

**PROGRESS WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD
CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMMES (ISCED-T):
RECOMMENDATIONS MOVING FORWARD**

UNESCO Institute for Statistics

EDSC Working Group on Teachers

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1. Background

The development and implementation of the International Standard Classification of Teacher Training Programmes (ISCED-T) is conducted in close consultation with the Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG 4 - Education 2030 (TCG).

At its 6th meeting (29-30 August 2019), the TCG recognized ISCED-T as a sustainable solution and a positive step towards achieving a global public good, facilitating global policy dialogue on teachers.

During the 7th TCG meeting (27-29 October 2020), UIS presented various development options for ISCED-T. In a post meeting consultation, the TCG endorsed the proposed dimensions for classification of Teacher Training Programmes (TTPs) in ISCED-T¹.

At the 8th TCG meeting on 2 November 2021, the UIS presented the draft proposal of ISCED-T, which had been submitted to the 41st session of the UNESCO General Conference (GC) for adoption. In the post-meeting consultation, the TCG endorsed the mapping of national TTPs to the five main classification dimensions of ISCED-T. It was expected that this mapping would help produce internationally comparable data and the development of an international standard for defining “trained” and “qualified” teachers².

ISCED-T was [adopted](#) at the 41st session of UNESCO GC in November 2021. Following its adoption, the UIS developed an implementation strategy with input from ISCED-T Technical Advisory Panel³. At the 9th TCG meeting on 22 November 2022, the UIS presented a proposed implementation strategy for ISCED-T⁴. In the post-meeting consultation (March 2023)⁵, the TCG approved the implementation plan for ISCED-T, including the proposed questionnaire.

The 10th TCG meeting on 11 December 2023 focused on the first session of the [Conference on Education Data and Statistics](#) (Paris, 7-9 February 2024)⁶. The meeting discussed position papers for the Conference, including “Teachers’ Indicators: What are the challenges going forward?”⁷.

¹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). 2021. “Technical Cooperation Group: Report for 2020 - 7th TCG Meeting Report and Indicator Development for 2020.” Montreal: UIS. <https://tcg.uis.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2021/01/TCG-Report-2020.pdf>

² UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). 2022. “Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG4 – Education 2030 (TCG): Eight Meeting. Post-TCG 8th Meeting Consultation”. March 2022. Montreal: UIS. <https://tcg.uis.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/03/TCG-Consultation-Report-Dec-2021.pdf>

³ ISCED-T TAP is a gender-balanced group consisting of 11 experts in teacher training and qualifications, teacher statistics, and international classifications from 12 organizations and from all UNESCO regions. The TAP includes the following organizations: Africa Federation of Teaching Regulatory Authorities (AFTRA), Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS), Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), Centro de Investigación Avanzada en Educación (Center for Advanced Research in Education) (CIAE) - Universidad de Chile, Education International, Eurostat, Network for International Policies and Cooperation in Education and Training (NORRAG), International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Pacific Community, Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) which also acts as the secretariat for the United Nations Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications (UNCEISC). The UIS acts as the Secretariat of the TAP.

⁴ https://tcg.uis.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/11/WG_T_2_ISCED-T_Updated_Document_2022.11.21.pdf

⁵ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). 2023. “Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG4 – Education 2030 (TCG): Ninth Meeting. Post-TCG 9th Meeting Consultation”. March 2023. Montreal: UIS. https://tcg.uis.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2023/03/TCG9_Consultation-Results_Report_2023.03_FINAL.pdf

⁶ <https://tcg.uis.unesco.org/10th-meeting-of-the-tcg/>

⁷ https://ces.uis.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/23/2023/10/Teachers-position-paper-2023.touse_.pdf

This document aims to present the progress in the implementation of ISCED-T, focusing on the results and key findings from the ISCED-T pilot, and proposes options for future steps considering the results from the pilot.

