

Romania

This country note for *Education at a Glance 2026* provides an overview of the key characteristics of the education system in Romania. In line with this year's thematic focus, it emphasises teacher shortages while also covering other parts of the education system. The data in this note are provided for the latest available year. Readers are referred to the corresponding tables in *Education at a Glance 2026* for notes and reference years.

Highlights

- Romania has reduced the child to teacher ratio for pre-primary education. Between 2015 and 2024, the number of children enrolled in early childhood education fell by 8%, while the number of teachers still increased by 8%. As a result, the ratio of children to teachers fell by 15% (Figure D2.1).
- In 2025, one in four 25-34 year-olds in Romania had below upper secondary attainment, more than double the OECD average (Table A1.2). Adults without an upper secondary qualification face higher risks of unemployment, lower earnings, and are less likely to participate in adult learning and training opportunities. These risks are particularly pronounced for young women. Approximately 70% of women aged 25-34 with below upper secondary attainment are not in the labour force, one of the highest rates among OECD and partner countries. In contrast, the inactivity rate for tertiary-educated women in the same age group is substantially lower, at approximately 10% (Table A3.3).
- Romania stands out for its high share of national students graduating in STEM fields compared to the OECD average. Approximately 30% of Romania's national tertiary graduates specialise in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), exceeding the OECD average of 23% (Table B4.2).
- Romania's strong performance in STEM specialisation contrasts with low overall tertiary attainment. Only 19% of 25-64 year-olds have a tertiary degree compared to the OECD average of 43% (Table A1.1).
- Investment in education is low in Romania. This is reflected in government expenditure on education, which shows how much priority education receives compared with other public services. In 2023, government expenditure on education constituted about 6.4% of total government expenditure, which is among the lowest shares globally and below the OECD average of 9.8%. Investment can also be expressed in expenditure as a percentage of GDP, which measures education spending relative to the overall size of the economy. Public education expenditure as a share of GDP has remained relatively stable in Romania, from 2.4% in 2015 to 2.6% in 2023. This is, however, low by international comparison, considering the OECD average of 4.2% of GDP in 2023. (Table C1.7).
- Most teachers in Romania are fully qualified, with the share of non-fully qualified primary and secondary teachers at 2.3%, well below the OECD average of 9.1% (Table 1). However, a low share of non-fully qualified teachers does not necessarily imply the absence of recruitment

challenges. An estimated 2.8% of teaching positions go unfilled in Romania, one of the highest rates among countries with comparable data (Table 2). This indicates that schools are often unable to recruit teachers for certain posts rather than filling vacancies with less-qualified staff. In general, the prevalence of teacher shortages differs by subject, and they are particularly pronounced in mathematics and science disciplines (Figure 4). Despite this, an above average share of teachers report being satisfied with the terms of their employment and feel their profession is valued in society (Table 5).

