

Key findings

- Over half OECD countries (21 of 38) now require private sector employers to report gender-disaggregated pay information to stakeholders. Most of these countries – 16 of 21 – require that gender pay information be further disaggregated by job category, so that the pay of similar workers can be compared.
- Gendered pay information is also commonly reported by level of seniority, education and/or qualification achieved, and, slightly less often, by age.
- Most OECD countries with pay reporting measures do *not* require pay information to be further disaggregated by race/ethnicity.
- Only two countries – Korea and the United Kingdom – require simply a top-line, company-wide gender pay statistic.
- Interestingly, at least 24 countries require private sector employers to provide *non-pay* statistics by gender. This often entails reporting the gender distribution of workers in a given firm and the gender composition of top positions, such as the share of managers or corporate board members who are women.
- **Policy takeaway:** While presenting the overall gender wage gap at the firm level is useful, governments should consider requiring firms to assess disaggregated results by subgroups. Mindful that calculating too many subgroup statistics may risk administrative burden, a practical solution is to start by requiring gender-disaggregated mean or median pay by job category, to enable simple comparisons of ostensibly comparable workers. Good practice would include gender-disaggregated pay statistics for additional subgroups such as level of seniority, parent status, education, and racial/ethnic background. The collection of gender-disaggregated non-pay statistics is also a useful next step for many countries.

Many OECD governments are putting pay transparency policies in place to tackle gender wage gaps. The OECD report ***Reporting Gender Pay Gaps in OECD Countries: Guidance for Pay Transparency Implementation, Monitoring and Reform*** presents an in-depth assessment of a commonly mandated pay transparency measure for private sector firms – gender pay gap reporting (OECD, 2023^[1]). Over half of OECD national governments (21 of 38) now require private sector employers to report gender-disaggregated pay information to stakeholders like workers, their representatives, the government, and/or the public. In almost half of these countries (10 of 21), pay reporting requirements are embedded within more comprehensive, mandatory, equal pay auditing processes.

Reporting the overall firm-level gender pay gap may not be enough

Pay reporting regimes require, at the minimum, average or median pay statistics disaggregated by gender. Presenting this overall, firm-level gender pay gap has benefits. The calculation of a simple statistic helps to reduce administrative burden on firms, as firms do not need to assess disaggregated information; it encourages businesses to consider how horizontal and vertical segregation contributes to wage discrepancies; and it helps to increase stakeholder awareness of pay (in)equity with a single, tangible statistic (OECD, 2021^[2]).

At the same time, reporting *only* the total gender pay gap can hide disparities and potentially even discrimination among employees in comparable positions. This lack of clarity can make equal pay disputes even more difficult to resolve. In other words, reporting only the company-wide gender pay gap might not go far enough to support specific individuals who could be unfairly underpaid for doing equal work or work of equal value (OECD, 2021^[2]).

In fact, many countries require reported pay information to be further disaggregated by worker characteristics. This is to help identify the different factors that contribute to gender pay gaps within firms and sectors. By examining different characteristics, such as job position, age, education, parenthood status, and even race/ethnicity, countries can understand which women face higher disadvantage and how to best address the barriers they face (OECD, 2021^[2]; Cowper-Coles et al., 2021^[3]).

Out of the 21 OECD countries that require pay reporting in the private sector, Korea and the United Kingdom are the only ones that ask for *only* an aggregate, company-level estimate of the wage gap. In all others, more granular information is required to be reported (Table 1).

Table 1. Gender pay gap information is further disaggregated by...

	Job category	Seniority	Education	Ethnicity	Age	Other
Australia	✓	✓				✓
Austria	✓					✓
Belgium	✓	✓				
Canada	✓			✓		✓
Chile	✓					✓
Denmark	✓					
Finland						
France	✓				✓	
Iceland	✓					
Ireland						✓
Israel	✓	✓				✓
Italy	✓					✓
Japan						✓
Korea						
Lithuania	✓	✓	✓			✓
Norway	✓		✓			✓
Portugal	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Spain	✓					
Sweden						
Switzerland	✓	✓	✓			✓
United Kingdom						

Note: Table summarises the level of disaggregation required in pay reporting rules in countries with such requirements.

Source: (OECD, 2023^[1]), *Reporting Gender Pay Gaps in OECD Countries*, <https://doi.org/10.1787/ea13aa68-en>.

