



EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND CULTURE  
EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EACEA)

EACEA.A - Erasmus+, EU Solidarity Corps  
EACEA.A.6 - Platforms, Studies and Analysis



# Joint Data Collection Manual

## Instruction Time

School year **2024/25**

### ***Guidelines to the Data collection***

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## Introduction

### 0.1 Objectives of the survey

The Eurydice Network and the OECD **NESLI Network** have conducted this joint data collection on instruction time since 2014. The development of a common tool was aimed at simplifying work of data providers at the national level and avoiding overlaps and inconsistencies. This joint data collection is conducted biennially.

Previously, both organisations had been collecting and analysing data on instruction time for many years. Since 1993, the Eurydice Network had regularly published information on the organisation of school time in the countries participating in the network in several publications, notably in all editions of *Key Data on Education*. Since 2010, a regularly updated report on instruction time is available on the Eurydice website. The OECD has been collecting internationally comparable data on instruction time through the INES Network for the collection and adjudication of system-level descriptive information on educational structures, policies and practices (NESLI, previously Network C) since 1992. These data have been regularly published in the OECD's flagship publication *Education at a Glance*.

The first part of this manual explains the scope of the data collection, the common definitions and the subject categories. The second part of the document describes the data collection instrument (EXCEL sheets) and contains some indications and recommendations for its use.

### 0.2 Timeline and submission of questionnaires

The joint data collection on instruction time is organised jointly by Eurydice and OECD according to the following timeline:

24 October 2024	Final questionnaires to be sent to Eurydice and NESLI members
06 December 2024	Deadline for data providers to return the completed questionnaire
28 February 2025	End of cleaning phase

- Countries (or regions within countries) that are **members of both Eurydice and the OECD NESLI Network** should send their completed questionnaire to the contact people at EACEA A6 and the OECD Secretariat. These countries (or regions within countries) should coordinate at the national level to provide ONLY ONE completed questionnaire per country/region in one single email. In addition, they should coordinate the validation process at national level (between OECD and Eurydice representatives) and agree the final version of the questionnaire (even when adjustments are made during the preparation of OECD and/or Eurydice publications).
- Countries (or regions within countries) that are **only members of the OECD NESLI network** should send their completed questionnaire to the contact persons at the OECD Secretariat.
- Countries (or regions within countries) that are **only members of Eurydice** should send their completed questionnaire to the Eurydice contact person at EACEA A6.

The verification and validation of the data will be made by both organisations together (EACEA A6 and the OECD Secretariat). The validation process will depend on your continued co-operation with both Eurydice and the OECD Secretariat.

### 0.3 Contact

A list of all Heads of national Eurydice Units and national NESLI representatives is available on the respective intranets of each Network.

Eurydice

OECD Secretariat

# 1. Scope

## 1.1 Intended recommended instruction time

This data collection collects information on the recommended instruction time (Intended instruction time) of **compulsory education** from the first year of primary education until the end of full-time compulsory education. In grades where **both** vocational and general programmes exist, it only refers to the general programmes **in public institutions**. Pre-primary education programmes, even if compulsory, are not within the scope of the present data collection. However, countries where one or more years of pre-primary education are compulsory should specify it in the country-specific notes.

The intended curriculum, its goals, structure, subjects and the notional workload for the students can be based on regulations or standards of the **top-level (central)** authority responsible for education. The **top-level** authority is usually the state, but in some countries the competence lies (or is shared) with the **first territorial unit below the nation (in some federal countries or countries with similar types of governmental structures), which is considered as the top-level authority**. These documents may describe the different elements of the curriculum as a whole as well as the instruction time linked to each subject or might only include information on the goals and the content of the subjects and delegate the instruction time definition to other complementary documents. In the present data collection, all these sources of information may be used to complete the time allocation between subjects and educational stages.

**Intended instruction time** can be composed of a **compulsory curriculum** and a **non-compulsory curriculum**. The **compulsory curriculum** refers to the amount and allocation of instruction time that has to be provided in almost every public school and must be attended by almost all students. The compulsory curriculum may be flexible in various ways as local authorities, schools, teachers and/or **students** may have varying degrees of freedom to choose the subjects and/or the allocation of the compulsory instruction time. The **non-compulsory curriculum** refers to the amount of instruction time that public schools must offer on top of the compulsory curriculum but is not mandatory for all students (see Section 2.2 for definitions).

**NB:** The present data collection does not gather information on the **actual instruction time** (but investigates – in the country-specific notes – whether it would be possible to report actual instruction time). The **actual instruction time** can be defined as the average time executed by subject in each grade in the schools that participated in the survey or the national data collection. Actual instruction time refers to the instruction time actually provided at schools, taking into account the cancellation of lessons for a variety of reasons (e.g., school closures, teacher absenteeism and strikes, etc.). The methodology used in the national data collection should be specified in the country-specific note worksheet, in particular

information on the sampling of schools (if applicable) and on the calculation of average instruction time across schools (for example whether the averages are weighted by the number of students in each school).

## 1.2 Public education institutions

The main target of this joint data collection is the intended instruction time that **students are entitled to receive in public schools**. However, countries should also include government-dependent private schools if they enrol a large proportion of the student population. In such cases, the note 'The scope includes both public and government-dependent private institutions' should be included in **both** the country-specific **notes for Eurydice countries and for all countries** (in the sections 'Notes for the interpretation of intended instruction time').

