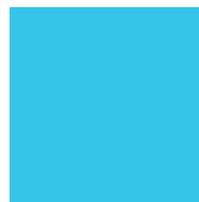


---

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION  
AND TRAINING IN EUROPE

POLAND

---



# IBE



INSTYTUT  
BADAŃ  
EDUKACYJNYCH

Please cite this publication as:

Chłoń-Domińczak, A. et al. (2019). *Vocational education and training in Europe – Poland*. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports 2018.

[http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2019/Vocational\\_Education\\_Training\\_Europe\\_Poland\\_2018\\_Cedefop\\_ReferNet.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2019/Vocational_Education_Training_Europe_Poland_2018_Cedefop_ReferNet.pdf)

Authors: Agnieszka Chłoń-Domińczak (Chapter 3 & 4), Dorota Holzer-Żelażewska (Chapter 1) and Anna Maliszewska (Chapter 2)  
Barbara Przybylska (English proofreading), Olga Wasilewska (report editor)  
Validated by: Jerzy Bielecki, Centre for Education Development (ORE)

Reviewed by Iraklis Pliakis, Cedefop

© Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych (Cedefop ReferNet Poland), 2018

Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

This VET in Europe report is part of a series prepared by Cedefop's ReferNet network. VET in Europe reports provide an overview of national vocational education and training (VET) systems of the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. The reports help to understand VET's main features and role within countries' overall education and training systems from a lifelong learning perspective, and VET's relevance to and interaction with the labour market. VET in Europe reports follow a common Cedefop format. They are available at <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Information-services/vet-in-europe-country-reports.aspx>.

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

VET in Europe reports are cofinanced by the European Union and ReferNet national partners.

ReferNet is a network of institutions across Europe representing the 28 Member States, plus Iceland and Norway. The network provides Cedefop with information and analysis on national vocational education and training. ReferNet also disseminates information on European VET and Cedefop's work to stakeholders in the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway.

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/networks/refernet>



# Table of contents

<b>LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES</b> .....	<b>3</b>
TABLES.....	3
FIGURES.....	3
<b>CHAPTER 1.EXTERNAL FACTORS INFLUENCING VET</b> .....	<b>5</b>
1.1. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS .....	5
1.2. ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS .....	7
1.3. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT .....	12
<b>CHAPTER 2.PROVISION OF VET</b> .....	<b>15</b>
2.1. INTRODUCTION .....	15
2.2. GOVERNMENT-REGULATED VET PROVISION .....	16
2.3. VET GOVERNANCE .....	26
2.4. OTHER FORMS OF TRAINING .....	31
<b>CHAPTER 3.SHAPING VET QUALIFICATIONS</b> .....	<b>34</b>
3.1. DESIGNING QUALIFICATIONS .....	34
3.2. ANTICIPATING SKILLS NEEDS.....	39
3.3. RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING.....	44
3.4. QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VET.....	44
<b>CHAPTER 4.PROMOTING PARTICIPATION IN VET</b> .....	<b>47</b>
4.1. INCENTIVES FOR LEARNERS, EDUCATION PROVIDERS AND ENTERPRISES .....	47
4.2. GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING.....	52
<b>ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>57</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>59</b>
LEGISLATION.....	61

# List of tables and figures

## Tables

1. Activity rates by educational attainment level, population aged 15-64 (%) .....	9
2. Employment rates by gender, age group and highest level of education attained (%) .....	10
3. Employment share by economic sector in Poland (%) .....	11
4. Unemployment rates by gender, age group and highest level of education attained (%) ..	11
5. Population (15-64) by educational attainment level and gender (%) .....	12
6. The share of higher vocational schools and students in the total number of higher education institutions and students.....	19
7. Main types of vocational examinations and vocational certificates.....	22
8. The most popular qualifications for which State vocational examinations were taken in the 2016/2017 school year .....	24
9. Employment and unemployment rates of recent graduates (up to one year after leaving education) in the age group of 15-30.....	25
10. The share of young people aged 20-24 not in education, employment or training (NEET) in 2017 .....	26
11. Adult participation in lifelong learning, age group: 25-64 (%) .....	31
12. Minimum salaries for juvenile workers (2018) .....	48
13. Participants in various forms of training support offered by UPs (Number of persons who applied for some type of training) .....	50

## Figures

1. Population age structure in 2015 and 2050 .....	5
2. Population aged 16-21 and number of vocational education students .....	6
3. Enrolment shares by type of education in upper secondary and post-secondary levels .....	7
4. Real GDP growth rate, percentage change from previous year .....	8
5. Economic activity rates by gender, population aged 15-64 .....	8
6. Early leavers from education and training (%) .....	14
7. VET in Poland's education and training system in 2018 .....	16
8. The distribution of youth in general upper secondary programmes and VET programmes .....	20
9. The structure of students in all age groups in general upper secondary programmes and VET programmes in 2017.....	21
10. PIAAC mean cognitive skills level of students aged 16-19 by programme type in 2011- 2012.....	25
11. The structure of the educational expenditures of counties in 2017 by school type .....	27
12. The structure of VET schools by type and managing institution in 2016 .....	27

