



Educational attainment in the adult population

Over a fifth of New Zealand population aged 25 to 64 has attained tertiary education at a degree level or above

Indicator Description

Distribution of the population aged 25 to 64 years-old by highest qualification.

expansion of scientific and cultural knowledge, and a population's educational levels are positively related to economic growth rates and so to a country's capacity to provide its citizens with a high standard of living.

Why This Is Important

Higher educational attainment, in terms of recognised qualifications, is associated with a range of positive outcomes, including better income, employment, and health. As the requirements for many jobs and the expectations of employers are rising, education that provides the necessary skills and knowledge has become essential for full participation in society and for a productive workforce. Education also contributes to an

This indicator examines the highest level of education completed or achieved within the 25-64 age group. This is often considered a proxy for 'human capital', that is, the skills and knowledge in the core working-age population. Changes in educational attainment provide information about access to education and the equity of the education system, and serve as a backdrop to current participation and completion rates.

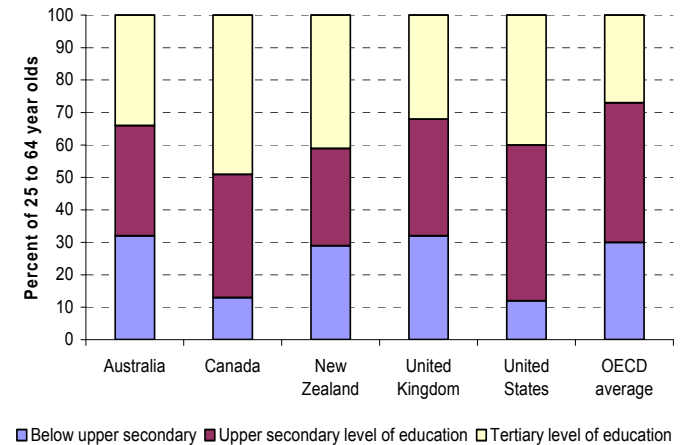
How We Are Going

In 2007, 41% of all 25 to 64 year-olds in New Zealand had tertiary education. This figure is well above the OECD average across 30 countries (27%), higher than the United States (40%), United Kingdom (32%) and Australia (34%), but less than Canada (49%). Tertiary education in this context includes tertiary education of type A (largely theory-based and designed to provide sufficient qualifications for entry to advanced research programmes and professions with high skill requirements, such as medicine, dentistry or architecture), type B (typically shorter than those of tertiary-type A with focus on practical, technical or occupational skills for direct entry into the labour market) and advanced research programmes.

The proportion of the New Zealand population aged 25 to 64 with a degree or above almost doubled between 1997 and 2007, then dropped by one percentage point to 22% in 2008.

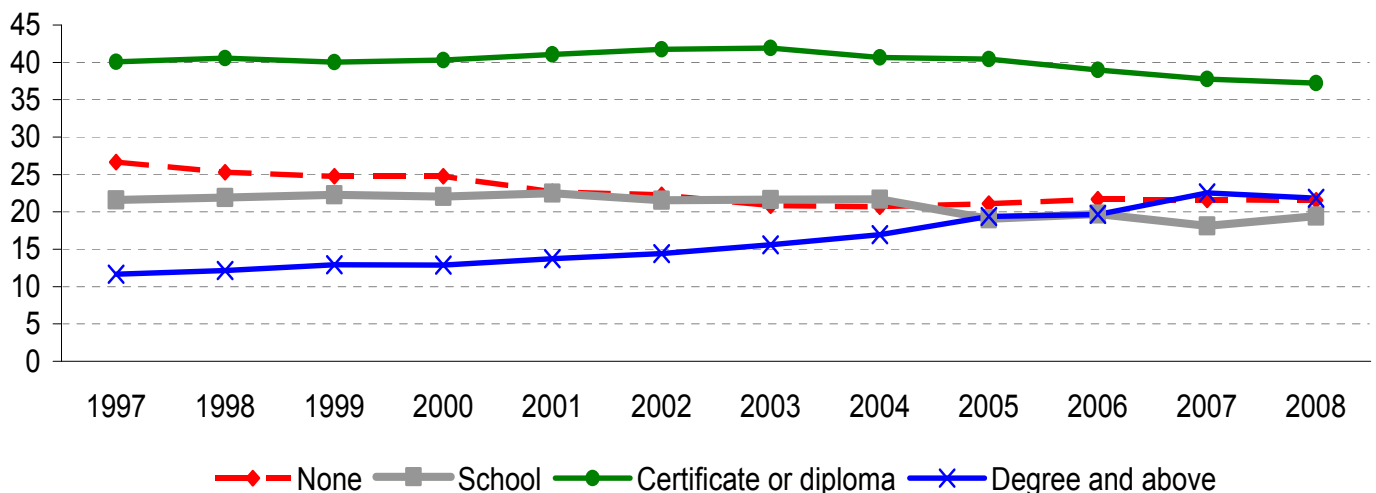
After a peak in 2002 and 2003, the percentage of the population with a certificate or diploma continued to decline. The percentage of the population with no qualification remained unchanged for the last three years at 22%.