Pay reporting is commonly disaggregated by job category, though this is inadequate for ensuring equal pay for work of equal value

Most commonly gender pay gaps or pay information must be further disaggregated by job category. The job categories used for reporting on the gender pay gap vary by country. Most countries recommend using a pre-defined job classification system. This can be a standard national or international job classification system, a company job classification system, or a classification system used in collective agreements. The level of detail in these systems affects how comparable different roles are within each classification.

It should be noted that when gender pay gaps are disaggregated by job position, the pay gap(s) within a firm may appear smaller. This is because men tend to dominate higher-paying positions while women are more likely to be in lower-paying jobs. It is therefore useful to present both the aggregate and subgroup-decomposed gender wage gap estimates, as well as the gender *composition* of the workforce by job position. By doing so, it allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the gender pay gap and its underlying causes, including the issue of occupational segregation.

Job classification systems used

Job classifications are used to group jobs together based on the tasks and duties they involve. This can include ostensibly “objective” criteria that relate to the knowledge and education required, the effort exerted and working conditions, as well as the relevant responsibilities and the difficulty of a role – among other observable characteristics (OECD, 2021^[2]).

National job classification systems suggested to employers include the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO); the Employment Equity Occupational Groups (EEOGs), based on Canada’s National Occupational Classification; the DISCO-08 code, i.e. the Danish version of ISCO-08 with an additional tier that further specifies job functions; and the Portuguese Classification of Occupations.

Pay reporting regulations often allow employers to choose between two or more job classification systems. In Austria, for example, employers can use either the company’s job classification system or sectoral collective agreements. In the New Zealand public sector, employers can use the ANZSCO or opt for roles relevant within the organisation. In France, categories of equivalent positions are used. These either correspond to the predefined socio-professional categories (blue-collar workers; white-collar workers; technicians and supervisors; engineers and managers) or to another alternative categorisation, although most companies use the predefined system (Briard, Meluzzi and Ruault, 2021^[4]).

In Portugal, in contrast, employers must disaggregate pay information by both the standard classification system *and* by job categories defined in the company or in collective agreements. In Belgium, the employer must prioritise the sectoral job classification. If a sectoral job classification applies, the job classification at company level should not contain any provisions that conflict with the sectoral collective agreement.

Occupational segregation and the risk of embedding unequal pay

Job classification schemes seek to assess objectively the knowledge, effort, responsibilities, working conditions, education, and difficulty of specific jobs. Yet correctly defining which jobs and responsibilities are “of equal value” is not straightforward. The “value” of different jobs today reflects broader historical, societal, and cultural factors. Job classification schemes can therefore also be influenced by societal biases and gender stereotypes – which, in turn, can embed systematically lower pay in some job categories (Acker, 1989^[5]).

The principal risk is that jobs that are traditionally performed by women may be undervalued and underpaid compared to jobs that are traditionally performed by men, even if they require similar levels of skill, effort, and responsibility.

Analyses on the gender pay gap across different countries highlight various factors that contribute to the pay gap between men and women, with occupational choice being a significant factor (Farrell, 2005^[6]; Bettio, Verashchagina and Camilleri-Cassar, 2009^[7]; Hegewisch et al., 2010^[8]; Georges-Kot, 2020^[9]). Men tend to opt for higher-paying sectors, while women tend to work in less lucrative sectors (such as health and social work or teaching) and, more often than men, in part-time roles. This is a result of both employee and employer behaviour. A review of experimental audit studies finds that potential employers discriminate against women in (relatively better-paying) male-dominated occupations, and discriminate in favour of women in (relatively lower-paying) female-dominated occupations (Galos and Coppock, 2023^[10]), thereby reinforcing gender segregation.

A study of gender-segregated occupations in the United States illustrates different wage outcomes for men- versus women-dominated jobs. The authors find that women-dominated occupations are consistently paid less across all skill levels (low, medium, and high)¹ (Hegewisch et al., 2010^[8]).

The gender differences are marked among high-skilled full-time workers. Workers in men-dominated, high-skilled professions earned a median of USD 1 424/week, whereas those in women-dominated professions earned a median of USD 953/week (Hegewisch et al., 2010^[8]). These occupations include, for instance, computer software engineers for male-dominated professions and registered nurses or elementary and middle school teachers for female. These jobs require at least three years of post-secondary education (i.e. a bachelor degree or equivalent) in most countries. While these women-dominated occupations are more likely to be found in the public sector, such pay differences are striking considering that the women's roles often carry a high degree of responsibility. Decisions of registered nurses could make the difference between life and death, while teachers, of course, are caring for and educating children.

