



## How much time do teachers spend on teaching and non-teaching activities?

- The annual number of teaching hours of teachers differs greatly from one country to another and tends to decrease as the level of education increases.
- On average across countries, teachers spend half of their working time in non-teaching activities including planning lessons, marking and collaborating with other teachers.
- Keeping order in the classroom, generally the biggest concern for new teachers, occupies an average of 13% of all teachers' time across countries.
- Schools could further benefit from developing ways to use teachers' time more efficiently so that they could devote more time to professional development, teaching-related work and learning.

The attractiveness of the teaching profession is influenced not just by the level of salaries, but by working conditions. Two aspects influencing teachers' working conditions are the number of hours they must work and the number of children they must teach. Although statutory working hours and teaching hours only partly determine teachers' actual workload, they do offer valuable insight into the demands placed on primary and secondary teachers in different countries.

### *The number of teaching hours of teachers differs greatly from one country to another.*

There are significant differences across countries in the number of teaching hours per year required of a public school teacher. For example, lower secondary school teachers are required to teach an average of 694 hours per year in OECD countries. However, this teaching time varies significantly across countries and ranges from under 600 hours in Finland, Greece and the Russian Federation to over 1 000 hours in Argentina, Chile and Mexico. Similar variations are observed at other levels of education (Figure 1). The distribution of teaching time throughout the year also varies. On average across OECD countries, teachers at lower secondary level of education spread their working hours across 38 weeks or 182 days of teaching. Among OECD countries, the number of teaching days ranges from 152 days in Greece to 203 in Brazil.

Statutory teaching time is defined as the scheduled number of 60 minute sessions per year that a full-time teacher teaches a group or class of students in public educational institutions, as set by policy.

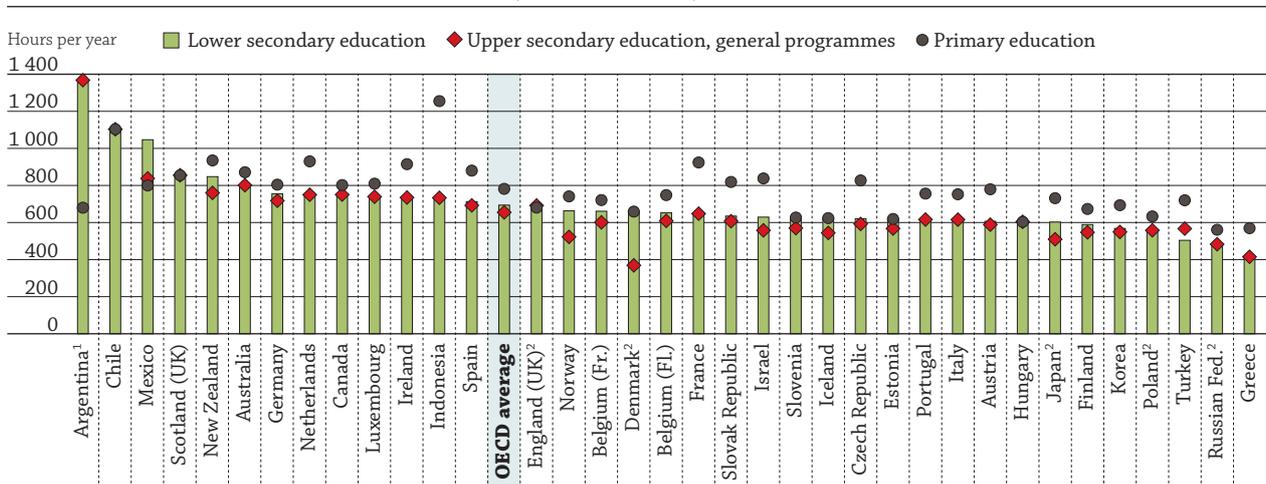
Working time refers to the number of hours that a full-time teacher is expected to work as set by policy. It does not include paid overtime. Depending on a country's formal policy, working time can refer to:

- the time directly associated with teaching and other curricular activities for students, such as assignments and tests
- the time directly associated with teaching and hours devoted to other activities related to teaching, such as preparing lessons, counselling students, correcting assignments and tests, professional development, meetings with parents, staff meetings, and general school tasks.

There has been little or no change in teaching hours on average over the last decade. However, a small number of countries have seen teaching time in lower secondary education change by at least 10% between 2000 and 2012. In Spain, lower secondary school teachers were required to teach 26% more hours in 2012 than in 2000. In contrast, teaching time fell in Mexico and the Netherlands by 135 and 117 hours respectively. In Scotland, the Teachers' Agreement, "A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century", introduced a 35 hour working week for all teachers and a phased reduction of maximum teaching time to 22.5 hours per week for primary, secondary and special school teachers in 2001.



Figure 1. **Number of teaching hours per year, by level of education (2012)**  
*Net statutory contact time in public institutions*



1. Year of reference 2011.

2. Actual teaching time.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the number of teaching hours per year in lower secondary education.

