

CO3.2: Gender differences in university graduates by fields of study

Definitions and methodology

This indicator provides information on the subjects that male and female students tend to study at university by looking at the gender distribution of graduates in certain subjects. This gives an insight into the skills and expertise that men and women then bring to the labour market, and into how differences in subjects studied at university may affect future career and earnings patterns.

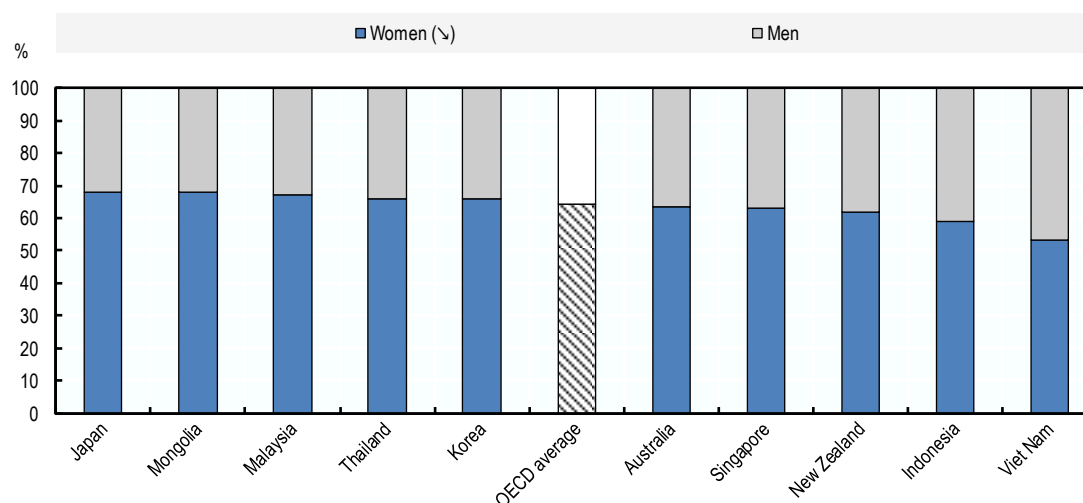
Data on graduates by field of study are collected through the OECD Education Statistics and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, as well as national statistics for some countries. Graduates are classified as having successfully followed and completed a university programme and graduated in the specified year; this is then further disaggregated by gender and subject.

Key findings

In Asia-Pacific countries, as also across all OECD countries, the majority of tertiary graduates in arts and humanities subjects are women (Chart CO3.2.A). Looking across the covered Asia-Pacific countries, women's shares of arts and humanities graduates ranges from around 53-59% in Indonesia and Viet Nam to 67-68% in Japan, Malaysia and Mongolia.

Chart CO3.2.A. **Men's and women's shares of degrees awarded in humanities and arts subjects**

Distribution (%) of tertiary degrees awarded in humanities and arts qualifications by sex, 2019



Note: Data for Thailand refer to 2020, Japan, Korea and Indonesia to 2018, Viet Nam to 2017, Singapore to 2016 and Malaysia to 2009. Qualifications classified under ISCED 11 levels 5-8, only.

Sources: [Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand and OECD average: OECD Education at a Glance 2021](#); [Singapore and Viet Nam: UNESCO UIS](#); [Thailand: Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2020 \(Data at 31 August 2020\)](#); [Malaysia: Data source UNICEF 2009](#); [Mongolia: Education Statistics 2019](#).

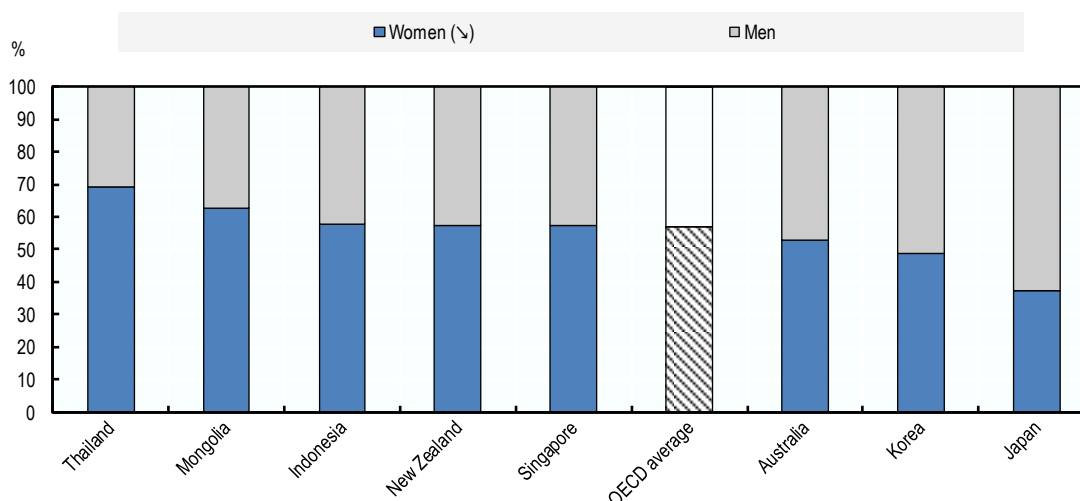
In most of the covered Asia-Pacific countries, the majority of graduates in business, administration and law are also women (Chart CO3.2.B). In Australia, Indonesia, New

Other relevant indicators: Employment profiles over the life course (LMF1.4); Educational attainment by gender (CO3.1); and, Literacy scores by gender at age 15 (CO3.4).