The classification between public and private is made according to whether a public agency or a private entity has the overall control of the institution. Overall control is decided with reference to who has the power to determine the general policies and activities of the institution including the appointment of staff and officers managing the school and, where relevant, the majority of members of the governing board. Ultimate control will usually also extend to the decision to open or close the institution. As many institutions are under the operational control of a governing body, the constitution of that body will also have a bearing on the classification. **This definition derives from the 2014 UOE manual for the data collection on education systems.**

An institution is classified as **public** if it is controlled and managed:

- directly by a public education authority or agency of the country where it is located or,
- either by a government agency directly or by a governing body (council, committee etc.), most of whose members are either appointed by a public authority of the country where it is located or elected by public franchise.

An institution is classified as **private** if:

- it is controlled and managed by a non-governmental organisation (e.g. a church, a trade union or a business enterprise, foreign or international agency), or
- its governing board consists mostly of members not selected by a public agency.

Private institutions can be further classified between government-dependent private and independent private institutions. A **government-dependent private institution** is one that either receives at least 50% of its core funding from government agencies or one whose teaching personnel are paid by a government agency – either directly or through government.

## 1.3 Instruction time

The intended instruction time includes the time a public school is expected to provide instruction to students on all the subjects integrated in the compulsory and non-compulsory curriculum in the school premises or in out-of-school activities which are formal parts of the compulsory programmes. The instruction time excludes:

- breaks between classes or other types of interruptions
- non-compulsory time outside the school day
- time dedicated to homework activities
- individual tutoring or private study
- days when schools are closed for festivities, such as national holidays, and days when all students (of indicated ISCED level or grade) are not expected to be at school because of teacher development days or examination periods.

All the respondents are asked to provide information on the instruction time in hours or periods, and per weeks or per year as stated in their national policy documents or defined in the national surveys.

All the collected information will be disseminated as **annual instruction time in hours of 60 minutes per grade** bearing in mind the number of instruction days per week and per year and the number and length of periods. When the data collected from the national policy document (i.e. national steering

document) is presented in periods (usually between 30 and 55 minutes), per week or per year, calculations are done to obtain standard annual data in hours. In the following paragraphs some examples of these time conversions are presented.

### Examples

**Information provided by YEAR and in PERIODS:** if for reading, writing and literature the indicated instruction time is 200 periods per year and one period is of 45 minutes, then the total annual number of hours of 60 minutes will be **150 hours** ( $200 \times 45/60$ ).

**Information provided by WEEK and in HOURS of 60 minutes:** if for reading, writing and literature the indicated instruction time is 8 hours per week for a specific grade, one week has 5 days and the total number of school days for one year is 175 then the total annual number of hours of 60 minutes per year will be **280 hours** ( $8/5 \times 175$ ).

**Information provided by WEEK and in PERIODS:** if for reading, writing and literature the indicated instruction time is 8 periods per week for a specific grade, one period is of 45 minutes, one week has 5 days and the total number of school days for one year is 175 then the total annual number of hours of 60 minutes per year will be **210 hours** ( $(8/5 \times 175) \times (45/60)$ ).

## 1.4 Organisation of the day for students

Many countries are at present re-thinking the distribution of school and extracurricular activities during the day/week for their students. The present data collection also collects data on the organisation of the school day for students including possibilities to report on extracurricular activities, the time allocated to specific support measures, the activities that schools can offer during school holidays, etc. Please refer to Section 3.4 for further details.

## 1.5 Education levels

The joint data collection on instruction time focuses on **full-time compulsory education during primary and (lower and upper) secondary education** as defined in the national education systems. Within that scope, only instruction time for general programmes of education should be reported. The levels of education in this data collection are defined with reference to the 2011 International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).

As the scope only includes general programmes, please use 2-digit ISCED codes for secondary education so that the orientation can be identified:

- ISCED 1: Primary education
- ISCED 24: Lower secondary general education
- ISCED 34: Upper secondary general education

Please refer for details to the UNESCO UIS Manual on ISCED 2011, available at <https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/isced-2011-en.pdf>.

The duration of compulsory education in each country is shown in:

- the Eurydice leaflet, *The structure of the European Education systems 2023/24: Schematic diagrams* (<https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/publications/structure-european-education-systems-20232024-schematic-diagrams>)
- the Annex document *Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes* (<https://doi.org/10.1787/d7f76adc-en>).

## 1.6 Education programmes

The present data collection focuses on **general education programmes in public institutions**. In countries where more than one educational pathway/track for general education exists in parallel (e.g. *Hauptschule*, *Realschule* or *Gymnasium* in Germany), the specific curricula and instruction time of each of these pathways/tracks must be specified separately: One 'Intended instruction time' worksheet per

general educational track should be filled out. Please indicate underneath the main table in the category 'Statistics' the number of students following the reported curriculum as a percentage of the student population covered by the report at this level to enable calculating the weighted averages. Please provide these percentages for each level of education (ISCED 1, ISCED 24 and ISCED 34). If the different tracks (at a given level of education) are not completely independent programmes, countries should report, in a single sheet, the instruction time for the core common subject categories and capture the remaining instruction time in the category of compulsory options that students (or schools) can choose.

Secondary education programmes with vocational profiles are not within the scope of the present data collection.

Programmes specifically designed for students with special needs are not within the scope of the present data collection.

## 1.7 Reference year

Information on recommended instruction time must be provided for the 2024/2025 school year or in case of countries in the Southern Hemisphere, 2025. When there is no available data for the school year 2024/2025 or 2025 school year, data should be provided for the last available year of reference, which should be indicated in each sheet of the questionnaire.

## 2. Definitions

### 2.1 General Terms and Definitions

Table 1 below specifies some 'support' definitions related to the instruction time joint data collection to facilitate the understanding of the categories used in the electronic questionnaire.

