

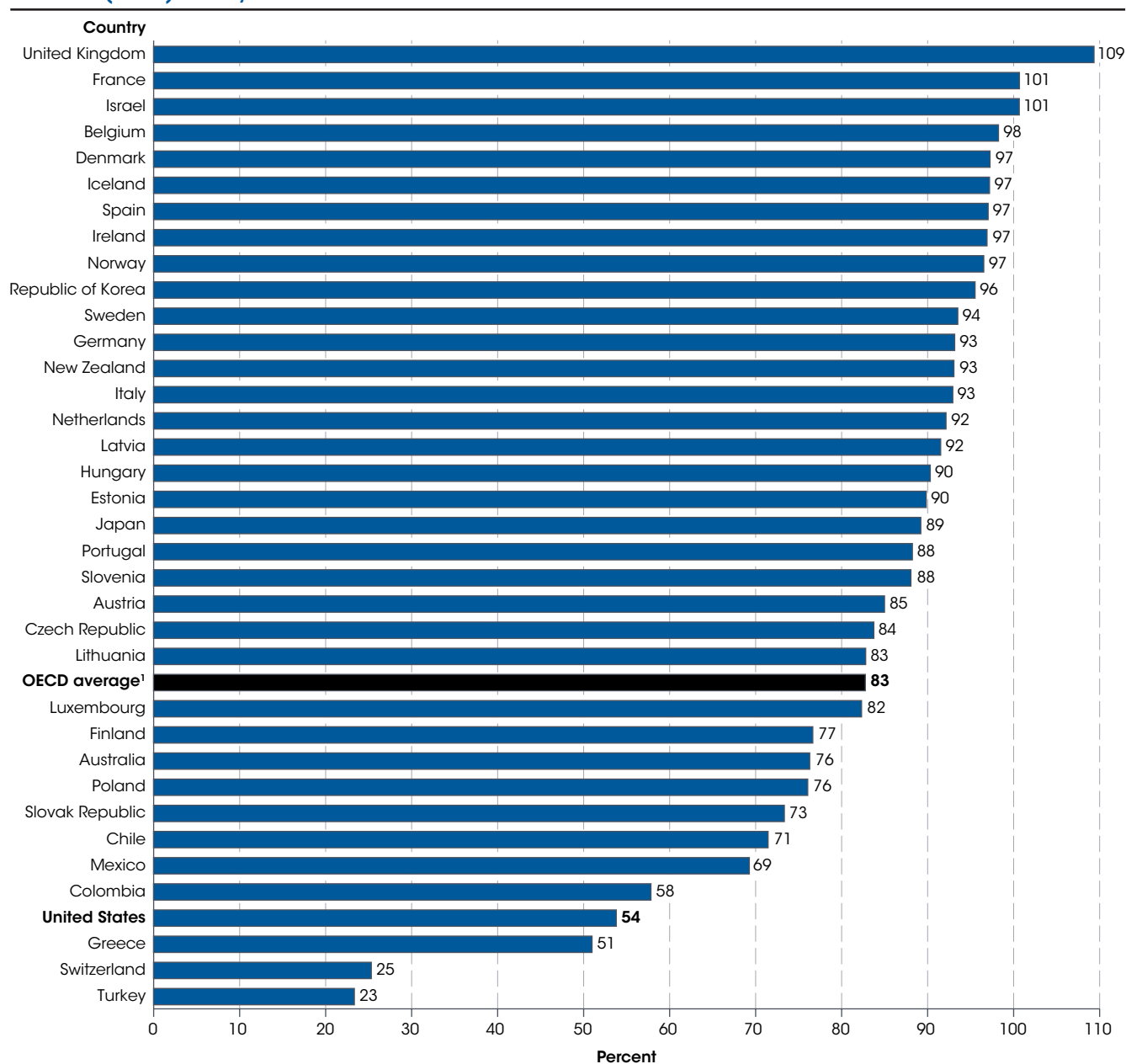
Enrollment Rates by Country

In contrast to the near universal enrollment of 5- to 14-year-olds in all OECD countries, enrollment rates among 15- to 19-year-olds varied across OECD countries in 2017, ranging from 59 percent in Colombia to 95 percent in Belgium. Some 83 percent of 15- to 19-year-olds in the United States were enrolled in school at any level, which was slightly lower than the average of OECD countries (84 percent).

This indicator uses data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to compare educational enrollment rates by age group across countries. The OECD is a group of 37 countries whose purpose is to promote trade and economic growth. The OECD also collects and publishes an array of data on its member countries.

Across OECD countries, students generally follow a similar pathway through the education system. Before beginning primary (elementary) education, children may be enrolled in an early childhood education program and/or a preprimary education program, such as kindergarten in the United States.¹ Across OECD countries, compulsory education typically begins at the start of primary

education.^{2,3} Upon completion of primary education, students progress through lower secondary (middle school) and upper secondary (high school) education. Compulsory education typically ends during or at the completion of upper secondary education—around age 17 or 18 in the United States—after which time students may continue into either postsecondary nontertiary education (short career/technical educational programs) or tertiary education (postsecondary degree programs). While the educational pathway is similar across OECD countries, enrollment rates differ across countries and across age groups. Also, if a country enrolls many residents of other countries, the country's total population in the specified age group can be smaller than the total number enrolled, resulting in enrollment estimates exceeding 100 percent.