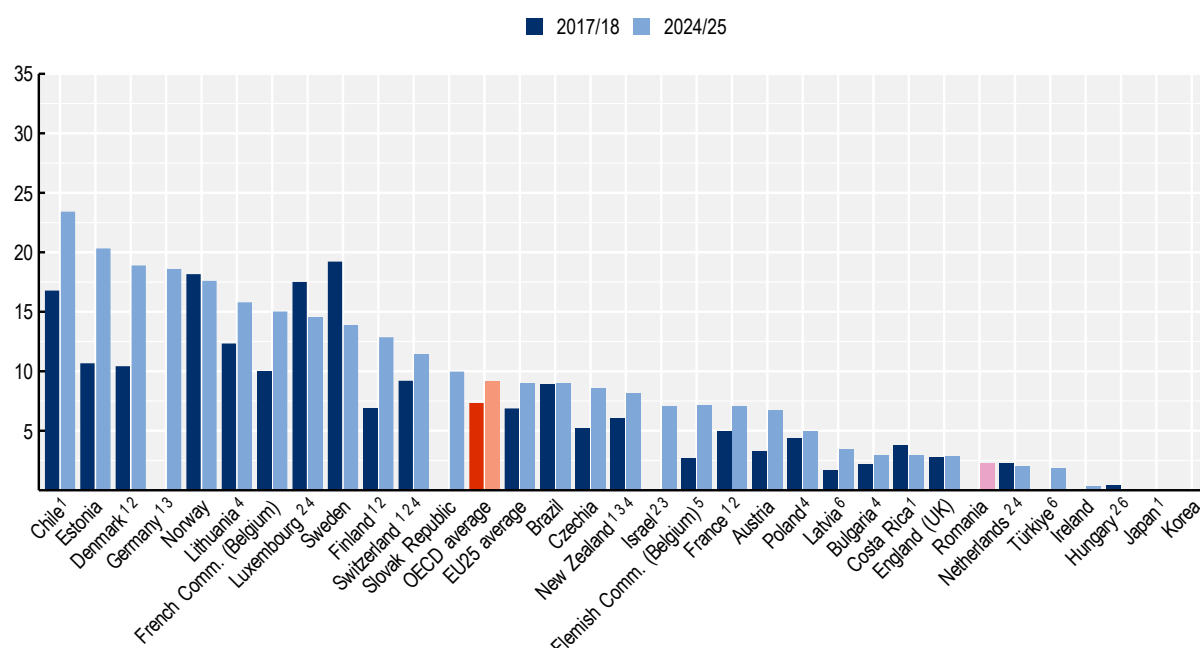
- Teacher absence is less frequently reported as a barrier to learning in Romania than across the OECD. According to data from the OECD PISA survey, only 3% of Romanian 15-year-old students attend schools where learning is hindered by teacher absence, compared to more than one in four students (27%) on average across the OECD. (Figure 6).
- Teacher salaries in Romania are more competitive relative to other tertiary educated workers than in most OECD countries. In 2025, actual salaries for lower secondary teachers were about 5% higher than the average earnings of other tertiary-educated workers in the country, whereas they are typically lower across the OECD (Table D3.2). This also reflects a substantial improvement in teacher remuneration in recent years. In 2023, salaries for lower secondary teachers were about 13% lower than the average earnings of other tertiary-educated workers, indicating a shift from a salary disadvantage to a modest premium within just two years (*Education at a Glance 2023*).
- Women are overrepresented in the teaching profession across all OECD member and partner countries, and particularly so in Romania where 93% of primary teachers are women, compared to the OECD average of 83% (Table D5.1). At the same time, Romanian teachers and school management staff demonstrate a closer gender balance than the OECD average. While women make up 93% of primary teachers, they also constitute 82% of school management staff. This results in a leadership-to-teacher gender gap of 11 percentage points, which is smaller than the OECD average gap of 15 percentage points (Tables D5.1. and D5.2).

Teacher shortages

- Shortages of skilled workers have affected many sectors across the OECD in recent years, and the teaching profession is no exception. Teacher shortages manifest in different ways across education systems: in some countries, a lack of fully qualified teachers is reflected in a higher share of non-fully qualified staff, while in others a significant number of teaching positions remain unfilled.
- Non-fully qualified teachers refer to teachers who do not yet meet all the requirements to be recognised as fully qualified teachers under national regulations. In most countries, they either possess the required academic qualifications but lack mandatory certification or teacher training, have completed the required teacher training but do not hold the required academic qualifications, or lack both. In Romania, 2.3% of all primary and secondary teachers in public institutions were not fully qualified in 2024/25, below the OECD average of 9.1% (Figure 1).
- Countries use two main approaches to measuring teacher shortages. The first approach estimates shortages before or at the start of the school year based on projected recruitment needs and the outcome of centralised competitions for teaching positions. The second approach measures shortages by counting the number of positions that remain vacant at the start of the school year or shortly after it begins. Romania uses the first approach. There was a shortage equivalent to 2.8% of all full-time teaching positions in public institutions in primary and secondary education at or before the start of the 2024/25 school year (Table 2).