What's more, there is some evidence that women entering a field can cause wages to drop. A recent study finds that a ten percentage point increase in female workers into an occupational class leads to an eight percent decrease in average male wage and a seven percent decrease in average female wage in the concurrent census year, and an nine percent decrease in male wages and a 14 percent decrease in female wages over ten years. Using a shift-share instrument that takes into account the rise in women's educational attainment and workforce participation from 1960 to 2010, the study establishes a causal relationship between declining wages and gender (Harris, 2022^[11]). Other studies have shown mixed conclusions when looking at job prestige and wages (OECD, 2023^[12]).

Gender-neutral and/or gender-sensitive job classification schemes

To try to address systematically low pay in women's fields, gender-neutral job classification schemes are mandated in at least ten OECD countries (OECD, 2021^[2]). This means that they must aim to classify work based on objective criteria (see above), regardless of the gender of the person doing the job and regardless of the preponderance of one gender in a given job class. These systems should also take into account the historical context and potential biases that may have affected how different jobs have been valued in the past (OECD, 2021^[2]).

When designed with equal pay considerations in mind, job classification systems can help to achieve equal pay for work of equal value goals (Wagner, 2020^[13]). Beyond simply removing gendered connotations from job titles, gender neutrality means connecting pay with the objective skills, experiences and responsibilities required in a job category independently of the traditional gender composition of a job category.

¹ Male-dominated occupations are defined as those in which 25% or fewer workers are female, and female-dominated occupations are defined as those in which 25% or fewer workers are male. Wages are from 2009.

In some countries – such as Belgium, Germany, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, and the United States – job classification systems are not mandatory themselves. However, when they *are* used they should be gender-neutral and/or gender-sensitive (OECD, 2021^[2]).

Many countries with equal pay auditing mechanisms (see Chapter 4 in (OECD, 2023^[11])) use job classifications to detect pay disparities, as in Canada, Finland, France, Iceland, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden, and (OECD, 2021^[2]). For instance, in Iceland, the Equal Pay Standard necessitates that companies create their equal pay system using a job classification system that is free of gender bias. The government also offers a free job classification tool for employers. Following the transition from a voluntary to a mandatory Equal Pay Standard in Iceland, gender-neutral job classifications have become more common (OECD, 2021^[2]).

Similarly, in Norway and Sweden, regulations specify that analysis should concentrate on equal work or on work of similar or equal value, and in Finland that employee groups should be defined by some objective worker characteristic (e.g. function performed). In Canada, the *Pay Equity Act*² regulations specify that “job classes are determined by the employer, or in the case a pay equity committee has been formed, by the committee, and are made up of positions within the workplace that: 1) have similar duties and responsibilities; 2) require similar qualifications; and 3) are part of the same compensation plan and are within the same range of salary rates”.

Belgium provides tools like a checklist for ensuring “gender neutrality” in the evaluation and classification of functions for employers³. In Austria, gender-neutral job evaluation has been used to re-evaluate the value of the work of lower-paid cleaners, which previously had separate pay grades for jobs carried out by men and women (Pillinger, 2021^[14]). This type of re-evaluation of job classifications helps to correct bias in grading systems and can promote equal pay for work of equal value.

The EU Pay Transparency Directive should give gender-neutral job classifications a push forward in EU countries, as it calls for gender-neutral job classifications that “include skills, effort, responsibility and working conditions, and, if appropriate, any other factors which are relevant to the specific job or position. They shall be applied in an objective gender-neutral manner, excluding any direct or indirect discrimination based on sex. In particular, relevant soft skills shall not be undervalued.” (Article 4[4])⁴.

How to address unequal pay for work of equal value?

Identifying which jobs hold “equal value” is difficult when the skills and education required are completely different. As has been found in the United States, for example, it is not immediately obvious why truck drivers earn nearly USD 250 more per week than nursing, psychiatric and home health aides (Hegewisch et al., 2010^[8]) – but it is also not straightforward to compare them and address this difference. Both types of jobs suffer from worker shortages, and both face occupational risks. One may argue that truck drivers have physically demanding jobs that require them to lift heavy objects – but this is not dissimilar to nursing aides, who often need to lift people with limited physical mobility. And even if there were a difference in physical demands, should physical demands be valued more highly than the significant organisational and interpersonal skills, as well as emotional demands, required in caregiving jobs?

