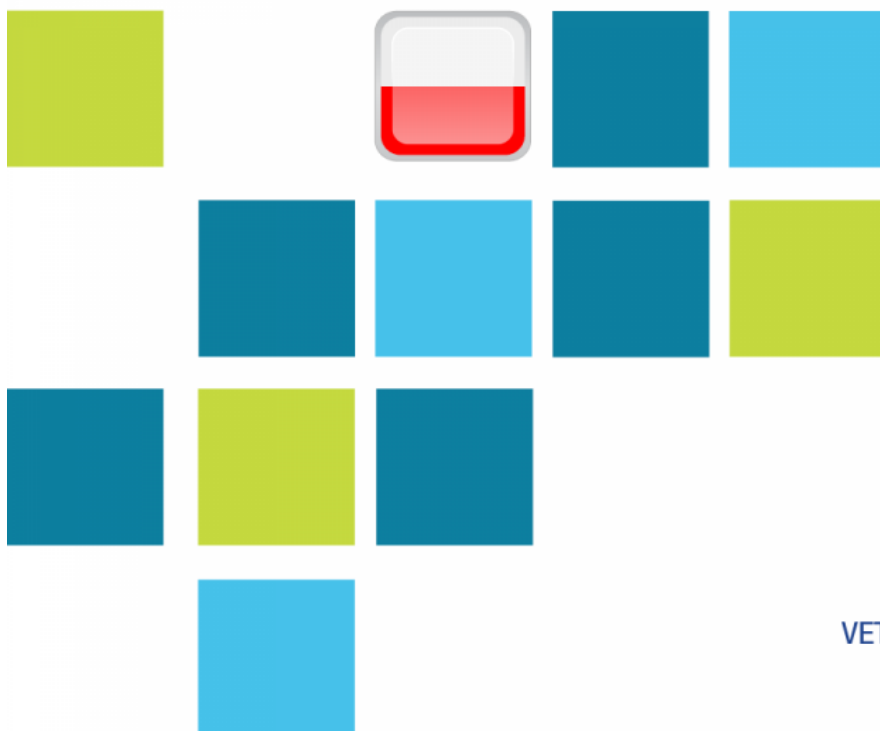

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING IN EUROPE
POLAND

SYSTEM DESCRIPTION



Please cite as:

Cedefop; Educational Research Institute (2019). *Vocational education and training in Europe: Poland* [From Cedefop; ReferNet. Vocational education and training in Europe database]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/poland>

Contributors: Katarzyna Matuszczak (Educational Research Institute), Olga Wasilewska (Educational Research Institute) and Iraklis Pliakis (Cedefop).

© Cedefop and Educational Research Institute (ReferNet Poland), 2019
Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

This report was automatically generated from Cedefop's vocational education and training in Europe database <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems>. It helps understand main features of vocational education and training systems in EU, Iceland and Norway.

The opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of Cedefop.

Data collection for this report was financed by the European Union and ReferNet national partners.

ReferNet is a network of institutions across Europe representing all Member States, plus Iceland and Norway. The network provides Cedefop with information and analysis on national vocational education and training. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/networks/refernet>

Table of contents

- Chapter 1. Summary of main elements and distinctive features of VET.
- Chapter 2. Main challenges and policy responses.
- Chapter 3. External factors influencing VET.
 - 3.1. Demographics.
 - 3.2. Economics.
 - 3.3. Labour market.
- Chapter 4. Education attainment.
 - 4.1. Share of high, medium and low level qualifications.
 - 4.2. VET learner share of the total VET population.
 - 4.3. VET learners by level.
 - 4.4. Female share.
 - 4.5. Early leavers from education and training.
 - 4.6. Participation in lifelong learning.
 - 4.7. VET learners by age.
- Chapter 5. VET within education and training system.
- Chapter 6. Apprenticeship.
- Chapter 7. VET governance.
- Chapter 8. VET financing mechanisms.
- Chapter 9. Teachers and trainers.
 - 9.1. VET teacher types.
 - 9.2. Continuing professional development of teachers/trainers.
- Chapter 10. Shaping VET qualifications.
 - 10.1. Anticipating skill needs.
 - 10.2. Designing qualifications.
- Chapter 11. Quality assurance.
- Chapter 12. Validation of prior learning.
- Chapter 13. Incentives for learners.
- Chapter 14. Incentives for enterprises to boost their participation in VET provision.
- Chapter 15. Guidance and counselling.
- Vocational education and training system chart.
- VET Programme Types.
 - Work preparation classes for SEN learners leading to EQF level 2 (oddziały przysposabiające do pracy).
 - Vocational upper secondary programme (technikum) leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354.
 - First stage sectoral programme leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 353 (branżowa szkoła I stopnia).
 - Second stage sectoral programme leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354 (branżowa szkoła II stopnia).
 - Special job-training programme leading to ISCED 243 (szkoła specjalna przysposabiająca do pracy).
 - Post-secondary school-based programmes leading to ISCED 453 (szkoła policealna).
 - Colleges of social work leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 554 (kolegia pracowników służb społecznych).
- References.

CHAPTER 1.

Summary of main elements and distinctive features of VET

VET in Poland comprises the following main features:

- high decrease in participation in VET programmes at upper secondary and post-secondary levels (35.6% during 2005-2017 period) mainly due to demographic challenges and reduced interest in VET among young learners. However, during last several years a small increase in the share of students in vocational education can be observed;
- participation in VET programmes at the upper secondary level remains slightly higher than in general education;
- the share of the population with an upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary level of education, for both men and women, is much higher than the EU average;
- early leaving from education and training is significantly below the EU-28 average and has remained stable over the last decade;
- participation in lifelong learning remains well below the EU-28 average and has been stable in the past decade;
- the VET system has been under continuous reform over the last few years aiming to improve its quality and effectiveness.

Distinctive features (1) (1a) :

Over the past three decades, Poland's education system has undergone several profound changes in its structure, forms of organisation and management, as well as of the core curriculum. As a result of these changes, distinctive VET features were developed:

- a flexible VET system allows changing pathways at any point;
- the classification of occupations for vocational education includes a list of occupations for which VET programmes can provide education. Each occupation comprises one to two qualifications that can be acquired in IVET and CVET. A VET qualification diploma can be issued only when all qualifications required for an occupation have been acquired (via State vocational examinations), together with a school leaving certificate;
- core curricula for all VET occupations included in the classification of occupations. Separate VET qualifications within specific occupations are described in the core curricula as a set of expected learning outcomes: knowledge, occupational skills, and personal and social competences allowing learners to handle their occupational tasks independently. Learning outcomes are linked to detailed assessment criteria;
- autonomy of VET schools in developing their teaching programmes, based on VET core curricula, and in choosing either subject-centred or modular programmes, which can be easily modified, depending on labour market needs;
- uniform external vocational examinations, centrally organised;
- vocational qualification courses allowing adults to acquire qualifications faster than IVET learners;
- validation of competences acquired in different learning contexts, including professional experience, by taking external examinations.

[1a] Information on the Polish VET system is also partially based on: Chłóń-Domińczak, A. et al. (2019). Vocational education and training in Europe – Poland. Cedefop ReferNet VET

in Europe reports 2018.

CHAPTER 2.

Main challenges and policy responses

The main challenges for VET are:

- raising attractiveness of VET in society;
- continuous adaptation of core curricula to the challenges and current needs of the labour market;
- increasing employer engagement in organising practical training, identifying and forecasting skills and qualification needs in the labour market, and in reviewing VET curricula;
- adjusting VET teachers' qualifications and competences by easing access to traineeships in enterprises;
- assuring a suitable number of VET teachers and trainers with adequate competences through the professional development of teachers and attracting young people to the profession;
- encouraging adult learners to LLL;
- encouraging sustainable cooperation between VET schools and higher education institutions (HEI) aimed at transferring HEI good practices in teaching, training and developing teachers' competences;
- assuring high quality guidance and counselling for all age groups;
- providing high quality infrastructure for VET schools to ensure teaching and training in line with labour market needs.

Several recent initiatives undertaken by the education ministry address these challenges:

- new measures in the VET system were introduced by the education ministry in November 2018 (2) focusing on strengthening the mechanisms of including employers in the development of VET in all its stages and the systematic adaptation of vocational education to the needs of the labour market, in particular:
 - □ strengthening cooperation between employers and schools mainly in relation to practical training and teacher professional development in enterprises;
 - □ expanding the implementation of work-based learning in VET, introducing a new form of apprenticeship;
 - □ introducing an annual forecast of the demand for employees in VET occupations and directing more funds to occupations of special demand on the labour market;
 - □ strengthening different quality assurance mechanisms e.g. introducing a requirement for all VET learners to take a State vocational examination or a journeyman's examination, enhancing the accreditation system for institutions providing CVET;
 - □ allowing VET schools to organise shorter forms of vocational courses of special importance for adult learners.
- the Act on the Integrated Qualifications System (2016) has brought together the qualifications framework, register of qualifications that can be attained, quality assurance and validation principles. General and higher education level qualifications are included in the register;
- non-statutory qualifications linked to CVET have been registered based on the initiative of VET providers or other stakeholders;
- new regulations strengthening guidance and counselling in schools were developed and are

- being implemented;
- new core curricula for vocational education were developed by the education ministry together with the Centre for Education Development (ORE), employers and other stakeholders;
 - new sectoral skills councils have been established under the umbrella of the Polish Enterprise Development Agency, giving voice to sectoral stakeholders regarding the demand for competences at sectoral level to improve education and labour market matching;
 - numerous initiatives addressing the above-mentioned challenges in VET were developed with ESF co-funding, including projects supporting: cooperation among VET schools and HEI, development of counselling and guidance in schools, development of programmes for vocational courses for adults, enhancing employers' involvement in different stages of VET development and in organising practical training.

Based on VET in Poland Spotlight 2017 (3)

[2] The Act of 22 November 2018 amending the Act on the Education Law, the School Education Act and other acts: <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20180002245>.

CHAPTER 3.

External factors influencing VET

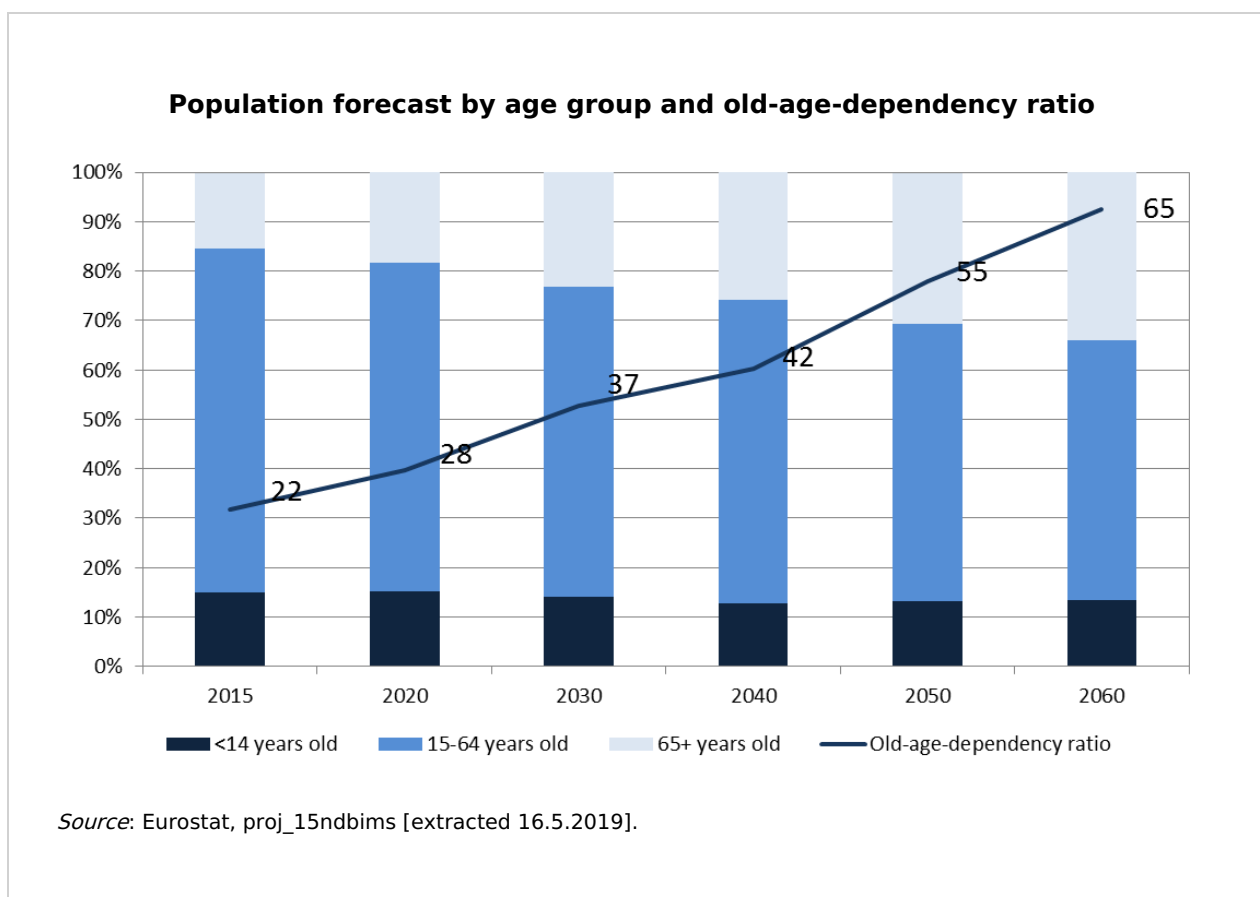
3.1 Demographics

Population in 2018: 37 976 687 (4)

It decreased since 2013 by 0.2% due to negative natural growth (5) .

As in many other EU countries, the population is ageing.

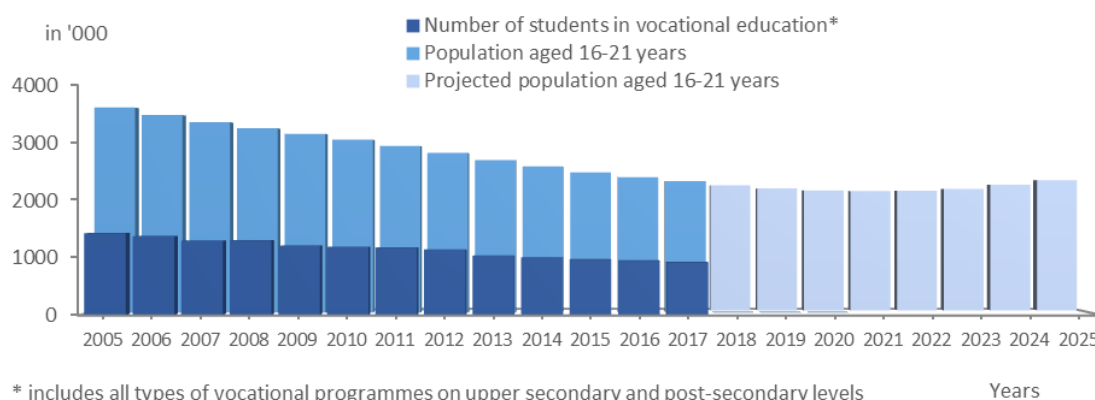
An old-age dependency ratio is expected to increase from 22 in 2015 to 65 in 2060 (6) .



Demographic trends have a direct impact on educational enrolment.

Since 2005, the overall number of enrolments in VET programmes at upper secondary and post-secondary levels decreased by 35.6%, which represents over half a million learners. The decrease was highest (40% or more than 350 000) in vocational upper secondary programmes.

Population aged 16-21 and number of vocational education students



Source: ReferNet Poland calculations based on data from the Local Data Bank, Statistics Poland: <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start> and Statistics Poland (2018b) [accessed 20.9.2018].

