



European
Commission



Education and Training Monitor 2014

Portugal

1. Key indicators and benchmarks

	Portugal		Trend	EU28 average		Europe 2020 target /
	2010	2013		2010	2013	Benchmark
<i>Europe 2020 headline target</i>						
1. Early leavers from education and training (age 18-24)	28.3%	18.9%	▼	13.9%	12.0%	EU target: 10% National target: 10%
2. Tertiary educational attainment (age 30-34)	24.0%	30.0%	▲	33.6%	36.9%	EU target: 40% National target: 40%

ET 2020 Benchmarks

3. Early childhood education and care (4-years-old until the starting age of compulsory education)	90.1% ⁰⁹	95.0% ¹²	▲	92.1% ⁰⁹	93.9% ¹²	95%	
4. Basic skills Low achievers (15 year-olds; Level 1 or lower in PISA study)	Reading	17.6% ⁰⁹	18.8% ¹²	▲	19.7% ⁰⁹	17.8% ¹²	15%
	Mathematics	23.7% ⁰⁹	24.9% ¹²	▲	22.3% ⁰⁹	22.1% ¹²	15%
	Science	16.5% ⁰⁹	19.0% ¹²	▲	17.8% ⁰⁹	16.6% ¹²	15%
5. Learning mobility	Initial vocational training (IVET)	0.6%	0.7% ¹²	▲	0.6%	0.7% ¹²	
	Higher Education	-	2.4% ¹²	:	-	1.2% ¹²	
		2.9%	4.7% ¹²	▲	6.0%	6.9% ¹²	
6. Employment rate of recent graduates (age 20-34) having left education 1-3 years before reference year	ISCED 3-6	80.6%	67.8%	▼	77.4%	75.5%	82%
	ISCED 3-4	77.0%	64.1%	▼	72.1%	69.5%	
	ISCED 5-6	83.4%	72.0%	▼	82.7%	80.9%	
7. Adult participation in lifelong learning (age 25-64)	5.7%	9.7%	▲	9.1%	10.5% ^b	15%	

