

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN THE ADULT POPULATION

Key Findings: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States

The Russian Federation had the largest percentage of adults ages 25 to 64 who had completed higher education; Italy had the smallest percentage. Among 25- to 34-year-olds, 36 percent of U.S. males and 42 percent of U.S. females had completed higher education.

In a majority of the G-8 countries, the largest percentage of adults ages 25 to 64 in 2004 had completed upper secondary education or postsecondary vocational training as their highest level of education (figure 17a). The exceptions were Italy, where about half of the 25- to 64-year-old population had completed lower secondary education or below, and the Russian Federation and Canada, where 55 and 45 percent of the adult population, respectively, had completed higher education. In all of the G-8 countries except the Russian Federation, less than half of the adult population had completed higher education. The Russian Federation had the largest percentage of adults ages 25 to 64 who had completed higher education, followed by Canada, and Italy had the smallest percentage (11 percent); in the United States, 39 percent of adults in 2004 had completed higher education.

Focusing on the younger adult population (ages 25 to 34) shows that in several of the G-8 countries, higher percentages of this age group had completed higher education than had the broader adult population of 25- to 64-year-olds. For example, in Canada and Japan, at least half of 25- to 34-year-olds had completed higher education (figure 17b). In France, 38 percent of 25- to 34-year-olds had completed higher education, compared with 24 percent of 25- to 64-year-olds (figures 17a and 17b). In the United States, the corresponding percentages were the same for both age groups in 2004 (39 percent).

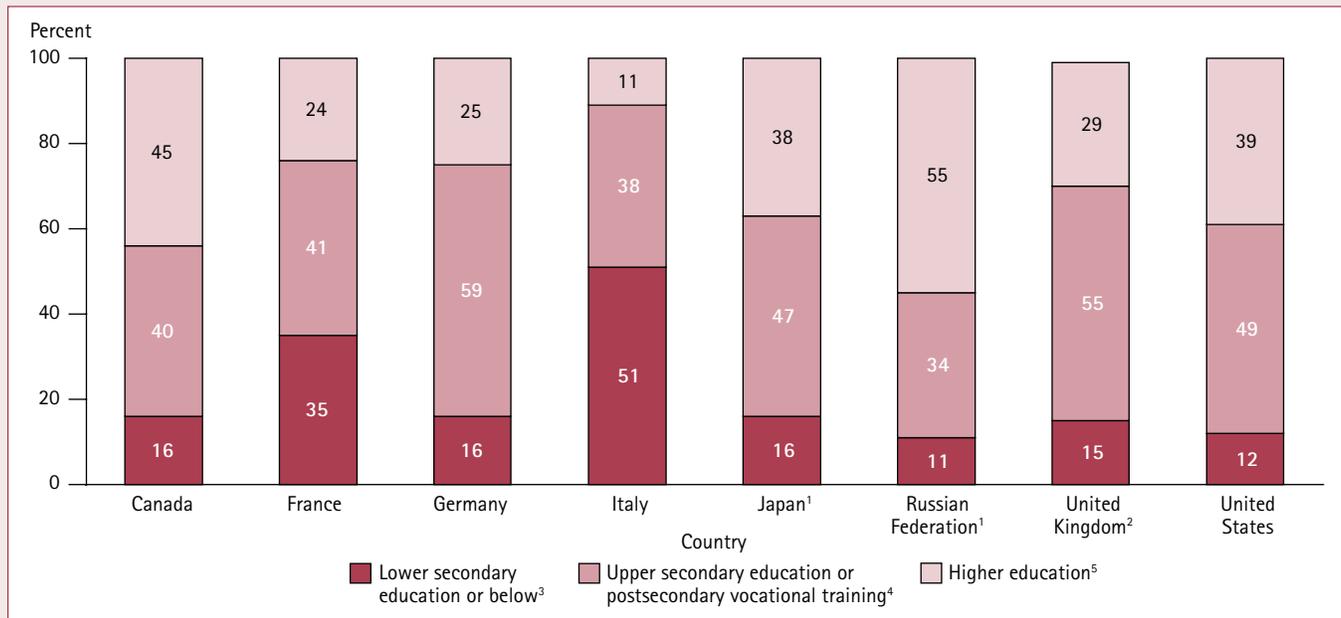
In the United States, more bachelor's degrees have been awarded to women than to men since about the mid-1980s (U.S. Department of Education 2006). Among 25- to 34-year-olds in the United States in 2004, 36 percent of males and 42 percent of females had completed higher education (figure 17b). This difference by sex favoring females was also found in Japan (5 percentage points), Italy (5 percentage points), France (7 percentage points), the Russian Federation (12 percentage points), and Canada (13 percentage points).