Source: OECD (2014), *Education at a Glance 2014: OECD Indicators*, Table D4.1. See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm)).

**The higher the level of education, the less time teachers spend in the classroom.**

In the great majority of countries, teaching time tends to decrease as the level of education increases. In the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Indonesia, Israel and Turkey, for example, primary school teachers have at least 30% more annual teaching time than lower secondary school teachers. Argentina, England and Mexico are the only economies in which the teaching load for primary school teachers is lighter than for lower secondary school teachers.

This pattern is less evident when lower secondary education is compared with upper secondary education: teaching time at the lower and upper secondary levels is similar across most countries. However, in Mexico and Norway the annual required teaching time at the lower secondary level is at least 20% more than at the upper secondary level. This difference rises to almost 80% in Denmark.

**Workload and teaching load requirements may evolve throughout a teacher's career.**

Within countries, the number of teaching hours may evolve during a teacher's career. In some countries, such as in Germany, teachers might have a reduced teaching load when first starting out, as part of their induction programmes. Some countries also encourage older teachers to stay in the teaching profession by diversifying their duties and reducing their teaching hours. For instance, in Portugal and Quebec, experienced teachers can work as mentors for student teachers. Similarly, in England and Wales, the new career grade of Advanced Skills Teacher (AST), introduced in 1998, is designed to supply an alternative route for career development for teachers who wish to stay in the classroom. Their role is to provide pedagogic leadership within their own and other schools.

**On average, teachers spend half of their working time on non-teaching activities.**

Teachers' work is composed of a multitude of often competing responsibilities. The 2013 OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) examined lower-secondary teachers' reported working hours overall as well as the time they report spending on various work-related tasks during a typical week (Figure 2). It is important to note that these findings are meant to paint a picture of the typical work week across the entire teacher population in each country and therefore include responses from teachers working full time and part time and teaching in public and private institutions.

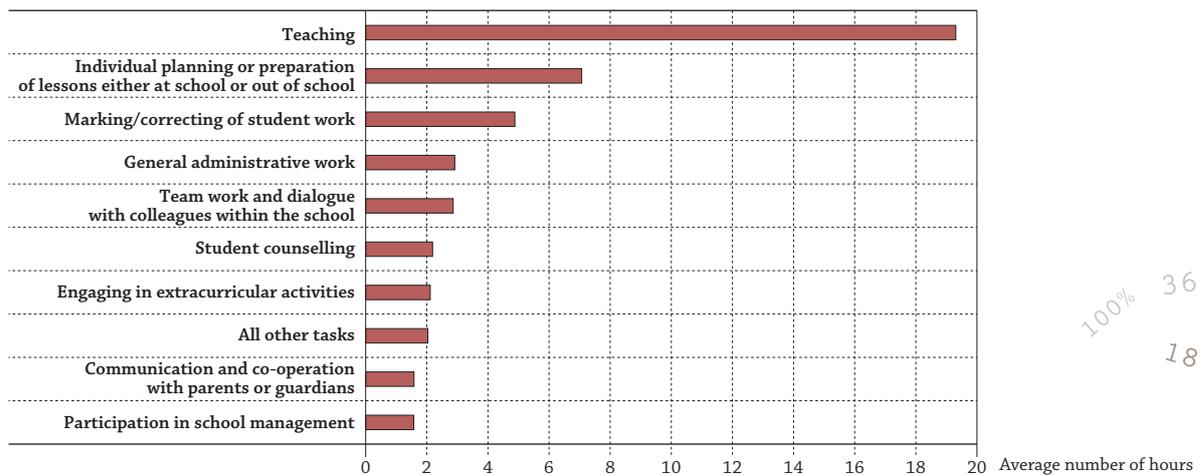
Across countries, teachers report spending an average of 38 hours in total on teaching and non-teaching activities, ranging from 29 hours in Chile and Italy to 54 hours in Japan. As expected, teachers report spending half of this time teaching. The overall average is for 19 of those 38 hours to be spent teaching per week, ranging from 15 hours

201 6.8% 2014 9.5% 2014 9.8% 2014 9.8% 2014 9.8%



in Norway to 27 hours in Chile. It is noteworthy that, despite their long working hours, teachers in Japan report spending only 18 hours teaching per week, meaning they spend substantially more time on all other tasks related to their job than they do actually teaching (see list of tasks in Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Teachers' working hours**  
Average number of 60-minute hours lower secondary education teachers report having spent on the following activities during the most recent complete calendar week<sup>1</sup>



**Note:** The sum of hours spent on different tasks may not be equal to the number of total working hours because teachers were asked about these elements separately. It is also important to note that data presented in this table represent the averages from all the teachers surveyed, including part-time teachers. 1. A "complete" calendar week is one that was not shortened by breaks, public holidays, sick leave, etc. Also includes tasks that took place during weekends, evenings or other off-classroom hours.