**Table 1: Definitions and concepts**

Term	Definition
Educational Pathway / Track / Branch in general education	Different types of general educational provision that may be chosen by the parents/students or defined by the schools (e.g. <i>Hauptschule</i> , <i>Realschule</i> or <i>Gymnasium</i> in Germany).
Theoretical age of admission in compulsory primary education	Refers to the theoretical age, determined by the top-level (central) education authorities, at which a child would normally begin to attend lessons in compulsory primary education (delays, grade retention are not taken into account).
Grade	Each education level is composed of a series of grades or classes that must be taken in a consecutive way by the students making normal progress (i.e. who has not had to redo a year) and where they are taught together in the same course of instruction.
One instruction day	One instruction day is a calendar day when schools are open and students are required to attend school for instruction, irrespective of the length of the school day.  If the legislation defines a shorter school day as a 'half-day', the statutory number of school days (as stated in the regulation) should be explained to help the interpretation of the data (in the item on how the standard school week is organised in the Organisation of the School day worksheet).
Number of instruction days per school year	The minimum number of days that schools are open and students receive instruction. Days when schools are closed for festivities, such as national holidays, and days when students are not expected to be at school because of teacher development days or examination periods should be excluded.  Teacher development days refer to the days that regulations and official documents may provide for all teachers to participate in CPD activities during the instruction days of the school year when students do not have the obligation to attend school. These days should be excluded even if the school may offer other activities to students on a voluntary basis.  Days for non-school-based examinations (e.g. national examinations) and other officially regulated examination periods when it is not compulsory for all students – of a specific grade – to attend school should also be excluded.
Length of a period / lesson	Each school day is divided into a given number of periods or lessons, the length of which may vary depending on the country or grade concerned. It may not therefore correspond to exactly one hour (it is generally between 30 and 55 minutes).
Subject in its own right	Subject devoted exclusively to work on a single area or group of topics. This concept is to be distinguished from integrated subjects.



Term	Definition
Integrated subject	Topics that are not necessarily learnt as subjects in their own right, but in the course of other subjects for which they may even serve as a tool, as in the case of ICT (Information and Communication Technology). To be considered an integrated subject, it must have its own learning objectives in the official curriculum.
Vertical Flexibility (VF)	Curricula only indicate the total instruction time that has to be taught for a specific subject for a certain number of grades, or even the whole of compulsory education, without specifying the time to be allocated to each grade. In such cases, schools/local authorities are free to decide how much time should be assigned for each grade.
Horizontal Flexibility (HF)	Curricula only specify the subjects and the total instruction time per grade, without specifying the time to be allocated to each subject. In such cases, schools/local authorities are free to decide how much time should be assigned for specific compulsory subjects.

## 2.2 Definitions of subject categories

The subject areas taught during compulsory education vary depending on the country. It is, therefore, necessary to group them according to more general subject areas, to be able to compare the collected information. The scope, however, is not identical for each of the subject categories. Certain subject categories (e.g. natural sciences) cover several subjects taught (physics, chemistry or biology), whereas others are more specific (e.g. technology).

Table 2 below defines the subject categories that are included in the information gathering for the joint data collection on instruction time. Note that some subject categories may not be relevant for some countries, and this should be indicated using the code 'category not applicable' as explained in Section 3.2.1 of the manual.

**Table 2: Definitions of subject categories**

Term	Definition
Reading, writing and literature (L1)	Covers skills such as spelling, reading, and writing in the language of instruction and includes subjects such as grammar, language of instruction and literature. It can be considered as the first language taught to students.  If there are two languages of instruction in almost every public school, then hours allocated to reading, writing and literature in both languages of instruction should be reported.
Mathematics	Covers all numeracy skills and subjects such as arithmetic, algebra, geometry, statistics, etc.
Natural Sciences	Includes subjects such as science, physics, chemistry, biology, environmental sciences and ecology.
Social Sciences	Includes subjects such as history, geography and all related studies. May also include community studies, social and political instruction, philosophy or civics education.
Languages (2-5)	Includes subjects that develop students' knowledge of a language viewed in the curriculum as 'foreign' (or modern) languages, other national languages and/or regional and minority languages. This definition of languages in the curriculum is educationally based and unrelated to the political status of languages.
Physical Education and Health	Includes subjects such as education in sports and health enhancing physical activities, as well as time devoted to instruction in competitive and traditional games, gymnastics, swimming, athletics, dance or other activities that develop <b>students'</b> physical and social competences (including knowledge, skills,

Term	Definition
	psychomotor coordination, cooperation and leadership) and an active healthy lifestyle.
Arts Education	Includes subjects such as arts, history of arts, music, visual arts, drama, music and dance performance, photography, and creative handicraft.
Religion/Ethics/ Moral education	Includes subjects whose aim it is to teach the principles and history of one or more religions and subjects such as ethics whose aim it is to determine how to live and behave in accordance with human and social principles.
Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)	Includes subjects such as informatics, information and communication technologies or computer science. These subjects include a wide range of topics concerned with the new technologies used for the processing and transmission of digital information, including computers, computerised networks (including the Internet), microelectronics, multimedia, software and programming, etc.
Technology	Includes subjects that provide knowledge on the practical use of scientific or technological discoveries that use specific instruments and processes. For example, construction, electricity, electronics, graphics and design, etc.
Practical and vocational skills	Includes vocational skills (preparation for a specific occupation), accountancy, entrepreneurship education or business studies, career guidance, clothing and textiles, driving and road security, home economics, nursing, secretarial studies, tourism and hospitality, woodwork, metalwork and sewing.
Other subjects	Includes different subjects that cannot be classified within the other groups or which specifically reflect national concerns. The following subjects could be included in this category: Latin, ancient Greek, classical studies, minority languages which have not been reported in Language 2, 3, 4 or 5 columns, environmental education, personal development and well-being.  The 'other subjects' must be part of the <b>compulsory</b> curriculum to be provided by schools. Form time, assemblies and tutoring should only be included if they are compulsory, have an educational component and are aimed at all the students.
Compulsory subjects with flexible timetable (total time devoted to...)	Includes the total amount of instruction time indicated by the <b>top-level (central)</b> authorities for a given group of subjects, which regional authorities, local authorities, schools or teachers allocate to individual subjects. There is flexibility in the time spent on a subject, but not in the subjects to be taught. For example, <b>top-level (central)</b> authorities may define the total number of hours that students should be studying reading, writing and literature, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages per year and schools may choose how to distribute this time between these individual subjects.
Compulsory options chosen by the students	Includes the total amount of instruction time on one or more subjects that <b>students</b> have to select (from a set of subjects that are compulsory for schools to offer) in order to cover part of their compulsory instruction time. This only applies if students have a choice between different subjects ( <u>as categorised in the questionnaire</u> ) and not a choice within a subject category. For example, students may be able to choose between studying a second foreign language or computer science or economics, but to attend one of these options is compulsory.
Compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools	Includes the total amount of compulsory instruction time indicated by the <b>top-level (central)</b> authorities, which regional authorities, local authorities, schools or teachers allocate to subjects of their choice (or subjects they chose from a list defined by <b>top-level (central)</b> education authorities). For example, schools may be able to choose between offering religious education or more science, or art, etc., but to offer one of these subjects is compulsory for the school and students must attend it.