² Canada’s pay reporting regulation is two-fold, pay gap reporting under the Employment Equity Act applies to federally regulated private-sector employers with 100 or more employees. These employers submit annual reports to the Minister of Labour by 1 June of each year. Conversely, under the Pay Equity Act, federally regulated employers in both the private (10 employees or more) and public sectors (no employee threshold) are required to submit an annual statement on their pay equity plans to the Pay Equity Commissioner.

³ Available at <https://emploi.belgique.be/fr/actualites/check-list-non-sexisme-et-classification-des-fonctions>.

⁴ The European Union Pay Transparency Directive is available at https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0091_EN.html#title2.

Assessing what constitutes “equal value” – and consequently achieving equal pay for work of equal value – is therefore a complex issue that requires a range of approaches. Pay transparency legislation, including disaggregated reporting using job classification schemes, is an important tool in promoting equal pay for work of equal value. However, it is important to address biases and stereotypes in job classifications and job evaluation processes with a gender-sensitive lens.

The International Labour Organization provides guidance for employers, HR personnel, and social partners on how to implement gender-neutral job classification systems, emphasising the need to analyse the gendered nature of work (ILO, 2008^[15]). To mitigate the risk of bias, researchers in the European and Australian contexts suggest ensuring that job evaluators receive adequate training and come from mixed-gender backgrounds (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2015^[16]; Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2012^[17]). Wage negotiation and wage setting, including collective bargaining, should routinely integrate gender-neutral job evaluations (Pillinger, 2021^[14]). This is arguably more practical at the firm level than at the sectoral level.

Government bodies have an important role to play by checking and verifying job classification systems for embedded gender biases and developing (as well as enforcing) sanctions for non-compliance (Wagner, 2020^[13]). If job classification systems actually were gender-neutral and successfully ensured equal pay for work of equal value, it could potentially eliminate the need for pay equity litigation, saving workers and their representatives time and resources (OECD, 2021^[2]). Pillinger (2021^[14]) proposes good practice in gender-neutral and/or gender-sensitive job classifications.

While job classifications, when used, should be designed in a gender-sensitive way, governments and social partners should also ensure that they do not make job classifications overly rigid. Firms need some freedom to set wages in line with productivity and respond to skill demands and supply (OECD, 2018^[18]; 2021^[19]). This again illustrates the value of gender-disaggregated pay reporting, which illuminates gender pay gaps even in the absence of jobs defined as having “equal value”.

Some countries have less specific requirements for defining job categories

In some countries, regulations include a simple list of job categories to be used in pay reporting. For example, in Italy, pay information is reported separately for executives, managers, clerks, and workers (*dirigenti, quadri, impiegati, and operai*). Belgian reporting rules also offer an option to report by subsidiary function classification (executive, managerial, executive staff). A similar categorisation is also used with France’s socio-professional categories.

Pay information can also be disaggregated by seniority, age, parenthood status and level of education

In addition to job classification, some countries require the disaggregation of pay data by level of seniority (Australia, Belgium, Lithuania, and Portugal, as well as in Switzerland under recommendations⁵) and/or by the level of education or qualification achieved (Belgium, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Portugal and Switzerland under recommendations). Age is also a common factor for disaggregation (Australia, Latvia, and Portugal) and is relevant given that gender gaps typically increase over the life course.

Other worker characteristics used to further disaggregate gendered pay data include working location/region (Australia, Canada under the Employment Equity Act, and Portugal), remuneration/salary

⁵ When the gender pay gap analysis is conducted with the Swiss Confederation’s standard analysis tool, gender gaps are disaggregated further by education, seniority, potential work experience, level of qualifications and professional position.

group (Austria, Israel and Lithuania), the level of work responsibility (Chile, Finland and Norway), workload, effort, and working conditions (Finland and Norway), and working patterns (Ireland).

Related to this, women tend to take more and longer breaks from their careers to raise children, which slows down their career progression and affects their pay (Georges-Kot, 2020^[9]; OECD, 2022^[20]; OECD, 2019^[21]). As such, the pay gap is not just a gender issue but also a motherhood issue. Women who become mothers tend to work less in the labour market and often⁶ earn less than women without children, men without children, and men who become fathers – the so-called “motherhood penalty” and “fatherhood bonus” (Harkness and Waldfogel, 2003^[22]; Budig and Hodges, 2010^[23]; Glauber, 2018^[24]; OECD, 2017^[25]). This is likely driven in part by discriminatory behaviour by employers, as has been shown in audit studies (Correll, Benard and Paik, 2007^[26]). As such, countries should consider disaggregating gendered pay information by parent status.