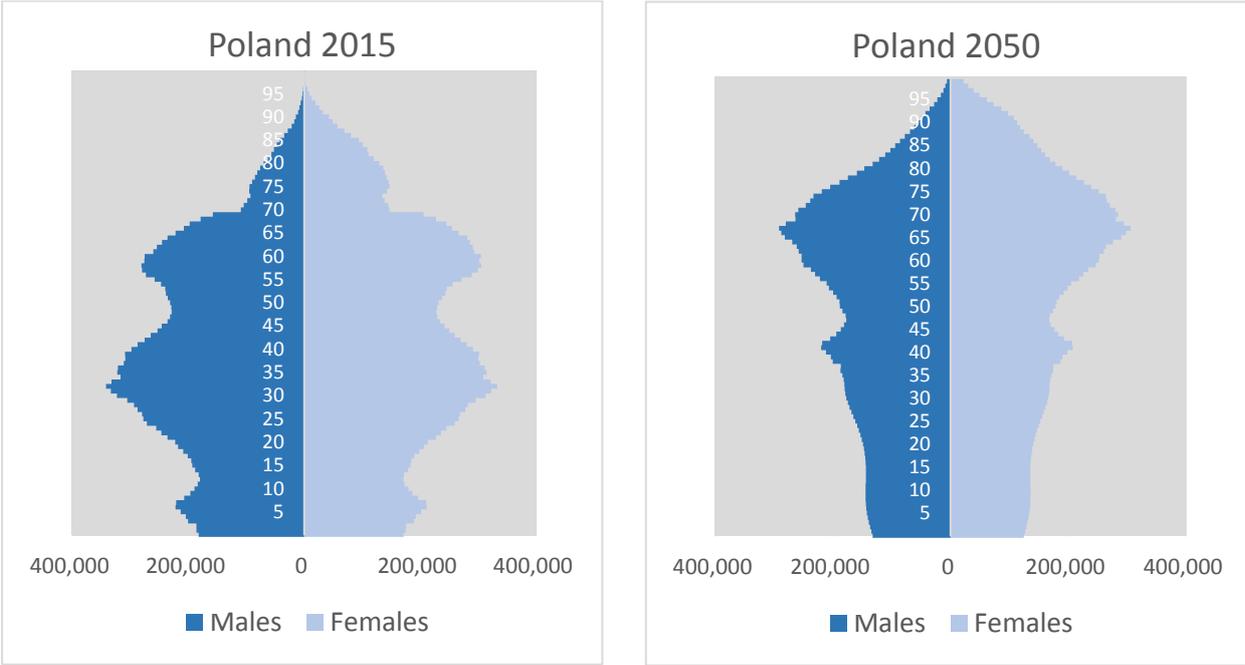
13. The ratio between educational expenditures and the State general subsidy for education by type of local government in the period of 2006-2017 .....	30
14. The share of 20 to 65 year-olds participating in training in 2014 by level of education ....	32
15. The share of 25 to 64 years old participating in non-formal training in 2016 by age.....	32
16. Distinguishing qualifications in the occupations listed in the KZSZ .....	35
17. Qualifications in the Polish Integrated Qualifications System (IQS) .....	39
18. System of Sector Skills Councils .....	40
19. Vocational counsellors and unemployed persons per counsellor at county UPs .....	55
20. Number of unemployed persons who received various forms of vocational counselling and guidance in 2015 and 2017 .....	56

# External factors influencing VET

## 1.1. Population and demographics

Poland has the sixth largest population in the EU with 38 433 558 inhabitants as of 1 January 2018 (Statistics Poland, 2018a). By 2050, it is forecasted to decrease by almost 12% (-4.5 million) (Statistics Poland, 2014). With an area of 312 695 km<sup>2</sup>, the country is tenth in the EU in population density (United Nations, 2017). Poland, as other countries in Europe, is characterised by low birth rates and a growing life expectancy, which impacts the age pyramid and results in an older population structure. The share of young people (aged 0-24) was 26% in 2015. However, as population projections show, it will decrease to 24% by 2025 and to 20% by 2050, which means a decrease by over one million and three million persons respectively.

Figure 1. Population age structure in 2015 and 2050



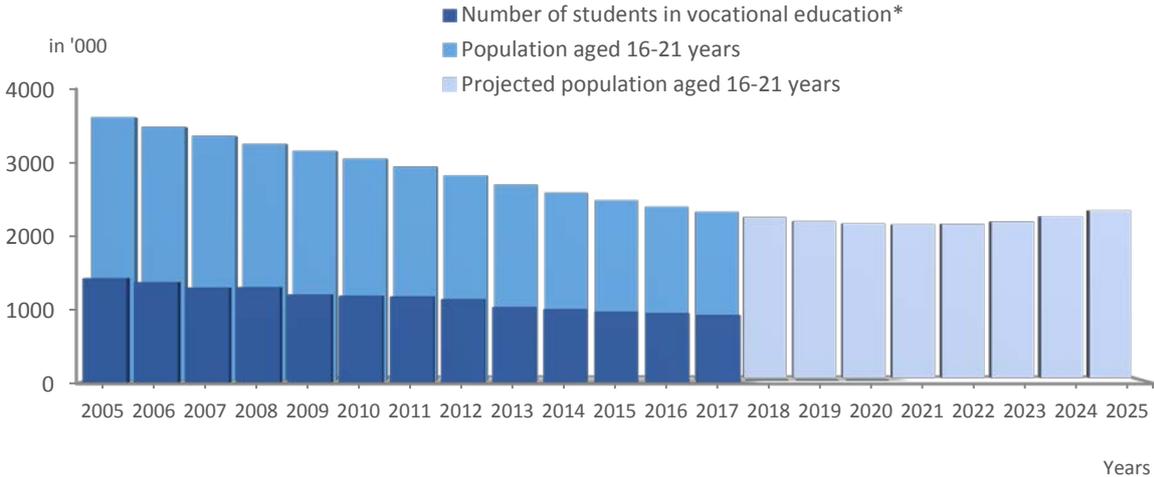
Source: own calculations based on data from the Statistics Poland, Population projection 2014-2050 (Statistics Poland, 2014).

The forecasted changes in the age structure indicate a growing dependency ratio of the non-working to working age population, mainly due to the growing numbers of the pension age population. The non-working population in 2017 was equal to 63% of the working age population. In line with current pension-age regulations, it is forecasted to grow to 72% and 105% by 2025 and 2050 respectively (Statistics Poland, 2014).

While the population above the pensionable age is forecasted to grow significantly, the lower part of the population pyramid indicates a decreasing young population, as indicated in Figure 2. This declining trend will continue until 2020 and in the first half of 2020s, the

projected number of young people is likely to increase slightly. This demographic trend has a direct impact on educational enrolment. Since 2005, the overall number of enrolments in upper secondary and post-secondary education (both general and vocational) decreased by 34%, which represents around 800 000 students. The decrease was highest (40% or more than 350 000) in vocational upper secondary programmes.