Other ET 2020 Indicators

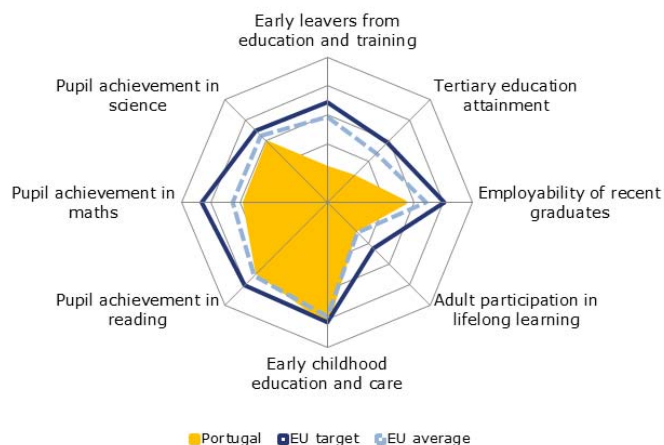
8. Investment in education and training	a. General government expenditure on education (% of GDP)	7.1%	5.7% ¹²	▼	5.5%	5.3% ¹²	
	b. Annual expenditure on public and private educational institutions per pupil/student in € PPS	ISCED 1-2	:	:	:	€6,063.74 ^e	€6,297.16 ^{11, e}
		ISCED 3-4	:	:	:	€7,022.35 ^e	€6,650.87 ^{11, e}
	ISCED 5-6	€ 7,713	€ 7,089 ¹¹	▼	€9,764.30 ^e	€9,474.80 ^{11, e}	
9. Transversal competences	Digital competences	a. Pupils in grade 4 (ISCED 1) using computers at school	:	59.9% ¹¹	:	60.7% ⁰⁷	64.7% ¹¹
		b. Individuals aged 16-74 with high computer skills ¹	27.0% ⁰⁹	29.0% ¹²	▲	25.0% ⁰⁹	26.0% ¹²
	Problem solving in technology rich environments	c. Low achievers (no or insuff. computer experience) ²	:	:	:	:	16.9% ^{12, EU17}
		d. High achievers (PAAAC level 2 and above)	:	:	:	:	33.2% ^{12, EU13}
	Entrepreneurial competences	e. Individuals aged 18-64 who believe to have the required skills and knowledge to start a business	:	49.0%	:	:	42.3% ^{a, EU18}
	Foreign language skills	f. ISCED 2 students at proficiency level B1 or higher in first foreign language ³	:	30.3% ¹¹	:	:	43.5% ^{11, EU13}
g. ISCED 2 students learning two or more foreign languages		64.4%	78.4% ¹²	▲	60.6%	63.0% ¹¹	
10. Basic skills of adults	Literacy	Low achievers (< PAAAC proficiency level 2)	:	:	:	19.9% ^{12, EU17}	
		High achievers (PAAAC proficiency level 3 and >)	:	:	:	43.3% ^{12, EU17}	
	Numeracy	Low achievers (< PAAAC proficiency level 2)	:	:	:	23.6% ^{12, EU17}	
		High achievers (PAAAC proficiency level 3 and >)	:	:	:	40.9% ^{12, EU17}	
11. Skills for future labour market Projected change in employment 2010-2020 in %	High qualification	:	+10.3%	:	:	+12.4%	
	Medium qualification	:	+26.7%	:	:	+2.1%	
	Low qualification	:	-12.9%	:	:	-13.2%	
12. Teachers	a. Teachers aged >50 teaching in public and private at ISCED 2-3 - as % of total teachers teaching in ISCED 2-3 ⁴	22.0%	26.3% ¹²	▲	:	:	
	b. Percentage of teachers who undertook some professional development activities in the previous 12 months	:	88.5%	:	:	84.6% ^{EU19}	
13. Vocational education and training	Percentage of vocational students at ISCED 3	38.8%	43.6% ¹²	▲	50.1%	50.4% ¹²	

Source: Cedefop: 11 / EAC: 5ab / European Survey on Language Competences (ESLC): 9f / Eurostat (COFOG): 8a / Eurostat (ISS): 9b / Eurostat (LFS): 1, 2, 6, 7 / Eurostat (UOE): 3, 5, 8b, 9g, 12a, 13 / Global Entrepreneurship Monitor: 9e / IEA TIMSS: 9a / OECD (PIAAC): 9cd, 10 / OECD (PISA): 4 / OECD (TALIS): 12b

Notes: ⁰⁷ = 2007, ⁰⁸ = 2008, ⁰⁹ = 2009, ¹⁰ = 2010, ¹¹ = 2011, ¹² = 2012, a = unweighted average, b = break, e = estimate, p = provisional.

¹ = having carried out 5-6 specific computer related activities. Caution is advised when interpreting comparability over time, due to developments in the implementation of questions related to computer skills, ² = results cover people who have no computer experience or failed the ICT test, ³ = average of skills tested in reading, listening, writing, ⁴ = in some Member States, ISCED 3 includes level 4 (CZ, EE, ES, IE, NL, FI, UK), while in others (IT, LU, NL) only public institutions figures are reported.

Figure: Position in relation to highest (outer ring) and lowest performers (centre)



Source: DG Education and Culture calculations, based on data from Eurostat (LFS 2013 and UOE 2012) and OECD (PISA 2012). Note: all scores are set between a maximum (the highest performers visualised by the outer ring) and a minimum (the lowest performers visualised by the centre of the chart).