Figure 1. Percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in school, by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) country: 2017

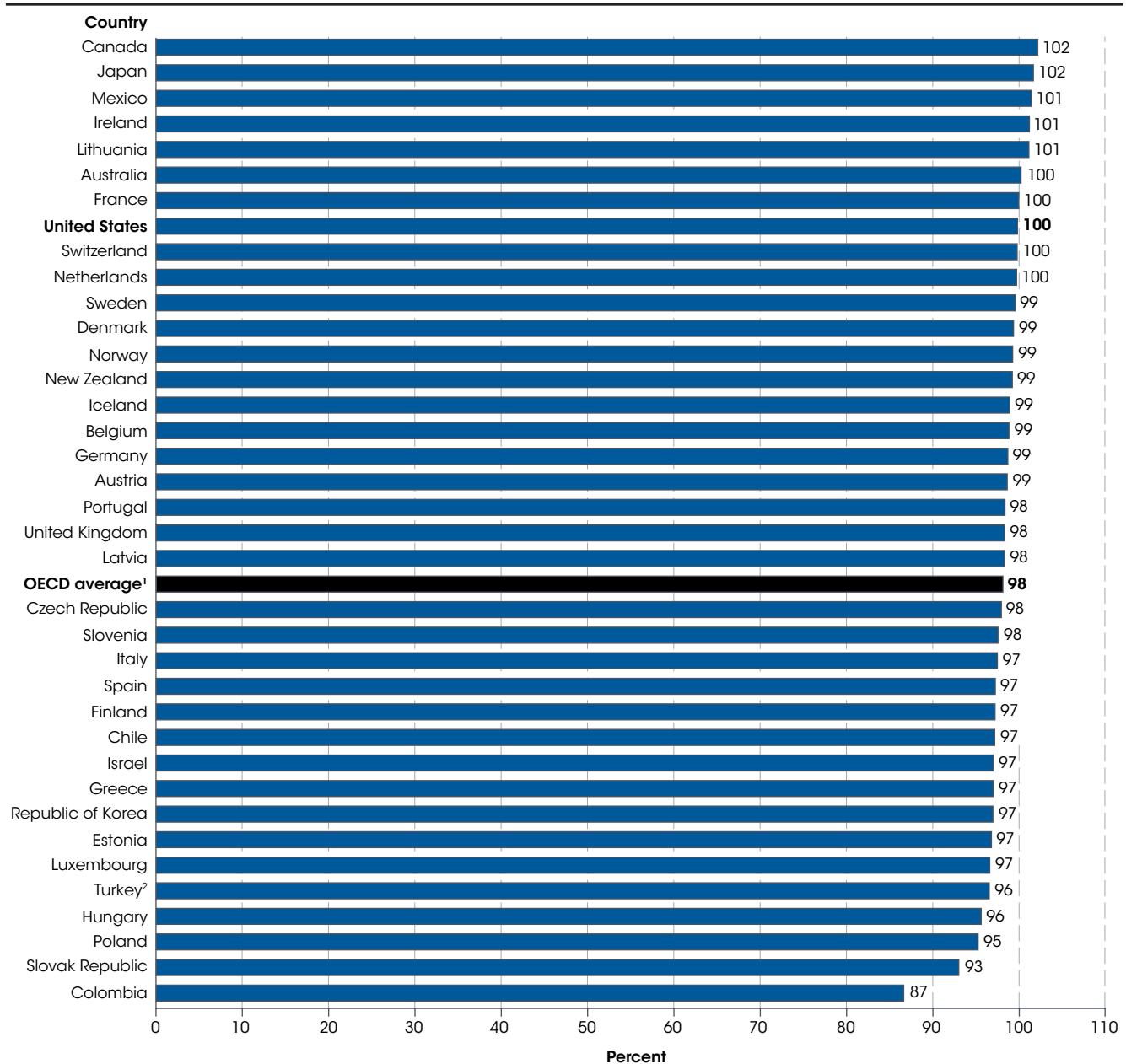
¹ Refers to the mean of the data values for all reporting Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, to which each country reporting data contributes equally. The average includes all current OECD countries for which a given year's data are available, even if they were not members of OECD in that year.

NOTE: Of the 37 OECD countries, 36 are included in this figure. Canada is excluded because the 2017 enrollment rate for 3- and 4-year-olds is not available. For each country, this figure shows the number of 3- and 4-year-olds who are enrolled in that country as a percentage of that country's total population of 3- and 4-year-olds. Enrollment rates may be underestimated for countries that are net exporters of students and may be overestimated for countries that are net importers. If a country enrolls many residents of other countries, the total number of students enrolled may be larger than the country's total population of 3- and 4-year-olds, resulting in enrollment estimates exceeding 100 percent. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Online Education Database, retrieved September 16, 2019, from <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx>. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 601.35.