Term	Definition
Non-compulsory curriculum	Refers to the total amount of instruction time that public schools must offer on top of the compulsory instruction time but is not mandatory for all students. Subjects can vary from school to school or from region to region and take the form of optional subjects.  Additional activities before/after classes offered by the school are not <i>per se</i> part of the non-compulsory curriculum, for instance, if there is no obligation upon public schools to provide this instruction time or it is not part of the official curricula. In particular, non-compulsory education excludes morning care classes or after school care classes, even if they are officially regulated.

### 3. Data collection tool

#### 3.1 General overview

Data on instruction time is collected through a common questionnaire in Excel format. The Excel file is composed of **five** main worksheets:

1. Changes
2. Intended instruction time
3. Organisation of the school day
4. Country-specific notes
5. Standard Intended instruction time.

For some countries, additional Excel files might be also used, particularly if there are multiple pathways/tracks and weighted data.

In the '**Changes**' worksheet, data providers are asked to explain changes in the legislation or policy documents, and/or in the methodology with an impact on the data provided in the previous reference year. All modifications to the pre-filled questionnaire must be explained in this worksheet and must appear in **red font** in the relevant worksheets (e.g. intended instruction time).

In the '**Intended Instruction Time**' worksheet (see an overview in Figure 1 below), data providers are asked to update the pre-filled questionnaire with the data referred to the **2024/2025 school year**. This worksheet is composed of three main sections: *General information on the education system*; *Distribution of Minimum Instruction Time and Horizontal Flexibility* (i.e. Instruction time distribution) and *Distribution of the instruction time in the case of Vertical Flexibility*.

Countries with more than one general educational pathway will have to check and update one worksheet for each of them; all of them are included in the same excel file. An additional worksheet called **weights** may be added to assist with the calculations of weighted averages of hours per subject by grade. However, all information used to calculate the weighted averages should also be provided in each track-specific worksheet, including the hours per subject and the percentage of students following the reported curriculum in the relevant ISCED level.

In the '**Organisation of the school day**' worksheet, data providers may fill in relevant information related to the average duration of the school week and school day; availability of before and after school activities organised by schools, activities during school holidays, time devoted to support measures, etc. This worksheet should be filled even if the available data is partial and only concerns some grades or subjects.

In the '**Country-specific notes**' worksheet, data providers should include all the information necessary to understand the data provided and avoid misinterpretation. The information is divided into two sections, one for **countries members of Eurydice only** and the second **with questions for members of both Eurydice and the OECD**. The notes only concerning Eurydice countries will be used in the updated Eurydice report. The notes in the common section will be used both for the OECD publication and for the preparation of a visualisation tool for Eurydice.

Finally, the '**Standard Intended time**' worksheet is for consultation only. It contains formulas that standardise the data provided in periods and/or weeks into hours per year. Data providers are not expected to modify or insert any data on this worksheet.

The following **COLOURS** are used in the Excel file:

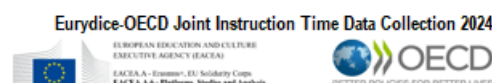
- **Orange:** Cells with information that cannot be modified.
- **Yellow:** Cells that must be filled (or can be edited) by data providers.
- **Blue:** Automatic sums of filled data.
- **Grey:** Cells in the section of the 'Country-specific notes' worksheet used for both the OECD publication and the Eurydice visualisation that do not need to be filled in by countries which are members of Eurydice Network only.

Figure 1: Overview of the intended instruction time worksheet

## Intended Instruction Time

## General information on the education system

Country:	Please select a country
Reference year:	2024/25
Number of years compulsory primary education (ISCED 1)	
Number of years compulsory lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	
Number of years compulsory upper secondary education (ISCED 3)	
Theoretical age of admission in Compulsory Primary Education	
Information given by (Week or Year):	
Pathway / Track / Branch:	
Information given in (Periods OR hours of 60 min)	
Vertical flexibility in the instruction time distribution act	



## Distribution of Minimum Instruction Time and Horizontal Flexibility

Grade	ISCED level	Number of instruction days per school year	Number of instruction days per school week	Length of a period / lesson in minutes	Reading, writing and literature (L1)	Mathematics	Natural sciences	Social sciences	Language 2 (*)	Language 3 (*)	Language 4 (*)	Language 5 (*)	Physical Education and Health	Art Education	Religion/Beliefs/Moral education	ICT	Technology	Practical and vocational skills	Other subjects	Compulsory subjects with flexible timetable	Compulsory options chosen by the students	Compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools	Total compulsory curriculum	Non-compulsory curriculum
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)	(23)	(24)
A1	1																							
A2	2																							
A3	3																							
A4	4																							
A5	5																							
A6	6																							
A7	7																							
A8	8																							
A9	9																							
A10	10																							
A11	11																							
A12	12																							