**Figure 2. Population aged 16-21 and number of vocational education students**

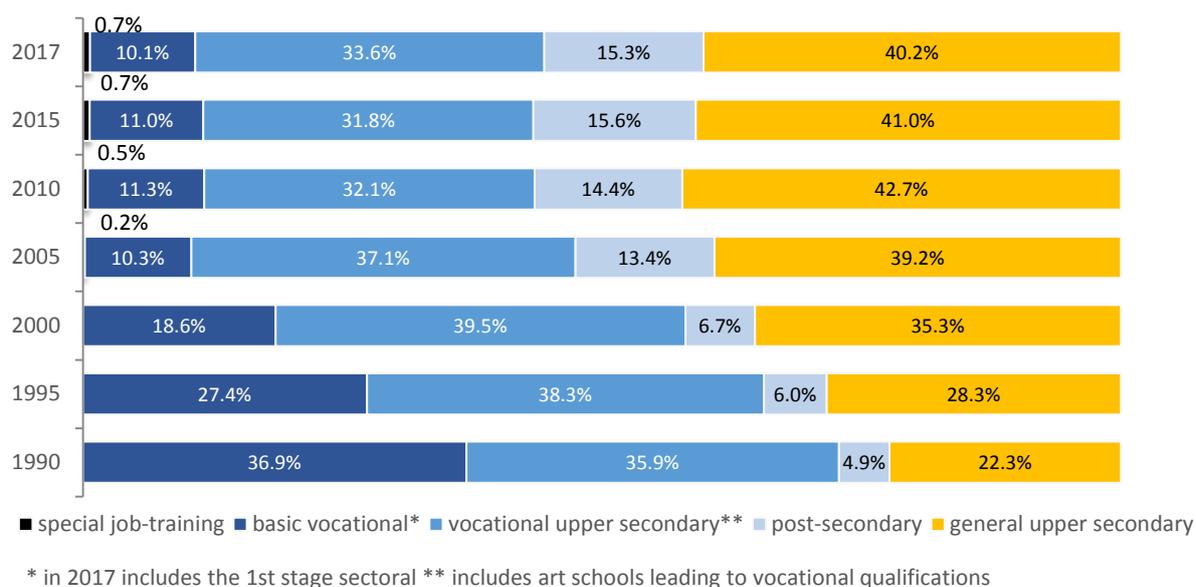


\* includes all types of vocational programmes on upper secondary and post-secondary levels

Source: own calculations based on data from the Local Data Bank, Statistics Poland, <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start> and (Statistics Poland, 2018b). Accessed on September 20, 2018.

This phenomenon is related to the reduced interest in vocational education and training (VET) among young people. Over the last three decades, the share of students in vocational education has decreased from 78% to almost 60%. During the last several years the share of learners in general upper secondary vs. vocational upper secondary and vocational post-secondary education has remained at approximately 40% to 60%. Since the mid-2010s, a small increase in in the share of students in vocational education is observed (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Enrolment shares by type of education in upper secondary and post-secondary levels**



Source: own calculations based on data from the Local Data Bank, Central Statistical Office of Poland, [https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start\\_and](https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start_and) (Statistics Poland, 2018b). Accessed on September 20, 2018.

Taking into account vocational education only, in the 2017/2018 school year, there were almost 670 000 <sup>(1)</sup> young students participating in VET programmes, of which 75% were enrolled in vocational upper secondary programmes, 15% in basic vocational programmes, 8% in the 1<sup>st</sup> stage sectoral programmes and 2% in special job-training programmes. The adult student population of nearly 236 000 was enrolled in post-secondary programmes that are dedicated to adults in the education system.

Additionally, in September 2017, almost 60 000 learners participated in over 2 500 vocational qualification courses <sup>(2)</sup>. In the 2016/2017 school year, 413 548 learners took both parts of the State vocational examination, of whom 76% obtained a qualification certificate i.e. they passed the theoretical and practical part of the exam (CKE, 2017).

## 1.2. Economy and labour market indicators

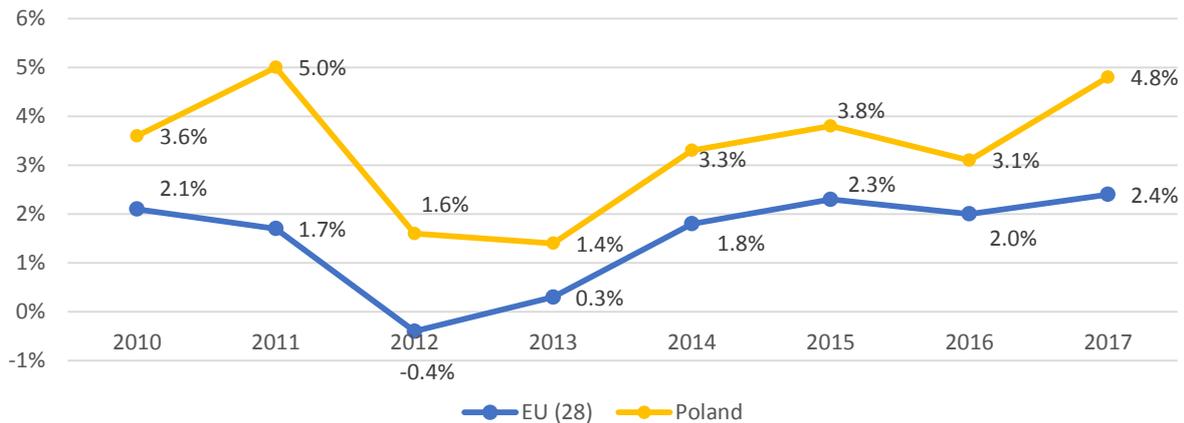
### 1.2.1. Economy

Over the last five years, the Polish economy has experienced relatively positive GDP growth. As Eurostat data show, real GDP growth rate was higher than the EU average and among the highest in Europe.