2. Main challenges

Portugal has achieved the strongest improvement in early school leaving of all EU countries since 2009. However the main challenge is to continue improving the effectiveness of its education system — in terms of attainment levels, organisation and graduate employability — whilst constrained by the need for fiscal consolidation. Recent reforms whose effective implementation needs to be monitored aim at improving the quality of both general education and vocational education and training, and, in particular, to reduce the rates of early school leaving and poor performance amongst students. Portugal's tertiary education attainment rate is improving, but this has failed to increase the employment rate amongst young people proportionally. Moreover, adult participation in lifelong learning has been falling, and there is also an urgent need to identify, adapt and adopt practices which will help tackle the mismatch between the skills offered by the workforce and those demanded by the labour market.

The 2014 European Semester country-specific recommendation (CSR 4) on education and training focused on: (i) improving the quality and labour-market relevance of the education system in order to reduce early school leaving and address low educational performance rates; (ii) ensuring efficient public expenditure in education; (iii) reducing skills mismatches, including by increasing the quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training and fostering co-operation with the business sector; (iv) enhancing cooperation between public research and business and fostering knowledge transfer.¹

3. Improving resource efficiency and effectiveness

3.1 Investment in education

General government expenditure on education as percentage of GDP has been above the EU average in Portugal in recent years, but fell from 7.1 % in 2010 (compared to an EU average of 5.5 %) to 5.7 % in 2013 (compared to an EU average of 5.3 %). This change is the result of recent fiscal consolidation measures. In 2013, education was the area which suffered the largest decrease in government expenditure, with funding for primary and secondary education reduced by 11.0% in real terms as compared to 2012 levels.² Total expenditure of EUR 5.8 billion was allocated to basic (ages 6 to 14) and secondary (ages 15 to 17) education and school administration programmes for 2014, representing a further decrease of 7.6 % as compared to the previous year. This relates mainly to a reduction in funding for the day-to-day operation of state-funded schools. Expenditure on pre-school education was reduced from EUR 503.1 million in 2013 to EUR 435.6 million in 2014.³ Funding for higher education has been reduced by 4.1 %. Although almost half of the reduction in spending on education in 2013 related to a lower level of investment in *Parque Escolar*⁴ in that year, the budget for 2014 includes an expected

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2014/csr2014_council_portugal_en.pdf

² *Económico*, 17/10/2012 http://economico.sapo.pt/noticias/educacao-e-afinal-a-area-com-maior-corte-orcamental_154155.html.

³ Opinion on Law Proposal no 177/XII/3^a, 'Approval of Major Planning Options for 2014'.

⁴ A public organisation responsible for the planning, management, development and implementation of the modernisation programme for state-funded secondary schools and other educational institutions that has been being implemented since 2007.

training is to adapt teaching practices to the specificities of different educational or training institutions and their respective students or trainees, and to ensure that the reforms of the educational system introduced most recently are implemented effectively, in particular that the new curriculum targets for basic skills in areas including mathematics, Portuguese language and science are applied.

4. Increasing employability

4.1 Work-based learning, apprenticeships and adult learning

The employment rate of young people aged 20-34 years having completed upper secondary or tertiary education within the last three years has fallen sharply in recent years. From an above-EU average level of 82.6% in 2009, it fell significantly to 76% in 2012 and further to approximately 68% in 2013, a level below the EU average. In addition, the employment rate of those having recently completed upper secondary education is lower than the EU average. The proportion of young people aged 15-29 not in education, employment or training is higher than the EU average (16.4 % compared to 15.9% in 2013).¹⁴

The proportion of students in upper secondary education who are enrolled in vocational courses was 43.6% in 2012. Vocational education and training participation rate is increasing, but it is still below the EU average of 50.4%. The data on participation in upper secondary vocational education and training also reveal significant differences between the patterns seen for men and for women. In addition to the participation in vocational education and training being systematically higher amongst men than women, the proportion of men choosing this path increased from 46.5% to 48.4% between 2011 and 2012, whilst the participation rate for women saw only a small increase from 38.4% to 38.8% over the same period.¹⁵

Adult participation in lifelong learning has been falling since 2011, reaching 9.7% in 2013, while the EU average increased from 8.9% in 2011 to 10.5% in 2013.