However, this phenomenon is also related to the reduced interest in VET among young people. Over the last three decades, the share of students in VET has decreased from 78% to almost 60%. During the last several years the proportion of learners in general upper secondary vs. vocational upper secondary and vocational post-secondary education has remained at approximately 40:60. Since the mid-2010s, a small increase in the share of students in vocational education is observed.

Poland is rather homogeneous country in terms of nationality and language. According to the 2011 National Population and Housing Census (7) 97,09% of people declared Polish nationality and 98,2% declared that they use the Polish language at home. However, due to the increased migration to Poland in recent years, changes in these percentages in the next census may be expected.

The Act on national and ethnic minorities distinguishes 9 official national minorities and 4 national ethnic minorities in the country. The constitution guarantees these groups the freedom to preserve their own language, customs and traditions, and develop their own culture. There are special forms of support provided to learners from national and ethnic minorities:

- inclusion of the minority language and the regional language into the educational activities required of the student, the course of one's own history and culture to additional educational activities for the student (at the request of the student's parent) (8) ;
- learning of a minority language and a regional language can be conducted in schools in various ways; the number of teaching hours depends on the way it is taught;
- external examination regulations are adjusted for learners of the language of the national minority, ethnic minority and the regional language.

According to SIO data, 809 learners in 29 VET schools (first stage sectoral schools and vocational upper secondary schools) were learning national/ethnic minority or regional languages in line with above-mentioned regulations in the 2018/2019 school year.

As far as foreign learners in Poland are concerned, the following forms of support are available to foreigners subject to compulsory education:

- education and care in all types of public schools and kindergartens provided up to the age of 18 or age of graduating from school at the secondary and post-secondary level on the same terms applicable to Polish citizens (9) ;
- admission to schools on the basis of diplomas which does not have to be formally recognised;
- free-of-charge Polish language classes, additional compensatory classes in a given subject, preparatory classes (*oddziały przygotowawcze*) set up at schools,
- additional classes of the language and culture of the country of origin, organised at school by the diplomatic/consular mission or a cultural/ educational association;
- assistance to the learner provided by a person who speaks the language of the country of origin, employed as a teacher's assistant;
- different ways of facilitating external examinations taken by foreign students.

Also, certain groups of foreign adult learners (e.g. EU nationals, persons with different types of permits granted in Poland, selected scholarship holders, etc.) can benefit from education in public schools for adults, public post-secondary schools, public art schools, public colleges of social work and different forms of lifelong learning in the form of vocational courses, under the same conditions as Polish citizens.

In the 2018/2019 school year, there were approximately 44,000 foreigners in Polish schools and pre-schools (10) .

3.2 Economics

The enterprise sector in Poland is dominated by microenterprises. In Poland, 96.2% of enterprises are microenterprises (11) . They produce 31% of GDP and significantly affect the labor market - they generate 40% of the jobs in the enterprise sector. The number of micro-enterprises has increased in recent years.

Small-sized companies account for 2.8% of the Polish enterprise sector, produce 8% GDP and generate 12% of the jobs in the enterprise sector.

Medium-sized companies account for 0.8% of the Polish enterprise sector, produce 11% GDP and generate 17 % of the jobs in the enterprise sector.

Large-sized enterprises in Poland account only for 0.2% of the enterprise sector produce 24% GDP and generate 31% of the jobs in the enterprise sector.

The main economic sectors in Poland are wholesale and retail trade, transport, accommodation and food service activities, industry (except construction) and manufacturing.

Share of economic sectors in gross value added and income in 2017 (%)

Sector	2017
Wholesale and retail trade, transport, accommodation and food service activities	25.7
Industry (except construction)	25.4
Manufacturing	19.3
Public administration, defense, education, human health and social work activities	14.6
Professional, scientific and technical activities; administrative and support service activities	8.5
Construction	7.0
Real estate activities	4.9
Financial and insurance activities	4.4
Information and communication	4.1
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	3.1
Arts, entertainment and recreation; other service activities; activities of household and extra-territorial organisations and bodies	2.2

NB: NACE_R2/TIME.

Source: Eurostat nama_10_a10 [extracted 4.5.2019].

The following sectors have the largest share of Polish exports (12) :

- machinery and transport equipment (34.8%);
- manufactured goods (17.7%); and
- chemicals and related products (14.5%) (13) .

The employment structure in Poland has not undergone any significant changes over the last few years. The share of services in total employment increased slightly and in 2017 reached around 58%, which is still far below the EU28 average of around 74%. The employment share in industry is rather stable in Poland at around 30-32% and the share in agriculture decreased from 13.1% in 2010 to 10.2% in 2017.

Employment share by economic sector in Poland (%)

	2017
Industry	31.7
Females	17.2
Males	43.4
Agriculture	10.2
Females	8.9
Males	11.3
Services	58.1
Females	73.9
Males	45.3

Source: The Local Data Bank of Statistics Poland: <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start> [accessed 23.12.2018].

Most employed women are in services (73.9%), while the share of employment in services and industry of men is very similar, 45.3% and 43.4% respectively.

3.3 Labour market

The labour market tends to be deregulated in Poland. However, in some cases access to and practice of some occupations/professions are subject to the possession of a specific professional qualification. The EC Regulated professions database (14) lists 360 regulated professions in Poland.

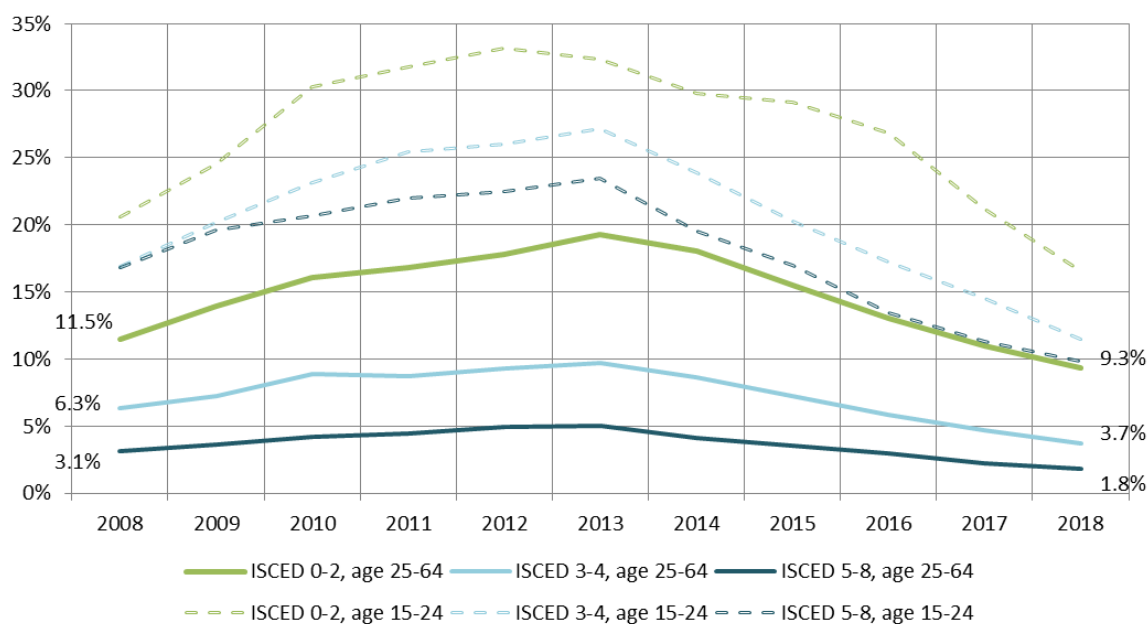
The rules of access to professions are determined by the ministers responsible for specific fields.

The regulated occupations in Poland are divided into two groups:

- sectoral system occupations, which are automatically recognised in all EU member states (e.g. attorney, doctor, pharmacist, nurse, architect); and
- general system occupations – more numerous – in the case of which additional requirements for a given profession in given country must be met (e.g. teacher, sworn translator, tourist guide, customs agent, etc.).

Total unemployment (15) (2018): 3.2% (6.0% in EU28); it decreased by 2.6 percentage points since 2008 (16) .

Unemployment rate (aged 15-24 and 25-64) by education attainment level in 2008-18



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series.

ISCED 0-2 = less than primary, primary and lower secondary education.

ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.

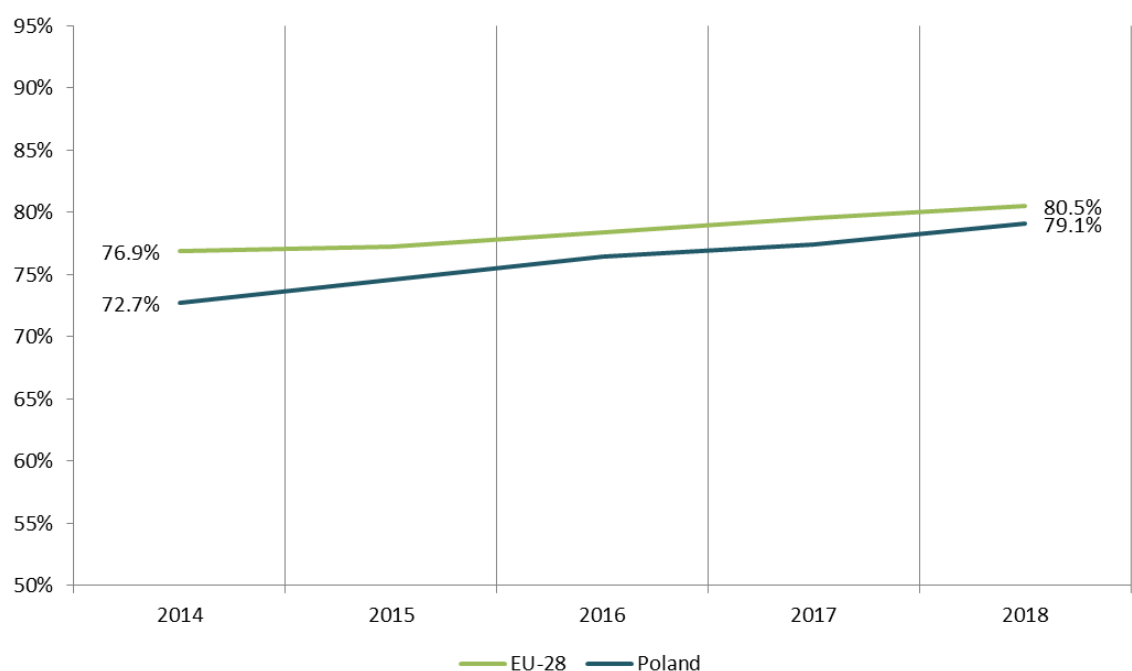
ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education.

Source: Eurostat, Ifsa_urgaed [extracted 16.5.2019].

Unemployment is distributed unevenly between those with low- and high-level qualifications. The gap has increased during the crisis as unskilled workers are more vulnerable to unemployment. In 2018, the unemployment rate of people with medium-level qualifications, including most VET graduates (ISCED levels 3 and 4) was lower than in the pre-crisis years. In the past five years, there was an overall decrease of unemployment in all age groups and by all types of education levels.

Employment rate of 20 to 34-year-old recent VET graduates increased from 72.7% in 2014 to 79.1% in 2018 and still remains below the EU-28 level.

Employment rate of VET graduates (20 to 34 years old, ISCED levels 3 and 4)



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series.

ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.

Source: Eurostat, edat_lfse_24 [extracted 16.5.2019].

The increase (+6.4 pp) in employment of 20-34 year-old VET graduates in 2014-18 was higher compared to the increase in employment from 75.2% to 80.0% (+4.8pp) of all 20-34 year-old graduates in the same period (17) .

For more information about the external drivers influencing VET developments in Poland please see the case study from Cedefop's changing nature and role of VET in Europe project [(17a)]

[4] NB: Data for population as of 1 January. Eurostat table tps00001 [extracted 16.5.2019].

[5] NB: Data for population as of 1 January. Eurostat table tps00001 [extracted 16.5.2019].

[6] Old-age-dependency ratio is defined as the ratio between the number of persons aged 65 and more over the number of working-age persons (15-64). The value is expressed per 100 persons of working age (15-64).

[8] Ministry of the Interior and Administration: Polish legislation and solutions regarding the protection of languages of minorities [Ustawodawstwo i rozwiązania polskie w zakresie ochrony języków mniejszości].
<http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mswia.gov.pl/mne/oswiata/informacje-dotyczace-o/8302,Ustawodawstwo-i-rozwiazania-polskie-w-zakresie-ochrony-jezykow-mniejszosci.html> [accessed 30.4.2019].

[9] Ministry of National Education: information on the education of foreigners in the Polish education system [Informacja o kształceniu cudzoziemców w polskim systemie oświaty].
<https://www.gov.pl/web/edukacja/informacja-o-ksztalceniu-cudzoziemcow-w-polskim->

systemie-oswiaty [accessed 30.4.2019].

- [10] Ministry of National Education: education of children coming from abroad in the Polish education system [Nauka dzieci przybywających z zagranicy w polskim systemie edukacji]. <https://www.gov.pl/web/edukacja/nauka-dzieci-przybywajacych-z-zagranicy-w-polskim-systemie-edukacji> [accessed 30.4.2019].
- [12] SITC nomenclature: sections.
- [14] European Commission - Regulated professions database [accessed 4.5.2019]: <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regprof/>
- [15] Percentage of active population, 25 to 74 years old.
- [16] Eurostat table une_rt_a [extracted 20.5.2019].
- [17] Eurostat table edat_ifse_24 [extracted 16.5.2019].

CHAPTER 4.

Education attainment

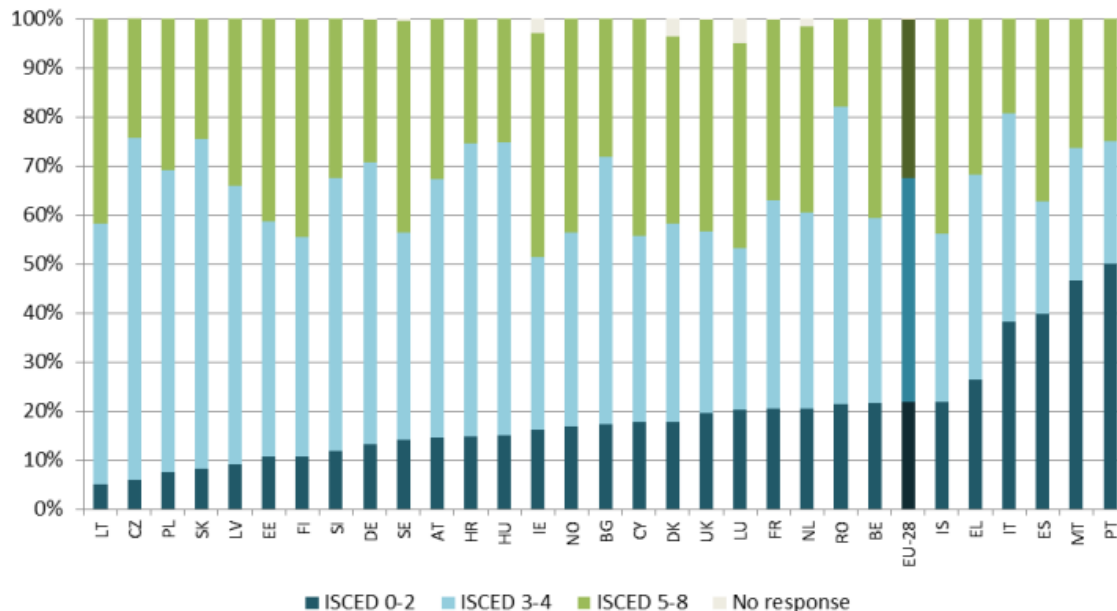
4.1 Share of high, medium and low level qualifications

Participation in tertiary education in Poland has significantly increased over the last three decades, which is connected to an increase in the perceived value of education and higher educational aspirations. From 2009 to 2018, the share of the population with tertiary education increased from 21.2% to 30.9% but remains slightly below the EU average (32.2%).

