



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Equal educational opportunities – *Improving educational success of foreigners in German schools*

10.1 Foreign school graduates



Data source(s):
Federal Statistical Office

Definition

The indicator shows the proportion of foreign school leavers among all foreign school leavers in a year group (in %). School leavers are those who leave general education schools with at least a lower secondary school leaving certificate, while school leavers are those who leave school without a school leaving certificate.

Intention

The integration of foreigners living in Germany is an important prerequisite for the social cohesion of our society. The basic prerequisite for successful integration is sufficient school qualifications that open up vocational training and employment opportunities.

Target

Increase the proportion of foreign school leavers with at least a secondary general school certificate and bring into line with that of German school leavers by 2030¹

¹ The designation of school leaving qualifications was revised for the 2024/25 reporting year in accordance with the Agreement on School Types and Educational Pathways in Lower Secondary Education (Resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of 03/12/1993, as amended on 07/10/2022).



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Content and progress

This indicator represents the proportion of foreign school graduates relative to the total number of foreign school leavers and graduates within a given cohort. Graduates are defined as pupils who have completed a specific type of school with a formal qualification. This also includes those who transfer to another general education school type to obtain an additional qualification. Foreign nationals are defined as all persons who are not German within the meaning of Article 116 (1) of the Basic Law (Grundgesetz), that is, those who do not hold German citizenship. This definition also encompasses stateless persons and those with unresolved citizenship status. Persons holding German citizenship alongside another nationality are not classified as part of the foreign population.

In 2023, the proportion of foreign school graduates among all foreign school leavers and graduates stood at 82.3%. This represents the third consecutive year of decline compared to the previous year. A gender-specific analysis reveals that the proportion of female foreign graduates among all female foreign school leavers and graduates was 85.2%, whereas the corresponding figure for males was 79.7%. The proportion of German school graduates among all German school leavers and graduates was most recently 94.2%, remaining very stable over the past fifteen years.

The difference between the proportion of foreign and German graduates reached its lowest point of 6.1 percentage points in 2013. However, following increased migration of refugees in 2015/2016, this gap widened significantly again, surpassing the level observed in 1996 (11.8 percentage points). The largest gap recorded was in 2017, at 13.0 percentage points. After a temporary reduction to 9.6 percentage points in 2020, the gap stood again at 11.9 percentage points in 2023. The politically established target to increase the proportion of foreign school graduates with at least a First School Leaving Certificate (formerly: *Hauptschulabschluss*) was not met in 2023, nor was the goal of aligning this proportion with the level of German school graduates.

When considering not only absolute proportions but also the level of attainment, it is evident that among foreign graduates of general education schools in the 2023 cohort, 30.9% obtained the First School Leaving Certificate, 39.0% left school with an Intermediate School Leaving Certificate (*Mittlerer Abschluss*), and 12.3% achieved the entrance qualification for universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulreife*) or the general higher education entrance qualification (*Allgemeine Hochschulreife*). Among German school graduates, the corresponding proportions were 14.9% for the First School Leaving Certificate, 43.5% for the Intermediate School Leaving Certificate, and 35.9% for the *Fachhochschulreife* or *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*. Notably, foreign youths are markedly underrepresented compared to their German peers, especially in higher educational qualifications.

The data underlying this indicator derive from school statistics compiled by the Federal Statistical Office from the individual Länder' records. These generally consist of complete surveys with a mandatory reporting obligation. The aggregation of Länder results into a national figure is influenced by differences in education policy among the Länder – for example, with respect to promotion regulations or the structuring of vocational education pathways. Such differences can only be partially compensated for by formal regulations aimed at standardising classifications.



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Type of target

Combination of Directional target and Target with specific target value

Assessment

Indicator 10.1 comprises two sub-targets that must be achieved simultaneously: first, the proportion of foreign school graduates should be increased; second, the difference compared with the corresponding proportion of German school graduates should be reduced to a maximum of 0 percentage points by 2030.

The first sub-target is assessed as slightly cloudy, as the most recent development in 2023 points in the desired direction, while the average development between 2018 and 2023 moved in the opposite direction. The second sub-target is assessed as cloud, since the overall trend is positive, but the politically defined target value of 0 percentage points by 2030 would still be clearly missed if the current development continues.

For indicators with several sub-targets that must be met concurrently, the lowest rating determines the overall assessment. Indicator 10.1 is therefore assessed as cloud for 2023.