Definitions and Methodology

As shown in the figures, education levels are defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). For more information on the ISCED levels, see appendix A.

Male-female percentage-point differences in higher education completion presented in the text are computed from unrounded numbers; therefore, they may differ from computations made using the rounded whole numbers that appear in figure 17b.

Figure 17a. Percentage distribution of the population aged 25 to 64, by highest level of education completed and country: 2004



¹Reference year is 2003 rather than 2004.

²The United Kingdom includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

³Includes ISCED levels 0 (preprimary education), 1 (primary education), and 2 (lower secondary education).

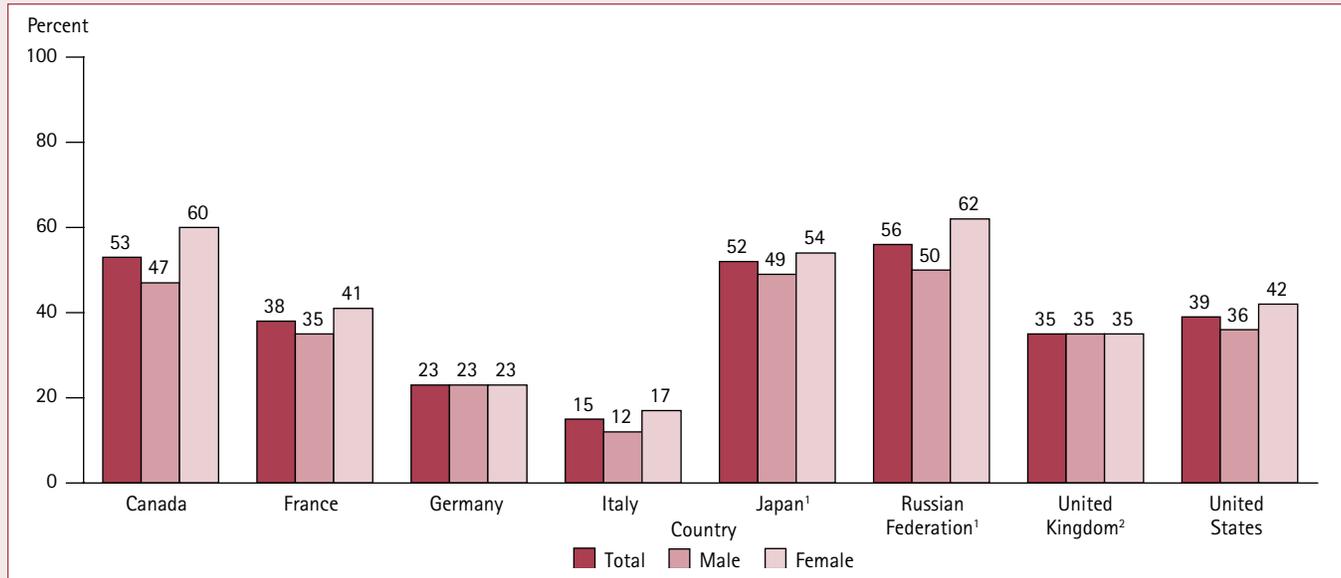
⁴Includes ISCED levels 3 (upper secondary education) and 4 (postsecondary nontertiary programs).

⁵Includes ISCED levels 5A (academic higher education below the doctoral level), 5B (vocational higher education), and 6 (doctoral level of academic higher education).

NOTE: Education levels are defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). For more information on the ISCED levels, see appendix A in this report. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (2006). *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2006*, table A1.1a. Paris: Author.

Figure 17b. Percentage of the population aged 25 to 34 who had completed higher education, by sex and country: 2004



¹Reference year is 2003 rather than 2004.

²The United Kingdom includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

NOTE: Education levels are defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Higher education refers to ISCED levels 5A (academic higher education below the doctoral level), 5B (vocational higher education), and 6 (doctoral level of academic higher education). For more information on the ISCED levels, see appendix A in this report.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (2006). *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2006*, table A1.3a and web tables A1.3b and A1.3c. Paris: Author.