For the last several years, the share of the population with an upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary level of education, for both men and women has been slowly decreasing, from 66.8% in 2009 to 61.5% in 2018, but is still much higher than the EU average (45.7%).

Poland has the third lowest share (far below the EU average) of people with no or low education level attained (7.6% in 2018). This indicator has been gradually decreasing in the last few years (12% in 2009).

Population (aged 25 to 64) by highest education level attained in 2018



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; low reliability for 'No response' in Czechia, Iceland, Latvia and Poland.

ISCED 0-2 = less than primary, primary and lower secondary education.

ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.

ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education.

Source: Eurostat, Ifsa_pgaed [extracted 16.5.2019].

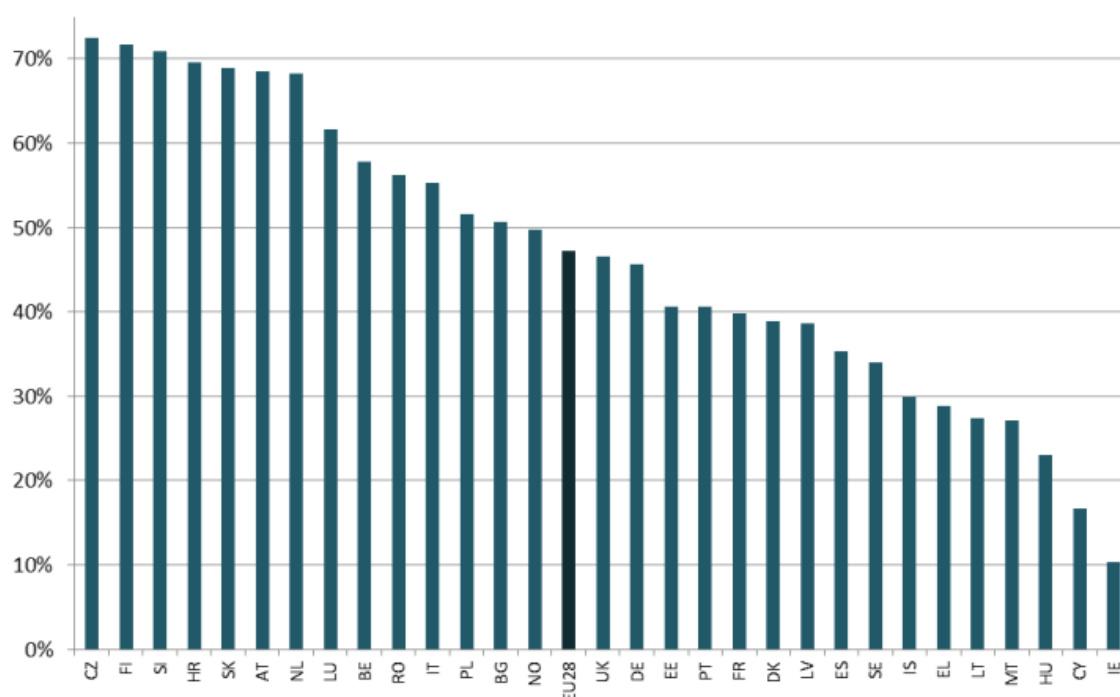
4.3 VET learners by level

Share of learners in VET by level in 2017

lower secondary	upper secondary	post-secondary
Not applicable	51.7%	100%

Source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs01, educ_uoe_enrs04 and educ_uoe_enrs07 [extracted 16.5.2019].

Share of initial VET students over all upper-secondary students (ISCED level 3), 2017



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011.

Source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs04 [extracted 16.5.2019].

4.4 Female share

In 2017/2018 school year females constituted 46% of all learners in VET programmes, however the share differs depending on the type of programme - in post-secondary programmes, females are the majority (71,1%), in programmes at the upper secondary level, there are many more males than females, with the lowest share of females in the first stage sectoral programmes (31,5%).

Share of female learners in VET programmes in the 2017/2018 school year (%)

Type of programme	Female learners
-------------------	-----------------

Vocational upper secondary programmes	39.6
First stage sectoral programmes	31.5
Post-secondary programmes	71.1
Special job-training programmes	41.6
Total	46.4

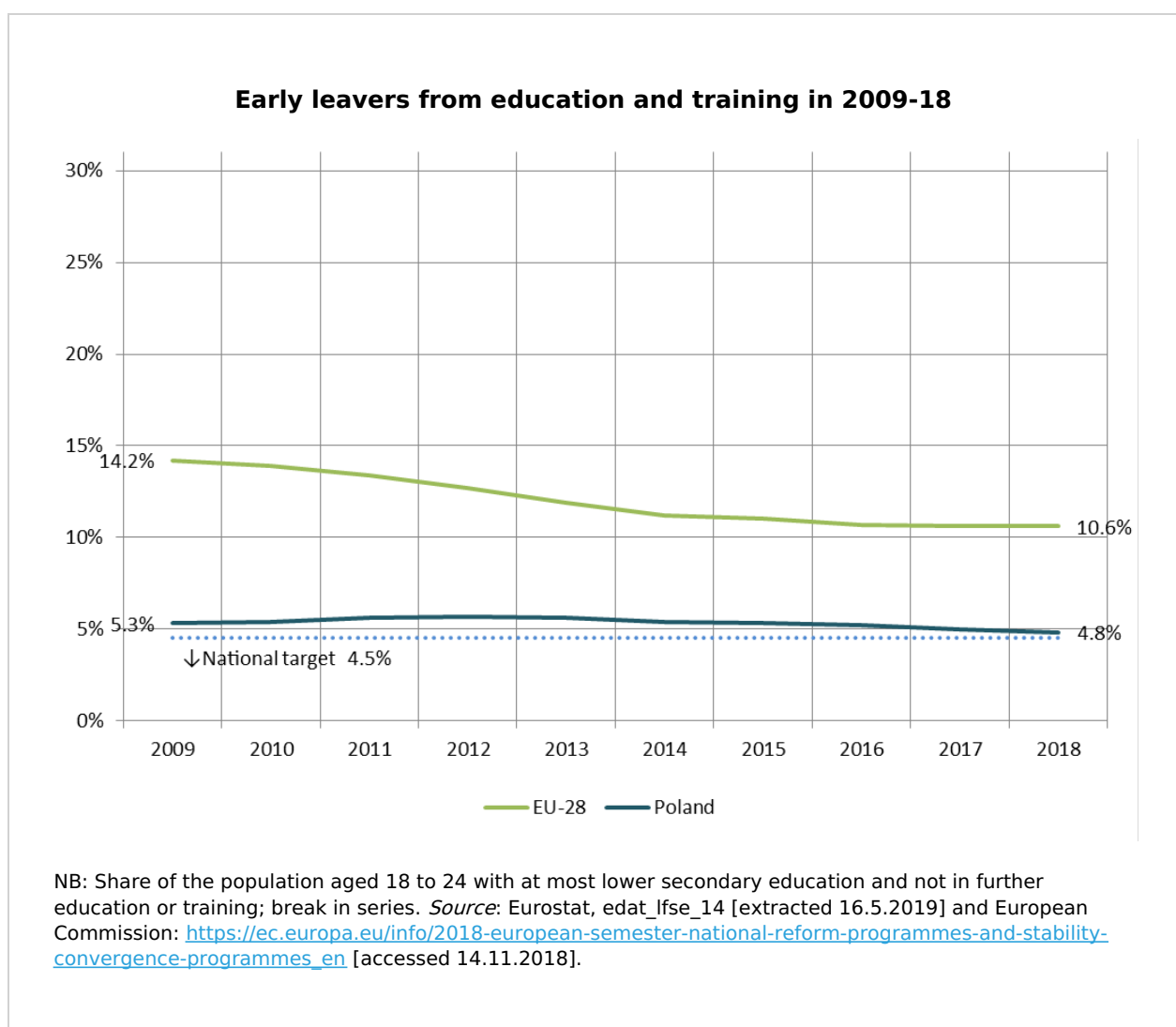
Source: Statistics Poland - Education in the 2017/18 school year.

Female learners prefer the following fields of study:

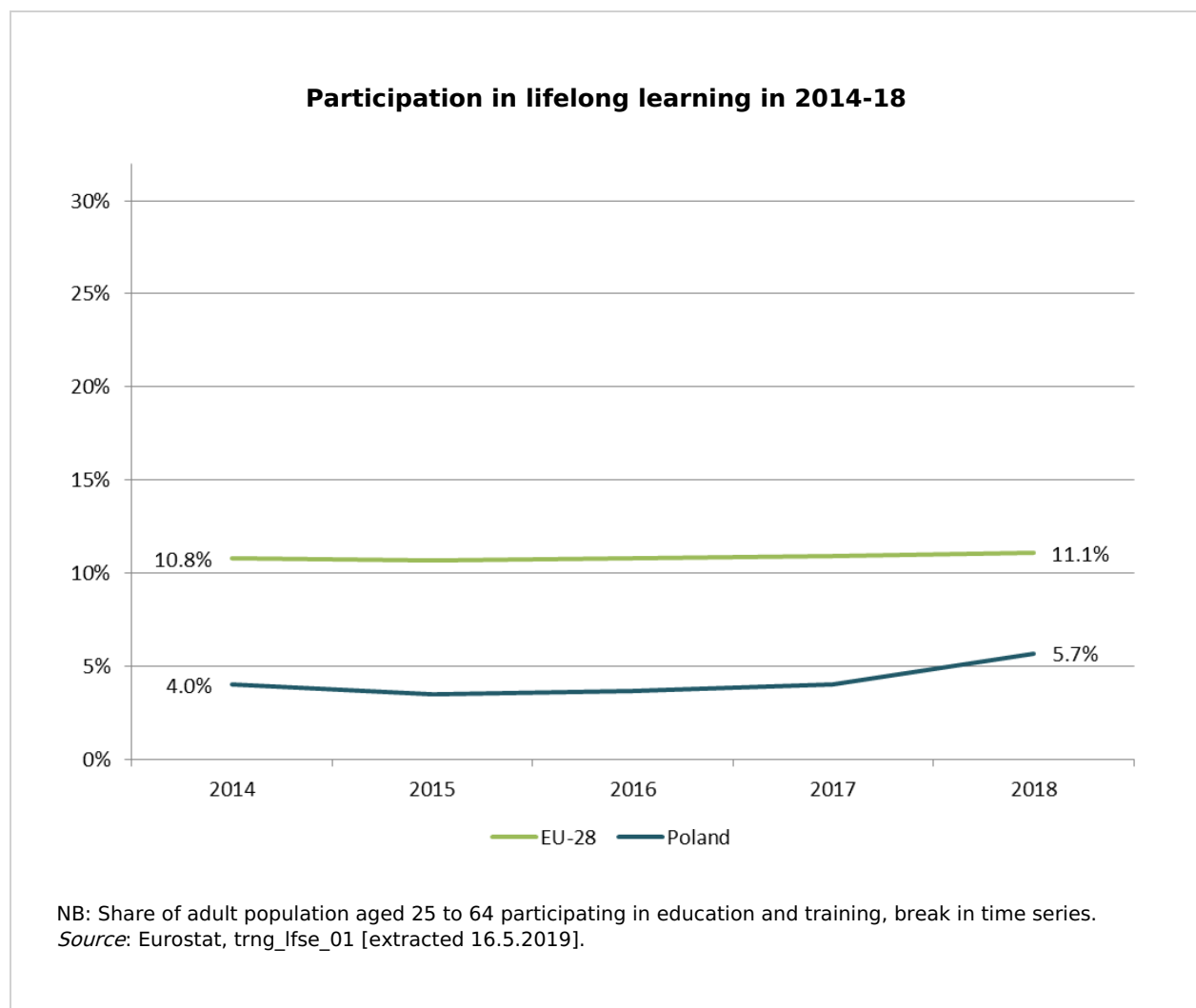
- in post-secondary programmes: hygiene and work safety, personal services, business and administration, medical study;
- in first stage sectoral programmes: personal services, business and administration and manufacturing and processing;
- in vocational upper secondary programmes: personal services, business and administration, social and behavioural science.

4.5 Early leavers from education and training

The share of early leavers from education and training in 2018 was 4.8%, which is much lower than the EU-28 average of 10.6%. The share is slightly lower than in 2009 (5.3%). Despite high attainment rates, it is still slightly above the national target for 2020 of not more than 4.5%.



4.6 Participation in lifelong learning

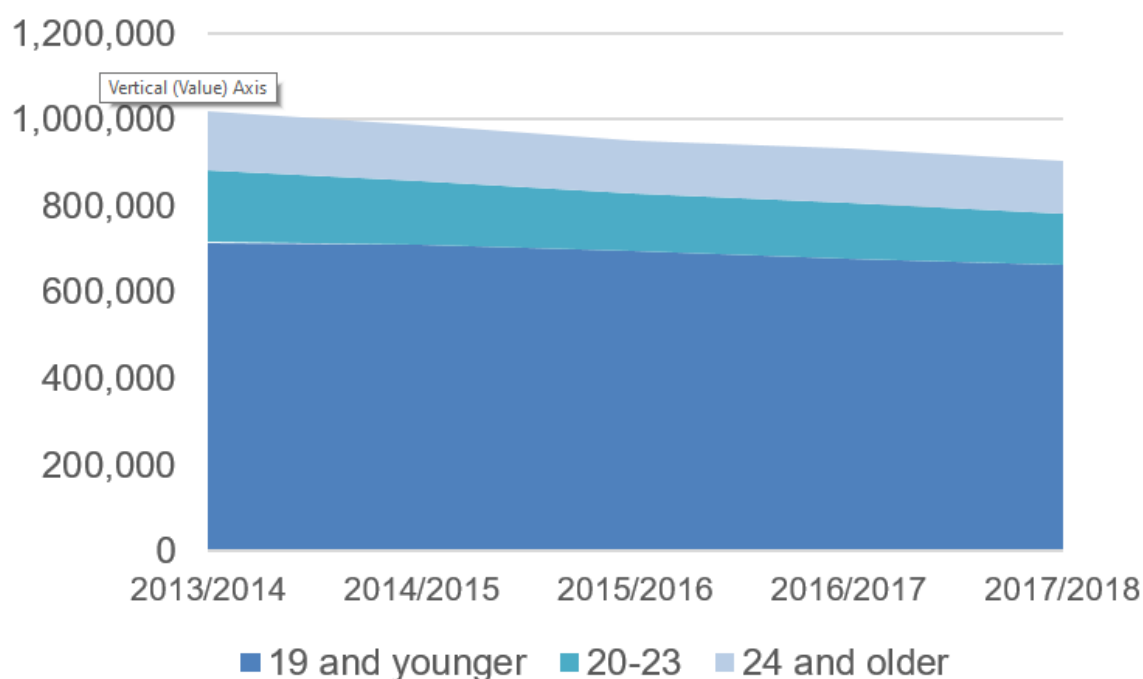


Participation in lifelong learning in Poland has remained at a very low level (4.0%) till 2017, while in 2018 reached 5.7%. However, it remains 5.4 percentage points below the EU-28 average.

Education level, age and labour market activity are the factors differentiating the rate of participation in training; persons who are unemployed and have a low level of education often do not participate in educational activities. Age is also a strong determinant of participation in education; people in older age groups not only participate in training less often, but also study less on their own (informal learning).

4.7 VET learners by age

Learners in VET schools by age group



NB: Participants of vocational qualification courses not included.