In recent years, many OECD countries (although not the United States) have begun to offer universal legal entitlements to early childhood education programs to all children for at least one or two years before the start of compulsory schooling.⁴ As a result, 83 percent of 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled at any education level on average across OECD countries in 2017.^{5,6} In comparison, only 54 percent of 3- and 4-year-olds in the United States were enrolled. These data on the percentages of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in school exclude child care programs that are not primarily designed to provide educational experiences, such as day care programs. Among the 36 countries⁷ for which the OECD reported 2017 data, the percentage of

3- and 4-year-olds enrolled ranged from 23 percent in Turkey to more than 100 percent in Israel, France, and the United Kingdom. Twenty-four countries reported enrollment rates among 3- and 4-year-olds that were higher than the average of OECD countries, while 12 countries reported enrollment rates lower than the average of OECD countries. In 17 countries, at least 90 percent of 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled. In 2017, the United States had one of the lowest enrollment rates among 3- and 4-year-olds (54 percent) of any OECD country; only Greece, Switzerland, and Turkey reported lower enrollment rates (51, 25, and 23 percent, respectively).

Figure 2. Percentage of 5- to 14-year-olds enrolled in school, by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) country: 2017

¹ Refers to the mean of the data values for all reporting Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, to which each country reporting data contributes equally. The average includes all current OECD countries for which a given year's data are available, even if they were not members of OECD in that year.

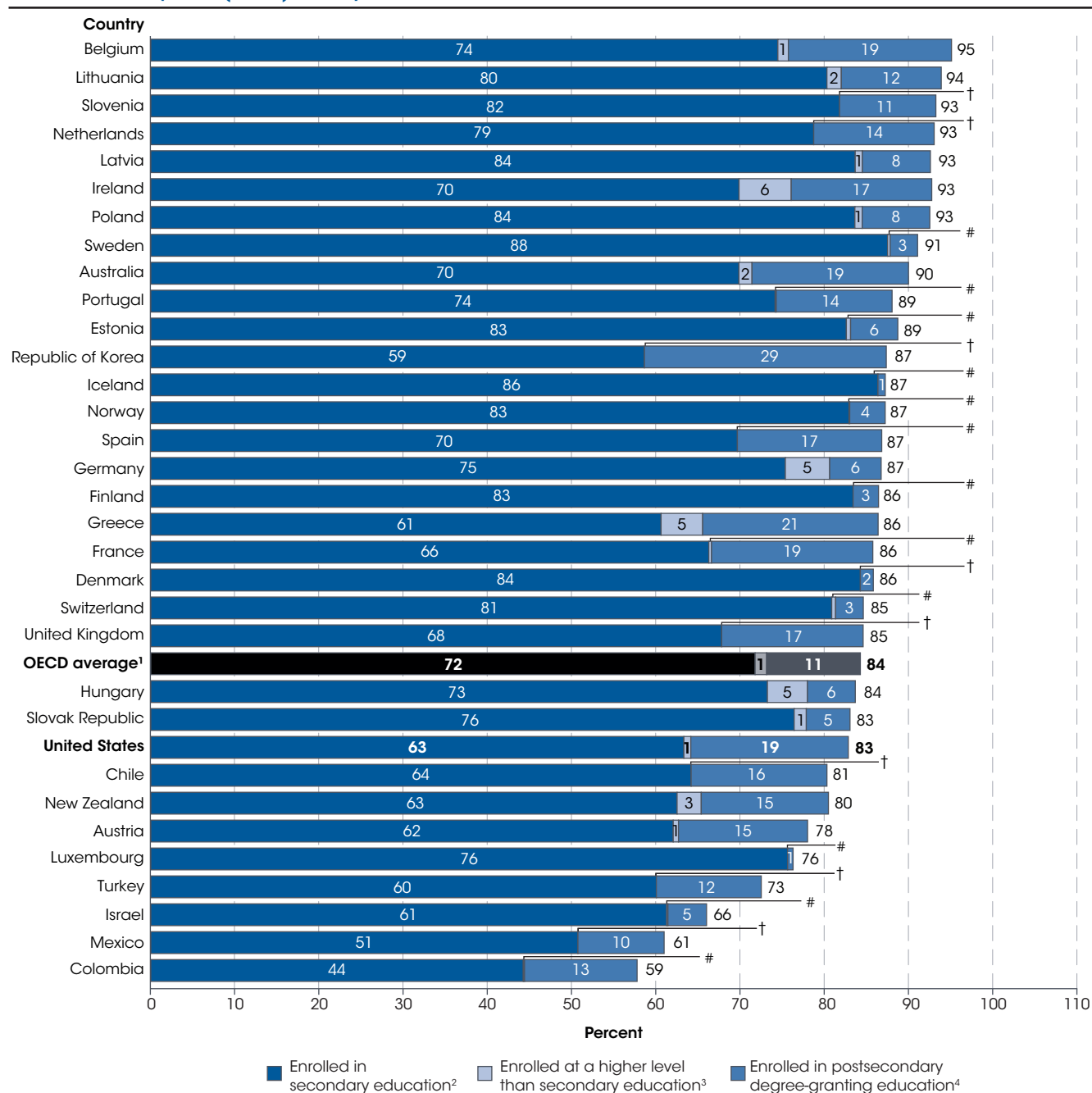
² Includes 15- to 17-year-olds enrolled in primary education.

