



spotlight on VET POLAND



VET in Poland

Management and administration of the VET system in Poland has a three-level structure: national (ministries), partially regional (school superintendents, mainly in pedagogical supervision), and district authorities (governing upper secondary schools). Social partners are involved in developing the VET system by giving opinions on planned changes to VET.

Educational policy at secondary level is governed by the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (artistic schools), the Ministry of Agriculture (agricultural schools), the Ministry of the Environment (forestry schools), the Ministry of Justice (inmate education and correctional education) and other ministries responsible for particular occupations. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education is responsible for VET at higher education level.

At upper secondary level, students can gain vocational qualifications at a three-year basic vocational school (ZSZ) or at a four-year upper secondary technical school (*technikum*). Pathways are provided for students to continue education at tertiary level. At post-secondary non-tertiary level, graduates of general and technical upper secondary schools can gain vocational qualifications at post-secondary school (*szkoła policealna*).

Polish VET at technical schools and post-secondary schools is mainly school-based with a share of 50% practical training in VET programmes, while in basic vocational schools the practice and theory proportion is 60% and 40% respectively. Of students at basic vocational schools, 60% undergo practical training in form of apprenticeship organised in small and medium-sized enterprises. It starts after completion of lower secondary education at age 16.

After passing external exam(s) confirming vocational qualification(s), students obtain a relevant certificate. Each occupation comprises one to three qualifications. Only after passing exams confirming all qualifications required for a given occupation may a diploma confirming vocational qualifications be issued.

Adult learning and CVET

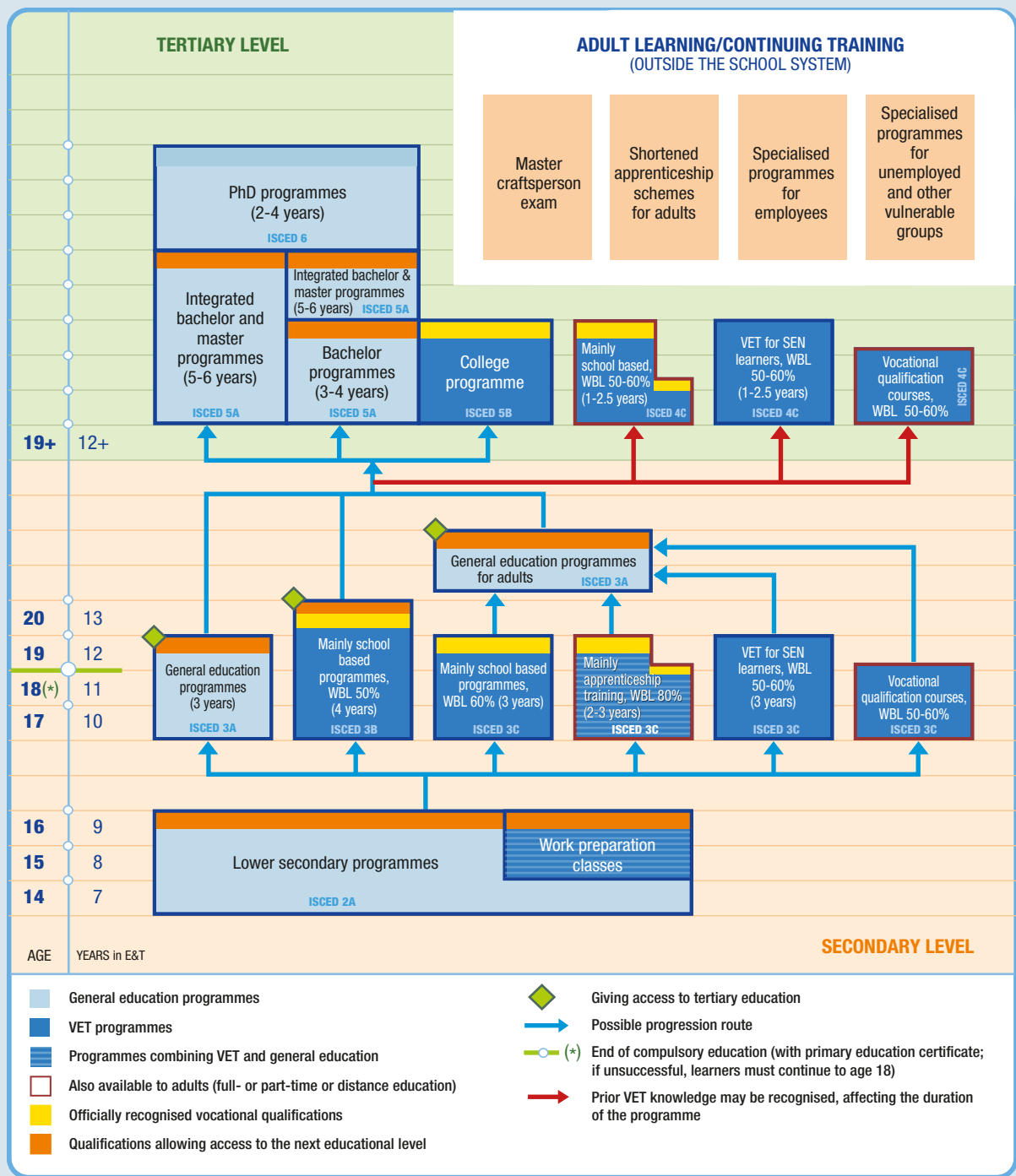
About 4.5% of the population between 25 and 64 years of age participated in some form of education or training in the four weeks before the survey. Since 1 September 2012, due to more State intervention, basic vocational and technical schools for adults are gradually being replaced by a more flexible system of VET courses, enabling adults to acquire either part or full qualifications. Introducing these types of courses has created a fast track for adults to gain vocational qualifications. IVET schools offering vocational education for youth have expanded their target group to include adults.