Includes basic vocational/first stage sectoral programmes, upper secondary vocational programmes, special job-training and post-secondary programmes.

Source: own calculations based on data from the School Information System (SIO).

Young learners constitute the majority in VET schools – with only post-secondary schools intended for adult learners. This is connected with the establishment of vocational qualifications courses for adult learners which replaced VET schools for adults at the upper secondary level. Vocational qualifications courses were introduced in 2012 as a quicker way of obtaining vocational qualification. Data on the age of participants of vocational qualifications courses is not available and was not included in the chart.

CHAPTER 5.

VET within education and training system

The education and training system comprises:

- preschool education (ISCED level 0);
- eight-year primary education (*szkoła podstawowa*); a programme divided into two four-year parts (basic and lower secondary level) (ISCED levels 1 and 2)
- upper secondary education (ISCED level 3);
- post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED level 4);
- tertiary education including colleges of social work (ISCED levels 5 to 8).

The education system in Poland is currently undergoing structural transformation. In December 2016, the education ministry introduced reforms aimed to prolong the time children spend within one educational programme and to develop a vocational education system that is responsive to the needs of a modern economy. Key elements of the reform included:

- phasing out lower secondary school (*gimnazjum*);
- restructuring six-year primary education (*szkoła podstawowa*) into an eight-year programme divided into two four-year parts (basic and lower secondary level);
- extending the general upper secondary programme (*liceum ogólnokształcące*) to four years instead of three, and the vocational upper secondary programme (*technika*) to five years instead of four;
- introducing two-stage sectoral programmes (*dwustopniowa szkoła branżowa*); the first stage sectoral school has replaced the basic vocational school (*zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa*) as of 2017/18, while the second stage sectoral schools will begin to operate in 2020/21.

Changes in the school structure are accompanied by the gradual development of new core curricula. The school system will be transitioning until 2022/23. During this period, some previous programmes will be functioning alongside the new ones until they are completely phased out.

Education is compulsory up to 18 years of age, while full-time school education is compulsory up to age 15. Full-time compulsory education lasts 9 years (the last year of pre-school education and 8 years of primary school education). Compulsory education for 15-18 year olds can take place as part-time education, both in and out of school, e.g. in the form of short qualifications courses or vocational training for juvenile workers.

Pre-school education is provided in pre-schools (*przedszkole*) for two-and-a-half to six-year-old learners.

Primary and lower secondary education is provided in primary schools (*szkoła policealna*) and lasts typically eight years from age 7 to 15. Work preparation classes for SEN learners are available in the last two years of primary school. A three-year special job-training programme for SEN learners is available for primary school graduates.

Upper secondary education can be provided by different types of schools and take the form of a general upper secondary four-year programme (*licea ogólnokształcące*), a vocational upper secondary five-year programme (*technika*) or a three-year first stage sectoral programme (*branżowa szkoła pierwszego stopnia*), which can be followed by a two-year second stage

sectoral programme. Upper secondary education is typically available to primary school graduates (usually 15 year-olds), apart from the second stage sectoral programme, which will be available to graduates of the first stage programmes (18 year-olds).

Post-secondary non-tertiary programmes are provided by post-secondary schools (*szkoły policealne*) and can be attained in one- to two-and-a-half years. They are available to graduates of general and vocational upper secondary programmes, as well as in the future – of second stage sectoral programmes (usually 19-20 year-olds).

A special form of education is provided by colleges of social work (*kolegium pracowników służb społecznych*), offering programmes at the ISCED 5 level. These colleges provide three-year programmes for the occupation of social worker.

Completing any type of VET programme and obtaining a school leaving certificate is not the same as attaining a vocational qualification. Learners in the formal VET system can be awarded two types of documents confirming attained learning outcomes:

- vocational certificates (certificate of a vocational qualification in an occupation); and
- vocational diplomas (vocational qualifications diploma).

Learners can obtain a vocational diploma only by obtaining both all the qualifications distinguished in an occupation (vocational certificate/s) and a school leaving certificate. Vocational qualifications can only be attained by passing an external State vocational examination.

Each qualification includes specific sets of learning outcomes defined in the core curricula for vocational education. Learning outcomes are grouped in units, which typically contain from several to over a dozen learning outcomes and reflect specific professional tasks. The core curriculum for general education determines the learning outcomes related to the general education component and key competences provided by VET programmes (18) .

Adults aged 18 and older can be awarded a vocational certificate after passing the State vocational examination extramurally. By taking extramural exams, adults may also acquire certificates of completion of general education schools.

Formal VET leads to four qualification levels (2 to 5) that are the same as in the European qualifications framework (EQF).

The VET system comprises initial and continuing education. It can be offered as:

- school-based programmes with obligatory work-based learning (WBL differing in scope and form, also including dual training/alternate training);
- juvenile employment (apprenticeship scheme – with practical training with employer and theoretical training in school or in out-of-school forms, based on a contract between the learner and the employer) (19) ;
- out-of-school forms – different types of courses based on the core curricula.

[18] For vocational upper secondary programmes, it also defines the learning outcomes that must be achieved by a person in the process of attaining the qualification of the *matura* certificate.

[19] An additional new form – the student apprenticeship – will be available for learners of vocational upper secondary programmes and first stage sectoral programmes as of September 2019.

CHAPTER 6.

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship schemes on secondary and post-secondary level:

- **juvenile employment** for the purpose of vocational training (*przygotowanie zawodowe młodocianych pracowników*) dedicated to young people (15-18 years old) with a lower secondary education or 8-year primary education. It is based on a work contract between the learner and employer. In case of theoretical education taking place in school, arrangements between the school and employer regarding scope and organisation of training provided by both parties constitute an annex to the contract. Juvenile worker has a status of an employee and in case of theoretical training taking place in school – also of a student. During the training period, a juvenile worker is entitled to a salary (from 4 to 6 percent of the national average salary, depending on the subsequent year of training), social security benefits and holiday leave. Juvenile workers carry out their apprenticeship usually in SMEs, mainly in the craft sector.

Juvenile employment can take the following forms:

- **training for a profession** (*nauka zawodu*) - apprenticeship with the theoretical education taking place at school (first stage sectoral programme) or in an out-of-school form (e.g. courses) and the practical training organised by the employer. Training for a profession lasts up to 36 months and is finalised with a State vocational examination or Journeyman's examination (*egzamin czeladniczy*). In the 2017/2018 school year, juvenile workers constituted about half of all the learners in the first stage sectoral schools.
- **training for a specific job** (*przyuczenie do wykonywania określonej pracy*) - a rare form limited to a small group of youth, prepares a learner to perform specific tasks in a profession. It lasts from 3 to 6 months and is finalised with a verifying examination.
- **student apprenticeship** (*staż uczniowski*). New form of apprenticeship which will be available as of September 2019. It will be open to learners in vocational upper secondary programmes and first-stage sectoral programmes, who are not juvenile workers. Student apprenticeship is based on the work contract between the learner and employer, with arrangements between the school and employer in the annex to this contract. Student apprenticeship covers all elements of the teaching programme and chosen elements or elements connected with a given occupation but not included in the programme. Students are entitled to a salary unless the contract says otherwise.
- **dual training as a form of practical training**. Apart from above-mentioned schemes apprenticeship might be arranged by school in cooperation with employers as one of the ways of organisation of practical training. In general, practical training (obligatory for all VET programmes) can be organised in different forms and venues - including also apprenticeship - alternate training/dual training with structured alternation of learning in an education and training setting with learning and working at a workplace. This form of organisation of practical training could be considered an apprenticeship however it is based on the contract between the school and employer not between employer and learner.

Apprenticeships for adult learners are also available. It is a form of support provided by Labour Offices and financed from the Labour Fund dedicated to unemployed and job seekers.

Apprenticeships for adults are carried out on the basis of a contract between a Labour Office, an

employer and an institution responsible for conducting exams. Apprenticeships are provided in a form of occupational training and a training aimed at preparation for performing a specific job. In 2017, apprenticeships for adult learners attracted over 140 000 participants.

Learn more about apprenticeships in the national context from the European database on apprenticeship schemes by Cedefop: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/scheme-fiches>

CHAPTER 7.

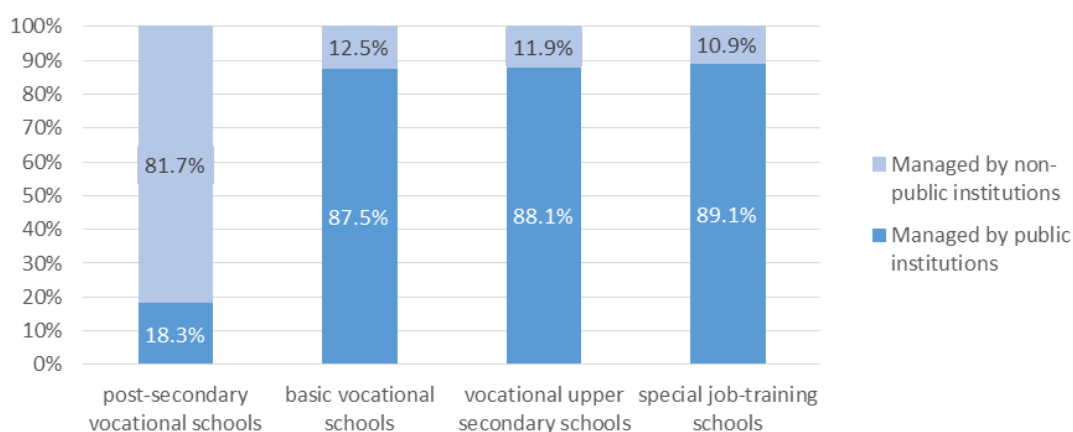
VET governance

VET has three governance levels: national (ministries), regional (school superintendents, mainly in pedagogical supervision) and county (powiat – managing schools). The education ministry is in charge of VET policies at secondary level, supported by other ministries responsible for particular occupations. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education is responsible for higher VET. Social partners advise policy makers on necessary changes in VET.

The majority of public education institutions in Poland are managed by local government units. Counties (powiaty) are responsible for upper secondary schools, including vocational schools, and schools for children with special needs; the regions (województwa) are responsible for schools of regional and trans-regional significance (e.g. groups of schools or vocational schools important for the regional economy).

Central government units (usually ministries) often manage vocational and fine arts schools. All types of schools can also be established and managed by non-public institutions, such as religious and social associations. Generally, in Poland, the higher the education level, the higher the share of non-public institutions. The chart below presents the structure of vocational schools by type and management institution in 2016.

The structure of VET schools by type and managing institution in 2016



Source: ReferNet Poland calculation based on Local Data Bank, Statistics Poland:
<https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start> [accessed 24.9.2018].

In the 2017/18 school year, there were 6 071 VET schools in Poland. The majority (36%) of them were post-secondary vocational schools, followed by vocational upper secondary schools (31%), 25% constituted the first stage sectoral schools and 8% special job-training schools (20) .The decision to provide education for a particular occupation listed in the classification of occupations

for vocational education is made at local level by the school principal in agreement with local authorities (county level) and after asking the regional labour market councils (advisory bodies) for their opinion concerning compliance with labour market needs. Teaching programmes can be developed individually by schools. The school principal is responsible for incorporating the learning outcomes in the teaching programme and providing the organisational requirements as defined in the core curricula.

CHAPTER 8.

VET financing mechanisms

The main resources for educational expenditure are:

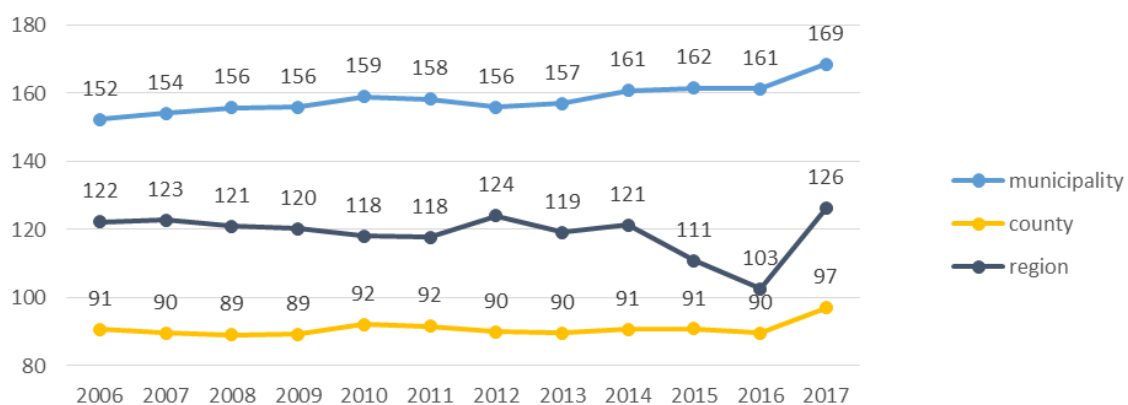
- the education part of the State budget's general subsidy for local government units;
- central government targeted grants;
- the local government unit's own income;
- foreign funds (mainly EU funds).

The education part of the general subsidy from the State budget is the major source of funding of the education system in Poland. The amount of this part of the general subsidy for local government is defined annually in the Budgetary Act, and then the education ministry prepares an algorithm to distribute the educational funds among the local government units, based on the responsibilities ascribed to the different levels of local government (basically the number of students in each type of school) (21) . Since January 2018, the weights for vocational secondary schools have been different for four sets of categories of occupations; the distinction is based on the cost of the vocational part of the education. Additional weights were added for students of post-secondary programmes who obtained a vocational qualifications diploma and for participants of vocational qualification courses who passed the State vocational examination (22)

Further modifications of VET financing (increased state subsidies for learners of special demand occupations in VET schools indicated by the forecast of the demand for employees in vocational education occupations; increased subsidies for employers involved in training juvenile employees in those occupations) will be introduced as of 2020.

Local governments have the power to decide how to use the subsidy; they can decide not only how to allocate the funds to respective schools, but also to use them for other things than educational expenditures. As the chart below illustrates, municipalities and regions spend more on education than they receive as subsidy, but counties, which are mainly responsible for vocational schools, do not use the entire amount on education expenditures. The visible increase in expenditures in 2017 on all local government levels may be due to the structural reforms of the education system.

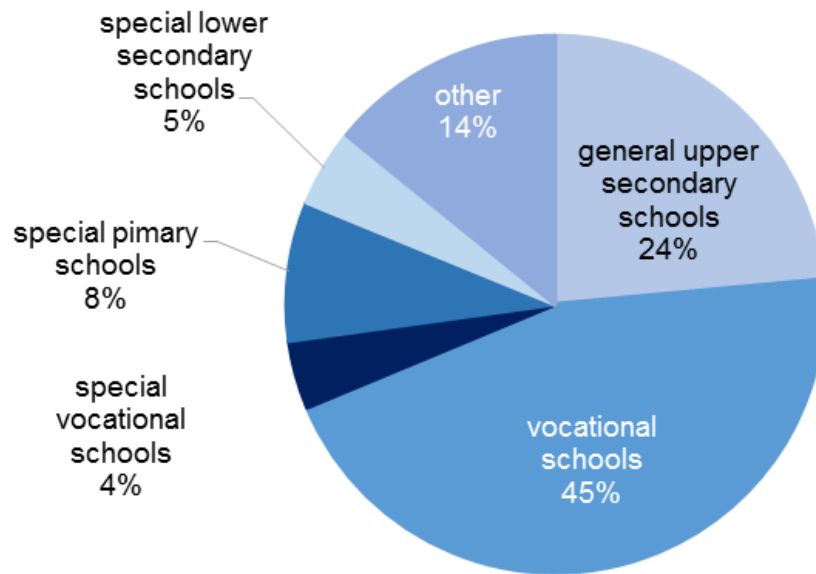
The ratio between educational expenditures and the State general subsidy for education by type of local government in the period of 2006-2017



The higher the ratio the greater the share of local spending. Value over 100 means that local government spends more than it receives from the central government.