Figure 1. Trends in the share of non-fully qualified teachers in primary and secondary education (2017/18 and 2024/25)

In per cent, full-time equivalents, public institutions



1. Year of reference differs from 2024/25: academic year 2023/24 for Denmark, Finland, France, Germany and Switzerland; calendar year 2024 for Chile and Costa Rica; calendar year 2025 for New Zealand; academic year 2025/26 for Japan.

2. Pre-primary and primary education are combined in France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Upper secondary education is excluded in Denmark, Israel and Switzerland. Upper secondary vocational education is excluded in Finland, Hungary and the Netherlands.

3. Teacher data are based on headcounts instead of full-time equivalents.

4. Year of reference differs from 2017/18: academic year 2018/19 for Bulgaria, the Netherlands, and Switzerland; 2019/20 for Luxembourg and Poland; calendar year 2020 for New Zealand.

5. Including government-dependent private institutions.

6. Teachers classified as non-fully qualified in these countries are in the process of acquiring full qualification.

For data, see OECD (2026) *Education at a Glance 2026: OECD Indicators*, <https://doi.org/10.1787/b4968bbc-en>, Figure 1 and Table 1.

- Recruiting second-career teachers is a common strategy for addressing teacher shortages and helps to diversify the profile of the teaching workforce. According to the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2024, on average across the OECD, 8.4% of lower secondary teachers are second-career teachers; in Romania, they make up 7.1% of all teachers (Figure 2).
- According to the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2024, a large majority of lower secondary teachers (68.4%) are satisfied with their terms of employment (barring salaries) on average across the OECD. In contrast, the share of lower secondary teachers who are satisfied with their salaries is much lower at 38.7% on average. In Romania, 81.1% of lower secondary teachers are satisfied with their terms of employment and 57.2% are satisfied with their salaries (Figure 12).
- Teachers tend to be older than other workers. On average across countries with available data, 25% of secondary teachers are aged 55 and over, compared to 19% of employed individuals holding at least a master's degree and 21% of the overall employed population (Table 4). Romania follows a similar pattern: 19% of secondary teachers are aged 55 and over, compared to 11% of

employed individuals holding at least a master's degree and 16% of the overall employed population (Figure 10).

- The number of teachers a system needs is not determined by student numbers alone. On average across the OECD, measured in full-time equivalents, the number of teachers in public and private primary schools rose by 13% between 2015 and 2024, even though the number of primary students rose by only 2% over the same period, a divergence driven by policy choices around class sizes, teachers' working hours and instruction time. In Romania, the number of primary teachers decreased by 3% over this period, while the number of students decreased by 7% (Table 7).
- Looking ahead, the number of children aged 5-14 in Romania is projected to decrease by 14% between 2024 and 2033, pointing to lower demand for teachers if other policies remain unchanged (Table 7). However, as argued above, demographic trends are only one factor shaping teacher workforce needs, and their effects can vary depending on how population change is distributed across regions. Teacher workforce needs also depend on policy decisions related to class sizes, teacher attrition and funding.