<sup>(1)</sup> Additionally around 13 000 students were in art schools leading to vocational qualifications. Art schools are not included in the data in the following parts of the Report. Art education constitutes a separate system, supervised by the minister responsible for culture and national heritage.

<sup>(2)</sup> Own calculations based on data from the School Information System (SIO) as of September 2017.

**Figure 4. Real GDP growth rate, percentage change from previous year**

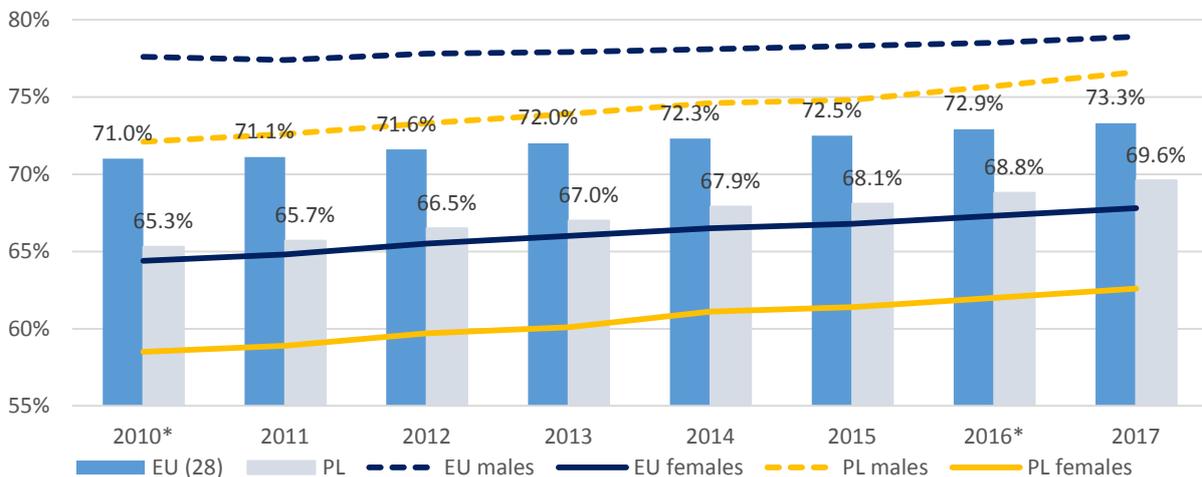


Source: Eurostat <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>. [tec00115] Accessed on October 30, 2018.

### 1.2.2. Economic activity rate

The economic activity rates in Poland have been increasing over the last several years. Still, in 2017, the average economic activity rate for the population aged 15-64 in Poland was 69.6%, almost four percentage points lower than the EU average. Almost 77% of men in this age group and 63% of women were active economically; yet again, both rates were significantly lower than the EU average. However, data show that the activity rates in Poland are increasing slightly faster than in the EU.

**Figure 5. Economic activity rates by gender, population aged 15-64**



\* Break in time series for 2010 and 2016 data for Poland

Source: Eurostat <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>. [lfst\_r\_lfp2actrt] Accessed on September 20, 2018.

The activity rates differ substantially by educational attainment level. Higher educational attainment levels are linked with higher activity in the labour market, therefore, tertiary education graduates have the highest activity rates. Since 2014, Poland is characterised by a

slightly higher activity rate of this group than the EU average. The activity rates for the lower levels of educational attainment in Poland are far below the EU average.

**Table 1. Activity rates by educational attainment level, population aged 15-64 (%)**

		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)	<b>EU (28)</b>	53.7	54.3	54.6	54.4	53.4	53.1	53.3	53.6
	<b>Poland</b>	28.9	28.9	29.3	28.5	28.2	28.2	27.0	26.6
Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)	<b>EU (28)</b>	75.1	75.0	75.3	75.3	75.6	75.7	76.0	76.2
	<b>Poland</b>	69.1	69.3	69.4	69.6	70.1	69.9	70.6	71.0
Tertiary education (levels 5-8)	<b>EU (28)</b>	87.0	86.9	87.1	87.4	87.4	87.7	87.9	88.0
	<b>Poland</b>	86.8	86.8	87.0	87.3	88.1	88.6	88.8	89.0

*NB: level of education – ISCED 2011*

Source: Eurostat <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>. [lfsa\_argaed] Accessed on September 20, 2018.

The least economically active group has the lowest educational attainment, i.e. less than primary, primary or lower secondary education. This group's activity rate in Poland is only 26.6%, while the EU average is 53.6%. Over the past several years, Poland has introduced different means of attempting to increase activity rates, such as offering vocational qualification courses (see Section 2.2.3), which enable the attainment of vocational qualifications in a short period of time. Furthermore, the public employment service offers a variety of vocational training programmes for unemployed people with low qualifications (see Section 4.1.).

### 1.2.3. Employment

In 2017, almost 15.7 million people were employed, which represents almost 65% of the total population aged 15-64. Age and education attainment level impact employment rates. In 2017, the employment rate for the prime age population (aged 25-49 years) was slightly higher than the EU average for that group, which is a constant trend since 2009. Young (15-24) and older (50-64) groups are characterised by a much lower employment rate than the EU average. In 2017, the employment rate of tertiary education graduates was almost 87%, which is higher than the EU average (2.8 percentage points). In contrast, the share of employed people with primary or lower secondary education is relatively low (23.3%), and much lower than the EU average of 45.5%. In 2017, the share of employed people with post-secondary and vocational upper secondary education was 67%, four percentage points lower than the EU average. However, it has increased during the last 5 years (a change of over 5 percentage points) slightly faster than in the EU on average. As data show, the higher the attained education level, the better the chances for employment.