Source: ReferNet Poland calculation based on Local Data Bank, Statistics Poland:
<https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start> [accessed 20.9.2018].

The structure of the educational expenditures of counties in 2017 by school type



Source: ReferNet Poland calculation based on Local Data Bank, Statistics Poland: <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start> [accessed 24.9.2018].

In addition to the subsidy, local government units can apply for targeted grants to implement specific public tasks, which usually require co-funding by the unit.

Non-public schools with a public school status are entitled to public funding equal to public schools.

In 2017, public (local and central government) expenditures for the education system reached PLN 71.9 billion (around EUR 16.8 billion), of which 10.4% was spent on vocational schools. Public spending on education as a share of GDP was 3.6%, which is slightly lower than in previous years (23) .

[21] Number of adjustment weights are ascribed to different groups of students (e.g. SEN students, ethnic minorities, students in small schools, in rural regions, in sport classes); teacher qualifications are also included in the algorithm.

CHAPTER 9.

Teachers and trainers

9.1 VET teacher types

In VET there are:

- general subject teachers;
- theoretical vocational subject teachers;
- practical vocational training teachers;
- teachers/pedagogues providing educational support to learners;
- teachers/psychologists providing psychological support to learners, teachers and parents;
- teachers/methodological advisers providing support to teachers;
- teachers/consultants who develop teaching materials, design and deliver in-service training courses for teachers and education managers, etc.;
- in-company trainers (nationally referred to as practical vocational training instructors);
- specialist in-company trainers (various groups of practitioners providing training as their primary or additional activity).

Teachers in public schools and pre-schools comprise 87% of all teachers and are employed on the basis of the Teacher's Charter (24) , which specifies working conditions, duties, rights, professional development requirements, and teachers' salaries. In non-public schools, teachers are employed only on the basis of labour and civil law regulations.

General subject teachers should have at least a master's degree.

Theoretical vocational subject teachers are required to have at least a master's or bachelor's degree, including pedagogical training.

Practical vocational training teachers are required to:

- have the same qualifications as required for teachers of vocational theoretical subjects or the title of master in a craft or a pedagogical technical college (currently non-existing) diploma or a matura examination together with a vocational qualifications certificate and two years of work experience;
- have a pedagogical qualification.

In-company trainers (practical vocational training instructors) can be employers or employees who are not teachers; they are required to have both the defined by the regulation combination of formal qualifications and years of work experience in a given occupation and the adequate pedagogical qualification (25) .

9.2 Continuing professional development of teachers/trainers

As regulated by the Teachers' Charter, teachers have the right to participate in all forms of continuing professional development (CPD) and are obliged to follow CPD in line with the school's needs. CPD is required from teachers on the path to higher advancement levels.

Teacher CPD is funded by local/regional budgets. School heads are responsible for assessing teacher CPD needs and preparing school professional development plans.

There are different public teacher training institutions at the national, regional and local levels, as well as numerous non-public teacher training institutions. The Centre for Education Development teacher training institution operates at the national level and covers both general and VET teacher CPD. In general, the main tasks of these institutions consist of developing teacher CPD programmes and educational materials, indicating CPD priorities, and implementing CPD programmes. Teacher training is also provided by higher education institutions.

Another form of CPD is offered by teachers/methodological advisers, who provide direct subject-oriented and methods assistance; support teachers in their professional development; organise conferences, seminars and workshops; and identify teachers' needs for counselling and vocational training. CPD is also provided at the school level via internal systems of professional development, including e.g. self-development teachers' councils meetings, lessons, observations, study visits and others. Other forms of CPD include internships in enterprises for VET teachers. From September 2019 all VET teachers are obliged to participate in professional training in companies relating to the occupation they teach. Numerous educational resources (open bases) and CPD opportunities are available through ESF co-funded initiatives.

The Teacher's Charter specifies four categories of job positions in the profession of teaching:

- trainee teacher – first stage in a teacher's career,
- contractual teacher – awarded after one year and nine months of internship and passing an examination given by an examination commission;
- appointed teacher – awarded after two years and nine months of internship and after passing an examination given by an examination commission;
- chartered teacher – awarded after two years and nine months of internship, after having their professional achievement accepted by a qualification commission, and an interview.

These categories have direct impact on a teacher's basic salary level. Teachers with outstanding performance may also be awarded the title of honorary school education professor.

In 2017/18, 55% of teachers were chartered teachers. In VET schools on upper secondary level, the share of chartered teachers was higher than 60%, however in post-secondary schools, it was only 23% (26) .

Practical training institutions are involved in improving the competence of in-company trainers by offering a broad range of thematic training. The most common training refers to methodology of vocational education and the use of standards for examination requirements.

CHAPTER 10.

Shaping VET qualifications

10.1 Anticipating skill needs

System of sector skills councils

The system of sector skills councils, launched in 2016, consists of three components:

- The programme Council on competences (Rada Programowa ds. Kompetencji – RPK) consists of representatives of ministries, training institutions, social partners, universities, non-governmental agencies, as well as labour market stakeholders. The RPK mainly focuses on building cooperation between the education community and entrepreneurs; it also encourages the development of sector councils and implements recommendations in the areas of science and education.
- The sector skills councils are the central part of the system. Currently, there are seven active councils in the following sectors: health and social care; construction; finances; tourism; motorisation and electromobility; fashion and innovative textiles; ICT. Their main aims are:
 - to collect information from various labour market stakeholders and recommend systemic solutions and changes in the area of education;
 - to stimulate cooperation between education providers and employers;
 - to provide support in identifying and anticipating competency needs in a given sector.
- The human capital study aims to increase knowledge about current needs in various sectors and enable the demand for competences and qualifications to be anticipated. The information collected in the study provides, among others, deeper insight about the skills gaps in the economy.

Integrated skills strategy

In 2017, the education ministry initiated the development of a national skills strategy. The strategy covers the whole area of education and training, i.e. general education, vocational education, higher education and adult learning. It takes into account both the demand side (demand for specific competences and qualifications) and supply (availability of qualifications and competences in society). The general part of the strategy was developed (27) and adopted by the government in January 2019. This will be followed by the development of the more detailed part of the strategy and strategy implementation.

Deficit and Surplus Occupation Monitoring

Since 2005, the Deficit and Surplus Occupation Monitoring survey (MZDiN) has been conducted by county and regional labour offices as well as the labour ministry. In 2015, a new methodology was applied – the survey is based mainly on the IT systems' data of employment offices (on unemployed persons, reported vacancies, providers offering professional activation services), studies of online job offers, information obtained from employers in a questionnaire study, data from the Statistics Poland and the School Information System. Since 2015, the 'Occupational barometer', previously implemented in the Małopolska region, also started to be implemented in the whole country, conducted by the regional labour offices. It is a qualitative short-term (annual) forecast providing information on deficit and surplus occupations (28) .

New forecast of the demand for employees

The forecast of the demand for employees in vocational education occupations was introduced in 2018 as a new tool to help shape the vocational education and training offer. Starting with 2019, this forecast will be developed annually and published in the form of an announcement by the Ministry of National Education. The forecast will be based on analyses conducted by the Educational Research Institute using various data sources. The forecast will impact VET financing.

See also Cedefop's skills forecast (29)

10.2 Designing qualifications

The VET programmes available at the national level are developed on the basis of three regulations of the education ministry:

- the classification of occupations for vocational education (30) ;
- the core curricula for vocational education (31) ;
- the core curriculum for general education (32) .

The classification includes the list of occupations for which VET programmes can provide education. Qualifications (33) are distinguished within occupations; each occupation can be made up of either one or two qualifications. Currently, there are 215 vocational education occupations, including so-called ancillary occupations for people with minor intellectual disabilities.

Developing occupations within the classification of occupations

The introduction of new occupations to the classification is regulated by the Education Law. The classification of occupations is determined by the education minister in cooperation with the relevant ministers responsible for a given sector of the economy, who can submit their requests to include particular occupations in the classification. To anticipate labour market needs, representatives of employers and employees are consulted during the development stage of the classification.

Professional associations, organisations of employers, sector skills councils, social partners and other stakeholders' organisations can submit their proposals to the relevant minister to establish a new occupation; in this way they shape the educational offer of the formal VET system. After the proposal has been approved, the education minister includes the occupation into the classification and appoints a working group to design the core curriculum for vocational education for that occupation.

Designing the core curriculum for vocational education

After the proposal has been approved, the education minister appoints a working group to design the core curriculum for vocational education for that occupation.

The working group contacts the institution which submitted the proposal for the new occupation to determine the learning outcomes, and then undertakes consultations with other experts in the field. At this stage, occupational standards, which are developed by the labour ministry, are considered.

The decision on the occupations offered by a given VET school is made by the school principal in agreement with local authorities (at the county level of government) and after asking the regional labour market councils (advisory bodies) for their opinion concerning compliance with labour market needs. Regional labour market councils shall take into the account the forecast of the demand for employees in vocational education occupations.

Modernising VET curricula

In order to improve the labour market relevance of VET education, the education ministry

together with the Education Development Centre, has implemented an ESF co-funded project 'Partnership for VET' focusing on developing partnerships in vocational education and training in cooperation with employers and other social partners.

In the first phase of the project, a social partner forum was established - 25 sectoral teams of social partners were set up to better adjust VET to labour market needs, and particularly to recommend changes in the vocational core curricula and classification of occupations. In the following years, stakeholders prepared changes in numerous VET curricula and developed new curricula. Numerous teaching plans and programmes, career development paths together with diplomas and qualification supplements in Polish and English were also designed. By February 2018, 1048 employers actively participated in the project.

[29] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/skills-forecast>

[33] The term 'qualification' is defined in the School Education Act, as in the European qualifications framework Recommendation 2008.

CHAPTER 11.

Quality assurance

All VET schools are included in external and internal quality assurance systems. External quality assurance is provided through pedagogical supervision; it is conducted by the Regional Education Authorities (kurator oświaty) overseen by the education ministry. Pedagogical supervision covers four aspects: evaluation, an audit of legal compliance (34) , monitoring and support.

The external evaluation of schools is conducted according to certain uniform procedures and requirements set in the legislation concerning:

- the organisation of educational processes;
- acquiring by students' skills and knowledge defined in the national core curriculum;
- active participation of students;
- shaping social attitudes, and respect for social norms;
- support to students' development taking into account their individual circumstances;
- cooperation with parents;
- cooperation with local community;
- including of findings from analyses of external exams' results as well as external and internal evaluations;
- school management.

It includes various research techniques (e.g. interviews, surveys, observation, document analysis) and takes into account the opinions of different stakeholders.

Reports from the external evaluations performed in schools are publicly available on a dedicated internet website (35) .

The Head of the Regional Education Authority prepares an annual report on the results of the educational supervision conducted and presents it to the Minister for Education.

School principals are obliged by law to design and implement an internal quality assurance system. They should do this in cooperation with their teachers. School principals are relatively free in how they design and implement these systems, but are obliged to include the four aspects of pedagogical supervision mentioned above. Internal evaluation is conducted annually and needs to include issues important for each particular school. Its results are taken into consideration in the external evaluation. In order to help school principals in developing and implementing internal quality assurance procedures, the National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education (KOWEŻiU) prepared 'Quality Standards for VET' (2013), a document covering ten thematic areas (36) related to quality assurance in VET, which are in line with the 2009 EQARF/EQAVET recommendation.

In the case of non-statutory qualifications included in the Integrated Qualifications Register (ZRK), quality assurance is provided by external quality assurance entities (Podmioty Zewnętrznego Zapewniania Jakości – PZZJ). The external quality assurance entity for a qualification is assigned by the relevant minister from the list of institutions selected for a given area of qualifications. There are also internal quality assurance mechanisms for institutions awarding qualifications; they are required to perform internal evaluations.

The system of external examinations

The system of external examinations is a key element for ensuring and improving the quality of education and qualifications attained in schools. The central examination board and eight

regional examination boards are responsible for organising external examinations. The external examination system is supervised by the education ministry. In the external examination system, all examinees solve the same tasks and assignments to verify whether they have achieved the learning outcomes defined in the core curriculum. Trained examiners registered at the regional examination boards assess examination results. The central examination board analyses aggregate test and examination results and initiates research in the field of assessment. The results of external examinations are taken into consideration in both external and internal quality assurance as part of pedagogical supervision.

Starting in 2019, all students will be obliged to take a State vocational examination or a journeyman's examination as a condition for school graduation; up till now, this has been optional. This change aims to strengthen the role of the exam as a quality assurance mechanism.

School Information System

The collection and dissemination of information on the formal general and vocational education system by the School Information System (SIO) is an important element in ensuring the quality of qualifications. The system is maintained in electronic form and uses internet to provide information collected. Every school and education institution has to submit data regarding students, teachers, facilities, expenses, etc. Schools submit data through a web application. Information is collected regionally and then exported by regional education authorities to the education ministry. Each user group (ministries, Central Statistical Office, local authorities, etc.) has access to its relevant part of the data base, and some of this information is available to the public. The system was set up in 2004 but has functioned in this way since 2012 and has been continuously modernised. In 2017, a new regulation on the SIO was introduced (37) relating mainly to changes in the scope of the data gathered within the system.

-
- [34] Legal compliance auditing aims to check whether the activities of schools comply with legislation.
 - [35] System Ewaluacji Oświaty. Nadzór Pedagogiczny [Education evaluation system: pedagogical supervision]: www.npseo.pl
 - [36] The ten thematic areas of the quality standards are: (1) teaching programmes; (2) school staff; (3) school material resources; (4) organisation of teaching; (5) students with special needs; (6) cooperation with employers; (7) cooperation with domestic and international partners; (8) assessment and validation of learning outcomes; (9) counselling; (10) strategic management of the school.
 - [37] The Act of 21 April 2017 r. on changes in the Act on the School Information System and some other acts: <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20170000949>

CHAPTER 12.

Validation of prior learning

The VET system allows learners to attain qualifications (vocational certificates) through the validation of non-formal education and informal learning (38) . Persons can take extramural State vocational examinations conducted by regional examination boards if they are over 18 years old, have completed a lower secondary programme or an eight-year primary programme and have at least two years of learning or work in an occupation relating to the targeted qualification (39) . If they do not have two years of learning or work experience, they can enrol in a vocational qualifications course (KKZ). As of September 2018, the curriculum of the KKZ is based on the new curriculum for VET. Completion of a vocational qualification course entitles students to take the State vocational examination.

After successfully passing the State vocational examination, learners obtain the same vocational certificate as regular VET students. The fee paid by the applicant for the extramural examination is rather low, in 2019 approximately 45 EUR (15 EUR for the written part and 30 EUR for the practical part).

For more information about arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning please visit Cedefop's European database (40) .

-
- [38] By taking extramural exams adults might also acquire certificate of completion of the general education schools (primary and secondary).
 - [39] Documents confirming the fulfilment of these requirements are, in particular, school certificates, transcripts, education certificates or employment certificates related to work in a specific occupation, including those obtained abroad.
 - [40] European database on validation of non-formal and informal learning:
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/european-database-on-validation-of-non-formal-and-informal-learning>

CHAPTER 13.

Incentives for learners

In IVET, incentives include:

- Scholarships for IVET students

In 2018, school scholarships range from PLN 99.20 to PLN 248 (from EUR 23 to EUR 57) per month depending on the decision of local authorities. The period of receiving a scholarship can range from one to ten months per school year. VET students can receive financial support when studying away from their community or when their family income is below the threshold for receiving social assistance benefits combined with social problems that the family is facing. Scholarships for good grades can also be granted to VET learners. Apart from the country level, there are also regional initiatives aiming to promote participation in VET. Some regional scholarships have been financed within EU-funded projects.