(\*) as a compulsory subject

Number of	Distribution of Minimum Instruction Time and	Minimum Instruction Time: Sub-total Compulsory I	
A1	0 Primary (ISCED 1)	NA	NA
A1	0 Compulsory lower secondary (ISCED 2)	NA	NA
A1	0 Compulsory upper secondary (ISCED 3)	NA	NA

## Distribution of the instruction time in the case of Vertical Flexibility

In the event of vertical flexibility, please indicate the instruction time distribution across subjects for each group of grades

Group of grades	Duration from grade to grade	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)	Total (23)	(24)
F1	1																			0	
F2	1																			0	
F3	1																			0	
F4	1																			0	
F5	1																			0	
F6	1																			0	
F7	1																			0	
F8	1																			0	
F9	1																			0	
F10	1																			0	
F11	1																			0	
F12	1																			0	

Number of	Distribution of the instruction time in the case of	Vertical Flexibility: Sub-total Compulsory II	
F12	0 Primary (ISCED 1)		
F14	0 Compulsory lower secondary (ISCED 2)		
F15	0 Compulsory upper secondary (ISCED 3)		

## Total Instruction time

Number of	Total Instruction time	Instruction Time: Total Compulsory	
T1	0 Primary (ISCED 1)		
T2	0 Compulsory lower secondary (ISCED 2)		
T3	0 Compulsory upper secondary (ISCED 3)		

## Statistics

Percentage of students following the reported curriculum in primary education (ISCED 1)  
 Percentage of students following the reported curriculum in lower secondary education (ISCED 2)  
 Percentage of students following the reported curriculum in upper secondary education (ISCED 3)

## 3.2 Missing data and special coding

The correct use of codes is indispensable to ensure the integrity of the data. Statistical analysis and reports distinguish between different reasons for missing data. Data providers must, therefore, also clearly distinguish between different rationales for missing data in particular cases in the data tables.

No cell should remain blank or contain '0', including the table capturing vertical flexibility. Exceptionally, a cell may contain '0' when the subject is compulsory only in a circumscription that represents a very small part of the totality of the schools (e.g. a few *communes* in the French Community of Belgium).

Each cell for which there is no valid data value must be assigned one of the following codes:

- category not applicable (a);

- data not available (m);
- data included in other categories (xr:... and xc:...).

### 3.2.1 Category not applicable (a)

If a certain category does not apply to the education system(s) in your country, then assign the code “a” to the relevant cells.

Code “a” should be used whenever there is no minimum instruction time established for a certain subject category in the intended curriculum at some or at any grades of (full-time) compulsory education. For example, if a second language is not part of the intended curriculum in the first three grades of primary education, but it is introduced in grades 4 and 5, then the cells corresponding to the first three grades should be assigned the code “a”, while those of the latter two grades should indicate the corresponding instruction time.

Code “a” should also be used in the table capturing vertical flexibility for those grades and subject categories that are not affected. For instance, if the minimum instruction time for Language 2 is defined for a group of grades but the time for all the other subjects is defined grade by grade, all the cells in the relevant rows (for this/these group/s) in the table for vertical flexibility should show the “a” code except for Language 2, where the instruction time defined for this subject for this (these) group(s) should be reported.

### 3.2.2 Data not available (m)

Code “m” should be used when the related subject category is affected by a minimum recommended instruction time but data is not available or is difficult to calculate, provided that these data are not captured in any other cells of the table.

However, if the data for these classification categories are included in other categories of the tables, then do not use the code “m”, but use one of the “x” codes instead (see [Section 3.2.3](#)).

### 3.2.3 Data included in other categories (x...)

Sometimes certain data are not available (even though the corresponding categories apply), but the data are included in other categories of the tables. Most frequently this occurs in situations in case of flexibility in the curriculum.

#### Data included in another row (xr:...)

Use the code “xr: row\_code” if the data for this category are included in another row of the same column. Row\_code thereby refers to the row-code of the target row which is indicated in each table (and which is usually different from the internal Excel sequential row number).

When the time allocation for a specific subject is given in the national recommendations as a general value for various grades (Vertical Flexibility, see definitions in [Section 2.1](#)), then the corresponding cells should be assigned the code ‘xr:F1’ (or F2, F3 ...) and the number of hours/periods recommended for each group of grades must be provided in rows F1 to F12 (see [Section 3.3.3](#)).

#### Data included in another column (xc:...)

In general, code “xc: column\_code” must be used when data for this cell/category is included in another column of the same row. Column\_code thereby refers to the column-code of the target column which is indicated in each table (and which is usually different from the internal Excel sequential column number).

- When the time allocation for a specific grade is indicated as a general value for various subjects (Horizontal Flexibility, see definitions in [Section 2.1](#)), this must be indicated in the corresponding subject columns using the code “xc:20” and the total number of hours/periods per school year/week must be reported in the column ‘Compulsory subjects with flexible timetable’ (column 20). Code ‘xc:20’ should also be used when both horizontal and vertical flexibility coexist and column 20 will include the code for vertical flexibility ‘xr:F1’ for example (or ‘xr:F2’, etc).
- When a compulsory subject falls into two subject categories, the subject category for which you expect the smaller numeric value should be assigned the code ‘xc: column\_code’ and the

allocated instruction hours should be reported in the subject category for which you expect the largest numeric value. For example, if a compulsory subject covers both 'Technology' (column 17) and 'ICT' (column 16) with a focus on technology, the intended instruction time should be reported in the column 'Technology' and the code 'xc:17' should be assigned in the column 'ICT'.