**Table 2. Employment rates <sup>(3)</sup> by gender, age group and highest level of education attained (%)**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>EU (28)</b>	<b>64.1</b>	<b>64.2</b>	<b>64.1</b>	<b>64.1</b>	<b>64.8</b>	<b>65.6</b>	<b>66.6</b>	<b>67.6</b>
<i>Males</i>	70.1	70.0	69.6	69.4	70.1	70.8	71.8	72.9
<i>Females</i>	58.2	58.4	58.6	58.8	59.5	60.4	61.4	62.4
<i>15 - 24</i>	33.9	33.3	32.6	32.2	32.4	33.1	33.8	34.7
<i>25 - 49</i>	78.2	78.1	77.6	77.1	77.6	78.2	78.9	79.8
<i>50 - 64</i>	56.6	57.3	58.4	59.2	60.6	61.8	63.4	64.9
<i>Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)</i>	45.1	45.2	44.4	43.7	43.3	43.7	44.5	45.5
<i>Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)</i>	68.3	68.3	68.0	67.7	68.4	69.0	69.9	70.9
<i>Tertiary education (levels 5-8)</i>	82.3	82.0	81.8	81.7	82.0	82.7	83.4	84.0
<b>Poland</b>	<b>58.9</b>	<b>59.3</b>	<b>59.7</b>	<b>60.0</b>	<b>61.7</b>	<b>62.9</b>	<b>64.5</b>	<b>66.1</b>
<i>Males</i>	65.3	66.0	66.3	66.6	68.2	69.2	71.0	72.8
<i>Females</i>	52.6	52.7	53.1	53.4	55.2	56.6	58.1	59.5
<i>15 - 24</i>	26.4	24.9	24.7	24.2	25.8	26.0	28.4	29.6
<i>25 - 49</i>	78.9	78.9	78.5	78.2	79.4	80.6	81.3	82.2
<i>50 - 64</i>	47.0	48.4	49.4	50.3	51.8	53.2	54.7	56.6
<i>Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)</i>	23.6	23.4	23.4	22.4	22.7	23.3	23.0	23.3
<i>Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)</i>	61.8	62.0	61.7	61.6	62.9	64.0	65.6	67.0
<i>Tertiary education (levels 5-8)</i>	82.5	82.2	82.1	82.3	83.9	85.0	85.8	86.8

NB: level of education – ISCED 2011

Source: Eurostat <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>. [lfsa\_ergaed] Accessed on September 20, 2018.

#### 1.2.4. Employment structure

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 was 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.

<sup>(3)</sup> Labour Force Survey (LFS) data. Employed as per cent of total population aged 15-64 years.

**Table 3. Employment share by economic sector in Poland (%)**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Industry</b>	30.3	30.7	30.4	30.5	30.5	30.5	31.4	31.7
Females	16.1	16.5	16.1	16.1	16.5	16.5	16.9	17.2
Males	41.7	42.0	41.9	42.1	41.9	42.0	43.3	43.4
<b>Agriculture</b>	13.1	12.9	12.6	12.0	11.5	11.5	10.6	10.2
Females	12.7	12.2	11.7	10.9	10.3	10.4	9.4	8.9
Males	13.4	13.5	13.3	12.9	12.5	12.5	11.5	11.3
<b>Services</b>	56.6	56.4	57.0	57.5	58.0	57.9	58.0	58.1
Females	71.2	71.3	72.2	73.0	73.3	73.2	73.7	73.9
Males	44.9	44.5	44.8	45.0	45.6	45.5	45.1	45.3

Source: The Local Data Bank, Statistics Poland, <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start>. Accessed on December 23, 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.

### 1.2.5. Unemployment

In 2017, unemployment in Poland was lower than the EU average, which was also observed in previous years. In the past five years, there was an overall decrease of unemployment in all age groups and by all types of education levels. As with employment, the unemployment rates vary by age and level of educational attainment. The unemployment rates are highest for young people and those with the lowest educational level. The higher the attained educational level, the lower is the chance of being unemployed.

**Table 4. Unemployment rates (<sup>4</sup>) by gender, age group and highest level of education attained (%)**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>EU (28)</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>7.8</b>
<i>Males</i>	9.7	9.7	10.6	11.0	10.3	9.5	8.5	7.6
<i>Females</i>	9.6	9.8	10.6	11.0	10.5	9.6	8.9	8.0
<i>Age group of 15 - 24</i>	21.1	21.7	23.2	23.7	22.2	20.3	18.7	16.8
<i>Age group of 25 - 49</i>	8.9	9.0	9.9	10.4	9.8	9.0	8.2	7.3
<i>Age group of 50 - 64</i>	6.8	6.8	7.4	7.8	7.5	7.0	6.5	5.8
<i>Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)</i>	16.1	16.7	18.6	19.7	19.0*	17.9	16.6	15.2
<i>Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)</i>	9.1	9.0	9.7	10.1	9.5*	8.8	7.9	7.0
<i>Tertiary education (levels 5-8)</i>	5.4	5.6	6.2	6.5	6.2*	5.7	5.2	4.6

(<sup>4</sup>) Labour Force Survey (LFS) data. Employed as per cent of total population aged 15-64 years.

<b>Poland</b>	<b>9.7*</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>5.0</b>
<i>Males</i>	9.5*	9.1	9.5	9.8	8.6	7.4	6.2	5.0
<i>Females</i>	10.1*	10.5	11.0	11.2	9.7	7.8	6.3	5.0
<i>Age group of 15 - 24</i>	23.7*	25.8	26.5	27.3	23.9	20.8	17.7	14.8
<i>Age group of 25 - 49</i>	8.3*	8.3	8.9	9.2	8.1	6.7	5.5	4.3
<i>Age group of 50 - 64</i>	7.6*	7.4	7.7	7.8	6.9	5.8	4.5	3.8
<i>Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)</i>	18.3*	19.1	20.3	21.3	19.7*	17.3	14.9	12.6
<i>Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)</i>	10.6*	10.5	11.0	11.5	10.2*	8.4	7.0	5.7
<i>Tertiary education (levels 5-8)</i>	5.0*	5.3	5.7	5.7	4.7*	4.0	3.3	2.5

NB: level of education – ISCED 2011 \* break in time series

Source: Eurostat <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>. [lfsa\_urgaed] Accessed on September 20, 2018.