- Salary for juvenile workers

Students who are juvenile workers are entitled to a salary. The amount of their salary cannot be less than 4% (in the 1st year of training) 5% (in the 2nd year of training) and 6% (in the 3rd year of training) of the average monthly salary (ranging from EUR 42 to EUR 68). Employers also pay mandatory social insurance on the basis of the salary paid to the juvenile worker.

Minimum salaries for juvenile workers in 2019

Period	1 st year of training	2 nd year of training	3 rd year of training
1.06.2019. - 31.08.2019	198,04 PLN	247,55 PLN	297,06 PLN
	45,93 EUR	57,41 EUR	68,90 EUR
1.03.2019. - 31.05.2019	194,55 PLN	243,19 PLN	291,82 PLN
	45,12 EUR	56,40 EUR	67,68 EUR
1.12.2018. - 28.02.2019.	183,21 PLN	229,01 PLN	274,81 PLN
	42,49 EUR	53,11 EUR	63,74 EUR

Source: own calculations based on legal acts in Poland.

- Vocational training and support by the Voluntary Labour Corps

The Voluntary Labour Corps (41) (Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy – OHP) is an organisation specialised in supporting youth at risk of social exclusion and unemployed under 25 years old, overseen by the labour ministry. The organisation offers young people over 15 years old without lower secondary education, the possibility to attain vocational qualifications and/or to supplement their education. Currently it has over 214 Corps agencies (2019) providing young people with the opportunity to complete their education and acquire professional qualifications before entering adult life. The Voluntary Labour Corps provide training in 64 professions, both in their own workshops or as on-the-job training with an employer. All students with low/no income receive free meals and accommodation during the education period. Students also receive guidance and pedagogical support. Each year, over 800,000 young people receive various forms of help from Corps agencies including individual psychological support, group workshops for active job-seeking, vocational courses, vocational courses offering certified qualifications, language courses, European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) course, driving course, entrepreneurship course, assistance in finding jobs and organising traineeships, as well as traineeships offered by employers.

In the area of continuing VET (CVET), support is organised mainly through the employment services and financed from the Labour Fund (42) , as well as from the European Social Fund (ESF). This support includes:

- vocational training;
- loans for financing of the cost of training;
- training vouchers;
- vocational practice vouchers;
- scholarships for youth from low income families for the period of education;
- financial support for examination fees and vocational licence fees;
- statutory training leave for employees.

The Labour Fund plays an important role in delivering state support for VET. It promotes participation by granting resources for vocational training initiatives. The training is mainly offered to unemployed people, but it can also be provided to other job seekers, such as, for example, people with disabilities. The participants of group training have the right to receive a monthly training grant that amounts to 120% of the unemployment benefit. The number of training hours per month should exceed 150. The cost of individual training cannot exceed 300% of the national average monthly salary. In 2017, more than 49 000 unemployed and other eligible individuals participated in various forms of training. The most popular form of training (more than 12 000 participants) was driver's licence courses. The number of participants has declined mainly due to lower unemployment rate.

Participants in various forms of training support offered by the Labour Fund

	Training chosen by the participant	Group training planned by the labour office	Training voucher	Training loan	Financing of post-graduate studies	Financing the cost of an exam or licence
2015	24 585	19 055	6 393	234	2 459	986
2017 (number)	18 558	9 644	5 070	6	2 181	1 010
2017 (2015=100)	75,5	50,6	79,3	2,6	88,7	102,4

Source: Warsaw: Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (2018). *Bezrobocie w Polsce w 2017 r. Raport tabelaryczny* [Unemployment in Poland in 2017]. See also earlier editions.

Labour Offices support the organisation of vocational training for employees, but only at the initiative of employers (only when the employer has a special training fund). Up to 50% of the costs of the training can be refunded from the Labour Fund, but not more than the amount of the average monthly salary per participant. In the case of people over 45 years of age, the limit of the refund is 80% of the training costs, but not more than 300% of the average salary.

Labour Offices also fund apprenticeships organised in companies. Apprenticeships are nowadays available to all unemployed. In 2017, over 140 000 people participated in an apprenticeship scheme, including 46 000 youth under 25 years of age (33%). The number of participants in apprenticeship schemes, as well as the share of youth in all forms of training declined significantly between 2015 and 2017.

Training leave is provided to an employee. The leave (from six to 21 days) can be used to

prepare for and take an examination or defend a thesis. Training leave can be paid (to cover lost income) to an employee if an employer requires or agrees to the need for the training before it starts.

[41] Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP), <http://www.ohp.pl>.

[42] The Labour Fund (Fundusz Pracy) is a State special purpose fund operating under the Act of 20 April 2004 on the promotion of employment and labour market institutions (*Journal of Laws* 2004, No 99, item 1001 and later amendments).

CHAPTER 14.

Incentives for enterprises to boost their participation in VET provision

Employers who provide VET training to students of vocational programmes can receive the following support:

- refund of trainers' salaries;
- refund of the extra salary paid to instructors;
- refund of the cost of work clothes and necessary protective measures;
- training allowance for work placement supervisors;
- refund of the bonus for work placement supervisors;
- subsidy for the salary and social security contribution for the juvenile worker for the period of vocational training from the Labour Fund. The financial limits on the refund are set each year. As of 2020, the employers training juvenile employees in the professions indicated by the forecast of the demand for employees in vocational education occupations will receive increased subsidies.

Employers believe that the financial support offered is not fully adequate to the resources devoted to such training. The period of vocational practice is seen as being too short, which means that students are not providing added value to the company's performance (43) .

Since 2014, employers have been able to use the National Training Fund (Krajowy Fundusz Szkoleniowy), part of the Labour Fund (Fundusz Pracy), to finance their employees' training. It mainly finances courses and post-graduate studies attended by employees at the request of the employer; examinations enabling the attainment of vocational qualifications; medical and psychological examinations required for a job position; and personal accident insurance. In the case of microenterprises, the funding can cover 100% of the costs of continuing education, whereas in other types of enterprises, the employer covers 20% of the training cost. The training cost per employee cannot exceed 300% of the average salary in a given year. In 2017, 18 715 employers received support from the National Training Fund, resulting in training or other forms of assistance for 105,300 employees, which is an increase by around one-third compared to 2015.

CHAPTER 15.

Guidance and counselling

A regulation concerning occupational/career guidance and counselling was introduced in September 2018 (44) . Previously, occupational/career guidance/counselling had been implemented only on the basis of the provisions of the regulation on the principles of providing and organising psychological and pedagogical assistance.

According to the new regulation, occupational guidance is to be implemented in a planned and systematic way, in all types of schools, including VET schools. The regulation defines the goals as well as the terms and manner of implementing and organising guidance/counselling, including possible forms and detailed programme content, which vary depending on the school level.

The basic goal of guidance is to support students in the process of making independent and responsible decisions concerning their educational and professional life, based on learning about their own resources, the education system and the labour market.

Vocational guidance is to be conducted at all school levels, including:

- Pre-schools [ISCED 0] - vocational pre-orientation
- Primary school classes 1-6 [ISCED 1] - vocational orientation
- 7th and 8th grades of primary school [ISCED 2] and secondary schools [ISCED 3] - vocational guidance activities.

Schools are required to develop their own programme to implement the intra-school guidance system for each new school year. This programme should include:

- activities to implement occupational guidance (including the content of the activities, methods and forms of implementation, timeframe of implementation, persons responsible for implementation);
- entities with which the school cooperates in this field.

Please see also:

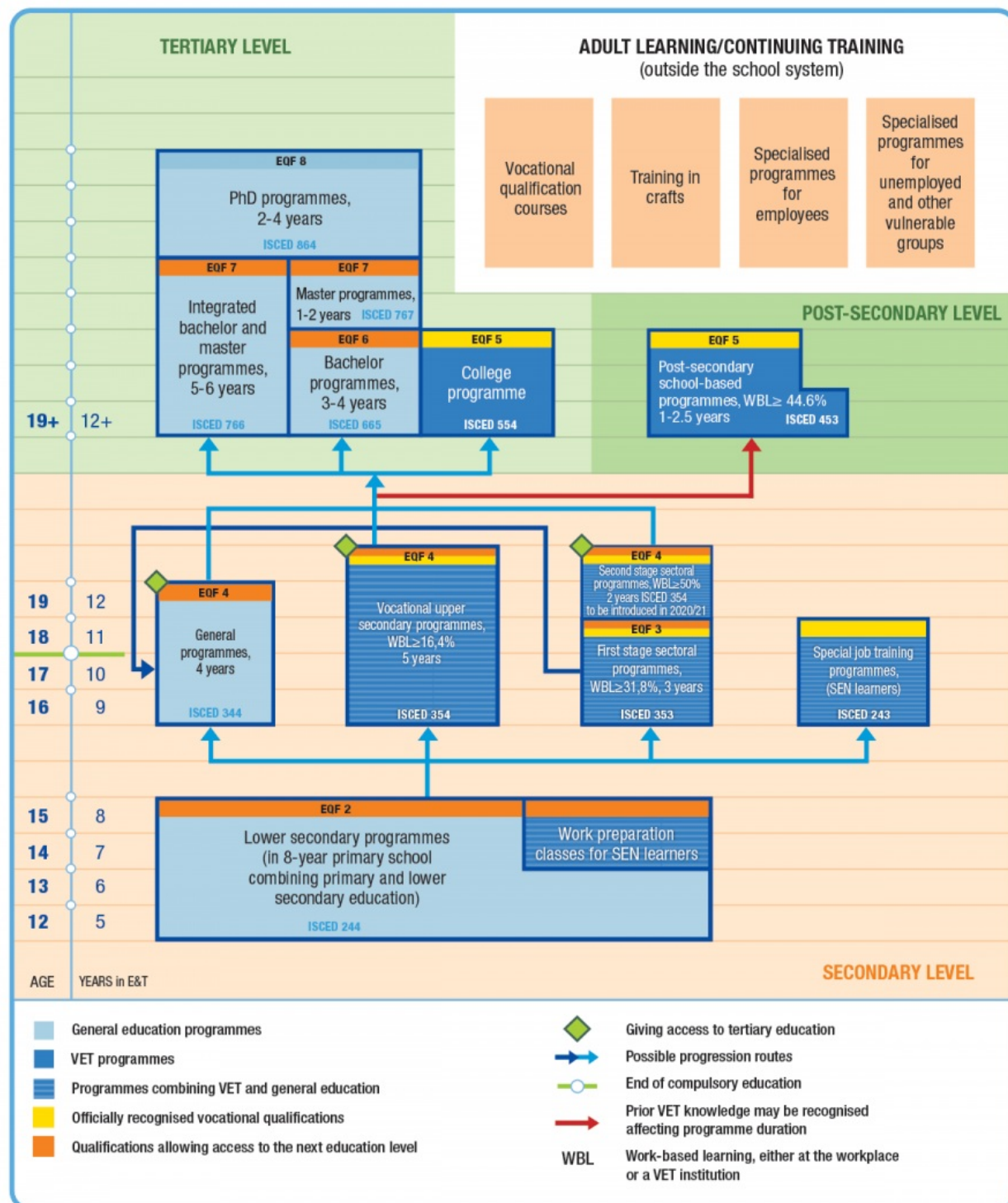
- guidance and outreach Poland national report (45) ;
- Cedefop's labour market intelligence toolkit (46) .

[44] Regulation of the education ministry on vocational/career guidance in Polish schools entered into force on 1 September 2018.

[45] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/events-and-projects/networks/refernet/thematic-perspectives/guidance-outreach>

[46] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/toolkits/resources-guidance/toolkit/where-can-you-find-more-information-in-your-country-and-elsewhere>

Vocational education and training system chart



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Poland, 2019.

VET Programme Types

EQF 2			
Work preparation classes for SEN learners			
Work preparation classes for SEN learners leading to EQF level 2 (oddziały przysposabiające do pracy)			
EQF level	2	Usual entry grade	7
Usual completion grade	8	Usual entry age	15 (47)
Length of a programme (years)	2		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 Education in Poland is compulsory up to 18 years of age, with full-time school education compulsory up to age 15.	Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	
Is it offered free of charge?		Is it available for adults?	
ECVET or other credits	Not applicable		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	Classes combine general education and work preparation – both adapted to the individual learner’s needs and capabilities.		
Main providers	Primary schools		
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	Not specified by the regulations. The programme is developed and adjusted to the specific needs of a learner by a lead teacher.		

Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	Different forms of practical training available: • practical training in school; • practical training in VET schools (school workshops), continuing education centres (48) and vocational training centres (49) ; • in-company training.
Main target groups	For learners over 15 years old with special education needs (SEN), at risk of early school leaving.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	For learners over 15 years old at risk of not completing primary school in the usual mode, who: • received promotion to grade VII; or • did not receive promotion to grade VIII. Enrolment requires confirmation from a psycho-social support institution on the need for this form of education.
Assessment of learning outcomes	Primary school leaving certificate is issued to those who completed the programme (with a special note with information on completion of work preparation classes).
Diplomas/certificates provided	School leaving certificate
Examples of qualifications	Not applicable
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete work preparation classes for SEN learners can enter the labour market or continue their education at the next EQF level.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	✗
General education subjects	✓
Key competences	✓
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	<1% (50)

[48] Continuing education centres (*centrum kształcenia ustawicznego* - CKU) - public institutions (usually a school complex) in Polish education, usually with a long tradition, whose task is to provide continuous, free-of charge education for adults and enable them to get a profession. They provide advice to teachers and lecturers employed in adult education. The centres can also employ professional advisers specialised in adult education.

[49] Vocational training centres (*centrum kształcenia zawodowego* - CKZ) - newly set up public institutions created from the transformation of existing centres for practical

training (*placówka kształcenia praktycznego*) or vocational training and development centres (*ośrodek doskonalenia i doskonalenia zawodowego*) responsible for supporting vocational education of VET learners in schools providing practical or theoretical training of juvenile workers. They will be also providing vocational training in the form of courses (professional skills, qualifying vocational courses or other courses - enabling to obtain and supplement knowledge, skills and professional qualifications).

- [50] Work preparation classes are not included in the statistics due to limited number of participants.

EQF 4
Vocational upper secondary programmes, WBL ≥16.4% 5 years ISCED 354

Vocational upper secondary programme (technikum) leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	354
Usual entry grade	9	Usual completion grade	13
Usual entry age	16 (51a)	Usual completion age	20
Length of a programme (years)	5		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 Education in Poland is compulsory up to 18 years of age, with full-time school education compulsory up to age 15.	Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	
Is it offered free of charge?		Is it available for adults?	

ECVET or other credits Not applicable

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance) The curriculum for upper secondary vocational programmes combines general and vocational education. The vocational parts consist of theoretical and practical aspects. Vocational schools have a relatively high level of independence regarding the organisation of practical training. The school director decides on the share of work-based learning however it cannot be less than 50% of the hours foreseen for vocational education (which combines both practical and theoretical training).

Main providers	Upper secondary vocational schools: • public schools (vast majority of schools) operated by local (county) and regional authorities; • non-public schools with public school accreditation operated by different providers (associations, companies - commercial law companies, natural persons).
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	≥16.4% (51)
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	The practical part of vocational education can be offered in: • school workshops; • continuing education centres (52) and vocational training centres (53) ; • with an employer (can be organised in different ways, partially or fully at an employers' premises, including also dual training/alternate training). A distinctive form of practical training - on-the-job training - is mandatory for learners of vocational upper secondary programmes and lasts from 4 to 12 weeks, depending on the type of occupation. An additional new form of WBL – the student apprenticeship – will be available for learners of this programme as of September 2019.
Main target groups	This programme is available to primary school graduates.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners should hold a primary school leaving certificate. Primary school graduates are usually 15 years old.