Measuring gender wage gaps with an intersectional lens

To fully understand the intersectional nature of gender pay gaps, it is important to be able to examine how gender interacts with factors such as (self-disclosed) race/ethnicity, language, place of birth, and disability status (Cowper-Coles et al., 2021^[3]). Unfortunately, however, only a few OECD countries systematically collect data on ethnic and racial background.

Gender pay information is disaggregated by ethnicity and/or race in Canada under the Employment Equity Act and in the public sector in New Zealand. The United States collects information on the gender and racial/ethnic composition of job categories by company via reporting requirements of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). While this presents a picture of diversity in workforce composition, the EEOC does not collect *wage* information and therefore cannot calculate wage gaps within specific firms with these gender, racial and ethnic data. This is problematic as (gender) wage gaps are large across racial and ethnic groups in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2023^[27])

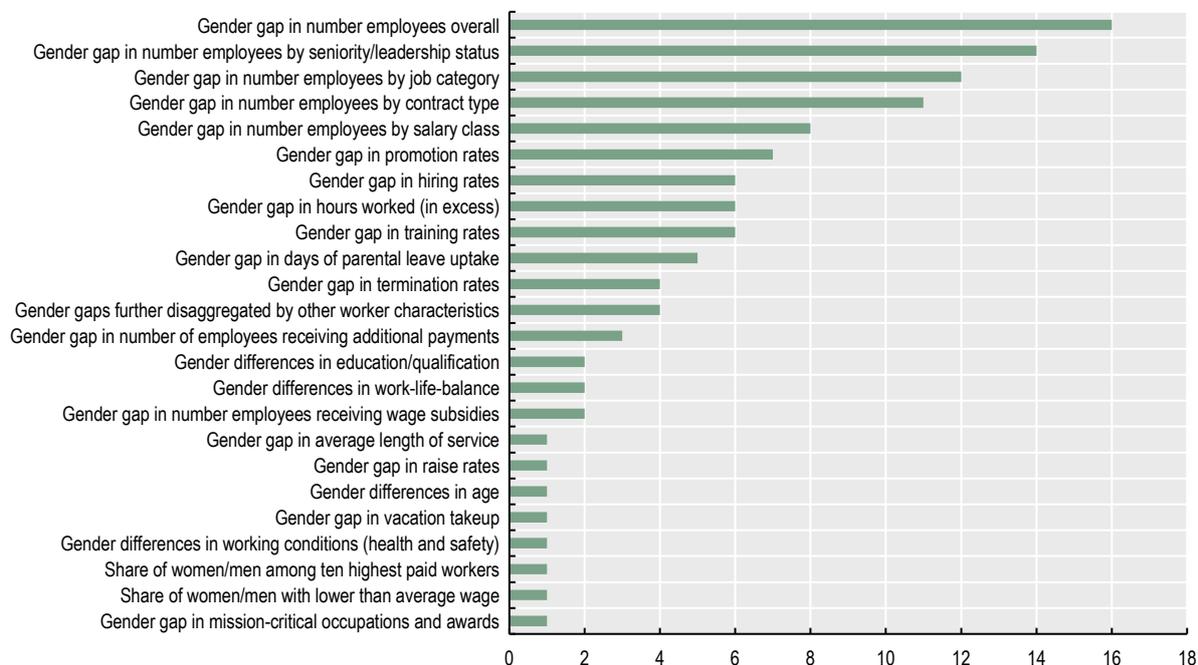
Non-pay gender disaggregated reporting

At least 24 OECD countries also require employers to report *non-pay* information about their workforce that is broken down by gender – in other words, gender-disaggregated non-pay data. This can be part of their pay reporting regulations or in separate reporting regulations altogether.

⁶ In the United States, for example, the motherhood penalty has been found to be larger among lower skilled/lower earning workers than for more highly skilled/earning workers (Budig and Hodges, 2010^[23]; Killewald and Bearak, 2014^[30]; Glauber, 2018^[24]).

Figure 1. Non-pay gender-disaggregated data reporting requirements

Tabulation of OECD countries requiring the following forms of gender-disaggregated data reporting by private sector firms, 2022



Note: Country counts presented in this bar chart summarise the results of Table 3.3 in Chapter 3 of (OECD, 2023^[1]).

