

considered to have abandoned formal education at ISCED level 6. The same logic applies to vocational programmes at ISCED levels 3 to 5. The possibility to transfer learning credits to the new programme that a person started after the change of field has no impact on the fact that changing the field is considered as abandoning formal education.

If a person changes school, training organisation or university but continues the same programme without changing the field of studies, this is not considered as abandoning the formal programme.

The variable refers to the programme, i.e. if a person abandons the same programme several times, this is to be counted as abandoning one programme only.

For combined/interdisciplinary programmes (i.e. with subjects from different fields), a person might start their studies with several subjects and narrow this down to one or a few subjects during the programme. If the person further pursued this narrowed-down programme, this is not to be considered as abandoning formal education.

Current formal education: if the person is currently participating in a formal programme, then this programme is not to be considered for this variable as it is ongoing. Current participation covers short interruptions like the regular school or university holidays. However, a person currently in formal education might have started and not completed formal programmes in the past.

Current interruption longer than school holidays: if at the time of the interview a person has interrupted their formal education for a 'long' period, then this interruption is to be counted as abandoning formal education, even if the respondent might have some plans to resume this formal education programme. 'Long period' means any period longer than the regular school or university holidays, i.e. the person is not in formal education. For example, a person who had started a bachelor programme but interrupted this programme for a gap year and is interviewed during the gap year is considered to have abandoned formal education.

Past interruptions: past interruptions of formal education are not considered as abandoned formal education if the programme was successfully completed after the interruption (the situation at the time of the interview). For example, a person who had started a bachelor programme, then interrupted this for a gap year (such as to do voluntary work or travel), then had resumed the same programme and successfully completed this programme at the time of the interview, is not considered as having abandoned formal education.

In some countries, some formal programmes exist which do not lead to a formal qualification (e.g. 'Enseignement des classes préparatoires aux grandes écoles' in France). In such cases, the criterion of full attendance during the programme is to be used, i.e. as long as a person fully attended the programme this is to be considered as completing the programme.

Answer cards that list categories of all relevant formal education programmes can be used. This programme category approach could be developed in a way that would make it possible to collect information on the level and orientation of education. For instance the approach with answer cards could help identify specific programme categories or even specific programmes, in a way that makes it possible to derive information about their level and orientation.

Suggested question:

FILTER: IF [Age < 16 or Age > 34] or never attended school >> go to the next question

IF $16 \leq \text{Age} \leq 34$ >> and attended school >> go to PE050_Q1

PE050_Q1: Is there any formal education programme that you have started, but then stopped without completing it?

[Please consider all formal education programmes that you ever started but then did not successfully complete. Please also include changes in the field of studies. If you are currently participating in a formal programme, this programme should not be taken into account].

1. Yes, one
2. Yes, several
3. No