Assessment of learning outcomes	The following forms of assessment of learning outcomes are foreseen for learners: • school leaving certificate - confirms that a learner completed the programme. It contains a list of subjects covered and the final grades achieved. To obtain school leaving certificate no external exam is required. Final grades are based on internal on-going assessments of learners and certificate consist of annual classification grades determined in the highest-level class and annual classification grades achieved in the completed lower classes; • State vocational examination (taking exam is obligatory for school graduation as of September 2019) – confirms obtaining vocational qualification. The examination has two parts: written and practical. The candidate has to pass both in order to receive a vocational certificate/diploma. The exam is centrally organised and based on uniform requirements, the same examination tasks, assessed according to the same criteria and organised in the same way regardless of where the examination is held; • school leaving examination (matura) – a state, uniform secondary school leaving examination based on the core curriculum for general education and providing access to tertiary education. As of September 2019, the vocational diploma in an occupation taught on technician level will allow learners to skip one additional subject in the matura exam. The matura exam consists of two parts: the oral part (internal and assessed at school) and the written part – external, set by the Central Examination Board (<i>Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna</i>) and assessed by examiners included in the registers of the Regional Examination Boards (<i>Okręgowa Komisja Egzaminacyjna</i>).
Diplomas/certificates provided	This programme leads to: • a school leaving certificate giving learners a secondary education; • vocational qualifications (vocational certificates) after passing the State vocational examination; • a vocational qualifications diploma for occupations consisting of two qualifications (issued when a learner obtained both qualifications distinguished in an occupation and a school leaving certificate).
Examples of qualifications	Occupations provided by this programme are two-qualification occupations, for example: electrical technician (<i>technik elektryk</i>), automation technician (<i>technik automatyk</i>), multimedia and photography technician (<i>technik fotografii i multimedialów</i>), construction technician (<i>technik budownictwa</i>), accountancy technician (<i>technik rachunkowości</i>), salesman technician (<i>technik handlowiec</i>).
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Graduates of these programmes, after passing the secondary school leaving examination (matura), are eligible to continue to tertiary education.

Destination of graduates	According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), in the 1st quarter of 2017 the employment rate of recent vocational upper secondary programme graduates (one year after completing education) was 55.8%.
Awards through validation of prior learning	 A vocational certificate can be awarded after passing the State vocational examination extramurally. Persons can take extramural State vocational examinations conducted by the regional examination boards if they are over 18 years old, have completed a lower secondary programme or an eight-year primary programme and have at least two years of learning or work in an occupation relating to the targeted qualification (54) . If they do not have two years of learning or work experience, they can enroll in a vocational qualifications course (KKZ). By taking extramural exams, adults can also acquire a certificate of completion of the general education schools.
General education subjects	 The vocational upper secondary programme combines general and vocational education.
Key competences	 The core curriculum for general education determines the learning outcomes related to the general education component and key competences provided by VET programmes.
Application of learning outcomes approach	 Each qualification includes specific sets of learning outcomes defined in the core curriculum for vocational education. Learning outcomes are grouped in units, which typically contain from several to over a dozen learning outcomes and reflect specific professional tasks. The core curriculum for general education determines the learning outcomes related to the general education component and key competences provided by VET programmes.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	56% (55)

[51] Own calculations of %WBL based on the assumptions provided in the *Teaching Plans [Ramowe plany nauczania]*, <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20190000639/O/D20190639.pdf>

[52] Continuing education centres (*centrum kształcenia ustawicznego* - CKU) - public institutions (usually a school complex) in Polish education, usually with a long tradition, whose task is to provide continuous, free-of charge education for adults and enable them to get a profession. They provide advice to teachers and lecturers employed in adult education. The centres can also employ professional advisers specialised in adult education.

- [53] Vocational training centres (*centrum kształcenia zawodowego* – CKZ) - newly set up public institutions created from the transformation of existing centres for practical training (*placówka kształcenia praktycznego*) or vocational training and development centres (*ośrodek doksztalcania i doskonalenia zawodowego*) responsible for supporting vocational education of VET learners in schools providing practical or theoretical training of juvenile workers. They will be also providing vocational training in the form of courses (professional skills, qualifying vocational courses or other courses – enabling to obtain and supplement knowledge, skills and professional qualifications).
- [54] Documents confirming the fulfilment of these requirements are, in particular, school certificates, transcripts, education certificates or employment certificates related to work in a specific occupation, including those obtained abroad.
- [55] Own calculations based on Statistics Poland (2018). *Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2017/2018* [Education in the 2017/18 school year].

EQF 3
First stage
sectoral programmes,
WBL ≥31.8%
3 years
ISCED 353

First stage sectoral programme leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 353 (branżowa szkoła I stopnia)

EQF level	3	ISCED-P 2011 level	353
Usual entry grade	9	Usual completion grade	11
Usual entry age	16 (56)	Usual completion age	18
Length of a programme (years)	3		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✓ Education in Poland is compulsory up to 18 years of age; full-time school education is compulsory up to age 15.	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✗
Is it offered free of charge?	✓	Is it available for adults?	✗

ECVET or other credits Not applicable

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance) The curriculum for first stage sectoral programme combines general and vocational education. The vocational parts consist of theoretical and practical aspects. Schools have a relatively high level of independence regarding the organisation of practical training. The school director decides on the share of work-based learning, however it cannot be less than 60% of the hours foreseen for vocational education (which combines both theoretical and practical training).

Main providers First stage sectoral schools:

- public schools (vast majority of schools) operated by local (county) authorities and associations;
- non-public schools with public school accreditation operated by different providers (associations, companies - commercial law companies, natural persons).

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	≥ 33.7% for programme for graduates of phasing out lower secondary school gimnazjum ≥ 31.8% for programme for graduates of 8-year primary school (57)
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	The practical part of vocational education can be offered in: • school workshops; • continuing education centres (58) and vocational training centres (59) ; • with an employer (can be organised in different ways, partially or fully at an employers' premises, including also dual training/alternate training); • juvenile employment. A special type of work-based learning is provided through juvenile employment for the purpose of vocational training (<i>przygotowanie zawodowe młodocianych pracowników</i>) for young people (15-18 years old) with a lower secondary education or primary education. In the 2017/2018 school year, juvenile workers constituted about half of all the learners in the first stage sectoral schools. Juvenile employment is based on a contract between the learner and employer. Juvenile employment for the purpose of vocational training most often takes the form of training for a profession (<i>nauka zawodu</i>) – this is an apprenticeship with the theoretical education taking place at a first stage sectoral school (or in out-of-school forms) and the practical training organised by the employer on the basis of a work contract. It lasts a maximum 36 months and is finalised with a State vocational examination. Practical training can also be organised by an employer in the craft trades, on the basis of a work contract. It also lasts a maximum 36 months and is finalised with a journeyman's examination (<i>egzamin czeladniczy</i>). An additional new form of WBL – the student apprenticeship – will be available for learners of this programme as of September 2019.
Main target groups	This programme is available to primary school graduates.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners should hold a primary school leaving certificate; primary school graduates are usually 15 years old.

Assessment of learning outcomes	The following forms of assessment of learning outcomes are foreseen for learners: • school leaving certificate - confirms that a learner completed the programme. It contains a list of subjects covered and the final grades achieved. It gives a learner a basic sectoral education. To obtain school leaving certificate no external exam is required. Final grades are based on internal on-going assessments of learners and certificate consist of annual classification grades determined in the highest-level class and annual classification grades achieved in the completed lower classes; • State vocational examination – confirms obtaining vocational qualification. The examination has two parts: written and practical. The candidate has to pass both in order to receive a vocational certificate/diploma. The exam is centrally organised and based on uniform requirements, the same examination tasks, assessed according to the same criteria and organised in the same way regardless of where the examination is held; • journeyman’s examination (<i>egzamin czeladniczy</i>) – exam for learners participating in juvenile employment organised by an employer in the craft trades. It has two parts: practical and theoretical. The practical part consists of tasks individually performed by a candidate. The theoretical part is both written and oral. Tasks are based on common examination requirements and the curriculum of the occupation. As of September 2019, taking the State vocational examination or journeyman’s examination is obligatory for all learners as a condition for school graduation.
Diplomas/certificates provided	This programme leads to: • a school leaving certificate giving learners a basic sectoral education; • a vocational qualification (vocational certificate) after passing the State vocational examination; • a vocational qualifications diploma for a single-qualification occupation (after passing the State vocational examination and obtaining a school leaving certificate). Learners participating in juvenile employment organised by an employer in the craft trades obtain a Journeyman’s certificate.
Examples of qualifications	Occupations provided by this programme are single-qualification occupations, for example: electromechanical worker (<i>elektromechanik</i>), locksmith (<i>ślusarz</i>), car tinsmith (<i>blacharz samochodowy</i>), gardener (<i>ogrodnik</i>), tailor (<i>krawiec</i>).
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Completion of this programme provides access to further education: at the second year of general upper secondary programmes for adults or in the two-year second stage sectoral programme.
Destination of graduates	Information not available

Awards through validation of prior learning	✓ A vocational certificate can be awarded after passing the State vocational examination extramurally. Persons can take extramural State vocational examinations conducted by regional examination boards if they are over 18 years old, have completed a lower secondary programme or an eight-year primary programme and have at least two years of learning or work in an occupation relating to the targeted qualification (60) . If they do not have two years of learning or work experience, they can enrol in a vocational qualifications course (KKZ). By taking extramural exams, adults can also acquire a certificate of completion of the general education schools.
General education subjects	✓ The first stage sectoral programme combines general and vocational education.
Key competences	✓ The core curriculum for general education determines the learning outcomes related to the general education component and key competences provided by VET programmes.
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓ Each qualification includes specific sets of learning outcomes defined in the core curriculum for vocational education. Learning outcomes are grouped in units, which typically contain from several to over a dozen learning outcomes and reflect specific professional tasks. The core curriculum for general education determines the learning outcomes related to the general education component and key competences provided by VET programmes.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	17% (61)

-
- [57] Own calculations of %WBL based on the assumptions provided in the Teaching Plans [*Ramowe plany nauczania*].
<http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20190000639/O/D20190639.pdf>
- [58] Continuing education centres (*centrum kształcenia ustawicznego* - CKU) - public institutions (usually a school complex) in Polish education, usually with a long tradition, whose task is to provide continuous, free-of charge education for adults and enable them to get a profession. They provide advice to teachers and lecturers employed in adult education. The centres can also employ professional advisers specialised in adult education.
- [59] Vocational training centres (*centrum kształcenia zawodowego* - CKZ) - newly set up public institutions created from the transformation of existing centres for practical training (*placówka kształcenia praktycznego*) or vocational training and development centres (*ośrodek doskonalenia i doskonalenia zawodowego*) responsible for supporting vocational education of VET learners in schools providing practical or theoretical training of juvenile workers. They will be also providing vocational training in the form of courses

(professional skills, qualifying vocational courses or other courses - enabling to obtain and supplement knowledge, skills and professional qualifications).

- [60] Documents confirming the fulfilment of these requirements are, in particular, school certificates, transcripts, education certificates or employment certificates related to work in a specific occupation, including those obtained abroad.
- [61] Own calculation based on Statistics Poland (2018). *Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2017/2018* [*Education in the 2017/18 school year*].

EQF 4
Second stage
sectoral programmes,
WBL ≥50%
2 years
ISCED 354
to be introduced in 2020/21

Second stage sectoral programme leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354 (branżowa szkoła II stopnia)

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	354
Usual entry grade	12	Usual completion grade	13
Usual entry age	19 (62)	Usual completion age	20
Length of a programme (years)	2		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✓	Is it available for adults?	✓

ECVET or other credits Not applicable

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

This programme will begin operating in the 2020/21 school year. The curriculum of the second stage sectoral programme combines general and vocational education. The vocational parts consist of theoretical and practical aspects.

General education in this programme is planned to be limited, with the main focus placed on the vocational training to be conducted in the form of vocational qualification courses. Schools have a relatively high level of independence regarding the organisation of practical training. The school director decides on the share of work-based learning, however it cannot be less than 50% of the hours foreseen for vocational education (which combines both theoretical and practical training).

Main providers This programme will begin operating in the 2020/21 school year.

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	>=50% (63) Calculations of % WBL for second stage sectoral programme vary depending on the following criteria: a) form of teaching, b) type of profession, c) type of learner i.e. phasing out lower secondary school (gimnazjum) graduate or primary school graduate. Number of hours for vocational education (both theoretical and practical) is provided in the <i>Core curriculum for education in the profession of sectoral education (Podstawa programowa kształcenia w zawodzie szkolnictwa branżowego</i>; 215 professions in 32 industries) and according to the <i>Teaching Programme</i> totals not less than 50% of the total number of hours for a given form of teaching.
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	The practical part of vocational education can be offered in: • school workshops; • continuing education centres (64) , vocational training centres (65) and with an employer (can be organised in different ways, partially or fully at an employers' premises, including also dual training/alternate training). A distinctive form of practical training is on-the-job training, which will be mandatory for learners of second stage sectoral programmes and lasts from 4 to 12 weeks, depending on the type of occupation.
Main target groups	This second stage sectoral programme aims at further developing the vocational qualifications attained in the first stage sectoral programme. The programme will be available to the graduates of the first stage sectoral programmes who obtained a qualification that constitutes part of an occupation taught in the second stage sectoral school. This programme will be open to adult learners who want to expand their qualifications.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners should have a first stage sectoral school leaving certificate and a vocational certificate of a qualification constituting part of an occupation taught in the second stage sectoral school. First stage sectoral programme graduates are usually 18 years old.

Assessment of learning outcomes	The following forms of assessment of learning outcomes are foreseen for learners: • school leaving certificate - confirms that a learner completed the programme. It contains a list of subjects covered and the final grades achieved. It gives a learner a secondary sectoral education, however, this is not the same as attaining a vocational qualification. To obtain school leaving certificate no external exam is required. Final grades are based on internal on-going assessments of learners and certificate consist of annual classification grades determined in the highest-level class and annual classification grades achieved in the completed lower classes; • State vocational examination (taking exam is obligatory for school graduation as of September 2019) – confirms obtaining vocational qualification. The examination has two parts: written and practical. The candidate has to pass both in order to receive a vocational certificate/diploma. The exam is centrally organised and based on uniform requirements, the same examination tasks, assessed according to the same criteria and organised in the same way regardless of where the examination is held; • school leaving examination (matura) – a state, uniformed secondary school leaving examination based on the core curriculum for general education and providing access to tertiary education. As of September 2019, the vocational diploma in an occupation taught on technician level will allow learners to skip one additional subject in the matura exam. The matura exam consists of two parts: the oral part (internal and assessed at school) and the written part – external, set by the Central Examination Board (<i>Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna</i>) and assessed by examiners included in the registers of the Regional Examination Boards (<i>Okręgowa Komisja Egzaminacyjna</i>).
Diplomas/certificates provided	This programme leads to: • a school leaving certificate giving learners a secondary sectoral education; • a vocational qualification (vocational certificate) after passing the State vocational examination; • a vocational qualifications diploma for occupations consisting of two qualifications (issued when a learner obtained both qualifications distinguished in an occupation and a school leaving certificate).
Examples of qualifications	Chemical technology technician (<i>technik technologii chemicznej</i>), hospitality technician (<i>technik hotelarstwa</i>), telecommunications technician (<i>technik telekomunikacji</i>).
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Second stage sectoral programme graduates will be eligible to continue to tertiary education after passing the secondary school leaving examination (<i>matura</i>).
Destination of graduates	Information not available

Awards through validation of prior learning	✓ A vocational certificate can be awarded after passing the State vocational examination extramurally. Persons can take extramural State vocational examinations conducted by regional examination boards if they are over 18 years old, have completed a lower secondary programme or an eight-year primary programme and have at least two years of learning or work in an occupation relating to the targeted qualification (66) . If they do not have two years of learning or work experience, they can enroll in a vocational qualifications course (KKZ). By taking extramural exams, adults can also acquire a certificate of completion of the general education schools.
General education subjects	✓ The second stage sectoral programme combines general and vocational education.
Key competences	✓ The core curriculum for general education determines the learning outcomes related to the general education component and key competences provided by VET programmes.
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓ Each qualification includes specific sets of learning outcomes defined in the core curriculum for vocational education. Learning outcomes are grouped in units, which typically contain from several to over a dozen learning outcomes and reflect specific professional tasks. The core curriculum for general education determines the learning outcomes related to the general education component and key competences provided by VET programmes.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Not applicable (67)

[63] Percentage of the hours foreseen for vocational education.