### 1.3. Educational attainment

In Poland, almost 60% of the population aged 15-64 has an upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education. However, the share of the population with this level of education, as well as the share of the population with less than primary and lower secondary education (levels 3-4 and 0-2) has been decreasing in favour of the share of the population with tertiary education (levels 5-8). 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, and in 2017, amounted to 64.3% and 55.3% respectively.

When compared to the EU average, Poland has a more pronounced difference in educational attainment level by gender. In 2017, the share of men with upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education was higher by 9 percentage points than the share of women. At the same time, 3 out of 10 women had tertiary education while only 2 out of 10 men had attained this level of education.

**Table 5. Population (15-64) by educational attainment level and gender (%)**

		<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>EU (28)</b>									
<i>Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)</i>	<b>Total</b>	<b>30.6</b>	<b>29.4</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>26.7</b>	<b>26.4</b>	<b>25.8</b>
	Males	30.2	29.2	28.5	27.7	25.7	27.1	26.8	26.4
	Females	30.9	29.6	28.5	27.5	27.1	26.4	25.9	25.3
<i>Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)</i>	<b>Total</b>	<b>46.2</b>	<b>46.1</b>	<b>46.1</b>	<b>46.1</b>	<b>46.2</b>	<b>46.1</b>	<b>45.9</b>	<b>45.8</b>
	Males	47.5	47.4	47.4	47.6	47.6	47.4	47.3	47.2
	Females	44.8	44.8	44.8	44.7	44.9	44.7	44.6	44.4

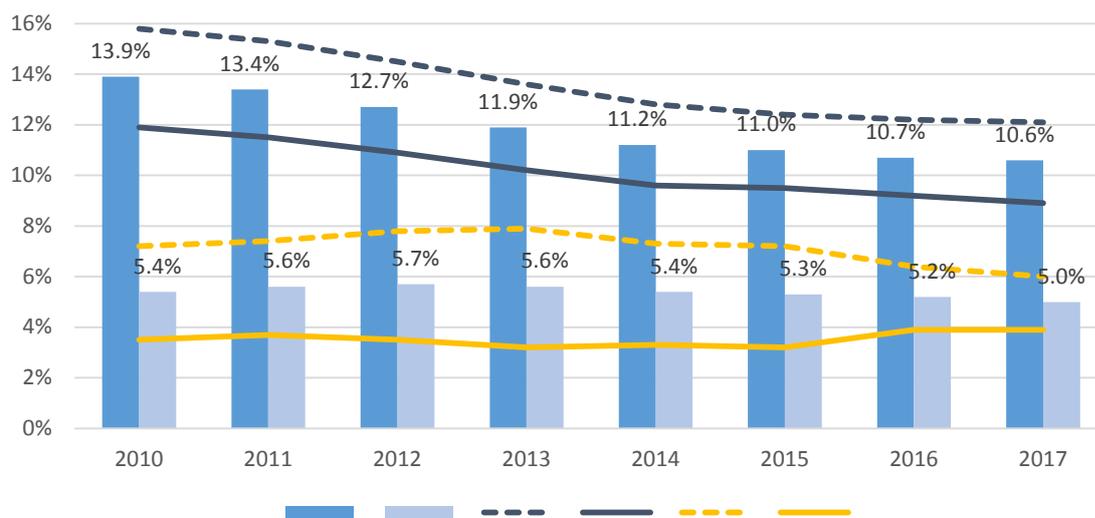
<i>Tertiary education (levels 5-8)</i>	<b>Total</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>23.4</b>	<b>24.3</b>	<b>25.1</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>27.1</b>	<b>27.1</b>
	Males	21.6	22.3	22.9	23.5	24.3	24.7	25.2	25.7
	Females	23.6	24.6	25.7	26.7	27.3	28.2	28.9	29.8
<b>Poland</b>									
<i>Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)</i>	<b>Total</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>13.9</b>
	Males	18.4	18.0	17.3	16.8	16.2	15.9	15.2	14.5
	Females	17.6	17.1	16.1	15.4	14.9	14.6	14.0	13.3
<i>Upper secondary and post-secondary non- tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)</i>	<b>Total</b>	<b>62.6</b>	<b>62.2</b>	<b>61.8</b>	<b>61.3</b>	<b>60.7</b>	<b>60.3</b>	<b>60.2</b>	<b>59.8</b>
	Males	65.5	65.4	65.1	64.7	64.4	64.3	64.5	64.3
	Females	59.6	59.0	58.5	57.9	57.0	56.3	55.9	55.3
<i>Tertiary education (levels 5-8)</i>	<b>Total</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>23.8</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>25.2</b>	<b>26.3</b>
	Males	16.0	16.6	17.5	18.5	19.5	19.8	20.3	21.2
	Females	22.8	23.9	25.4	26.7	28.1	29.1	30.1	31.4

NB: level of education – ISCED 2011

Source: Eurostat <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>. [lfsa\_pgaed] Accessed on June 18, 2018.

The share of early leavers from education and training in Poland has been much lower than the EU average over the last decade. In 2017, only 5.1% of the population in Poland aged 18-24 were in this group, while the EU average was 10.6%. The national target, in accordance with Europe 2020 strategy, is to further decrease the share of early leavers from education and training to 4.5% by 2020.

**Figure 6. Early leavers <sup>(5)</sup> from education and training (%)**



Source: Eurostat <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>. [edat\_lfse\_14] Accessed on October 12, 2018.

Existing policies/measures may partly explain why the number of early leavers from education and training is low compared with the EU average. These measures help prevent students from leaving early, provide support to students at risk or guide those who have left education/training early back into the system, e.g. the education and career guidance or the national Voluntary Labour Corps, whose main goal is to develop appropriate conditions for the social and professional development of youth by establishing a support system for the most vulnerable groups. The next chapters provide a detailed description of the education system in Poland and the general policies and measures in place.

