

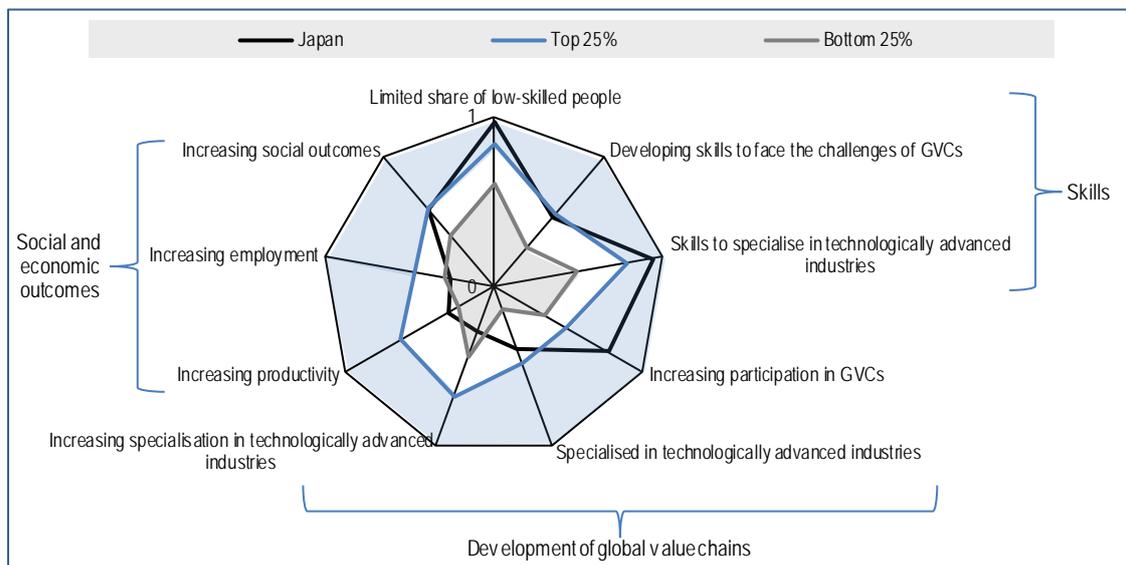
SKILLS OUTLOOK 2017 SKILLS AND GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS

How does Japan compare?

OECD Skills Outlook 2017

The *OECD Skills Outlook 2017* shows that skills matter for global value chains. The report presents new analyses based on the Survey of Adult Skills, a product of the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), and the Trade in Value Added Database. It develops a Scoreboard on Skills and Global Value Chains with the objective to measure the extent to which countries have been able to make the most of GVCs through the skills of their populations in terms of skills, global value chains, and social and economic outcomes. It also explains what countries would need to do to specialise in technologically advanced industries.

Figure 1. Scoreboard on skills and global value chains



Source: OECD (2017), *OECD Skills Outlook 2017, Skills and Global Value Chains*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264273351-en>.

- Since the 2000s, Japan has significantly increased its participation in global value chains, but participation remains relatively low (Figure 1, Table A.1; OECD, 2017, pp. 41-44). As a big economy with large internal value chains, Japan relies less on foreign inputs than smaller OECD economies. One in six jobs in the business sector of Japan is sustained by foreign final demand, less than the OECD average (OECD, 2017, Figure 2.9).
- Japan specialises in several technologically advanced industries, particularly more complex business services and some high- and mid/high-tech manufacturing industries. The analysis

shows that this specialisation pattern is largely supported by the country’s skills characteristics, particularly its large pool of workers with reliable qualifications and relatively good skills mixes, which can help the country deepen specialisation and specialise in similar industries (Figure 1; Table 1; OECD, 2017, pp. 107-115).

- Increased participation of Japan in global value chains has been accompanied by some social outcomes, particularly improved job quality, above the OECD average over the last decade (Figure 1, Table A.1). But Japan’s productivity growth has been modest and change in employment outcomes over the last decade are below the OECD average, reflecting the impact of population ageing.
- Japan’s population is highly skilled. According to the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC), the share of low performers in either literacy or numeracy skills is only nine percent, the lowest share among OECD countries (OECD, 2017, Figure 1.7). However, its workers have low readiness to learn (OECD, 2017, Figure 3.3). To maintain or deepen its specialisation in technologically advanced industries and ensure that the country fully benefits economically and socially from its participation in global markets, Japan needs to continue to equip its population with skills mixes of both cognitive and social and emotional skills, and encourage adults to continuously develop and adapt their skills. The country can also develop further its participation in global networks for education, training and innovation (OECD, 2017, Figure 4.11).

Table 1. **Specialisation opportunities in technologically advanced industries**

Coming from the alignment of Japan’s skills characteristics with industries’ skills requirements

		Medium/high-tech manufacturing			High-tech manufacturing			Business services (more complex)				
		Machinery and equipment n.e.c	Electrical machinery, apparatus n.e.c	Motor vehicles, trailers, semi-trailers	Chemicals and chemical products	Computer, electronic, and optical	Other transport equipment	Finance and insurance	Real estate activities	Renting of machinery, equipment	Computer and related activities	R&D, and other business services
specialisation in 2011	observed	○		○		○			○	○	○	
	opportunity											
specialisation trend 2000-11	increased			●		●	●		●	●	●	●
	decreased	●	●		●			●				

Note: The dots in the table show whether countries have increased (black circle) or decreased (grey circle) their revealed comparative advantages over the period 2000-11. Revealed comparative advantages (white circle) show the extent to which a country is specialised in a certain industry within GVCs (or receives more income from its exports in this industry than other countries). Opportunities for specialisation are the results of empirical work developed in the OECD Skills Outlook 2017. Countries have an opportunity to specialise in an industry if there is a good alignment of countries’ skills characteristics with the skills requirements of this industry. Several characteristics of skills shape countries’ specialisation in GVCs. The extent to which these characteristics are aligned with each industry’s skills requirement can be consolidated into one measure showing the specialisation opportunities of each country in each industry.