The output of educational institutions and the impact of learning

- Educational attainment remains at an all-time high in 2025 as more people obtain advanced qualifications. Across the OECD, 43% of working-age adults (25-64 year-olds) have a tertiary qualification, while the share of adults with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment is slightly lower at 39%. In Romania, the share of adults with tertiary attainment is below the OECD average at 19%, while the share of adults with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment is above the OECD average at 56% (Table A1.1).
- While more young adults obtain a tertiary qualification, the share of individuals whose highest qualification is upper secondary with a vocational orientation is decreasing in almost all OECD countries. This is also the case in Romania, where 59% of all 55-64 year-olds have upper secondary vocational attainment in 2025, compared to 45% of all 25-34 year-olds (Table A1.3).
- Youth and young adults who are neither employed nor in education or training (NEET) are a key policy concern, as prolonged periods of inactivity at a young age can have lasting negative effects on socio-economic outcomes later in life. In Romania, 23% of all 18-24 year-olds were NEET in 2025. For comparison, the average share of NEETs across OECD countries was 14% in 2025 (Table A2.2).
- Employment outcomes for recent tertiary graduates vary across countries and are shaped by economic conditions, labour demand, and public policy. In Romania, the unemployment rate among tertiary-educated young adults decreased from 6% in 2015 to 3% in 2025. The corresponding rates across OECD countries with available data for both years were 7% on average in 2015 and 5% in 2025 (Table A3.3).
- The labour-market significance of advanced qualifications is also reflected in earnings. In almost every OECD country, workers (aged 25-64) without a tertiary qualification have earnings below the national average. In Romania, full-time, full-year workers with general upper secondary as their highest level of attainment earn 11% less than the national average, those with vocational upper secondary attainment earn 8% less and those with below upper secondary attainment earn 18% less. The corresponding wage gaps on average across the OECD are 13% for general upper secondary attainment, 17% for vocational upper secondary attainment and 31% for below upper secondary attainment (Figure A4.1). While the difference is modest, workers with vocational upper secondary attainment in Romania face a smaller earnings gap relative to the national average than those with general upper secondary attainment, a pattern that differs from the OECD average.

- Workers with higher educational attainment are much more likely to be in jobs where they can work from home in most countries. In Romania, 10% of tertiary-educated workers sometimes or usually work from home compared to 2% of workers with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment. This trend is the same as that of the OECD average where 42% of tertiary workers report sometimes or usually working from home compared to 18% of upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary (Figure A6.3).

Access to education, participation and progression

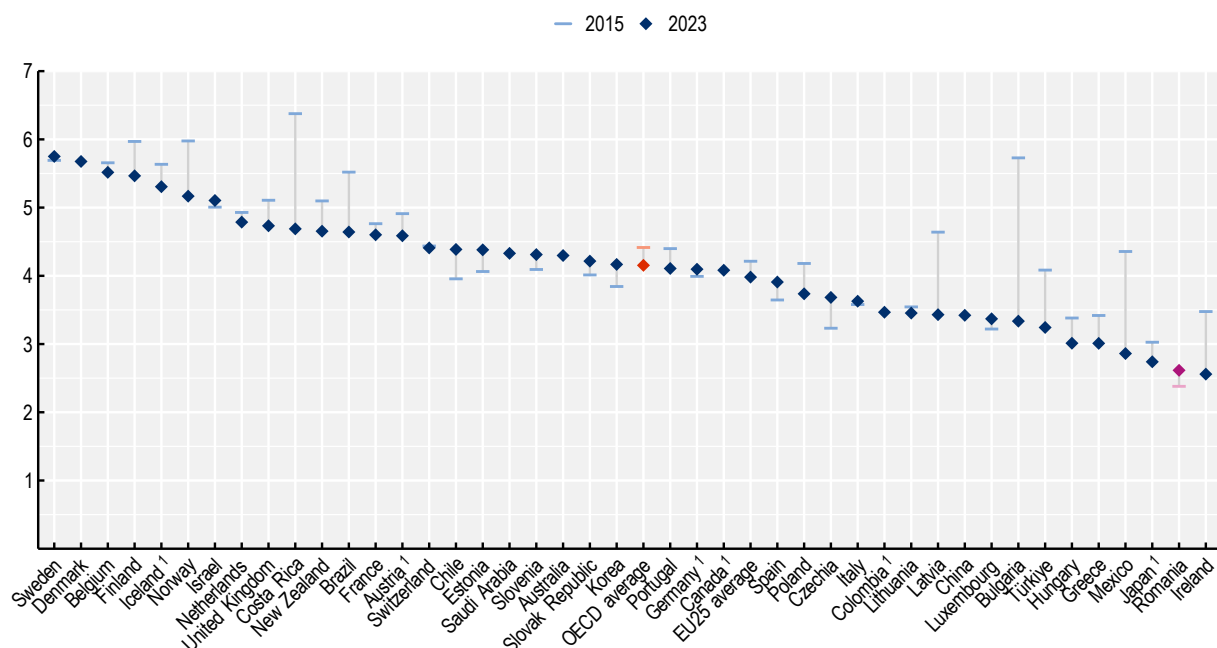
- Participation in early childhood education and care (ECEC) is common among children from the age of 3 in all OECD countries. In Romania, 76% of children between the age of 3 and the starting age of primary education (age 6 in Romania) were enrolled in ECEC in 2024, lower than the OECD average of 90% (Figure B1.1). However, enrolment rates for younger children vary widely across OECD countries. Among 2 year old children in Romania, 12% are enrolled in early childhood educational development programmes that meet the criteria of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) by combining education and care. While this places Romania at the lower end of OECD countries with available data, it is an increase of almost 6 percentage points from 2015, indicating improvement in enrolment rates (Table B1.1).
- At tertiary level (ISCED 5-8), most OECD countries host a larger number of international students than they send abroad. On average across the OECD, outbound internationally mobile students account for 6% of all national students (whether enrolled domestically or abroad), while inbound students account for 12% of all students enrolled domestically in 2024. In Romania the share of outbound international students is 6%, while inbound international students average 7%. (Table B4.3 and Table B4.4).
- In many countries, inbound mobility has increased faster than outbound mobility among tertiary students. On average across the OECD, the share of inbound mobile students increased by 4 percentage points between 2015 and 2024, and the share of outbound mobile students increased by 1 percentage point. In Romania, the share of inbound students increased by 3 percentage points, while the share of outbound students remained the same (Table B4.3).

