

Glossary:Lifelong learning (LLL)

Statistics Explained

Lifelong learning encompasses all learning activities undertaken throughout life with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences, within personal, civic, social or employment-related perspectives. The intention or aim to learn is the critical point that distinguishes these activities from non-learning activities, such as cultural or sporting activities.

Adult learning means the participation of adults in lifelong learning. Adult learning usually refers to learning activities after the end of **initial education** and is a vital component of the EU's lifelong learning policy. The main indicator used to measure adult learning is the participation rate in education and training, which covers participation in formal and non-formal education and training. The target population of Eurostat's adult learning statistics is the population aged 25-64. Two main data sources are available for adult participation in learning:

- the EU **labour force survey** which provides yearly data on participation in formal and non-formal education and training in the last four weeks and – from 2022 – biennial data on participation in formal and non-formal education in the last 12 months, and
- the **adult education survey** which provides detailed information on participation in formal and non-formal education and training as well as on informal learning in the last 12 months.

The **continuing vocational training survey** complements information on lifelong learning with data on investments by enterprises in the continuing vocational training of their staff.

Further information

- [EU policy in the field of adult learning](#)
- [Participation in education and training \(based on EU-LFS, ESMS metadata file\)](#)
- [Adult Education Survey \(ESMS metadata file\)](#)
- [Continuing vocational training in enterprises \(ESMS metadata file\)](#)

Related concepts

- [Erasmus programme](#)
- [Grundtvig programme](#)

Statistical data

- [Adult learning statistics](#)
- [Adult learning statistics - characteristics of education and training](#)
- [Adult learning - participants](#)
- [Vocational education statistics](#)
- [Statistics on continuing vocational training in enterprises](#)
- [Education and training in the EU - facts and figures](#)