[64] Continuing education centres (*centrum kształcenia ustawicznego* - CKU) - public institutions (usually a school complex) in Polish education, usually with a long tradition, whose task is to provide continuous, free-of charge education for adults and enable them to get a profession. They provide advice to teachers and lecturers employed in adult education. The centres can also employ professional advisers specialised in adult education.

[65] Vocational training centres (*centrum kształcenia zawodowego* - CKZ) - newly set up public institutions created from the transformation of existing centres for practical training (*placówka kształcenia praktycznego*) or vocational training and development centres (*ośrodek doskonalenia i doskonalenia zawodowego*) responsible for supporting vocational education of VET learners in schools providing practical or theoretical training of juvenile workers. They will be also providing vocational training in the form of courses

(professional skills, qualifying vocational courses or other courses - enabling to obtain and supplement knowledge, skills and professional qualifications).

- [66] Documents confirming the fulfilment of these requirements are, in particular, school certificates, transcripts, education certificates or employment certificates related to work in a specific occupation, including those obtained abroad.
- [67] Second stage sectoral programmes will start operating from 1 September 2020.

Special job-training
programmes,
(SEN learners)
ISCED 243

Special job-training programme leading to ISCED 243 (szkoła specjalna przysposabiająca do pracy)

EQF level	Not applicable	ISCED-P 2011 level	243
Usual entry grade	9	Usual completion grade	11
Usual entry age	16 (68a)	Usual completion age	18 Learners up to the age of 24 can participate in this programme.
Length of a programme (years)	3 (with the possibility of extending to 4 years)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✓ Education in Poland is compulsory up to 18 years of age, with full-time school education compulsory up to age 15.	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✗
Is it offered free of charge?	✓	Is it available for adults?	✗ This is not intended for adults, but learners up to the age of 24 can participate in this programme.
ECVET or other credits	Not applicable		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	It provides educational activities (personal and social functioning classes; communication skills development classes, creativity development classes, physical education and job training classes), revalidation activities, and job training classes.		

Main providers	Special job-training schools: • public schools (vast majority of schools) operated by local (county) authorities; • non-public schools with public school accreditation operated by different providers (associations, foundations).
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	Share of work-based learning is not specified by the regulations. Job training classes constitute over half of the hours foreseen for the educational activities. The programme is developed and adjusted to the specific needs of a learner by a lead teacher.
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	Mainly practical training at school, including school workshops.
Main target groups	This programme is intended for young learners with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities or multiple disabilities.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners should have a primary school leaving certificate; primary school graduates are usually 15 years old. Additional enrolment requires confirmation from a psycho-social support institution on the need for this form of education (certificate recommending special education or rehabilitation-and-education classes).
Assessment of learning outcomes	Learners do not pass any external exams. Descriptive assessment is used on a school-leaving certificate. This programme leads to a job-readiness certificate (based on the teacher's assessment) to perform specific tasks and not to a vocational qualification.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Learners receive school leaving certificate and a job-readiness certificate.
Examples of qualifications	Not applicable
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete this programme can perform some tasks in certain labour market occupations.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	
General education subjects	 It combines vocational and general education.

Key competences	✓ It provides educational activities such as (personal and social functioning classes, communication skills development classes and physical education).
Application of learning outcomes approach	✗ The core curriculum for this programme includes the aims of training, school assignments, forms of classes and detailed teaching content.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	1% (68)

[68] Own calculations based on data from Statistics Poland (2018). *Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2017/2018* [Education in the 2017/18 school year].

EQF 5

Post-secondary

school-based programmes,

WBL $\geq 44.6\%$

1-2.5 years

ISCED 453

Post-secondary school-based programmes leading to ISCED 453 (szkoła policealna)

EQF level	5	ISCED-P 2011 level	453
Usual entry grade	13 or 14	Usual completion grade	13+
Usual entry age	19 or 20	Usual completion age	20+
Length of a programme (years)	1 to 2.5		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?		Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	
Is it offered free of charge?	 There are public schools offering education free of charge but also numerous non-public schools charging fees for education.	Is it available for adults?	

ECVET or other credits Not applicable

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance) These programmes are strictly vocational and do not include general education. The vocational parts consist of theoretical and practical aspects. They are mostly school-based. Schools have a relatively high level of independence regarding the organisation of practical training. The school director decides on the share of work-based learning, however it cannot be less than 50% of the hours foreseen for vocational education.

Main providers	Post-secondary schools: • public schools operated by local and regional authorities, associations, national companies; • non-public schools with public school accreditation operated by different providers (associations, foundations, companies, HEIs); • non-public schools without public school accreditation operated by different providers (companies- natural persons, commercial-law companies).
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	≥ 44.6% for programme in a day form ≥ 48.5% for programme in stationary or extramural form (69)
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	The practical part of vocational education can be offered in: • school workshops; • continuing education centres (70) and vocational training centres (71) ; • with an employer (can be organised in different ways, partially or fully at an employers' premises, including also dual training/alternate training). On-the-job training, a distinctive form of practical training, is mandatory for learners of post-secondary programmes and lasts from 4 to 12 weeks, depending on the type of occupation.
Main target groups	They are available to graduates of general and vocational upper secondary programmes and (in the future) second stage sectoral programmes.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners should have a secondary education or secondary sectoral education (graduates of general and vocational upper secondary programmes and second stage sectoral programmes).
Assessment of learning outcomes	The following forms of assessment of learning outcomes are foreseen: • school leaving certificate - confirms that a learner completed the programme. It contains a list of subjects covered and the final grades achieved. To obtain school leaving certificate no external exam is required. Final grades are based on internal on-going assessments of learners and certificate consist of annual classification grades determined in the highest-level class and annual classification grades achieved in the completed lower classes; • State vocational examination (taking exam is obligatory for school graduation as of September 2019) – confirms obtaining vocational qualification. The examination has two parts: written and practical. The candidate has to pass both in order to receive a vocational certificate/diploma. The exam is centrally organised and based on uniform requirements, the same examination tasks, assessed according to the same criteria and organised in the same way regardless of where the examination is held.

Diplomas/certificates provided	This programme leads to: • a school leaving certificate; • a vocational qualification (vocational certificate) after passing the State vocational examination; • a vocational qualifications diploma (issued when a learner has obtained all qualifications distinguished in an occupation and a school leaving certificate).
Examples of qualifications	Administration technician (<i>technik administracji</i>), cosmetics services technician (<i>technik usług kosmetycznych</i>), optician technician (<i>technik optyk</i>), numerous medical qualifications: e.g. dental hygienist (<i>higienistka stomatologiczna</i>), pharmaceutical technician (<i>technik farmaceutyczny</i>), electrocardiograph technician (<i>technik elektrokardiolog</i>).
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Post-secondary programme graduates can enter the labour market. Those who have <i>matura</i> exam are eligible to continue on to tertiary education, however the programme does not provide such direct access.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	✓ A vocational certificate can be awarded after passing the State vocational examination extramurally. Persons can take extramural State vocational examinations conducted by regional examination boards if they are over 18 years old, have completed a lower secondary programme or an eight-year primary programme and have at least two years of learning or work in an occupation relating to the targeted qualification (72) . If they do not have two years of learning or work experience, they can enrol in a vocational qualifications course (KKZ). By taking extramural exams adults can also acquire a certificate of completion of the general education schools.
General education subjects	✗ These programmes are strictly vocational and do not include general education.
Key competences	✓
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	<26% (73)

[69] Own calculations of %WBL based on the assumptions provided in the *Teaching Plans* [*Ramowe plany nauczania*],

- [70] Continuing education centres (*centrum kształcenia ustawicznego* - CKU) - public institutions (usually a school complex) in Polish education, usually with a long tradition, whose task is to provide continuous, free-of charge education for adults and enable them to get a profession. They provide advice to teachers and lecturers employed in adult education. The centres can also employ professional advisers specialised in adult education.
- [71] Vocational training centres (*centrum kształcenia zawodowego* - CKZ) - newly set up public institutions created from the transformation of existing centres for practical training (*placówka kształcenia praktycznego*) or vocational training and development centres (*ośrodek doskonalenia i kształcenia zawodowego*) responsible for supporting vocational education of VET learners in schools providing practical or theoretical training of juvenile workers. They will be also providing vocational training in the form of courses (professional skills, qualifying vocational courses or other courses - enabling to obtain and supplement knowledge, skills and professional qualifications).
- [72] Documents confirming the fulfilment of these requirements are, in particular, school certificates, transcripts, education certificates or employment certificates related to work in a specific occupation, including those obtained abroad.
- [73] Own calculations based on Statistics Poland (2018). *Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2017/2018* [*Education in the 2017/2018 school year*].

EQF 5

College
programmes
ISCED 554

Colleges of social work leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 554 (kolegia pracowników służb społecznych)

EQF level	5	ISCED-P 2011 level	554
Usual entry grade	13 or 14	Usual completion grade	15 or 16
Usual entry age	19 or 20	Usual completion age	21 or 22
Length of a programme (years)	3		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✓	Is it available for adults?	✓

ECVET or other credits Not applicable

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance) Colleges conduct a day, evening or extramural form of education.
Learning forms:

- school-based learning;
- work-based learning – in-company training;
- self-learning (allocation of hours is not specified).

The form, place and timetable of in-company training is determined by the director of the college in cooperation with the governing body, after consulting the Programme Council and the learners council.

Every college operates under academic and didactic supervision of selected HEIs.

Main providers Colleges:

- public colleges operated by regional authorities;
- non-public colleges – operated by legal persons (74) .

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies around 24%

Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• general in-practice training in a social welfare centre; • general in-practice training in a 24-hour service; • specialist and graduate professional in-practice training.
Main target groups	Programmes intended for adults interested in obtaining the qualification of social worker.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	<i>Matura</i> certificate is required to enroll. A medical certificate stating that the learner is able to practice as a social worker is also needed.
Assessment of learning outcomes	To complete a college programme, learners must pass a final internal exam carried out by the examination board appointed by the head of the college. The diploma confirms that the learner has attained the qualification of social worker. In selected colleges, operating under given HEIs didactic care, participation in the programme leads also to BA exam and BA degree. However this option is not compulsory.
Diplomas/certificates provided	The learner receives a diploma confirming the completion of a college of social work, certifying the qualification of social worker. The graduation diploma is issued on the basis of documentation of the course of study conducted by the college. BA certificate is also offered to programme graduates of selected colleges.
Examples of qualifications	Social worker. Colleges can also provide specialised training in the field of social welfare, in a field of specialisation in the profession of social worker and social work supervisors.
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	College learners can enter the labour market or continue their studies in EQF 6 bachelor programmes. In some colleges graduates who are interested in continuing their studies in EQF 6 bachelor programmes are offered recognition of the college curriculum.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	In some colleges it is possible to acquire validation of prior learning gained within programmes provided by HEIs.
General education subjects	
Key competences	
Application of learning outcomes approach	

- [74] Regulation of the Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy of 15 September 2016 on colleges of social work. *Journal of Laws* 2016, item 1543.
- [75] Own calculations based on Statistics Poland (2018). *Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2017/2018* [Education in the 2017/18 school year]. Four colleges with 234 students.
-

References

- [1] Cedefop (2018). *Spotlight on vocational education and training in Poland*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8125_en.pdf.
- [3] Cedefop (2018). *Spotlight on vocational education and training in Poland*. Luxembourg: Publication Office. http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8125_en.pdf.
- [7] Statistics Poland (2015). *Struktura narodowo-etniczna, językowa i wyznaniowa ludności Polski* [The national-ethnic, linguistic and religious structure of the Polish population]. Warsaw: Statistics Poland. https://stat.gov.pl/files/gfx/portalinformacyjny/pl/defaultaktualnosci/5670/22/1/1/struktura_narodowo-etniczna.pdf.
- [11] PARP (2018). *Małe i średnie przedsiębiorstwa w Polsce 2018* [Small and medium enterprises in Poland]. Warsaw: PARP. <https://www.parp.gov.pl/storage/publications/pdf/male%20i%20srednie%20przedsiębiorstwa%20w%20polsce%20w%202018%20r.pdf>.
- [13] Statistics Poland, Yearbook Trade of Foreign Statistics of Poland 2018; Table 7 and 24.
- [20] Statistics Poland (2018). *Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland 2018*. Warsaw: Statistics Poland.
- [22] Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 15 December 2017 on the distribution of the school education part of the general subsidy for local government units in 2018. *Journal of Laws* 2017, item 2395.
- [23] Statistics Poland (2018). *Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2017/2018* [Education in the 2017/18 school year]. Warsaw: Statistics Poland. See also earlier editions.
- [24] Act of 26 January 1982 - Teacher's Charter. *Journal of Laws* 1982, No 3, item 19 with further amendments.
- [25] Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 22 February 2019 on practical vocational training. *Journal of Laws* 2019, item 391.
- [26] Statistics Poland (2018). *Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2017/2018* [Education in the 2017/18 school year]. Warsaw: Statistics Poland. See also earlier editions.
- [27] Ministry of National Education (2018). *Zintegrowana Strategia Umiejętności – część ogólna* [Integrated skills strategy: general part]. <https://bip.men.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/08/zintegrowana-strategia-umiejtnosci-do-uzgodnien-i-konsultacji.pdf>.

- [28] Regional Labour Office in Cracow (2017). *Occupational barometer 2018: summary survey report for Poland*.
<https://wupkrakow.praca.gov.pl/documents/67976/5945701/Occupational%20barometer%202018.%20Summary%20Survey%20Report%20for%20Poland/ab63839e-e605-44eb-a904-92af5974d996?t=1531291708000> [accessed 30.4.2019].
- [30] Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 15 February 2019 on the goals and tasks of education in vocational education occupations and classification of occupations for vocational education. *Journal of Laws* 2019, item 316.
- [31] Regulation of the Minister of National Education on the core curricula for training in VET occupations and additional vocational skills in chosen VET occupations – regulation signed on 16 May 2019, awaiting for publication in *Journal of Laws*.
- [32] Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14 February 2017 on the core curriculum for pre-school education and the core curriculum for general education in primary schools, including pupils with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities, and for general education in stage I sectoral vocational schools, general education in special schools preparing for employment, and general education in post-secondary schools. *Journal of Laws* 2017, item 356.
- [43] Fila J.; Rybińska; A.; Trzeciński R. (2014). *Współpraca szkół zawodowych z przedsiębiorcami na przykładzie Działania 9.2 PO KL [Cooperation of vocational schools and entrepreneurs based on the Action 9.2 of the Human Capital Operational Programme]*. Warsaw: Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych.
- [17a] Cedefop (2018). *The changing nature and role of vocational education and training in Europe. Volume 3: the responsiveness of European VET systems to external change (1995-2015). Case study focusing in Poland*. Cedefop research paper; No 67.
https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/poland_cedefop_changing_nature_of_vet_-_case_study.pdf