NOTE: All 37 OECD countries are included in this figure. For each country, this figure shows the number of 5- to 14-year-olds who are enrolled in that country as a percentage of that country's total population of 5- to 14-year-olds. Enrollment rates may be underestimated for countries that are net exporters of students and may be overestimated for countries that are net importers. If a country enrolls many residents of other countries, the total number of students enrolled may be larger than the country's total population of 5- to 14-year-olds, resulting in enrollment estimates exceeding 100 percent. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Online Education Database, retrieved September 16, 2019, from <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx>. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 601.35.

Enrollment rates among 5- to 14-year-olds were similar across OECD countries.⁸ In 2017, the percentage of 5- to 14-year-olds enrolled in school varied by 16 percentage points across all 37 OECD countries—ranging from 87 percent in Colombia to 100 percent (or more) in Australia, Lithuania, Ireland, Mexico, Japan, and Canada.⁹ Nearly 100 percent (99.8 percent) of 5- to 14-year-olds

in the United States were enrolled in school at any level, compared with the average of OECD countries of 98 percent. Enrollment among 5- to 14-year-olds in OECD countries is nearly universal due to compulsory schooling laws that cover primary and lower secondary education programs in all OECD countries.

Figure 3. Percentage of 15- to 19-year-olds enrolled in school, by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) country and level of education: 2017

† Not applicable.

Rounds to zero.

¹ Refers to the mean of the data values for all reporting Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, to which each country reporting data contributes equally. The average includes all current OECD countries for which a given year's data are available, even if they were not members of OECD in that year.

² Refers to International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011 level 2 (lower secondary education) and level 3 (upper secondary education). Secondary education generally corresponds to grades 7–12 in the United States.

³ Refers to programs classified at ISCED 2011 level 4 (postsecondary nontertiary education). Postsecondary nontertiary education generally corresponds to postsecondary vocational programs below the associate's degree level in the United States.

⁴ Postsecondary degree-granting programs (tertiary education programs) correspond to all postsecondary programs leading to associate's and higher degrees in the United States. Includes ISCED 2011 level 5 (corresponding to U.S. programs at the associate's degree level), level 6 (bachelor's or equivalent level), level 7 (master's or equivalent level), and level 8 (doctoral or equivalent level). Enrollment rates may not be directly comparable across countries due to differing definitions of tertiary education and the age at which it begins.

NOTE: Of the 37 OECD countries, 33 are included in this figure. Japan, Canada, the Czech Republic, and Italy are excluded because 2017 enrollment rates for 15- to 19-year-olds in these countries are not available for all education levels presented in the figure. For each country, this figure shows the number of 15- to 19-year-olds who are enrolled in that country as a percentage of that country's total population of 15- to 19-year-olds. Enrollment rates may be underestimated for countries that are net exporters of students and may be overestimated for countries that are net importers. If a country enrolls many residents of other countries, the total number of students enrolled may be larger than the country's total population of 15- to 19-year-olds. Enrollment estimates can also be affected if population and enrollment data were collected at different times. In addition to secondary and postsecondary education, total enrollment in all levels of education may include enrollment in ISCED 2011 level 1 (primary or elementary education). Includes both full-time and part-time students. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Online Education Database, retrieved September 24, 2019, from <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx>. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 601.40.