Items are ranked in descending order, based on the average number of hours spent on the following activities during the most recent complete calendar week.

**Source:** OECD, TALIS 2013 Database, Table 6.12.

A large proportion of working time spent teaching may indicate that less time is devoted to tasks such as assessing students and preparing lessons. Among non-teaching activities, the average time spent on planning or preparing lessons is seven hours, ranging from 5 hours in Finland, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands and Poland to 10 hours in Croatia. Teachers spend 5 hours marking student work on average but approximately twice as long in Portugal (10 hours) and Singapore (9 hours). Other tasks, such as school management, working with parents and extracurricular activities, take only an average of 2 hours per week each. Teachers in Korea and Malaysia report spending twice as much time than the TALIS average on general administrative work (6 hours). It is also notable that extracurricular activities are an important aspect of teachers' work in Japan, where teachers report spending 8 hours on extracurricular activities, far above the TALIS average of 2 hours.

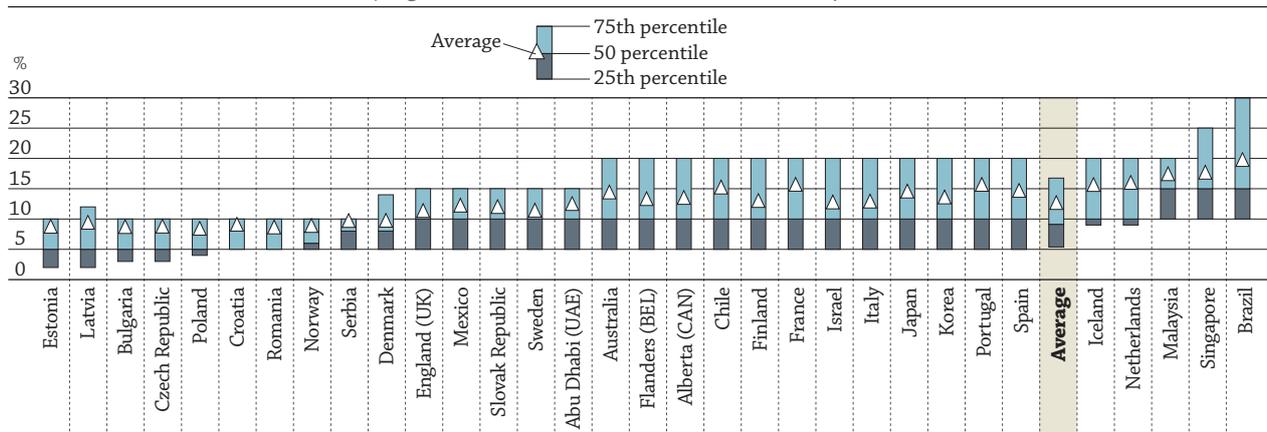
**Schools could make more effective use of lesson time.**

The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study has found a strong association between classroom climate and the performance of 15 year-olds. Classrooms and schools with more disciplinary problems are less conducive to learning, since teachers have to spend more time creating an orderly environment before instruction can begin. Keeping order in the classroom, generally the biggest concern for new teachers, occupies an average of 13% of all teachers' time across countries (Figure 3). Significant variations can also be seen among countries. Thus, half of all teachers in Brazil, Malaysia and Singapore report spending 15% or more of their class time on keeping order in the classroom. In contrast, half of all teachers in Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Romania report spending 5% or less of their class time on keeping order. Similarly, nearly one-third of teachers on average report losing quite a lot of time to behavioural problems or waiting for students to take their seats. One in four teachers (26%) report that there is a lot of disruptive noise in their classrooms. These issues seem particularly problematic for teachers in Brazil, where more than half of teachers agree that these are issues they have to deal with in their classroom.



Teaching time could be used more efficiently. Several countries could benefit from interventions that facilitate more effective use of classroom time. Additionally, giving teachers the opportunity to participate in professional development activities – both those related to improving their practice and those that focus on using class time effectively – could promote a positive school climate and improve the overall performance of schools.

**Figure 3. Percentiles of time spent on keeping order in the classroom**  
Distribution within each country of the percentage of class time teachers report spending on keeping order in the classroom in lower secondary education<sup>1</sup>



1. The chart shows the percentage of time spent on keeping order in the classroom for the second and the third quartile (middle) of the distribution within each country.

Countries are ranked in ascending order, based on the 25th percentile of the time teachers report spending on keeping order in the classroom in lower secondary education.

Source: OECD, TALIS 2013 Database, Table 6.12.

**The bottom line:** The number of teaching hours per teacher differs greatly from one country to another and tends to decrease as the level of education increases. On average across countries, teachers spend half of their working time on non-teaching activities and 13% of their teaching time keeping order in the classroom. Schools could benefit from developing ways to use teachers' time more efficiently so that they could devote more time to professional development, teaching-related work and learning.

**For more information**

OECD (2014), *Education at a Glance 2014: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2014-en>.

OECD (2014), *TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264196261-en>.

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

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