2. Pilot survey on ISCED-T: results and key findings

2.1. Survey results and key findings

Following up on the decision made at the 9th TCG, the UIS carried out the ISCED-T pilot survey from August to December 2023. The survey targeted a sample of 25 countries representing diverse education systems and contexts across UNESCO’s geographical regions (see Table 1). Primary objectives were to evaluate the effectiveness of survey instruments, including the questionnaire and data collection process, and to gather feedback from respondents for further refinement. Additionally, the pilot aimed to identify the national institutions most suitable for data reporting, provide insights on questionnaire and item response rates, and determine training and capacity-building needs.

Participating countries were tasked with completing the pilot questionnaire and a brief feedback form detailing their survey experience. Both documents were available in English, French, and Russian. To support respondents, the UIS provided a series of webinars and guidance materials in English and French on completing the pilot questionnaire.

Table 1: Countries included in ISCED-T pilot survey, by UNESCO geographical region

UNESCO Region	Countries
Africa and Arab States	Algeria, Cameroon , Malawi, Morocco , Senegal, Seychelles , South Africa , Zimbabwe
Asia and the Pacific	Azerbaijan, Cambodia , India , Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic , Malaysia , Palau, Samoa
Europe and North America	Andorra , Belarus, Belgium (French community) , Canada, Switzerland
Latin America and the Caribbean	Barbados , Brazil , Chile, Cuba

Notes: Countries in **bold** are the countries that responded to the pilot survey.

Despite measures deployed to stimulate survey participation, only 14 out of the 25 surveyed countries responded to the questionnaire, resulting in a response rate of 56% and a total of 119 pre-service teacher training programmes (TTPs) reported. Of the data supplied, complete answers

(100%) were obtained for three of the five classification dimensions of ISCED-T: the ISCED level of qualification awarded at completion of the TTP, the minimum ISCED level qualification required to access the TTP, and the theoretical duration of the TTP. The remaining two classification dimensions were not fully completed: the target teaching level of the TTP (98% completion) and the teaching practice ratio (72% completion). Additional issues observed during data collection included fragmentation of information at the national level and data submission from multiple agencies within the same country.

A report on the ISCED-T pilot survey's results and key findings evaluates the effectiveness of the data collection instruments and processes and identifies necessary adjustments. It also discusses countries' engagement in the data collection process, strategies for addressing nonresponses, and assesses the feasibility of scaling up data collection based on the pilot results.

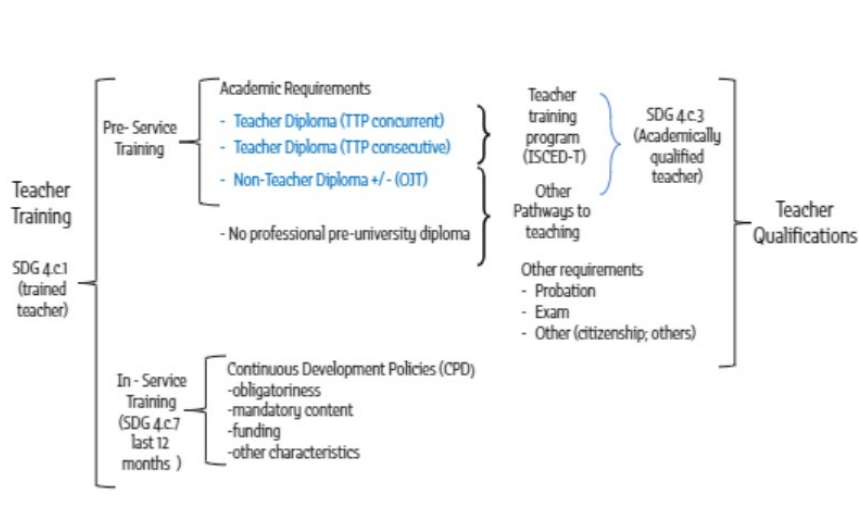
It is worth mentioning that as only 56% of targeted countries responded to the pilot survey, results and findings presented in the report may lack statistical value.

