

ISCED 2011

Full title: International Standard Classification of Education, 2011

Abbreviation: ISCED 2011

Legal basis:

- Commission Regulation (EU) No 912/2013 of 23 September 2013 implementing Regulation (EC) No 452/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the production and development of statistics on education and lifelong learning, as regards statistics on education and training systems

Implementation date: November 2011.

History of the classification:

ISCED is a member of the United Nations International Family of Economic and Social Classifications and is the reference classification for organizing education programmes and related qualifications by levels and fields of education. First developed in the mid-1970s by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), ISCED has been revised twice – most recently in 2011. ISCED is a product of international agreement and was adopted formally by the General Conference of UNESCO Member States.

The latest revision, ISCED 2011, concentrated primarily on changes to the levels of education of programmes (ISCED-P) and introduced, for the first time, a classification of levels of educational attainment based on qualifications (ISCED-A).

Structure:

The ISCED classification has a three-digit coding scheme. The first digit represents the level, the second the category (the orientation of the training), and the third the sub-category (access to programmes at higher ISCED levels).

Short description:

ISCED classifies education programmes by their content using two main cross-classification variables: levels of education and fields of education. ISCED2011 presents a revision of the ISCED 1997 levels of education classification. It also introduces a related classification of educational attainment levels based on recognised educational qualifications. The main cross-classification variables of ISCED are levels and fields of education. Within ISCED levels, programmes and qualifications are further classified by complementary dimensions. These include:

- the programme orientation;
- completion of the ISCED level;
- access to higher ISCED levels; and
- position in the national degree and qualification structure.

The duration criteria are important for the classification of programmes to levels and identification of level completion.

ISCED is a multi-purpose system, designed for education policy analysis and the structure of the national education system.

Main statistical applications:

statistics on education and training, other social statistics (educational attainment, educational participation, etc.).

Linked classification:

Corresponds to the ISCED 2011 classification adopted by UNESCO.

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