- When a subject category is not a subject in its own right, but is taught as an integrated subject (see Section 2.1 for definitions) in all or most other compulsory subjects, this must be indicated in the corresponding subject column using the code 'xc:23'(=included in the total compulsory curriculum). For example, if ICT is not taught independently, but taught integrated in all other subjects, the code 'xc:23' should be assigned in the column 'ICT' (column 16).
- Code 'xc:23' can also be used when data for certain subject categories are captured in column 23 (total compulsory curriculum), even if they are not integrated subjects.
- When there is flexibility to allocate instruction time among the compulsory flexible subjects chosen by the school (column 22), the code 'xc:20' should be assigned in column 22 and the related instruction time be included in column 20 (compulsory subjects with flexible timetable). In a similar vein, when compulsory flexible subjects chosen by the schools (column 22) are also optional to students, the code 'xc:21' should be assigned in column 22 and the related instruction time be included in column 21 (compulsory options chosen by the students).
- Code 'xc:24' (non-compulsory curriculum) cannot be used in any of the subject categories related to the compulsory curriculum. Similarly, in column 24, no 'xc:' code should be used.

### 3.3 Intended instruction time

The information provided in this sheet should correspond to the top-level (central) policy documents (i.e. national steering document) on **Intended instruction time during compulsory education by grade**.

#### 3.3.1 General information on the education system

The first section of the Excel sheet presents an overview of the national/regional education system with information on the number of years in compulsory primary and secondary education and the theoretical starting age for compulsory primary education (see Figure 2). The respondents must provide information regarding the name of the track concerned, specify how the information is provided (by **week** or **year**) and if the time dedicated to the subject categories is expressed in **number of periods** or in **number of hours of 60 minutes**. Countries must also specify if there is some vertical flexibility in the distribution of instruction time across grades. If no quantitative data can be provided on instruction time, countries should indicate 'a' (not applicable).

**Figure 2: General information on the education system**

General information on the education system	
Country:	Please select a country
Reference year:	2024/25
Number of years compulsory primary education (ISCED 1):	Total years of compulsory primary and secondary education
Number of years compulsory lower secondary education (ISCED 24):	0
Number of years compulsory upper secondary education (ISCED 34):	
Theoretical age of admission in Compulsory Primary Education:	
Information given by (Week or Year):	
Pathway / Track / Branch:	
Information given in (Periods OR hours of 60 min)	
Vertical flexibility in the instruction time distribution across grades	

#### 3.3.2 Instruction time distribution between grades and subject categories

In the second section of the sheet (see Figure 3), data providers must provide three types of information:

- The ISCED level of each grade (according to the national ISCED mapping).



- Quantitative data about the duration of the reference school year, number of days per week and the length of a period in minutes.
- Time distribution between different compulsory subjects for each grade and the additional time allocated to the non-compulsory subjects.

**Figure 3: Distribution of minimum instruction time and horizontal flexibility**

Distribution of Minimum Instruction Time and Horizontal Flexibility

Grade	ISCED level	Number of instruction days per school year	Number of instruction days per school week	Length of a period / lesson in minutes	Reading, writing and literature (L1)	Mathematics	Natural sciences	Social sciences	Language 2 (*)	Language 3 (*)	Language 4 (*)	Language 5 (*)	Physical Education and Health	Arts Education	Religion/Ethics/Moral education	ICT	Technology	Practical and vocational skills	Other subjects	Compulsory subjects with flexible timetable	Compulsory options chosen by the students	Compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools	Total compulsory curriculum	Non-compulsory curriculum
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)	(23)	(24)
A1	1																							
A2	2																							
A3	3																							
A4	4																							
A5	5																							
A6	6																							
A7	7																							
A8	8																							
A9	9																							
A10	10																							
A11	11																							
A12	12																							

Quantitative data about the general education time during the reference year includes information about the total number of instruction days of the school year, the number of instruction days per school week and the standard length of a period in minutes for each class. In countries with variations between regions the most common value or averages weighted by student enrolments must be reported in the table. In these cases, a methodological note must be included in the 'Country-specific notes' worksheet that explains the concrete national situation.

National holidays, recreational or other breaks of any kind and days when students are not expected to be at school because of teacher development days or examination periods must not be taken into account in the calculation of the total number of instruction days. Teacher development days refer to the days that regulations and official documents may provide for all teachers to participate in CPD activities during the instruction days of the school year when students do not have the obligation to attend school (even if the school may offer other activities to students on a voluntary basis). Days for non-school-based examinations (e.g. national examinations) and other officially regulated examination periods when it is not compulsory for all students (of a specific grade) to attend school should also be excluded. When it is not possible to exclude these days, an explanation must be provided in the 'Country-specific notes' worksheet.

The time distribution between subjects must be indicated for each grade by week or school year and in number of school periods or 60-minute hours as recommended by the policy documents (i.e. national steering documents). In countries where the regulations vary within the country (e.g. by region) weighted averages of these regulations should be reported taking into account student enrolments per region.

At the end of the section, there is a second table indicating the minimum instruction time per subject category for each ISCED level of full-time compulsory education. The sums are calculated automatically. Please verify that all the figures are correct.

### Countries with more than one official/national language

- For countries with **more than one official/national language**, the instruction time allocated to the additional official/national languages should be reported based on the status of these languages in the curriculum in the 'Languages 2 (or 3, 4, 5)' column. Countries that report additional national languages in 'Languages 2 (or 3, 4, 5)' are asked to specify this in the 'Country-specific notes' worksheet.
- If two official/national languages are both used as languages of instruction in almost every public school (i.e. bilingual education), then hours allocated to reading, writing and literature in both languages of instruction should be reported in column 5 and an explanatory note should be added 'Country-specific notes' worksheet.