<sup>(5)</sup> Early leavers from education and training refer to persons aged 18 to 24 fulfilling the following two conditions: first, the highest level of education or training attained is ISCED 0, 1, 2 or 3c short; second, respondents declared not having received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey (numerator). The denominator consists of the total population of the same age group, excluding no responses to the questions 'highest level of education or training attained' and 'participation in education and training'.

## CHAPTER 2.

# Provision of VET

## 2.1. Introduction

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

- (a) phasing out lower secondary school (*gimnazjum*);
- (b) restructuring six-year primary education (*szkoła podstawowa*) into an eight-year programme, taking place in one institution, divided into two four-year parts (basic and lower secondary level);
- (c) extending the general upper secondary programme (*licea ogólnokształcące*) - to four years instead of three - and the vocational upper secondary programme (*technika*) to five years instead of four;
- (d) 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. Another significant package of VET system reforms will take effect in September 2019 <sup>(6)</sup>.

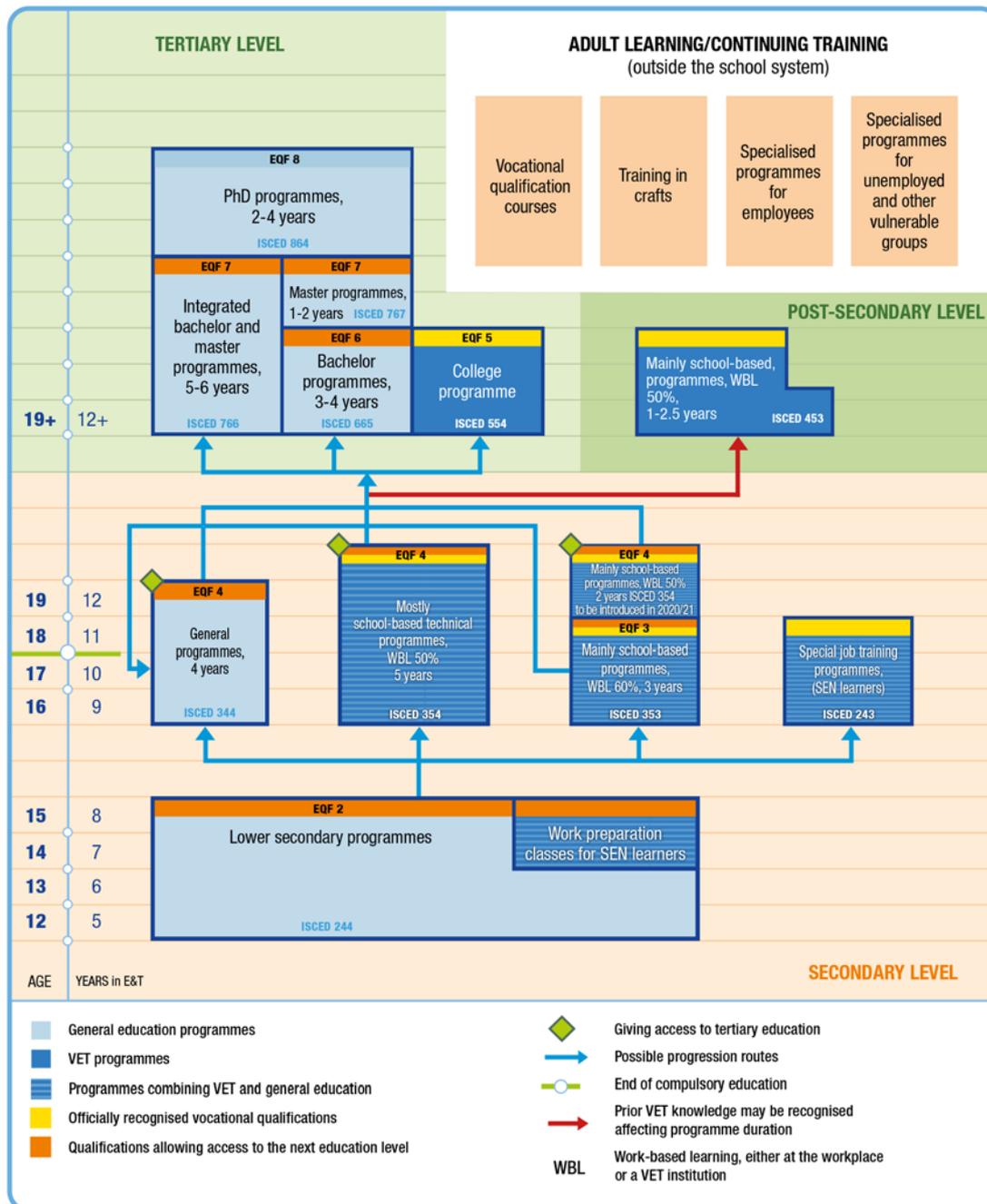
The school system will be transitioning until 2022/2023. During this period, the previous programmes will be functioning alongside the new ones until they are completely phased out. In the following section, the structure of the new, reformed system is presented.

---

<sup>(6)</sup> This includes, among others: strengthening cooperation between schools and employers, introducing a new form of vocational learning for learners, introducing regular forecast of the demand for employees in vocational education occupations, new rules on the functioning of the second-stage sectoral programmes and post-secondary programmes, changes to vocational examinations, introducing compulsory training in companies for VET teachers, streamlined procedures of introducing new occupations to the system, changes in subsidies for local governments for VET education, changes in the structure of the institutions providing vocational training, new vocational core curriculum and classification of occupations.

## 2.2. Government-regulated VET provision

Figure 7. VET in Poland's education and training system in 2018



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Poland.

Education in Poland is compulsory up to 18 years of age, while full-time school education is compulsory up to age 15. 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 qualification courses or vocational training for juvenile workers.

