

## UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES

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### *Key Findings: France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United States*

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The United States had the second-lowest upper secondary school graduation rate of the five countries reporting data in 1999. The graduation rate of 78 in the United States was 17 points below the rate in Japan (95), 14 points below the rate in Germany (92), and 7 points below the rate in France (85). Only Italy, with a rate of 73, was below the United States on the graduation rate (figure 20).

In contrast to the other four countries reporting data, the graduation rate for males in the United States was higher than the rate for females (79 compared to 77). In the other countries reporting data, the graduation rate for females was 10 points higher than the rate for males in Italy, 5 points higher in Japan, 4 points higher in Germany, and 2 points higher in France.

Students who complete upper secondary education (high school) in the United States receive a diploma that permits them to continue their studies in higher education in both academic and vocational programs. However, this is not the case in several other countries presented, as can be seen in graduation rates for students who are qualified to enter higher level academic programs. In Germany, for example, the overall graduation rate in 1999 was 92, but the rate for graduates who are qualified to enter into higher academic education was 33. Similarly, in Japan, the overall graduation rate was 95, but the rate for entry into higher academic education was 69.

### *Definition and Methodology*

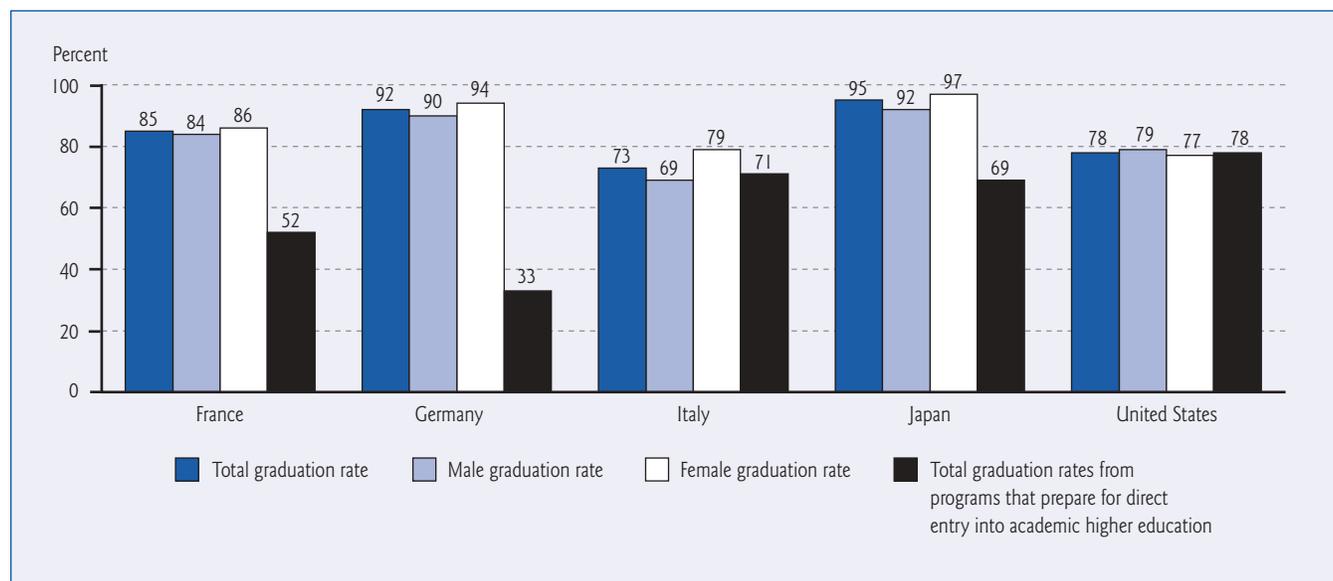
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The number of upper secondary graduates divided by the total population at the typical age of graduation (multiplied by 100) in public and private institutions in total, and by gender, in 1999. The number of graduates from programs that permit students to enter academic higher education programs divided by the total population at the typical age of graduation (multiplied by 100) in public and private institutions, in 1999.

In the United States, all students who complete high school are eligible to enter a program of higher academic education. The graduation rate from programs that prepare students for direct entry into academic higher education is therefore the same as the

graduation rate for all upper secondary programs. In other countries such as France and Germany, only students who complete programs of study that provide the qualifications for entry into the university can do so. Students who complete vocational and technical programs only have the qualifications to enter higher level vocational and technical programs. These differences in entry criteria into programs of higher education may contribute to differences in graduation rates from upper secondary programs that prepare for direct entry into academic higher education across countries.

**Figure 20. Upper secondary school graduation rates, by sex and country: 1999**



NOTE: Graduation rates for Germany use 1998 data. Graduation rates from programs that prepare for direct entry into academic higher education come from the column title ISCED 3A (designed to prepare for direct entry into tertiary type-A education). The figure presented for the United States is the same as the one reported as the total graduation rate, since graduation from all secondary programs permits entry into programs of academic higher education. In other countries such as France and Germany, only students who complete programs of study that provide the qualifications for entry into the university can enter programs of academic higher education. Students who complete vocational and technical programs only have the qualifications to enter higher level vocational and technical programs. These differences in entry criteria into programs of higher education may contribute to differences in graduation rates from upper secondary programs that prepare for direct entry into academic higher education across countries.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Education at a Glance*, 2001, Table C.2.2.

## Upper Secondary School Graduation Rates – Data Tables

Table A-20. Upper secondary school graduation ratios, by sex and country: 1999

Country	Total graduation ratio	Male graduation ratio	Female graduation ratio	Total graduation ratios from programs that prepare for direct entry into academic higher education
France	85	84	86	52
Germany	92	90	94	33
Italy	73	69	79	71
Japan	95	92	97	69
United States	78	79	77	78

NOTE: Graduation rates for Germany use 1998 data. Graduation rates from programs that prepare for direct entry into academic higher education come from the column title ISCED 3A (designed to prepare for direct entry into tertiary type-A education). The figure presented for the U.S. is the same as the one reported as the total graduation rate since graduation from all secondary programs permits entry into programs of academic higher education.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Education at a Glance*, 2001, Table C 2.2.