- In countries where the status of the other national languages in the curriculum varies for different types of public schools, data providers should report the predominant curriculum, if possible, and provide all necessary information in the 'Country-specific notes' worksheet. In countries where the status of the other national languages in the curriculum varies for different schools and where it is not possible to identify a predominant model, data providers should fill in different Excel files for each of the main type of school (in terms of language provision), as done by countries dealing with more than one general educational pathway.

### Notes on how to fill in the table

- When a subject that exists in the national curriculum **does not clearly fit into one of the predefined subject categories**, the data provider must decide on which category to capture this instruction time and provide an explanation in the 'Country-specific notes' worksheet.
- If there are hours of instruction reported in the column **'Other subjects'**, these other subjects must be specified in the 'Country-specific notes' worksheet.
- If there are hours of instruction reported in the column **'Non-compulsory curriculum'**, the corresponding subjects must be specified in the 'Country-specific notes' worksheet.

### 3.3.3 Distribution of instruction time in the case of Vertical Flexibility

If the time allocation for a specific subject is given in the national recommendations as a general value for various grades, that is in the case of Vertical Flexibility, the group of grades for which Vertical Flexibility applies (e.g. grades 1 to 3), the number of years (e.g. 3), and the number of hours/periods allocated to the specific subject must be indicated in the third section of the worksheet Intended instruction time (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Distribution of the instruction time in the case of vertical flexibility**

**Distribution of the instruction time in the case of Vertical Flexibility**

In the event of vertical flexibility, please indicate the instruction time distribution across subjects for each group of grades

Group of grades	Duration	from grade	to grade	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)	Total (23)	(24)
F1	1																					0	
F2	1																					0	
F3	1																					0	
F4	1																					0	
F5	1																					0	
F6	1																					0	
F7	1																					0	
F8	1																					0	
F9	1																					0	
F10	1																					0	
F11																						0	
F12																						0	

Number of years	Distribution of the instruction time in the case of Vertical Flexibility																					Vertical Flexibility: Sub-total Compulsory II	0
F13	0	Primary (ISCED 1)																				0	
F14	0	Compulsory lower secondary (ISCED 24)																				0	
F15	0	Compulsory upper secondary (ISCED 34)																				0	

Please use one row for each group of grades, indicating in all cases:

- The duration in years.
- The first and the last grades of the range.
- The allocation of time for the relevant subject categories.
- The 'a' code in the subject categories not affected by vertical flexibility.

The levels, length and number of groups vary across countries, and in many cases there is no vertical flexibility to report.

By way of example, and following the grouping pattern depicted in the previous table, if national regulations establish a minimum instruction time on reading, writing and literature for grades 1 and 2 altogether, this amount should be indicated in row F1 column 5. In a similar vein, if regulations establish that IT should be taught from grades 6 to 9 without specifying any concrete time for every year, the total recommended time for the four grades should be reported in row F3, column 16.

The second table in this section indicates the sub-totals for each ISCED level in the case of vertical flexibility. Please check or insert the formulas in the relevant cells and confirm that the sums displayed are correct.

### 3.4 Organisation of the school day

The Organisation of the school day sheet includes five boxes with questions. These boxes should be filled in with information concerning:

- the organisation of the school week
- the number of lessons in a standard school day
- the organisation of breaks
- additional activities before/after classes and whether schools offer activities during school holidays, as defined in regulations or standards of the top-level (central) authority responsible for education.

All countries must provide information on the possibility for schools to offer activities before and after classes or during the school holidays specified in national policy documents.

This worksheet should be filled in even if the available data is partial and only concerns some grades or subjects. In those cases, the limits of the information provided should be made clear, e.g. to which grades it refers to.

The boxes have been pre-filled with the edited version of the information as provided in last years' data collection and as shown in the Annex document *Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes* (<https://doi.org/10.1787/d7f76adc-en>) of the 2023 edition of *Education at a Glance*. Data providers are asked to review and update the relevant information for each of the questions. For the non-OECD countries, the text in the boxes corresponds to the one you submitted for the 2022 data collection. Respondents should bear in mind that the standard or most common distribution of the time during the day must be indicated for all questions.

### 3.5 Country-specific notes

The 'Country-specific notes' worksheet collects explanatory notes to help readers of the final publications to interpret comparative data on recommended instruction time.

NB: The publication of this information is in a **transition period for Eurydice**. In June 2023, the report should be published in a PDF format, as usual. However, EACEA will explore options for transforming this reporting exercise into an online visualisation.

For this reason, **all Eurydice units** are required to complete:

1. the usual Eurydice text box, which will be used for the report and
2. the boxes in white in the common section (previously OECD section), which will be tested for the visualisation.

For the countries members of the OECD but not of the Eurydice network, they should complete:

- all boxes in the common section (previously OECD section).

This worksheet has **two boxes**:

- country-specific notes for the Eurydice Publication (for members of Eurydice)
- country-specific notes for the OECD Publication and the Eurydice visualisation (for all countries).

The **Country-specific notes for the Eurydice Publication** (for members of Eurydice) will be prefilled by Eurydice with the notes published in the Eurydice report on Recommended Annual Instruction Time in Full-time Compulsory Education in Europe 2022/2023. This box should ONLY include notes essential to understand the data provided on the minimum recommended instruction time. Information describing the data and other facts beyond the scope of the report (e.g. on the education system) should be avoided. Information related to the reform or changes to the minimum instruction time is to be provided only in the year(s) when they are being implemented. Please remove this information once implementation has concluded.

