

EUROPEAN AGENCY STATISTICS ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

**Switzerland 2014/2015 data
background information**



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

How the official decision of special educational needs (SEN) used in the country relates to the agreed EASIE operational definition

An official decision leads to a pupil being recognised as eligible for additional educational support to meet their learning needs.

Pupils' legal entitlements under what legislation

Article 62.3 of the Federal Constitution of Switzerland states: 'The Cantons shall ensure that adequate special needs education is provided to all children and young people with disabilities up to the age of 20'. Since 2011, the Special Education Concordat of the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education has been in force (only for the signatory Cantons: 16 out of 26 by the end of 2015). It demands the application of a standardised procedure as a common tool to establish eligibility. This procedure is based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health for Children and Youth used generally for low-incidence disabilities.

In addition, Cantons use a framework for special educational support (*Sonderpädagogisches Konzept/Concept de pédagogie spécialisée* or directly in the legislation), which describes the organisation and delivery of additional support (including establishing eligibility). Cantons also provide additional support beyond the population covered by the Concordat. This includes, for example, children with learning difficulties (high-incidence disabilities) or with a first language different from the language of instruction.

How additional support is understood within the country context

The provision of additional support is under the authority of the Cantons and therefore may differ. Additional support for high-incidence disabilities or learning difficulties is generally under the school's authority; there is no national definition for additional support. Resources are made available according to school-based funding for additional support needs.

The needs assessment of the standardised eligibility procedure (for low-incidence disabilities) includes the following dimensions: special education support, pedagogical-therapeutic support (e.g. speech therapy, psychomotricity), counselling and support (e.g. counselling of teacher, sign language interpreter, transport), and care and assistance (support for daily routine, social support).

Health needs are an additional dimension, but these are not the responsibility or mandate of the education system. A recommendation is made for the provision of additional support, which the responsible education authority subsequently checks and approves.



The criteria for an official decision are

There has been an educational assessment procedure involving a multi-disciplinary team

The standardised eligibility procedure documents the evidence relevant to understand the problem and establish the support needs. The Cantons differ in their approach to implementing the procedure. However, generally there will be a case manager (e.g. school psychologist) as part of a multi-disciplinary team. In addition, parents and school representatives are involved in developing the recommendation for additional support.

The multi-disciplinary team includes members from within and external to the pupil's school

The standardised eligibility procedure (low-incidence disabilities) is conducted by a multi-disciplinary team that is mainly external to the pupil's school. However, the pupil's teacher(s) are involved as informant(s) (basic assessment) and to develop recommendations (needs assessment). The educational assessment for high-incidence disabilities does not involve a multi-disciplinary team, but is the responsibility of the school team, with support from external experts where necessary.

There is a legal document which describes the support the pupil is eligible to receive and which is used as the basis for planning

The Cantons participating in the Special Education Concordat describe their provision in a special education framework (*Sonderpädagogisches Konzept* or directly in the legislation). Most Cantons will also require the communities to develop such a framework as evidence that special education provision is sufficient and adequate. Because the Swiss education system is highly decentralised, types and organisation of provision will vary considerably among Cantons and even, in some of them, among communities within a Canton.

These special education frameworks are the background against which the additional support is organised and provided. For low-incidence disabilities, the standardised eligibility procedure sets out the dimension of additional support (see above). However, it does not prescribe fixed criteria as to which type of disability requires which type of additional support. The standardised eligibility procedure is a long-term planning tool, which documents overall goals and means to reach these goals. On this basis, schools develop medium-term and short-term goals to guide their work. Some Cantons have developed guidelines for this planning process.

The official decision is subject to a formal, regular review process

For low-incidence disabilities, the standardised eligibility procedure is used to formally review the goals and means of additional support. Generally, a formal review of these long-term goals and means should occur after two years. Medium-term and short-term goals are reviewed on a regular basis.

For high-incidence disabilities, review procedures will differ among Cantons. Some Cantons have introduced a procedure for collaborative assessment and planning meetings where parents, teachers and special educators (and sometimes pupils) meet regularly to review progress and adapt goals and means.



Some of the 10 Cantons which did not join the Concordat do not use the standardised eligibility procedure, but use a similar procedure to determine eligibility. The criteria for an official decision of SEN can vary from those described above.

Proxy indicator(s) for the 80% benchmark used for the country's data collection

Actual data is available to verify the 80% benchmark.

This will be the case from 2017/18.

Details on what the country proxy is

In principle, pupils placed in a specialised school are educated in this type of education for the majority of the time.

Why this proxy was used

It has not been possible to verify the number of hours of specialised education.

Specific country issues in applying the proxy

For pupils who are educated in two institutions, information is gathered for the institution where they spend more time.

Detailed description of what is meant by 'out of formal education' within the country's data collection

The 2011 International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) defines Formal Education as follows:

*[...] education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned through public organizations and recognised private bodies and, – in their totality – constitute the formal education system of a country. Formal education programmes are thus recognised as such by the relevant national education or equivalent authorities, e.g. any other institution in cooperation with the national or sub-national educational authorities. Formal education consists mostly of initial education [...] Vocational education, special needs education and some parts of adult education are often recognised as being part of the formal education system. Qualifications from formal education are by definition recognised and, therefore, are within the scope of ISCED. Institutionalised education occurs when an organization provides structured educational arrangements, such as student-teacher relationships and/or interactions, that are specially designed for education and learning (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2011, *International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 2011*, p. 11).*



Information on pupils considered out of education (i.e. those not in formal education as per the ISCED definition)

All children are supposed to attend school, even those without residence permits. There is no way of knowing if there are non-authorised children who stay hidden. Children in hospital receive tuition in the hospital, but remain enrolled in a (mainstream or specialised) school and are counted as such. Children in rehabilitation settings are attending a specialised school. There is no data concerning out of education children.

Country definitions of formal, non-formal and informal education

The ISCED definition is used. There is no information on home-educated pupils. However, there is only a negligible number of them in Switzerland.

Sources of data from non-educational sectors – i.e. social, justice, health

Please refer to the answer regarding pupils considered out of education: there is no data.

Provision of data on private sector education

The data collection covers all sectors of education, including numbers for the pupil population in the private sector.

Private sector education in the country

The definition is based on UNESCO-UIS/OECD/Eurostat, but Switzerland classifies private schools into two categories:

- 1) Private schools with public funding under 50%
- 2) Private schools with public funding of 50% or more.

For 2014/15, of the 497 specialised schools, 15 institutions fall under 1) and 316 institutions fall under 2). The 166 remaining schools are public.

Pupil population counted for each relevant question

Pupils in public schools, private schools and private schools with public funding.

Pupil age ranges

Usual pupil age ranges in the country at ISCED level 1: 7 to 12

Usual pupil age ranges in the country at ISCED level 2: 13 to 15