2.2. *ISCED-T and production of international comparable data on trained teachers*

SDG 4 teacher framework emphasizes the quality of teaching, with two key concepts central to the related monitoring indicators framework. The first concept, "trained," identifies the extent to which the teacher workforce has received specific pedagogical pre-service and in-service training (indicator 4.c.1). The second concept, "qualified", measures the percentage of teachers who meet the minimum academic requirements to teach, regardless of the nature of their diploma (indicator 4.c.3). Figure 1 summarizes the interactions between the teacher indicators⁸.

⁸ See the UIS Factsheet #63 "Teaching requirement policies globally and their implications for monitoring SDG 4" at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000387002>.

Figure 1: Teacher’s indicator framework



In 2022, the UIS developed a global minimum standard of teacher qualification by level of education taught⁹ (pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary). The proposal, based on empirical process, was presented at the 9th session of the Technical Cooperation Group on SDG 4 indicators (TCG)¹⁰ in November 2022 and approved during the post-9th TCG meeting consultation¹¹ in March 2023.

Regarding “trained” teachers, data collected through the ISCED-T pilot on relevant and existing pre-service TTPs has provided valuable insights for exploring the formulation of an international measure of “trained” teachers. Leveraging the information gathered from TTPs reported in the pilot survey, along with the 5-digit coding scheme within ISCED-T (Figure 2), allows for a unique characterization of each TTP (Figure 3). This can be combined with information on relevant ISCED-T dimensions, especially the teaching practice ratio¹².

However, to develop a comprehensive definition of “trained” teachers, additional information beyond ISCED-T data collection may be required.

1. Focus on pre-service TTPs: ISCED-T primarily addresses new entrants into the profession, typically representing up to around 10% of the teaching workforce. While ISCED-T can inform the training characteristics of new hires, it does not account for “experienced”

⁹ See https://tcg.uis.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/11/WG_T_3_Teachers_Definitions-and-global-minimum-standards-qualifications.pdf.

¹⁰ The Technical Cooperation Group on SDG 4 indicators (TCG) provides a platform to discuss and develop the indicators used to monitor the Education 2030 Agenda in an open, inclusive and transparent manner. For more information, see <https://tcg.uis.unesco.org/>.

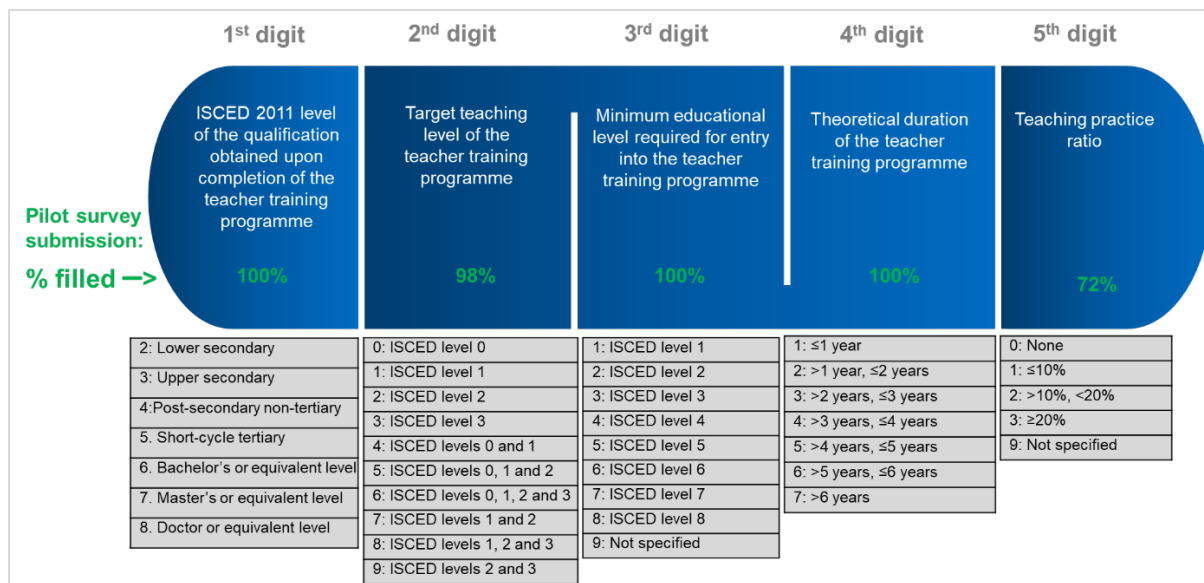
¹¹ See https://tcg.uis.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2023/03/TCG9_Consultation-Results_Report_2023.03_FINAL.pdf.

