

FIRST UNIVERSITY DEGREES

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

In 1999, the gross graduation rate from first university programs of medium length (from 3 to 5 years in length) was 33 per 100 at the population's typical age of graduation in the United States—the second-highest graduation rate in the countries presented. The graduation rate was lower in the United States than in the United Kingdom (36), but it was higher than the rates in Japan (29), Canada (27), the Russian Federation (26), France (19), Germany (5), and Italy (1). With the addition of graduates from long first university degree programs (from 5 to 6 years in length), the graduation rates for France and Germany increased to 25 and 16, respectively, but the rate for medium programs alone in the United States was still higher than the rate for medium and long programs combined in France and Germany (figure 25a).

In the United States, the graduation rate from first university programs that prepare students for advanced research training (33)

was around three and one half times the graduation rate from vocational and technical programs that prepare students for direct entry into the labor market. Graduation rates from the first type of program were also considerably higher in the United Kingdom and Canada—over three times the graduation rate of vocational and technical programs in the United Kingdom and over twice the rate in Canada (figure 25b).

Japan was the only country reporting data in which the graduation rate from vocational and technical programs was higher than graduation rates from programs that prepare students for advanced research and professional programs. In 1999, the graduation rate from vocational and technical programs was 30, compared to 29 from programs with a more academic orientation (figure 25b).

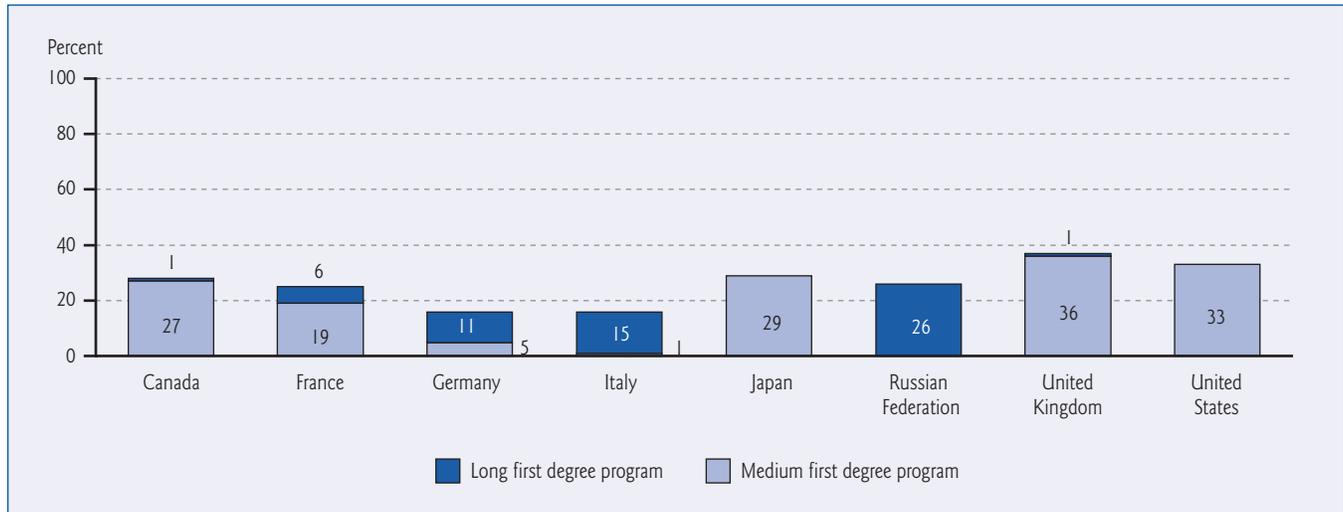
Definition and Methodology

Gross graduation rates are calculated by dividing the total number of graduates (all ages) from first degree programs in public and private institutions by the population at the typical age of graduation and multiplying by 100. Gross graduation rates are presented for France, Japan, the Russian Federation, and the United States. The theoretical graduation ages are: 21 to 22 in France for a medium first degree and 23 to 24 for a long first degree; 22 in Japan for a medium first degree and 23 for a long first degree; 22 in the Russian Federation for a medium first degree; and 22 in the United States for a medium first degree. Net graduation rates are presented for Canada, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. Net graduation rates are the sum of graduation rates by single year of age from first degree programs.

Countries organize higher academic studies differently. In some countries, such as the United States, there is a clear distinction

between first and second university degrees (i.e., undergraduate and graduate programs). First university degrees in these countries—a bachelor's degree in the United States—are typically of medium length (3 to 5 years duration in the international classification). (First university degrees exclude associate's degrees from community colleges.) In other countries, such as Germany and Italy, there is no distinction between first and second degree programs. The first university degree—the *Diplom* in Germany and the *Laurea* in Italy—is generally a long degree (5 to 6 years in the international classification). Program types are categorized as academic programs that prepare students for advanced research degrees and highly qualified professions (Type A in the international classification) and vocational/technical programs that prepare students for direct entry into the labor market (Type B programs).