VET for adults is organised mainly in out-of-school forms, such as:

- vocational qualification courses. Completing a vocational qualification course allows adults, if they pass an external examination, to confirm a vocational qualification acquired under the same conditions and rules as IVET students;
- occupational skills courses – courses for separate units of learning outcomes specified in a given qualification;
- courses related to classified occupations and specialisations meeting labour market needs, including courses conducted in cooperation with labour offices.

Apprenticeship for adults is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. This particular active labour market programme, provided by local labour offices, aims to improve employability of the unemployed and job-seekers by helping them to attest their skills and qualifications formally. Apprenticeship for adults is financed by the labour fund. The apprenticeship for adults programme, consisting of 80% practical training and up to 20% theoretical, has two forms: occupational training, lasting 12 to 18 months, leading to the journeyman exam and training for performing a specific job, lasting three to six months.

VET in Poland's education and training system



NB: The diagram presents VET in Poland since 1 September 2012. It does not include schools that are going to cease in two years.

The diagram of the full education system can be found on the OECD webpage.

ISCED 1997 was used on the chart. Conversion to ISCED 2011 is ongoing.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Poland.

Distinctive features of VET

To improve quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training, specific tools have been introduced:

- classification of occupations in vocational education defines separate qualifications for every occupation at basic vocational, technical upper secondary and post-secondary school levels. It is a register covering qualifications which can be acquired in both IVET and CVET;
- one VET core curriculum for all occupations (since 2012). Separate vocational qualifications within specific occupations are described in the core curriculum for vocational education as a set of expected learning outcomes: knowledge, occupational skills, as well as personal and social competences which allow students to handle their occupational tasks independently;
- two optional curricula for VET – subject-centred curricula or modular curricula – focusing on task characteristics of a given profession which will be performed in the future, called ‘modular units’. Such curricula intend to combine theory with practice. Modular units of curricula can be easily modified, depending on labour market needs;
- vocational qualification courses (since 2012), are a short and flexible way to acquire a separate distinctive vocational qualification in the continuing education system and to take an external exam confirming this qualification. After acquiring all qualifications required for a given occupation, students receive a diploma confirming these vocational qualifications;
- extramural examination in VET as a validation tool – confirming the knowledge, skills and competences acquired in different learning contexts, including professional experience. Extramural examinations are designed for persons who want to confirm their education level/vocational qualifications without going to school/attending courses;
- possibilities for VET graduates to continue education at tertiary level. The *matura* exam giving access to education at tertiary level, can be taken at upper secondary technical schools (*technikum*), while graduates of basic vocational schools (ZSZ) can upgrade their knowledge in general upper secondary schools for adults (*LO dla dorosłych*) starting in the second year and taking the *matura* exam there. Students may also upgrade their skills or gain new qualifications (requalify) in vocational qualification courses (after passing an exam confirming the vocational qualification).

