Not available.

17. Data revision Top
17.1. Data revision - policy
<p>The indicators 'early leavers from education and training', 'tertiary educational attainment', 'exposure of VET graduates to work-based learning' as well as other data presented in this domain are calculated four times a year (see 8.1. Release calendar). Each new release includes revisions of previous years submitted by countries.</p>

For the EU-LFS revision policy, please refer to the ESMS on '[Employment and unemployment \(LFS\)](#)'.

17.2. Data revision - practice

Please refer to the ESMS on '[Employment and unemployment \(LFS\)](#)'.

18. Statistical processing

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18.1. Source data

Please refer to the ESMS on '[Employment and unemployment \(LFS\)](#)'.

18.2. Frequency of data collection

Please refer to the ESMS on '[Employment and unemployment \(LFS\)](#)'.

18.3. Data collection

Please refer to the ESMS on '[Employment and unemployment \(LFS\)](#)'.

18.4. Data validation

Please refer to the ESMS on '[Employment and unemployment \(LFS\)](#)'.

18.5. Data compilation

EU and Euro area aggregates in absolute values are calculated by aggregating the estimated values (i.e. weighted population totals) of the respective Member States. For EU and Euro area aggregates expressed as rates or ratios, first EU and Euro area aggregates in absolute values are calculated for both numerator and denominator, and the rates or ratios based on those results.

For further information see [here](#).

18.6. Adjustment

In case of missing quarterly LFS data (before 2005), annual results are estimated by using interpolations of the EU Labour Force Survey data with reference to the available quarter(s). For further information see 3.1 above and [here](#).

19. Comment

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For further information about EU-LFS data on educational attainment and transition from education to work please consult [CIRCABC](#).

Related metadata

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[employ_esms](#) - Employment and unemployment (Labour force survey)

Annexes

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