Wide-ranging changes are being made to the vocational education and training system in an effort to reduce early school leaving and better align the skills being taught with the needs of the labour market. Measures introduced to adapt the curricular pattern of vocational education and training included: an increase in in-work training time from 420 to between 600 and 840 hours; possibility of additional hours of training adequate to the capacity of the companies' structure; the creation of a vocational centres network which will provide guidance on education and training; and the launch of new vocational courses at basic (age 14) and secondary (ages 15 to 17) education level with 46% of the total curricular time allocated to in-work training¹⁶. Increased flexibility between the academic and the vocational education and training paths should increase the attractiveness of vocational education and training. Centres for qualification and vocational education have been set up to inform and provide guidance to young students, and help them to make appropriate choices based on their individual profiles. This network will also be responsible for the recognition, validation and certification of competences.

Technical and professional education continued to be promoted also as part of lifelong learning. In 2014/2015 the number of 1st year classes of Adults Education and Training and other offers of regular teaching directed to adults will nearly triple. There are also new standardized quantitative and qualitative assessments for students increased after having set up a new process to replace the New Opportunities programme in March 2013.

The national implementation plan for the Youth Guarantee aims to ensure that young people under 30 years of age receive an offer of employment, education or training within four months of becoming unemployed or completing formal education¹⁷. The measures set out include: the provision of vocational education and training courses, promotion of the *Vida Ativa* ('Active Life') and *Emprego Jovem Ativo* ('Youth Employment Activity') programmes; provision of courses in specialised technological skills, internships and work placements; incentives for employers to take on new staff; and measures to support entrepreneurship¹⁸. Partnerships are currently being developed between the different stakeholders, and a new monitoring system to be used in schools will help to identify drop-outs. The *Retomar* ('Restart') programme, involving representatives from the government, students, and directors of schools and institutions for vocational education, focuses on measures to encourage people who dropped out of university to return to higher education.

¹⁴ See additional contextual indicators at: <http://ec.europa.eu/education/monitor>.

¹⁵ Eurostat database — participation and enrolment in education by sex.

¹⁶ Law n. 4/2013 of July 12th and law-decree n. 139/2012 of July 5th.

¹⁷ Council of Ministers Resolution no 104/2013 of 31 December.

¹⁸ For more information please see Portugal's 2014 national reform programme.

4.2 Modernising and internationalising higher education

Although still at a relatively low level, rates of enrolment in higher education are increasing in Portugal. The number of higher education graduates has more than doubled over the last 11 years. In 2013, however, the percentage of 30-34 year olds having attained tertiary level education (30.0 %) was significantly below the EU average (36.9 %) and the Europe 2020 national target of 40 %. In 2014, the number of applications to higher education increased for the first time since 2008 and the number of students placed in vocational courses, either at universities or polytechnic institutes, increased 18% compared to 2013¹⁹.

At present, entry into the labour market is difficult even for the high-skilled. While a university degree clearly improves an individual's employment prospects, the employment rate of graduates is well below the EU average and only very marginally higher than that of young people having completed only lower secondary education.²⁰

More students are now able to apply for scholarships as a result of a change in the eligibility conditions introduced in January 2014. A number of new technical professional courses (Tesp) were also offered for the first time in 2014, as a way of increasing the numbers of students completing education to this level and of optimising the use of the available training resources. These four-semester courses are worth 120 ECTS credits (credits in the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) and are classified at ISCED level 5. They include general, scientific, technical and in-work training. Completing a technical professional course does not of itself lead to the awarding of a degree but can be recognised as part of a degree programme.

The University of Porto, University of Minho and University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro are coming together to form a consortium of universities of the North, Uninorte, with the aim of promoting cooperation between the institutions and developing a regional higher education strategy. The consortium is also intended as a way of increasing the mobility of students and teachers, including by attracting international students and researchers, and encouraging joint applications to European funded scholarships.