Zealand and Singapore, around 53-58% of graduates in business, administration and law are women; and in Mongolia and Thailand women make up about two-thirds (62-69%) of graduates in business, administration and law. The two main exceptions are Korea (49%) and especially Japan (37%), where women make up less than half of graduates in business, administration and law.

Chart CO3.2.B. **Men's and women's shares of degrees awarded in business, administration and law**

Distribution (%) of tertiary degrees awarded in business, administration and law by sex, 2019



Note: Data for Thailand refer to 2020, Indonesia, Japan and Korea to 2018, and Singapore to 2016. Qualifications classified under ISCED 11 levels 5-8, only..

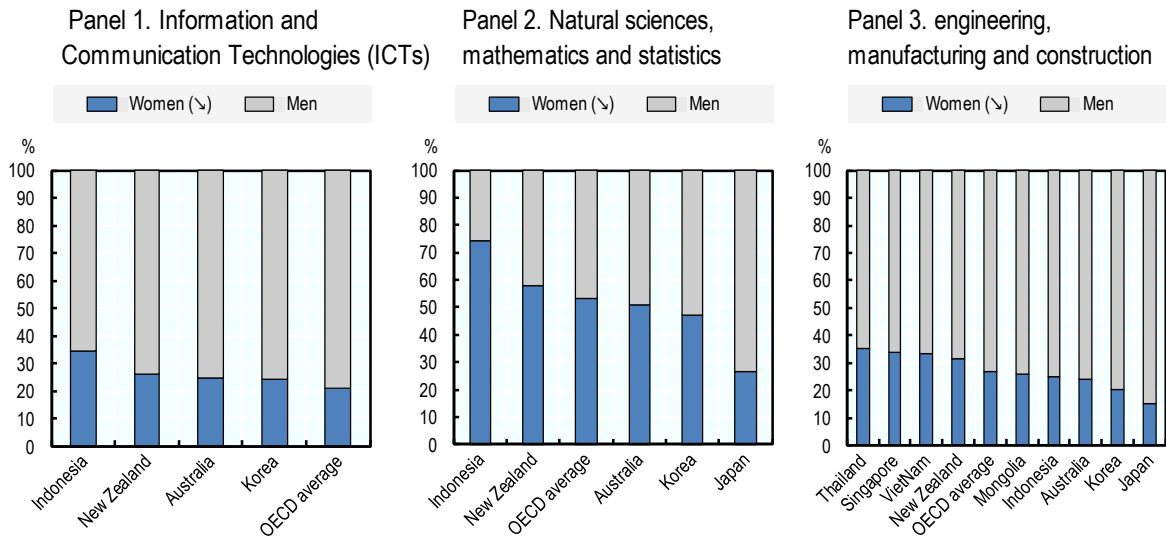
Sources: [Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand and OECD average: OECD Education at a Glance 2021](#); [Singapore: UNESCO UIS](#); [Thailand: Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2020 \(Data at 31 August 2020\)](#); [Mongolia: Education Statistics 2019](#).

Across the covered Asia-Pacific countries, women are under-represented among graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects (Chart CO3.2.C). Women's share of tertiary graduates in STEM varies slightly across the covered countries, but except in some countries in the field of science and mathematics, women still make up only about 36-37% of STEM graduates. In Japan, women make up less than 30% of all graduates in STEM, and only 15% in the field of Engineering.

Comparability and data issues

The UOE data collection manual gives detailed instructions to national correspondents on the mapping of subjects and fields of study. For more detail on specific countries, see the notes for Indicator A.3 provided in OECD (2021) Education at a Glance 2021 Annex 3 (https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2021_Annex3.pdf) and on UNESCO UIS.Stat (<http://data.uis.unesco.org/>).

Chart CO3.2.C. Men's and women's shares of degrees awarded in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)
 Distribution (%) of tertiary degrees awarded in STEM by sex, 2019



Note: Data for Malaysia refer to 2018. Qualifications classified under ISCED 11 levels 5-8, only.

Sources: [Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand and OECD average: OECD Education at a Glance 2021](#); [Singapore and Viet Nam: UNESCO UIS](#); Thailand: Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2020 (Data at 31 August 2020); Mongolia: Education Statistics 2019.

Sources and further reading: OECD Education Database and OECD (2021), *Education at a Glance 2018: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris - <https://doi.org/10.1787/b35a14e5-en>; OECD (2017), *The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle*, OECD Publishing, Paris - <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264281318-en>