Financial resources invested in education

- Most investment in education comes from public sources. On average across the OECD, government expenditure on primary to tertiary education (based on initial funds, on educational institutions) corresponded to 4% of GDP in 2023, while private expenditure corresponded to 0.6%. In Romania, government expenditure equalled 2.4% of GDP in 2023, while private expenditure equalled 0.2% (Table C1.8).
- In OECD countries with available data for both years, average government expenditure on primary to tertiary education (based on final funds, inside and outside educational institutions) has decreased slightly from 4.4% of GDP in 2015 to 4.2% in 2023. Over the same period, it increased from 2.4% to 2.6% in Romania, thus defying the trend of declining government expenditure on education as a share of GDP (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Trends in government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP (2015 and 2023)

Total government expenditure on education (inside and outside of educational institutions); primary to tertiary education



1. Data include or exclude some categories, please refer to the source table for more information.

For data, see OECD (2026) *Education at a Glance 2026: OECD Indicators*, <https://doi.org/10.1787/b4968bbc-en>, Figure C1.2 and Table C1.7.

- Government expenditure on primary to tertiary education as share of GDP (based on final funds, on educational institutions, including R&D) varies by a factor of approximately two across OECD countries (ranging from 2.4% to 5.2%), while government expenditure per student varies by a factor of ten (from USD 3 398 to USD 32 832 adjusted for purchasing power parity) as differences in income levels mean nominal expenditure tends to vary more than relative expenditure. On average across the OECD, expenditure per student from primary to tertiary education was USD 13 601 in 2023, while in Romania it was USD 7 293 (Table C1.4. and Table C1.1).
- In early childhood education, government expenditure per child has grown substantially between 2015 and 2023 in many OECD countries. This was also the case in Romania, where expenditure per child aged 3-5 in 2023 was USD 4 766 compared to USD 3 295 in 2015. In comparison, the OECD average expenditure in 2023 was USD 10 331 and USD 8 201 in 2015 (Table C2.3).
- Government expenditure on education tends to rise with the level of education. In primary education, expenditure per student was USD 3 783 in 2023 in Romania and USD 12 893 on average across the OECD. In lower secondary education, it was USD 8 658 in Romania and USD 14 291 on average across the OECD. Thus, Romania is among the majority of countries where expenditure is higher at lower secondary level than at primary level (Table C3.1).
- Expenditure can be divided into capital and current expenditure: the former finances investment in assets such as infrastructure, while the latter covers regular operating costs. Current expenditure can be further broken down into staff compensation and other current expenditure, such as purchases of goods and services and routine maintenance. In Romania, 86% of current expenditure in primary educational institutions is dedicated to staff compensation compared to 79%