Source: OECD (2017), *OECD Skills Outlook 2017, Skills and Global Value Chains*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264273351-en>.

Key policy messages

Equip graduates with reliable qualifications and strong mixes of relevant skills

- Workers in Japan show the highest cognitive skills according to The Survey of Adult Skills but the lowest readiness to learn (OECD, 2017, Figures 3.2 and 3.3). They also perform ICT, STEM, managing, communication and marketing and accounting tasks on the job, much less frequently than workers in other OECD countries, suggesting they could be better equipped with these skills – skills that are highly valued by employers. To preserve and enhance

Japan's comparative advantage in technologically advanced industries, the country needs to ensure its workers' strong cognitive skills are paired with social and emotional skills.

- To specialise in most technologically advanced industries, countries need pools of workers with qualifications that reliably reflect what they can do. This is the case in Japan more than in any other OECD country. More than 90% of the country's recent higher education graduates have numeracy skills at level 3 or above, far exceeding the OECD average. Japan is among the OECD countries with the smallest gap in learning outcomes between advantaged and disadvantaged 15-year-old students.
- To equip all graduates with a strong skills mix, the Skills Outlook emphasises the importance of high-quality pre-primary education for all to give every child a strong start to their education and careers. In addition, innovative teaching methods in schools and a stronger teacher support for all students can help them attain the relevant skills, both cognitive and social and emotional ones.

Continuously develop and adapt adults' skills

- Participation in adult learning is below the OECD average, according to the Survey of Adult Skills, which might not be enough for a country that specialises in high-tech manufacturing and complex business services industries (OECD, 2017, Figure 4.16). In addition, Japan's low-skilled adults have some of the lowest participation rates among the OECD countries, participating in the Survey of Adult Skills (OECD, 2013).
- Japan's low-skilled workers and those adults who withdraw from the labour market face a vicious cycle in which they do not benefit from training and therefore their skills remain weak. Policies need to better support all workers at risk of displacement and ensure quality of adult learning.

Make the best use of the skills pool

- Data suggest that the use of best management practices is more widespread in Japan than in most other OECD countries (OECD, 2017, Figure 4.9). These practices are a powerful tool for using effectively the skills assets, adjusting them to new needs, and thereby giving a country a comparative advantage in GVCs.

Participate in the global network of education, training and innovation

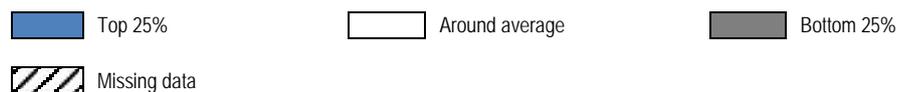
- Japan seems to participate less than many other countries in the global network of education, training and innovation (OECD, 2017, pp. 144-45). Patenting activities run in collaboration with international partners along with the scientific publications co-authored with researchers from abroad were the lowest among OECD countries in 2012. The international mobility of scientific authors in Japan is also relatively low. In addition, Japan has not attracted many international students and researchers (OECD, 2017, Figure 4.13).
- Many policies affect countries capacities to be part of global education, innovation and research networks, underlining the need to adopt a comprehensive approach.

Reference

OECD (2017), *OECD Skills Outlook 2017, Skills and Global Value Chains*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264273351-en>.

OECD (2013), *OECD Skills Outlook 2013, First Results from the Survey of Adult Skills*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264204256-en>.

Table A.1. Scoreboard on skills and global value chains



	Skills			Development of GVCs			Economic and Social Outcomes		
	A limited share of low-skilled people	Developing skills to face the challenges of GVCs	Skills to specialise in tech. advanced industries	Increasing participation in GVCs	Specialised in tech. advanced industries	Increasing specialisation in tech. advanced industries	Increasing productivity	Increasing employment	Improving social outcomes
Australia	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%
Austria	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%
Belgium	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%
Canada	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%
Chile	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Top 25%	Missing data
Czech Republic	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%
Denmark	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%
Estonia	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%
Finland	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%
France	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%
Germany	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Top 25%
Greece	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%
Hungary	Missing data	Bottom 25%	Missing data	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%
Iceland	Missing data	Bottom 25%	Missing data	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%
Ireland	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%
Israel	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Top 25%
Italy	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%
Japan	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%
Korea	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Top 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Top 25%	Top 25%
Luxembourg	Missing data	Bottom 25%	Missing data	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%
Mexico	Missing data	Bottom 25%	Missing data	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%
Netherlands	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%
New Zealand	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%
Norway	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%
Poland	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%
Portugal	Missing data	Top 25%	Missing data	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%
Slovak Rep.	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Top 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%
Slovenia	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%
Spain	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%
Sweden	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%
Switzerland	Missing data	Bottom 25%	Missing data	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%
Turkey	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Top 25%
United Kingdom	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%
United States	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Top 25%	Top 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%	Bottom 25%

Note: indicators are described in Box 1.1 of the report. The scoreboard shows for each sub-category, countries that perform in the top 25%, bottom 25%, and those around the OECD average. For instance, Finland is among the OECD countries that have the lowest share of low-skilled people, have not developed skills much to face the challenges of GVCs but have the skills to specialise in technologically advanced industries, and have not increased much their specialisation in technologically advanced industries. It performs around the average for the other sub-categories.

Source: OECD (2017), *OECD Skills Outlook 2017, Skills and Global Value Chains*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264273351-en>.