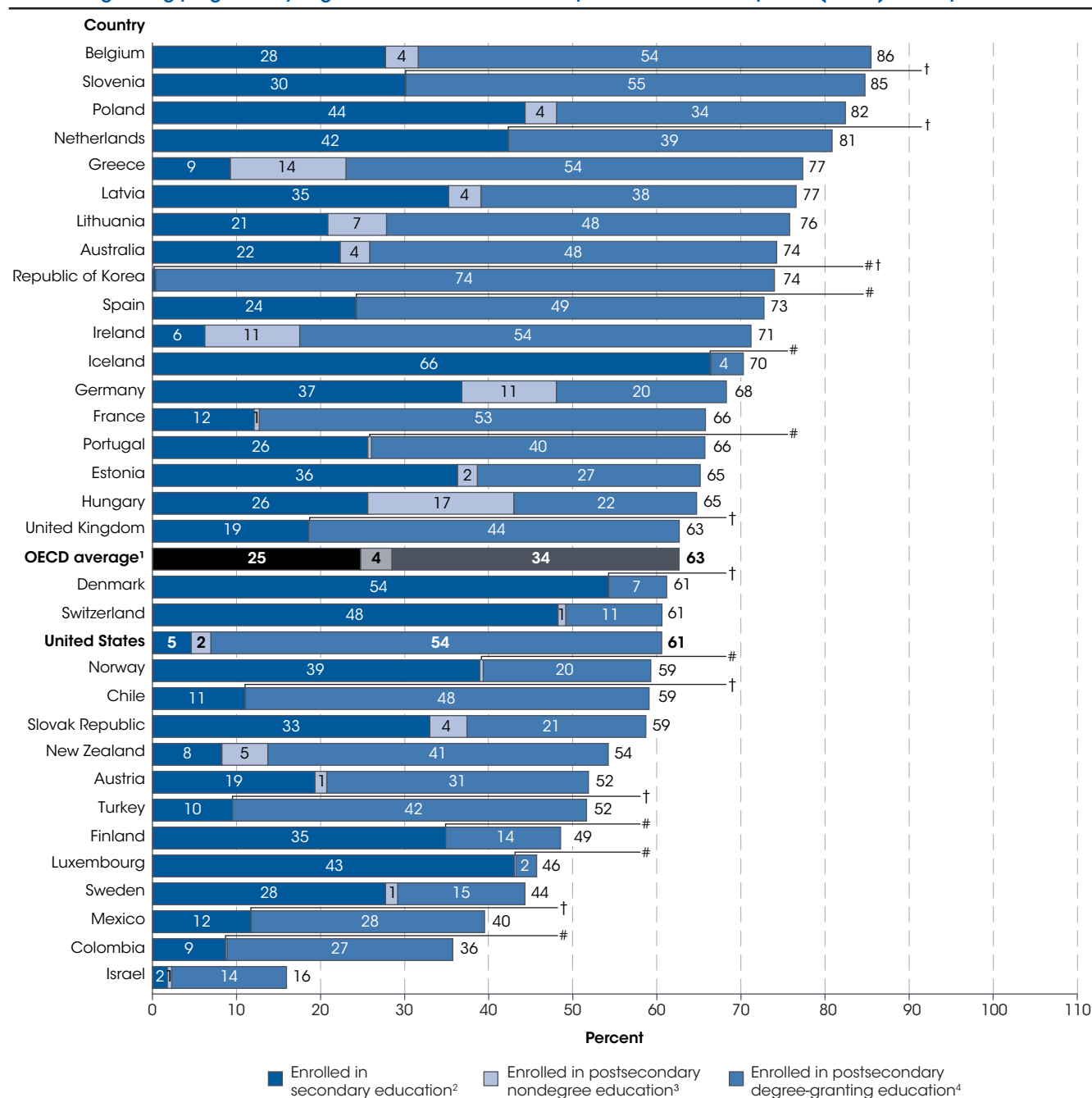
In contrast to the near universal enrollment of 5- to 14-year-olds in all OECD countries, enrollment rates among 15- to 19-year-olds varied more widely across OECD countries. Among the 36 countries¹⁰ for which the OECD reported 2017 data, the percentage of 15- to 19-year-olds enrolled in school at any level ranged from 59 percent in Colombia to 95 percent in Belgium. Part of this variation can be attributed to the end of compulsory schooling and the transition of some students into the labor market. In 2017, some 83 percent of 15- to 19-year-olds in the United States were enrolled in school at any level, which was slightly lower than the average of OECD countries (84 percent).

The 15- to 19-year-old age group spans the period during which students generally finish secondary education and potentially go on to more advanced schooling.¹¹ Among 15- to 19-year-olds who remain enrolled in school after completion of secondary education, some transition into postsecondary nondegree education (corresponding to a short career/technical educational program in the United States)¹² while others pursue postsecondary degree-granting education (corresponding to an associate's or higher degree in the United States).¹³ On average across OECD countries, 72 percent of 15- to 19-year-olds were enrolled in secondary education in 2017, while 1 percent were enrolled in postsecondary nondegree education programs and 11 percent were enrolled in postsecondary degree-granting education programs.¹⁴ Across OECD countries, there were differences in the share of 15- to 19-year-olds enrolled in secondary school compared with the share enrolled in a higher level of education. For example, the percentage of 15- to 19-year-olds in the United States enrolled in secondary education (63 percent) was lower than the average of OECD countries (72 percent), while the percentage enrolled in postsecondary nondegree education programs (just under 1 percent) was similar to the average of OECD countries (just over 1 percent) and the percentage enrolled in postsecondary degree-granting education programs (19 percent) was higher than the average of OECD countries (11 percent). In all OECD countries for which

the 2017 data were available for secondary, postsecondary nondegree, and postsecondary degree-granting education and the education levels were applicable, higher percentages of 15- to 19-year-olds were enrolled in secondary school than in postsecondary nondegree or postsecondary degree-granting education.

In the United States, it is more common for 15- to 19-year-olds to transition into a postsecondary degree-granting program than into a postsecondary nondegree program after completing secondary school. Among the 26 countries¹⁵ for which the OECD reported 2017 data on postsecondary nondegree education programs, the percentages of 15- to 19-year-olds who were enrolled in such programs ranged from less than 1 percent in 17 countries and from 1 to 6 percent in 9 countries. Among the 36 countries¹⁶ for which the OECD reported 2017 data on postsecondary degree-granting education programs, the percentages of 15- to 19-year-olds who were enrolled in such programs ranged from 1 percent in Luxembourg and Iceland to 29 percent in Korea. For all 25 countries¹⁷ for which the OECD reported 2017 data on both postsecondary nondegree and postsecondary degree-granting education, enrollment rates of 15- to 19-year-olds in postsecondary nondegree programs were lower than enrollment rates in postsecondary degree-granting programs.

The specific age at which students make the transition from secondary education to postsecondary education differs by country. In all OECD countries except Colombia, a majority of 15-year-olds, 16-year-olds, and 17-year-olds were enrolled in secondary school in 2017. In addition, 29 out of 36 OECD countries reported that the percentage of 18-year-olds enrolled in secondary school was higher than the percentage enrolled in a postsecondary degree-granting program, and 14 countries reported that the percentage of 19-year-olds enrolled in secondary school was higher than the percentage enrolled in a postsecondary degree-granting program. In the United States, 101 percent of 15-year-olds, 28 percent of 18-year-olds, and 5 percent of 19-year-olds were enrolled in secondary school in 2017.