4.3 Transversal competences, skills relevance and learning mobility, new ways of teaching and new technologies

The percentage of individuals aged 16-24 who describe themselves as having a high level of computer skills had increased in the years until 2011, and has been consistently above the EU average, despite a drop in 2012. Schools are relatively well equipped and have access to fast broadband, and the proportion of desktop computers connected to the internet is above the EU average.

A national strategy for the use of ICT in education is set out in Portugal's Digital Agenda. It encourages educational communities to use new generation networks by providing services and content of educational interest, improving the infrastructure (high-speed broadband and internet access in classrooms) and the technological equipment (desktop computers, video projectors and interactive whiteboards) in place in state-funded schools. The strategy also includes initiatives relating to curricular and extra-curricular activities, online collaboration, digital learning resources, e-safety, integration of ICT into the curriculum, and continuing the dissemination of professional development.²¹ The Schools' Portal is a bank of educational resources, in which students, teachers and trainers each have a personal space. It provides learning resources and allows users to share ideas on best practice as relates to the use of blogs for educational purposes. Plans for the further development of the portal include the creation of a virtual platform. It will contain programmes for learning maths, and will also provide online educational content for all core subjects, and will allow enrolments and certificates to be managed online.

Adults aged 18-64 rated their own entrepreneurial skills less positively in 2012 than they had in 2007. Over the last two years, however, the proportion of the working-age adult population considering themselves to have the required skills and knowledge to start a business has remained stable, and is, at 47 %, slightly higher than the EU average (42 % in 2012). Although the average number of foreign languages learned by students at ISCED level 2 has fallen, from 1.9 in 2006 to 1.7 in 2012, it is still higher than the EU average (1.5 in 2011). In 2012, English became compulsory for the second and third cycle of basic education (ages 10 to 14) and at the beginning of the second cycle students have to choose a second foreign language.

¹⁹ Direção-Geral de estatísticas de Educação e Ciência.

²⁰ For the 25-29 age group, the employment rate of tertiary graduates is 50.1 % compared to an EU average of 78.5 %, while the employment rate of people with at most lower secondary education is 48.2 % (data from the 2013 Eurostat labour force survey).

²¹ Portugal's 2015 Digital Agenda, prepared by the agency responsible for 'knowledge society', part of the Ministry of Education and Science.

The Institute of Educational Assessment (*Instituto de Avaliação Educativa*) signed a protocol which will allow students to take an English test certifying their level according to international standards as of the 2014/15 academic year. The tests for schools are being implemented from March 2014.

During the 2012/13 school year, Portugal was among the top ten destinations for Erasmus students, with 2.2% of the total student population in higher education being from outside the country, above the EU average of 1.1%. A strategic plan is being developed for the internationalisation of the Portuguese higher education system. It involves: agreements with foreign institutions regarding the mobility of students, teachers and researchers; the creation of joint degrees; participation in European and international projects; and agreements to accept students from specific regional areas (namely Europe, Africa, Brazil and China) through the creation of the International Student Statute.

Portugal has successfully completed the referencing of the Portuguese qualifications framework to the European qualifications framework, which has been in place since October 2010, and will now start to include the European qualifications framework levels in diplomas and certificates²². Centres for qualification and vocational education were opened in 2013. Their role is to encourage young people and other adults to enrol on education or training programmes and to conduct the processes necessary for the recognition, validation and certification of learning skills acquired in the context of formal, non-formal or informal education. The national qualifications catalogue is being redefined in terms of learning outcomes.