Challenges

The main challenges for the Polish VET system are:

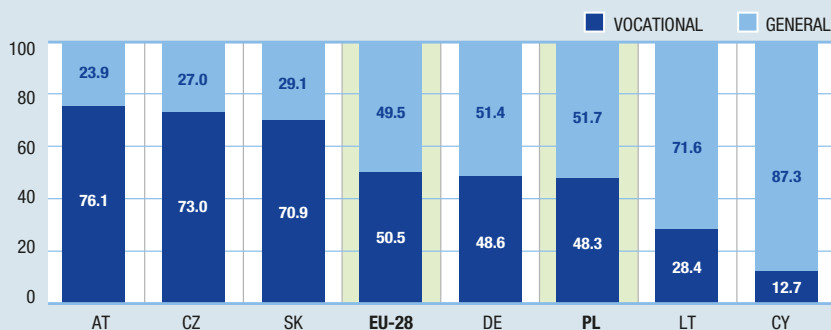
- involving employers in identifying and forecasting skills and qualification needs in the labour market, to draw up guidelines for vocational schools in designing their educational offers;
- increasing employers’ engagement in organising practical training in VET and developing cooperation of VET schools with higher education institutions;
- finalising work on designing a coherent and transparent national qualification system, including implementation of the NQF and the national qualifications register;
- developing guidance and counselling for all age groups;
- fostering VET teachers’ and trainers’ access to professional development by encouraging traineeships for teachers and trainers in enterprises.



Education and training in figures

Learners in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational and general programmes

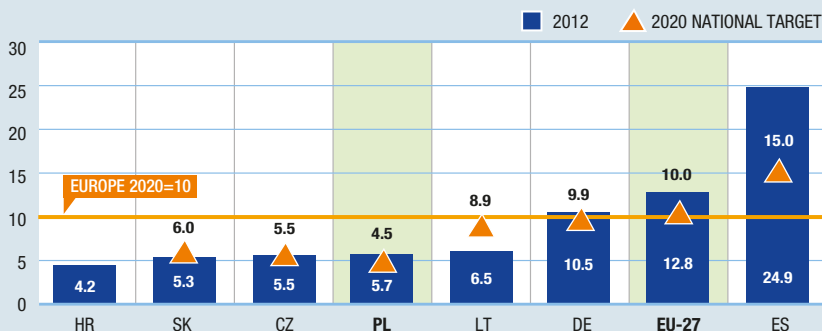
% of all students in upper secondary education, 2011



Source: Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction 28.6.2013.

Early leavers from education and training

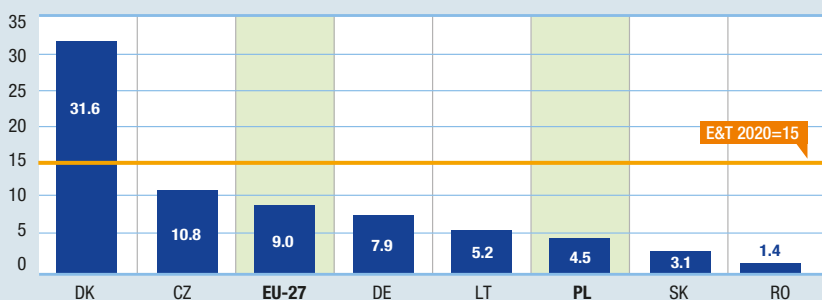
% of early leavers from education and training, 2012



Source: Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction 28.6.2013.

Lifelong learning

% of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2012

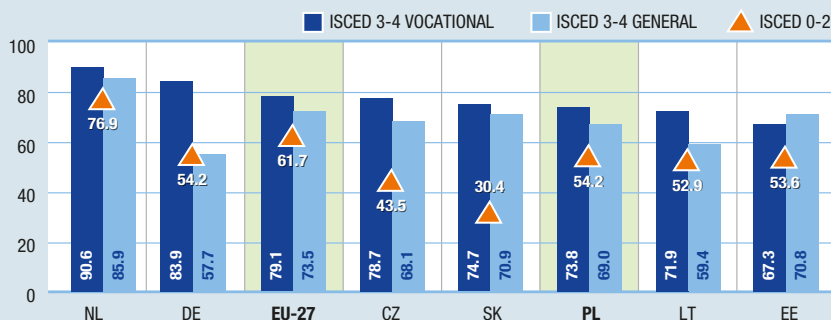


NB: Data for Germany, Poland and EU-27 are provisional.

Source: Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 8.7.2013.

Employment rates by highest level of educational attainment

20-34 year-olds no longer in education by highest level of educational attainment, 2009



Source: Cedefop calculations based on Eurostat, 2009 ad hoc module of the EU labour force survey, date of extraction 19.9.2012.



Further information

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www.mpips.gov.pl	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
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www.funduszestrukturalne.gov.pl	EU structural Funds in Poland
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