Source: (OECD, 2023^[1]), *Reporting Gender Pay Gaps in OECD Countries*, <https://doi.org/10.1787/ea13aa68-en>.

Some countries, including Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the United States, have rules for reporting non-pay information that is broken down by gender, but they do not have regulations in place for reporting on pay. This means that it may be relatively simple for these countries to create mandatory *pay* reporting schemes by simply adding pay to existing requirements. Although these reporting requirements are an important step toward improving diversity within organisations, the lack of reporting on wages limits meaningful action in addressing gender pay gaps.

Most countries require private sector employers to report gender gaps in the number of employees, to show gender balance in the firm. This is the most common (non-pay) data required, and it is mandated in Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, Italy, Korea, Lithuania, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and the United States.

Other commonly reported non-pay gender-disaggregated data include gender differences in hiring, termination, and promotion rates (Canada, Italy, Luxembourg, and the United States, with promotion rates also required in Australia and France) and worked hours (Belgium, Canada, Italy, and Norway). These are in line with the EU Pay Transparency Directive.

These gender gaps in headcounts are often further disaggregated by job category, as in Austria, Australia, Canada, Chile, France, Italy, Korea, Lithuania, Portugal, Norway, Spain, and the United States; by contract type, as in Belgium, Canada, Colombia, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Norway, Spain, and the United States; and less often, by salary class.

Japan applies an approach tailored to company size and, presumably, capabilities. As part of wage gap reporting rules, Japan requires employers to report several non-pay gender disaggregated statistics depending on sector and size in terms of number of employees.

The United States⁷ does something similar: federal agencies are required to report the number of employees by gender, race/national origin, and disability within the Senior Executive Service (SES), within each salary plan and grade level.

Table 2. Non-pay gender disaggregated data required by country

	Gender gap in										Gender gaps further disaggregated by other worker characteristics
	# of employees overall	# of employees by seniority/ leadership status	# of employees by job category	# of employees by contract type	# of employees by salary class	promotion rates	hiring rates	hours worked (in excess)	training rates	other	
Austria	✓		✓								
Australia	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	
Belgium	✓			✓				✓	✓		
Canada	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Chile	✓	✓	✓								
Colombia	✓	✓		✓	✓						
Denmark		✓									
Finland			✓								
France	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Germany	✓			✓							
Ireland										✓	
Israel		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	
Italy	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Japan		✓					✓	✓		✓	
Korea	✓	✓	✓								
Lithuania	✓	✓	✓		✓						
Luxembourg					✓	✓			✓		
Netherlands		✓									
Norway	✓			✓	✓					✓	
Portugal	✓		✓	✓				✓		✓	
Slovenia		✓									
Spain	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Switzerland	✓	✓									
United States	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

Note: Table 2 summarises what needs to be reported according to non-pay reporting rules in countries with such requirements.

Source: (OECD, 2023^[1]), *Reporting Gender Pay Gaps in OECD Countries*, <https://doi.org/10.1787/ea13aa68-en>.

⁷ Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Management Directive 715 (MD-715) is policy guidance for *federal agencies* to establish and maintain effective EEO programs, as required by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Many countries are interested in the gender composition of top positions

In OECD countries, women make up around one-third of managers on average (OECD, 2021^[28]). Women also hold just slightly below 30% of seats on the boards of the largest public businesses (OECD, 2022^[29]). This is related to the “leaky pipeline” to top jobs – in short, the number of women who can advance to leadership positions later in their career is much smaller than the number who enter the workforce in the first place, in large part due to career interruptions related to unpaid caregiving.

To help address vertical segregation, many countries’ regulations require non-pay reporting to concentrate on gender differentials in the top positions of companies. For instance, Slovenia’s non-pay reporting measure requires companies to report on the gender composition in management/supervisory boards, and in the Netherlands, companies must provide data regarding the male-to-female-ratio in (sub)top positions. In France, the Professional Equality Index⁸ includes an indicator which is calculated based on the proportion of workers from the less represented gender among the ten highest paid workers. Switzerland has a specific auditing process for companies with unequal representation of the two genders in top positions.

Furthermore, Australia, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Korea, Lithuania, and Spain require employers to report the number of employees by gender and by seniority.

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⁸ *Index de l’égalité professionnelle*, more information available at <https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/droit-du-travail/egalite-professionnelle-discrimination-et-harcelement/indexegapro>.

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