Educational attainment of the population aged 25 to 64 for selected countries by highest level of qualification (2007)

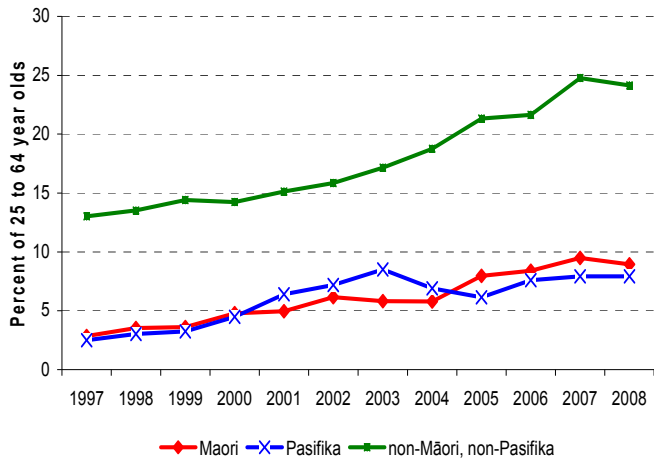


Between 1997 and 2007, the percentage of 25 to 64 year-olds with no qualification has decreased from 27% to 22%, a reduction of 19%, though this percentage has been relatively stable since 2002, dropping slightly below 21% in 2003 and 2004.

Educational attainment of the population by highest level of qualification (1997 to 2008)



Estimated percentages of the population aged 25 to 64 with a degree or above as highest qualification by ethnic group (1997 to 2008)



Non-Māori, non-Pasifika have the highest percentage of people aged 25 to 64 with a bachelors degree or higher. In 2008, almost 24% of non-Māori, non-Pasifika held a bachelors degree or above compared with 9% of Māori and 8% of Pasifika. However, the growth in degree or postgraduate qualifications has been highest for Pasifika and Māori, with rates in 2008 being approximately 3 times those in 1997. These growth rates compare with an 85% increase for non-Māori, non-Pasifika over the same time period. Despite this, the gap between the estimated percentages of the Māori and Pasifika population aged 25 to 64 and non-Māori, non-Pasifika population is not closing.

For tertiary qualifications certificates or diplomas, the highest level of growth has occurred for Māori with an 18% increase since 1997. This is consistent with the patterns of and growth rates of Māori participation in tertiary education. In 2008, the proportion of the Māori population aged 25 to 64 with a tertiary qualification below degree level as the highest qualification (38%) was the same as that for non-Māori, non-Pasifika. In contrast 28% of Pasifika aged 25 to 64 had a tertiary qualification below degree level as their highest qualification.

How To Find Out More

The following outcome and participation indicators should also be considered in conjunction with Educational attainment in the adult population:

- Completion of tertiary education
- Tertiary student progression
- Tertiary student retention
- Education expectancy
- Participation rates in tertiary education.

References

- Ministry of Education (2008). *Tertiary Education Strategy 2007-12 - a framework for monitoring*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- OECD (2009). *Education at a Glance: OECD indicators 2007*. Paris: OECD.

Estimated percentages of the population aged 25 to 64 with a tertiary certificate or diploma as highest qualification by ethnic group

