



Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)

Description

As part of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Survey of Adult skills measures the basic skills required by adults to deal with written and numerical information in everyday life and at work in the face of technological and digital change. To this end, PIAAC measures the literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills of the permanent resident population. The survey was conducted for the first time in 2011/2012. Switzerland is a new participant in the second cycle starting in 2021. In addition to Switzerland, 30 countries participated in PIAAC: Chile, Denmark, Germany, United Kingdom (England), Estonia, Finland, Belgium (Flemish region), France, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Canada, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, New Zealand, Netherlands, Norway, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, South Korea, Czechia, Hungary, United States.

In Switzerland, PIAAC was established as part of a collaboration between the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SEFRI), the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), the Federal Social Insurance Office (FSIO) and the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) implemented. The FSO was responsible for implementing the survey in Switzerland.

Methodology

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Sample survey of persons whose addresses are taken at random from the FSO's sample register. This contains data from the official registers of persons, namely the communal and cantonal population registers.

The survey is conducted using Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI), usually at the respondent's home. The survey consists of two parts. First, the background questionnaire is answered as part of a personal interview, with the interviewer recording the answers on the tablet. The respondent then works independently on exercises on the tablet to measure their skills in dealing with information. People who do not speak any of the three national languages can fill out a short version of the questionnaire (without exercises).

The results of the competency measurement are given on a scale from 0 to 500 points. A high score corresponds to high skills. To facilitate interpretation of the results, the scale was divided into competency levels. There are six levels for literacy and numeracy and five levels for adaptive problem solving. The levels range from "below level 1" to "level 5" or "level 4".

Statistical population and unit:

Permanent resident population of Switzerland between the ages of 16 and 65

Sample size:

The sample size is between 6 000 and 7 000 interviews (in 2022/2023 6 440 interviews were conducted)

Survey language:

German, French and Italian

Variables used:

Background questionnaire:

- Personal characteristics

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education and training• Current employment status, current occupation and career• Last occupation held• Use of literacy and numeracy skills at work and in everyday life• Work and personal environment• Non-economic aspects• Social and emotional skills <p>Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Literacy• Numeracy• Adaptive problem-solving skills <p>Data collection period: Data collection took place from June 1 to September 30, 2021 for the field trial and from September 1, 2022 to May 24, 2023 for the main study.</p> <p>Periodicity of publication: The survey is conducted approximately every ten years.</p> <p>Degree of regionalisation: Switzerland, language regions, major regions</p> <p>Reference period: September 2022 until October 2023</p> <p>Links used: Population and Household statistics (STATPOP), Social Insurance Registers (Central Compensation Office [CCO], AHV compensation office and State Secretariat for Economic Affairs [SECO]).</p> <p>Quality of statistical information: The quality criteria defined by the OECD and the FSO for the PIAAC survey apply.</p>
Policy on revisions	<p>Methodological revisions: The survey is methodologically revised in each PIAAC cycle.</p>
Legal bases	<p>Ordinance of 30 April 2025 on Federal Statistics (SR 431.011)</p>
Organisation	<p>Conception: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), international project management (PIAAC consortium)</p> <p>Implementation: PIAAC consortium, Federal Statistical Office (FSO) in collaboration with an independent survey institute (Survey 2022/2023 Institute for Economic and Social Research M.I.S. Trend SA, Lausanne, Bern)</p> <p>Contact: piaac@bfs.admin.ch +41 58 483 93 67</p>