5. Tackling inequalities

5.1 Starting strong: improving early childhood education and care and tackling early school leaving

Portugal is still among the group of European countries where early school leaving rates are very high (18.9% in 2013, compared to an EU average of 12.0%) and still far from reaching the EU and national target of 10%. Early school leaving is more common amongst students born in Portugal than those born outside the country.²³ Nevertheless, a notable improvement has been seen in recent years. Participation in early childhood education and care, which can also be relevant for tackling high levels of early school leaving, has increased over the past year, reaching a level of 95.0% in 2012, slightly above the EU average (93.9% in 2012).

Both a global monitoring system and a program supporting students at risk of dropping out of school (integration programme for education and training - PIEF) have been in place for several years. Portugal also launched the 2013-20 national strategy for integration of Roma communities in 2013, the first national plan specifically designed to improve the integration of Roma communities in the areas of education, healthcare, housing and employment.

The scope of the work undertaken by local intervention teams in promoting universal access to early intervention services in the area of early childhood education and care, was extended in 2013. In addition, responsibility for the third programme for educational territories of priority intervention (TEIP3) is being transferred to the regions. These policies include measures to prevent and reduce early school leaving, particularly amongst vulnerable children and young people from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. Lastly, the programme for the expansion and development of pre-primary education has introduced curricular guidelines for pre-primary education from the ages of three to six. The development of guidelines for the care of 0-3 year olds is at an advanced stage and shall be available online in 2015²⁴. All relevant stakeholders are being consulted as part of the development of the programme.

5.2 Basic skills of students

Whilst the performance of 15 year olds' in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study has improved over the last decade, the results from 2012 show the proportion of students in this age group performing poorly in reading, mathematics and science to have slightly increased between 2009 and 2012. The levels are still however far below those recorded in 2006. In all subjects, the proportion of low achievers has reduced more rapidly amongst girls than boys.²⁵ There is a strong relationship between socio-economic status

²² By the first quarter of 2014, EQF levels were included on VET qualifications (young and adults) corresponding to EQF levels 1, 2 and 4 and on almost all qualifications in adult education at EQF levels 2 and 3.

²³ See additional contextual indicators at: <http://ec.europa.eu/education/monitor>.

²⁴ Directorate General of Education of the Portuguese Ministry of Education and Science (pt), in: <http://www.dgicd.min-edu.pt/educacaoinfancia/index.php?s=directorio&pid=31>.

²⁵ <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results.htm>.

and student performance, as well as a large gap in performance both between native-born and first-generation migrants and between native-born and second-generation migrants.

The results of the national exams taken at the end of school education (age 17-18) from 2013 show students' performance to have deteriorated in the majority of subjects, including Portuguese language (average mark of 8.9 out of 20) and mathematics (average mark of 8.2 out of 20).²⁶

The requirements governing school curricula continued to be updated. In 2012, the Minister of Education and Science approved new requirements for Portuguese language, mathematics and ICT for all levels within basic education (ages 6 to 14). This was followed by the introduction of new requirements for the second (ages 10 to 11) and third (ages 12 to 14) cycles of basic education in 2013. In 2014, the Ministry published new syllabi and requirements for physics and chemistry for secondary education (exams being taken at the end of the penultimate year of school education, at age 16-17) and for Portuguese language and mathematics for upper secondary education (exams being taken at the end of school education, at age 17-18).

The structure of primary and secondary education curricula is being revised and new curriculum goals introduced across all subjects. Changes were already made in basic education during the academic year 2013/14 and reforms will continue in secondary education in 2015/16. The government implemented a programme for teacher training that is still in progress and published resources and material, including resources with multimedia features, for teachers and educators in order to support the implementation of the new curricular goals in basic education for Portuguese language, mathematics and English. New rules were introduced in 2014 allowing schools with autonomy agreements to enjoy greater curricular flexibility.

²⁶ Preliminary analysis of the 2013 national final exams (pt): GAVE. *Análise Preliminar dos Resultados – Provas finais de ciclo: Exames finais nacionais* 2013. In: http://www.gave.min-edu.pt/np3content/?newsId=24&fileName=PrelimReport_Exams_2013_PDFCon.pdf