The **Country Specific notes for OECD Publication and the Eurydice visualisation** (for all countries) will be prefilled by the OECD secretariat with the comments used in *Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes* (<https://doi.org/10.1787/d7f76adc-en>). These boxes should include

the notes about the sources used to provide intended instruction time and the methodology used to calculate the data (e.g. on the sampling of schools and on the calculation of average instruction time across schools). It should also include any other information necessary to understand the data provided on intended instruction time in the 'Notes on interpretation' section. It is advised to delete any old information that is no longer applicable for the data submitted for this data collection.

Countries that are not an OECD member, should also provide information in the white cells of this section. This information will be used for the future visualisation tool.

Should you introduce modifications in any of the two sections as compared to the previous data collection, **please highlight your changes** (e.g. use red font).

Country-specific notes (both Eurydice **notes** and **notes for all countries**) MUST include:

- A note for complementary information on compulsory education when it includes pre-primary education (even if this is not covered in this data collection) \* Included in box 2a of the **notes for all countries**.
- A note specifying that 'The scope includes both public and government-dependent private institutions' when information on instruction time in government-dependent private institutions is provided because they enrol a large proportion of the student population (see Section 1.3). \* Included in box 2b of the **notes for all countries**.
- A note specifying deviations from the defined coverage of the data collection relating to days or hours/periods included in or excluded from the intended instruction time and the reasons for these deviations. For example, a note is to be included when teacher development days are at the discretion of the school and therefore cannot be excluded (See section 1.4). \* Included in box 2b of the **notes for all countries**. More details on teacher development days and student examination periods that are excluded from the intended instruction time are required in box 4g of the **notes for all countries**.
- The 'compulsory options' when it was not possible to reflect this information in the table (e.g. when the relevant column already contained minimum instruction time or any other coding) (see Section 3.2.4).
- A list of the 'other subjects' when instruction time has been indicated in this category in the tables (see Section 3.3.2).
- When any instruction time has been reported in column 24 'Non-compulsory curriculum', please provide detailed information on the subjects offered, the relevant grades and the proportion of students taking these courses.
- When there are difficulties to fit a subject of the national curriculum in any of the predefined categories, the decision to include it in one of them should also be explained in these notes (see Section 3.3.2).
- Where applicable, an explanatory note should inform on the use of the most common value or averages when data vary across regions and about the criteria followed to report on several official languages (see Section 3.3.2).

### 3.6 Standard Intended time

The **Standard intended time** worksheet (see Figure 5) is **for consultation** only; it cannot be edited. It converts all the data provided into hours or periods of 60 minutes.

Should you spot any errors, please notify the Eurydice or OECD Secretariat where applicable.

Figure 5: Overview of the standard intended time worksheet

## Standard intended time

Eurydice-OECD Joint Instruction Time Data Collection 2024

## General information on the education system

Country:	Please select a country	
Reference year:	2024/25	Total years of compulsory primary and secondary
Number of years compulsory primary education (ISCED 1):	1	0
Number of years compulsory lower secondary education (ISCED 2):	1	
Number of years compulsory upper secondary education (ISCED 3):	1	
Theoretical age of admission in Compulsory Primary Education (Year):	1	
Information given by (Week or Year):	1	
Pathway / Track / Branch:		
Information given in (Period OR hours of 60 min):	1	



## Distribution of Minimum Instruction Time and Horizontal Flexibility

Grade	ISCED level	Number of instruction days per school year	Number of instruction days per school week	Length of a period / lesson in minutes	Reading, writing and literature (L1)	Mathematics	Information	Natural sciences	Social sciences	Language 2 (*)	Language 3 (*)	Language 4 (*)	Language 5 (*)	Physical Education and health	Art Education	Religion/Ethical Education	ICT	Technology	Practical and vocational skills	Other subjects	Compulsory subjects with flexible timetable	Compulsory options chosen by the students	Compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools	Total compulsory curriculum	Non-compulsory curriculum	Number of Weeks	Minimum period/60 minutes
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)	(23)	(24)				
A1	1																										
A2	2																										
A3	3																										
A4	4																										
A5	5																										
A6	6																										
A7	7																										
A8	8																										
A9	9																										
A10	10																										
A11	11																										
A12	12																										

(\*) or a compulsory subject

Number of	Distribution of Minimum Instruction Time and	Minimum Instruction Time: Sub-total Compulsory I	0
A1	0 Primary (ISCED 1)	NA	NA
A1	0 Compulsory lower secondary (ISCED 2)	NA	NA
A1	0 Compulsory upper secondary (ISCED 3)	NA	NA

## Distribution of the instruction time in the case of Vertical Flexibility

Group of grades	Duration from grade to grade	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)	Total (23)	(24)
F1	0																			0	
F2	0																			0	
F3	0																			0	
F4	0																			0	
F5	0																			0	
F6	0																			0	
F7	0																			0	
F8	0																			0	
F9	0																			0	
F10	0																			0	
F11	0																			0	
F12	0																			0	

Number of	Distribution of the instruction time in the case of	Vertical Flexibility: Sub-total Compulsory II	0
F13	0 Primary (ISCED 1)		
F14	0 Compulsory lower secondary (ISCED 2)		
F15	0 Compulsory upper secondary (ISCED 3)		

## Total Instruction time

Number of	Total Instruction time	Instruction Time: Total Compulsory	0
T1	0 Primary (ISCED 1)		
T2	0 Compulsory lower secondary (ISCED 2)		
T3	0 Compulsory upper secondary (ISCED 3)		

## Statistics

Percentage of students following the reported curriculum in primary education	0%
Percentage of students following the reported curriculum in lower secondary	0%
Percentage of students following the reported curriculum in upper secondary	0%