on average across the OECD, while the remainder is dedicated to other current expenditure (Figure C3.3).

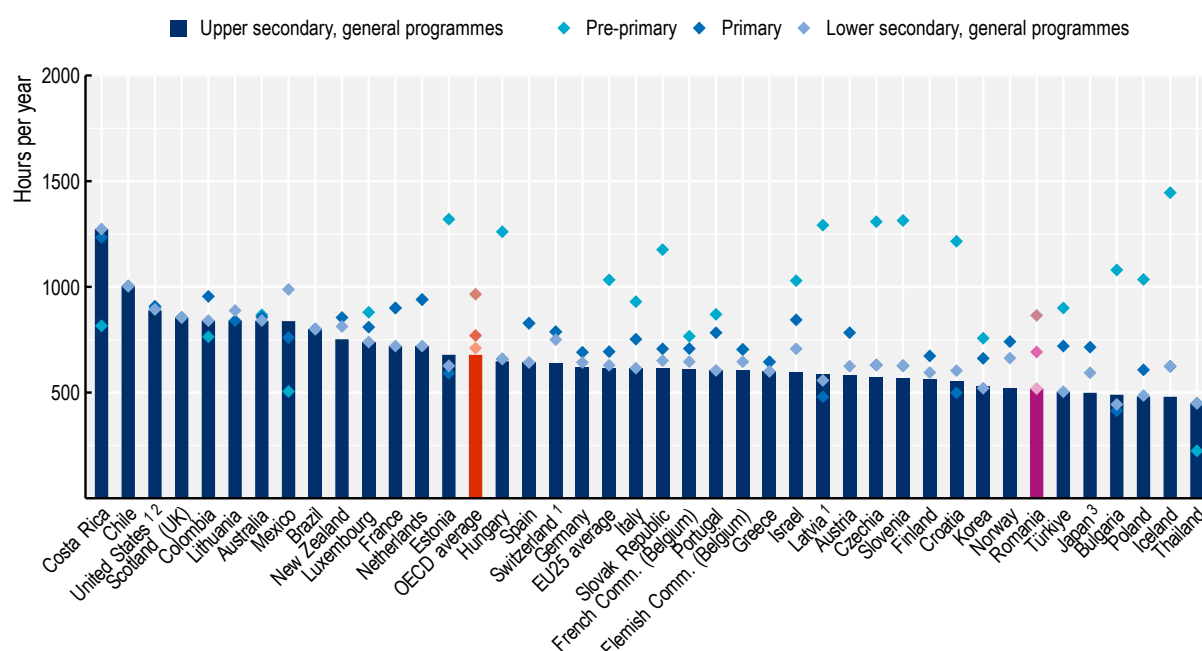
- At upper secondary level, government expenditure per student can differ substantially between general and vocational programmes. Vocational programmes are often more expensive than general programmes due to the need for specialised technical equipment, while at the same time, private contributions, for example from firms, cover a larger share of overall costs in some countries. In Romania, expenditure per student is USD 10 001 in general upper secondary programmes and USD 6 676 in vocational upper secondary programmes, compared to the OECD average of USD 12 421 in general programmes and USD 13 901 in vocational ones (Table C4.1). Spending also differs between attainment levels. At lower secondary level expenditure per student is lower than at the upper secondary level. Government expenditure per student at lower secondary level in Romania is USD 8 658, compared to the OECD average of USD 14 291 (Table C3.1).
- On average across the OECD, government expenditure per student is the highest at bachelor's and above levels despite being the levels where government expenditure accounts for the smallest share of total expenditure. Romania is among the countries where government expenditure constitutes a larger share of total expenditure compared to the OECD average. Government expenditure per student was USD 11 042 in 2023, corresponding to 83% of total expenditure at bachelor's and above levels. In comparison, average government expenditure per student across the OECD was USD 16 405, amounting to 68% of total expenditure (Table C5.1).