Figure 4. Percentage of 19-year-olds enrolled in secondary education and postsecondary nondegree and degree-granting programs, by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) country: 2017

† Not applicable.

Rounds to zero.

¹ Refers to the mean of the data values for all reporting Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, to which each country reporting data contributes equally. The average includes all current OECD countries for which a given year's data are available, even if they were not members of OECD in that year.

² Refers to International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011 level 2 (lower secondary education) and level 3 (upper secondary education). Secondary education generally corresponds to grades 7–12 in the United States.

³ Refers to programs classified at ISCED 2011 level 4 (postsecondary nontertiary education). Postsecondary nontertiary education generally corresponds to postsecondary vocational programs below the associate's degree level in the United States.

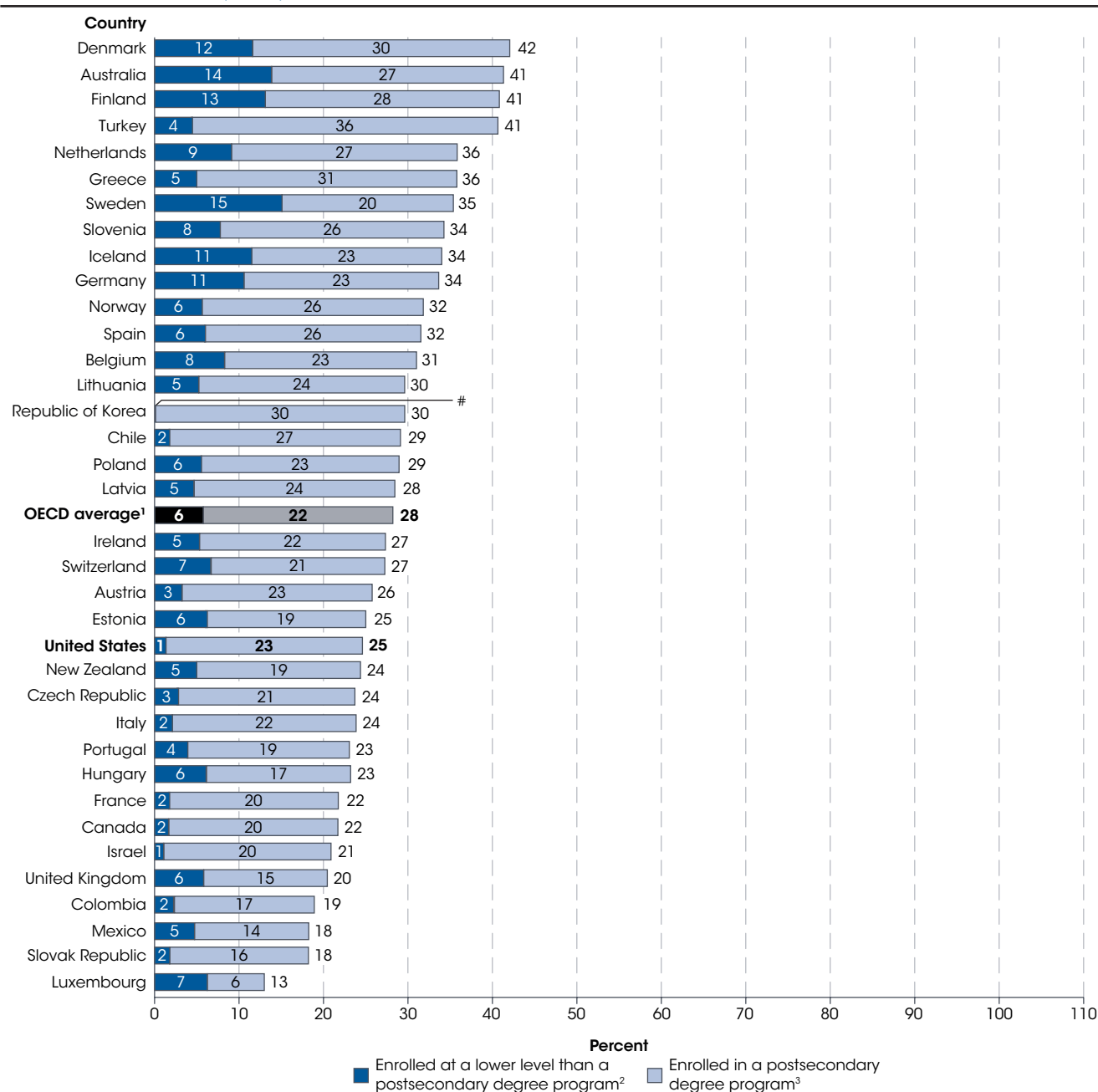
⁴ Postsecondary degree-granting programs (tertiary education programs) correspond to all postsecondary programs leading to associate's and higher degrees in the United States. Includes ISCED 2011 level 5 (corresponding to U.S. programs at the associate's degree level), level 6 (bachelor's or equivalent level), level 7 (master's or equivalent level), and level 8 (doctoral or equivalent level). Enrollment rates may not be directly comparable across countries due to differing definitions of postsecondary education and the age at which it begins.