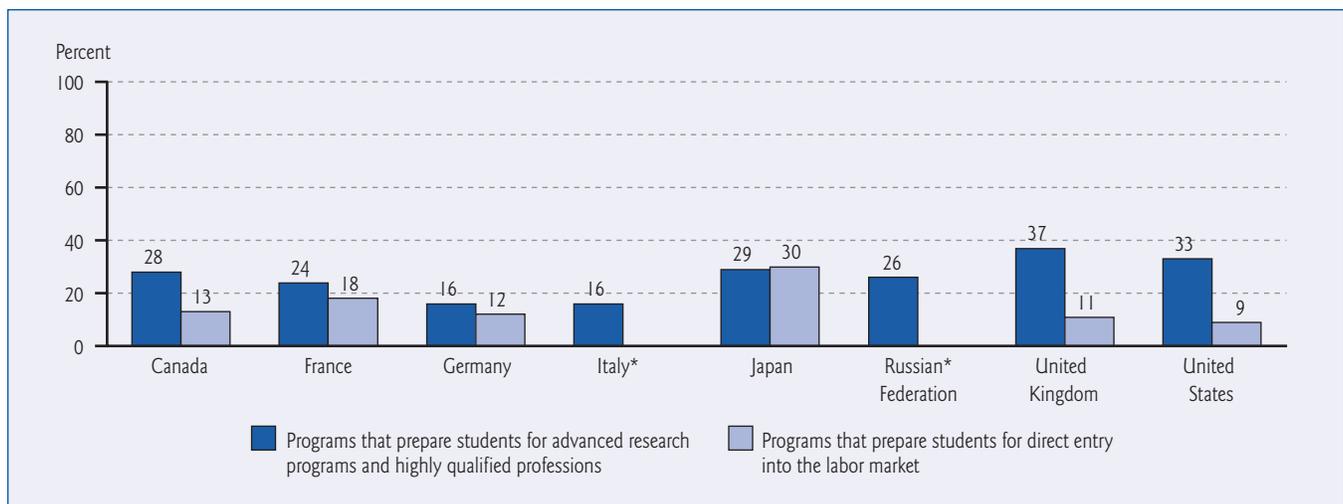
Figure 25a. Graduation rates in higher education, by length of program and country: 1999



NOTE: The United Kingdom includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Medium first degree program data not available for the Russian Federation. Long first degree program data not applicable for Japan and not available for the United States. Programs that prepare students for advanced research and highly qualified professions are classified as first university degree programs. In the United States, the first university degree corresponds to a bachelor's degree. As a bachelor's degree is typically of 4 years' duration, it is classified as a medium length first degree. First university degrees exclude associate's degrees. Gross graduation rates are reported for France, Japan, the Russian Federation, and the United States; net graduation rates are reported for Canada, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Education at a Glance*, 2001, Table C 4.1.

Figure 25b. Graduation rates in higher education, by type of program and country: 1999



*The graduation ratio for programs that prepare students for direct entry into the labor market in Italy rounds to zero; data on programs that prepare students for direct entry into the labor market are not available for the Russian Federation.

NOTE: The United Kingdom includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Programs that prepare students for advanced research and highly qualified professions are classified as first university degree programs. In the United States, the first university degree corresponds to a bachelor's degree. As a bachelor's degree is typically of 4 years' duration, it is classified as a medium length first degree. First university degrees exclude associate's degrees. Gross graduation rates are reported for France, Japan, the Russian Federation, and the United States; net graduation rates are reported for Canada, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Education at a Glance*, 2001, Table C 4.1.

First University Degrees – Data Tables

Table A-25a. Graduation rates in higher education, by length of program and country:
and country: 1999

Country	Type of first degree	
	Medium first degree program	Long first degree program
Canada	26.9	1.4
France	18.5	5.6
Germany	5.2	10.8
Italy	1.1	14.9
Japan	29.0	†
Russian Federation	—	26.1
United Kingdom	35.6	1.2
United States	33.2	—

— Data not available or missing.

† Not applicable.

NOTE: The United Kingdom includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Medium first degree program data not available for the Russian Federation. Long first degree program data not applicable for Japan and not available for the United States.

Programs that prepare students for advanced research and highly qualified professions are classified as first university degree programs. In the United States, the first university degree corresponds to a bachelor's degree. As a bachelor's degree is typically of 4 years' duration, it is classified as a medium length first degree. First university degrees exclude associate's degrees. Gross graduation rates are reported for France, Japan, the Russian Federation, and the United States; net graduation rates are reported for Canada, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Education at a Glance*, 2001, Table C4.1.

Table A-25b. Graduation rates in higher education, by type of program and country: 1999

	Type of higher education program	
	Programs that prepare students for advanced research programs and highly qualified professions	Programs that prepare students for direct entry into the labor market
Canada	28.3	12.6
France	24.1	17.9
Germany	16.0	11.8
Italy	16.0	0.3
Japan	29.0	29.9
Russian Federation	26.1	—
United Kingdom	36.8	11.4
United States	33.2	8.6

— Data not available or missing.

NOTE: The United Kingdom includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Programs that prepare students for advanced research and highly qualified professions are classified as first university degree programs. In the United States, the first university degree corresponds to a bachelor's degree as a bachelor's degree is typically of 4 years' duration, it is classified as a medium length first degree. First university degrees exclude associate's degrees. Gross graduation rates are reported for France, Japan, the Russian Federation, and the United States; net graduation rates are reported for Canada, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Education at a Glance*, 2001, Table C4.1.