Teachers, the learning environment and the organisation of schools

- As discussed above, most countries have increased their investment in pre-primary education in recent years. This is also reflected in the ratio of children to teachers. Across the OECD, the number of children enrolled at this level decreased slightly by 2% between 2015 and 2024 while the number of teachers increased by 14%, resulting in a 14% reduction in the child-to-teacher ratio. Similarly, in Romania, the number of children enrolled in pre-primary education decreased by 8%, while the number of pre-primary teachers increased by 8%, resulting in a 15% decrease of the child-to-teacher ratio (Data for chart D2.1).
- In most countries, salaries of teachers in public institutions are lower than the salaries of other tertiary-educated workers, especially for teachers at lower levels of education. However, this is not the case in Romania, where pre-primary teachers earned on average 1% more than other tertiary-educated workers, while lower secondary teachers earned on average 5% more than other tertiary-educated workers (Table D3.2).
- Teachers spend only a fraction of their working time teaching; the remainder is devoted to other tasks, including lesson preparation and marking. On average across the OECD, primary teachers taught 770 hours per year compared to 710 hours per year in lower secondary education. In Romania, annual typical teaching hours were 692 in primary education and 519 in lower secondary education. Thus, Romania was among the large majority of countries where teachers in lower secondary education had to teach fewer hours than those in primary education (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Teaching time of teachers, by level of education (2025)

Net statutory teaching time in hours per year, in public institutions



Note: Please refer to the source table for information on whether the data refer to typical, minimum or maximum hours.

1. Actual teaching time (in Latvia except for pre-primary level).

2. Reference year differs from 2023. Refer to the source table for details.

3. Average planned teaching time in each school at the beginning of the school year.

For data, see OECD (2026) *Education at a Glance 2026: OECD Indicators*, <https://doi.org/10.1787/b4968bbc-en>, Figure D4.1 and Table D4.1.

- Women form the majority of teachers at all levels of education except tertiary. Teachers in pre-primary education are almost entirely women with 96% of teachers being female on average across the OECD. The share of women among pre-primary teachers in Romania is even higher at 100%. At 74%, the share of female teachers in lower secondary education is lower, although it is still above the OECD average of 68% (Table D5.1).
- Across the OECD, women are more strongly represented among teachers than among school management staff. In primary education, women in Romania accounted for 93% of teachers and 82% of school management staff in 2024, a gap of 11 percentage points. This gap was smaller than the OECD average of 15 percentage points (Figure D5.3).
- Regular teacher appraisal as a quality assurance mechanism is common in some countries, but not in others. Romania uses an appraisal mechanism with mandatory appraisals of teachers, as do 16 out of 29 countries and economies with available data (Figure D7.1).
- Appraisals of schools are more widespread than those of teachers, with school inspections being used in 24 out of 28 countries and economies with available data. Romania is among the majority of countries with a mandatory appraisal mechanism at pre-primary, primary or secondary levels (Figure D6.1).

Contact

For more information on Education at a Glance 2026 and to access the full set of indicators, see: <https://doi.org/10.1787/b4968bbc-en>.

For more information on the methodology used during the data collection for each indicator, the references to the sources and the specific notes for each country, see Education at a Glance 2026: Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes, <https://doi.org/10.1787/dcf64a14-en>.

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The full book is available in English: OECD (2026), *Education at a Glance 2026: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/b4968bbc-en>.

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