NOTE: Of the 37 OECD countries, 33 are included in this figure. Japan, Canada, the Czech Republic, and Italy are excluded because 2017 enrollment rates for 19-year-olds in these countries are not available for all education levels presented in the figure. For each country, this figure shows the number of 19-year-olds who are enrolled in that country as a percentage of that country's total population of 19-year-olds. Enrollment rates may be underestimated for countries that are net exporters of students and may be overestimated for countries that are net importers. If a country enrolls many residents of other countries, the total number of students enrolled may be larger than the country's total population of 19-year-olds. Enrollment estimates can also be affected if population and enrollment data were collected at different times. Includes both full-time and part-time students. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Online Education Database, retrieved September 24, 2019, from <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx>. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 601.40.

Since enrolling in a postsecondary degree-granting education program is the most prevalent educational pathway in the United States among those who remain enrolled in education after secondary school, the next portion of this indicator examines how the transition from secondary school to a postsecondary degree-granting program in the United States compares with other OECD countries. Examining enrollment rates of 19-year-olds draws out differences in the typical age students transition from secondary school to a postsecondary degree-granting program across countries. As previously noted, 14 out of 36 OECD countries reported that a higher percentage of 19-year-olds were enrolled in secondary school than

in a postsecondary degree-granting program in 2017. In contrast, 22 countries—including the United States—reported having a higher percentage of 19-year-olds enrolled in a postsecondary degree-granting program than in secondary school. In the United States, 54 percent of 19-year-olds were enrolled in a postsecondary degree-granting program, whereas 5 percent were enrolled in secondary school. The percentage of 19-year-olds enrolled in secondary school in the United States was lower than the average of OECD countries (5 vs. 25 percent), but the percentage of 19-year-olds enrolled in a postsecondary degree-granting program in the United States was higher than the average of OECD countries (54 vs. 34 percent).

Figure 5. Percentage of 20- to 29-year-olds enrolled in school, by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) country and level of education: 2017

Rounds to zero.

¹ Refers to the mean of the data values for all reporting Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, to which each country reporting data contributes equally. The average includes all current OECD countries for which a given year's data are available, even if they were not members of OECD in that year.² In general, 20- to 29-year-olds who are enrolled in school but not in a postsecondary degree-granting program, are enrolled in a postsecondary nondegree program or in secondary education. "Postsecondary nondegree programs" refer to programs classified at International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011 level 4. ISCED 4 (postsecondary nontertiary education) typically corresponds to postsecondary vocational programs below the associate's degree level in the United States. "Secondary education" refers to ISCED 2011 level 2 (lower secondary education) and level 3 (upper secondary education) and generally corresponds to grades 7–12 in the United States.³ Corresponds to all postsecondary degree-granting programs leading to associate's and higher degrees in the United States. Includes ISCED 2011 level 5 (corresponding to U.S. programs at the associate's degree level), level 6 (bachelor's or equivalent level), level 7 (master's or equivalent level), and level 8 (doctoral or equivalent level). Enrollment rates may not be directly comparable across countries due to differing definitions of postsecondary education and the age at which it begins.

NOTE: Of the 37 OECD countries, 36 are included in this figure. Japan is excluded because 2017 enrollment rates for 20- to 29-year-olds are not available. For each country, this figure shows the number of 20- to 29-year-olds enrolled in that country as a percentage of that country's total population of 20- to 29-year-olds. Enrollment rates may be underestimated for countries that are net exporters of students and may be overestimated for countries that are net importers. If a country enrolls many residents of other countries, the total number of students enrolled may be larger than the country's total population of 20- to 29-year-olds. Enrollment estimates can also be affected if population and enrollment data were collected at different times. Includes both full-time and part-time students. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Online Education Database, retrieved September 24, 2019, from <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx>. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 601.40.

Among the 36 countries¹⁸ for which the OECD reported 2017 data, the percentage of 20- to 29-year-olds enrolled in school ranged from 13 percent in Luxembourg to 42 percent in Denmark. Thirteen countries reported that 30 percent or more of 20- to 29-year-olds were enrolled in school in 2017, of which four countries (Denmark, Australia, Finland, and Turkey) reported that 40 percent or more of 20- to 29-year-olds were enrolled. In 2017, some 25 percent of 20- to 29-year-olds in the United States were enrolled in school at any level, which was lower than the average of OECD countries (28 percent).

The 20- to 29-year-old age group spans the period during which students generally persist through (and potentially

complete) a postsecondary degree-granting program. In all OECD countries for which 2017 data were available, higher percentages of 20- to 29-year-olds were enrolled in a postsecondary degree program in 2017 than were enrolled in other levels of education. In the United States, 23 percent of 20- to 29-year-olds were enrolled in postsecondary degree programs in 2017. There were several countries, however, that had relatively large shares of 20- to 29-year-olds enrolled in a lower level of education than a postsecondary degree program. For example, 15 percent of 20- to 29-year-olds in Sweden and 14 percent of 20- to 29-year-olds in Australia were enrolled in a lower level of education than a postsecondary degree program.

Endnotes:

¹ Early childhood educational programs are targeted at children ages 0–2 and preprimary education programs are targeted at children age 3 years until the start of primary education. The upper age limit for preprimary education depends on the theoretical starting age of primary education. (See <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf>.)