¹² Teaching practice ratio can inform about the quality of teacher’s preparation to the profession, yet the definition of a minimum duration of the practicum may be required (e.g. based on most common practices).

teachers. Thus, the training status of currently employed teachers who graduated from TTPs that have been phased out or for which ISCED-T codes are unknown must be determined to see if they meet the minimum standard metric once defined.

2. Continued professional development: including information on the ongoing professional development of teachers is essential for a comprehensive understanding of their training status and related characteristics that may be required to inform the development of the “trained” teacher metric.
3. Teacher proficiency parameters: additional parameters that capture teachers’ proficiency, articulated around what teachers should know and be able to do, are necessary to fully define "trained" teachers.

Figure 2: ISCED-T classification dimensions, related coding schemes, and percentage filled based on countries’ response to the pilot survey



Note:

The “teaching practice ratio” is the ratio of the theoretical duration of the work-based (in school) component of the overall teacher training programme relative to the theoretical duration of the same programme.

Figure 3: ISCED-T codes for TTPs collected during the pilot survey, by single level taught

Target teaching level	ISCED 0					ISCED 1					ISCED 2					ISCED 3				
ISCED level of the TTP	3	4	5	6	7	3	4	5	6	7	3	4	5	6	7	3	4	5	6	7
Number of TTPs	3	4	1	19	3	4	9	3	34	7	2	9	5	31	13	2	2	4	33	18
ISCED-T code	3023- 30242	40322 40332	5032- 50322	6034- 60341 60342 60353 6061- 60613 6062- 6063-	70343 70612	3123- 31242	41322 41332	5132- 51322	61333 6134- 61341 61342 61353 6152- 6161- 61612 61613 6162- 61621 6163-	71343 71612 71621	3223- 32242	4223- 42322	5232- 52323	62331 62333 6234- 62341 62342 62353 6252- 6261- 62612 62613 6262- 62621 62622 6263-	72343 72352 72353 72621 72622 72623 72712 72713 72723 72732	3323- 33242	4323- 43322	5332- 53323	63331 6334- 63341 63342 63353 6352- 6361- 63612 63613 6362- 63621 63622 63623 6363-	73610 73612 73621 73622 73623 73712 73713 73723 73723 73732

3. Proposed decisions points for TCG consideration

Based on section 2.2, the prospects of using ISCED-T as an anchoring classification for defining global minimum standards for “trained teacher” may need to be reconsidered in light of alternative options. The following decisions points have been proposed for TCG consideration.

Decisions	Pros	Cons
<p>The ISCED-T data collection is not immediately scaled-up but instead an alternative approach is proposed to tailor available data to policy needs.</p> <p>Low response rate to the ISCED-T pilot survey and challenges in collecting comprehensive data for assessing the feasibility of producing internationally comparable data lowered the prospects of rapidly using ISCED-T to produce a global indicator on trained teachers.</p>	<p>Efforts are concentrated on options that could be rapidly leveraged to inform policy dialogue on teacher by 2025.</p> <p>Reinforces the momentum around the already endorsed global minimum qualification (ISCED 6) as the key indicator for cross-national dialogue on teachers.</p>	<p>Additional dimensions may be added (teachers’ continued professional development, and teachers’ proficiency parameters) and international agreement on these dimensions will need to be obtained.</p>