² The boundary between preprimary and primary coincides with the transition point in an education system where systematic teaching and learning in reading, writing, and mathematics begins. Although some preprimary programs may already provide some introduction in reading, writing, and mathematics, these programs do not yet give children sound basic skills in these areas, and thus do not sufficiently fulfill the criteria for classification as primary education. The transition from preprimary to primary education is typically marked by entry into nationally designated primary, elementary, or basic educational institutions or programs. (See <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf>.)

³ OECD. (2019). Who Participates in Education? In *Education at a Glance 2019: OECD Indicators*. (Indicator B1, pp. 146–159). Paris: OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2019_f8d7880d-en.

⁴ OECD. (2019). How Do Early Childhood Education Systems Differ Around the World? In *Education at a Glance 2019: OECD Indicators*. (Indicator B2, pp. 160–178). Paris: OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2019_f8d7880d-en.

⁵ While these enrollment rates include 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in school at any level, 3- and 4-year-olds across OECD countries are generally enrolled in programs classified by the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011 as ISCED 0 (early childhood education). In the United States, ISCED 0 programs are commonly referred to as preprimary school, preschool, nursery school, or prekindergarten. Child care programs that are not primarily designed to provide educational experiences, such as day care programs, are not included in ISCED 0.

⁶ Throughout this indicator, the “average of OECD countries” refers to the mean of the data values for all reporting Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, to which each country reporting data contributes equally. The average includes all current OECD countries for which a given year’s data are available, even if they were not members of the OECD in that year. Countries excluded from analyses in this indicator may be included in the average of OECD countries.

⁷ Canada is excluded because 2017 data on the enrollment rate of 3- and 4-year-olds are not available.

⁸ While enrollment rates include 5- to 14-year-olds enrolled in school at any level, students of this age group across OECD countries are generally enrolled in programs classified as ISCED 1 (primary education or elementary school) or ISCED 2 (lower secondary education or middle school). In the United States, ISCED 1 corresponds to grades 1–6 and ISCED 2 corresponds to grades 7–9.

⁹ Some of a country’s population may be enrolled in a different country, and some persons enrolled in the country may be

residents of a different country. Enrollment rates may be underestimated for countries such as Luxembourg that are net exporters of students and may be overestimated for countries that are net importers. If a country enrolls many residents of other countries, the country’s total population in the specified age group can be smaller than the total number enrolled, resulting in enrollment estimates exceeding 100 percent.

¹⁰ Japan is excluded because 2017 data on enrollment rates of 15- to 19-year-olds are not available.

¹¹ Secondary school includes programs classified as ISCED 2 (lower secondary education or middle school) and ISCED 3 (upper secondary education or high school). Secondary education generally corresponds to grades 7–12 in the United States.

¹² Refers to programs classified at ISCED level 4. ISCED 4 (postsecondary nontertiary education) typically corresponds to postsecondary vocational programs below the associate’s degree level in the United States.

¹³ Includes all postsecondary programs leading to associate’s and higher degrees in the United States. Postsecondary degree programs include ISCED level 5 (corresponding to U.S. programs at the associate’s degree level), level 6 (bachelor’s or equivalent level), level 7 (master’s or equivalent level), and level 8 (doctoral or equivalent level).

¹⁴ The average of OECD countries for the percentage of 15- to 19-year-olds enrolled in postsecondary nondegree education programs excludes Chile, Denmark, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Turkey, and the United Kingdom because postsecondary nondegree programs are not applicable in these countries and excludes Canada, the Czech Republic, and Italy because 2017 data on enrollment rates of 15- to 19-year-olds in postsecondary nondegree programs are not available. The average of OECD countries for the percentage of 15- to 19-year-olds enrolled in postsecondary nondegree education programs excludes Japan because 2017 data on enrollment rates of 15- to 19-year-olds in postsecondary degree-granting programs are not available.

¹⁵ Chile, Denmark, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Turkey, and the United Kingdom are excluded because postsecondary nondegree programs are not applicable in these countries. Canada, the Czech Republic, and Italy are excluded because 2017 data on enrollment rates of 15- to 19-year-olds in postsecondary nondegree programs are not available.

¹⁶ Japan is excluded because 2017 data on enrollment rates of 15- to 19-year-olds in postsecondary degree-granting programs are not available.

¹⁷ Chile, Denmark, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Turkey, and the United Kingdom are excluded because data on postsecondary nondegree programs are not applicable in these countries. Canada, the Czech Republic, and Italy are excluded because 2017 data on enrollment rates of 15- to 19-year-olds in postsecondary nondegree programs are not available. Japan is excluded because 2017 data on enrollment rates of 15- to 19-year-olds in postsecondary degree-granting programs are not available.

¹⁸ Japan is excluded because 2017 data on enrollment rates of 20- to 29-year-olds are not available.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, tables 601.35 and 601.40

Related indicators and resources: [International Educational Attainment](#); [Postbaccalaureate Enrollment](#); [Preschool and Kindergarten Enrollment](#); [Private School Enrollment](#); [Public School Enrollment](#); [Undergraduate Enrollment](#)

Glossary: Elementary school; Enrollment; International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED); Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); Postsecondary education; Preschool; Secondary school