**VET provided at the secondary level:**

- (a) three-year **first stage sectoral programme** <sup>(7)</sup> (*branżowe szkoły I stopnia*, ISCED 353, EQF 3) introduced in 2017 are part of the formal education and training system. This programme is available to primary school graduates (usually 15 year-olds), that is those who received the primary school leaving certificate <sup>(8)</sup>. The first stage sectoral programme combines general and vocational education and leads to a vocational qualifications diploma for a single-qualification occupation (after passing the State vocational examination). 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) <sup>(9)</sup>. Completion of this programme provides access to further education: at the second year of study at general upper secondary schools for adults or in the two-year second stage sectoral programme.
- (b) two-year **second stage sectoral programme** (*branżowe szkoły II stopnia*, ISCED 354, EQF 4) will begin to operate in the 2020/21 school year. This second stage sectoral programme aims at further developing the vocational qualifications attained in the first stage sectoral programme and will be available to the graduates of the first stage sectoral programmes - usually 18 year-olds. The second stage sectoral programme will lead to a vocational qualifications diploma for occupations consisting of two qualifications (after passing the State vocational examination). 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. 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). Second stage sectoral programme graduates will be eligible to continue to tertiary education after passing the secondary school leaving examination (*matura*).
- (c) five-year **vocational upper secondary programme** <sup>(10)</sup> (*technika*, ISCED 354, EQF 4) are part of the formal education and training system. This programme is available to

---

<sup>(7)</sup> The first-stage sectoral programme was introduced in the 2017/2018 school year replacing the basic vocational programme. However, for the next two school years, students of the previous basic vocational programme will be finishing their education under the old system. The three-year basic vocational programme, similarly to the first stage sectoral programme, enabled pupils to attain a vocational qualifications diploma after passing a state vocational examination and also to continue education on a higher level in the second year of the general upper secondary programme for adults.

<sup>(8)</sup> This also applies to lower secondary school graduates during the transitional period.

<sup>(9)</sup> Regulation of the Minister of National Education of March 28, 2017 on the teaching plan in public schools (Journal of Laws 2017, item 703).

<sup>(10)</sup> The four-year vocational upper secondary programme will be transformed into a five-year programme starting with the 2019/2020 school year for graduates of the new primary programme. Graduates of the old programmes continue their education based on the previous arrangements.

primary school graduates, usually 15 year olds, that is those who received the primary school leaving certificate. The vocational upper secondary programme combines general and vocational education and leads to a vocational qualifications diploma for occupations consisting of two qualifications after passing the State vocational examination. 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). Graduates of these programmes, after passing the secondary school leaving examination (*matura*), are eligible to continue to tertiary education.

- (d) three-year **special job-training programme** (*szkoły specjalne przysposabiające do pracy*, ISCED 243) for learners with special education needs (SEN) leads to a job-readiness certificate. This programme is designed for learners with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities or multiple disabilities. It provides educational activities (personal and social functioning classes; communication skills development classes, creativity development classes, physical education and job training classes) as well as revalidation activities. Job training classes constitute over a half of the hours foreseen for the educational activities <sup>(11)</sup>.
- (e) **work preparation classes** are available for SEN learners in seventh and eighth grade of primary school (lower secondary level) for pupils aged 15 years and older (*oddziały przysposabiające do pracy*, ISCED 244, EQF 2). Classes combine general education and work preparation – both adapted to the individual learner's needs and capabilities <sup>(12)</sup>.

### **Post-secondary level**

At the **post-secondary** non-tertiary level, vocational qualifications can be attained in one- to two-and-a-half year school-based programmes (*szkoły policealne*, ISCED 453). Post-secondary programmes are part of the formal education and training system and are available to the graduates of general and vocational upper secondary programmes (usually 19 and 20 year-olds), as well as in the future – the second stage sectoral programmes (usually 20 year-olds).

These programmes are strictly vocational and do not include general education. The school director decides on the share of work-based learning, however it cannot be less than 50% of the hours foreseen for vocational training.

### **Adult learning and out-of-school VET**

Adult learning and out-of-school VET is available in continuing education centres, practical training centres, further training and professional development centres <sup>(13)</sup>, and initial VET (IVET) schools offering:

---

<sup>(11)</sup> Regulation of the Minister of National Education of March 28, 2017 on the teaching plan in public schools (Journal of Laws 2017, item 703).

<sup>(12)</sup> Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 17 March 2017 on the detailed organisation of public school and public pre-schools (Journal of Laws 2017, item 649 with further amendments).

<sup>(13)</sup> The structure of institutions providing VET training will change as of September 2019.

- vocational qualification courses (*kwalifikacyjne kursy zawodowe – KKZ*) based on the curricula for a qualification in a given occupation; they allow learners to take the State vocational examination and obtain a vocational qualification certificate;
- vocational skills courses based on the core VET curriculum, including learning outcomes for a qualification or common learning outcomes for all occupations;
- at least 30-hour general skills courses that are based on the general education curriculum;
- theoretical courses for juvenile employees.

Adults, including the unemployed, may also undertake vocational training through courses provided by training companies and other non-formal education institutions. Since 2016, the qualifications based on the curricula of such courses can be included in the national qualifications framework.

A special path for young people over 15 years of age lacking a lower secondary education who want to attain vocational qualifications and/or supplement their education is provided by the Voluntary Labour Corps (*Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy - OHP*), which offer vocational training both in their own workshops or as on-the-job training with an employer (see Section 2.2.3. and 4.1.)

### VET in higher education

The law on higher education in Poland distinguishes different types of higher education institutions: academic, vocational and others, such as medical or military. The second type of school offers first (Licentiate degree) and second (Master's degree) cycle study programmes as well as uniform master's studies, but not doctoral programmes. Higher education vocational schools are also not obliged to conduct scientific research and educate academic staff.

**Table 6. The share of higher vocational schools and students in the total number of higher education institutions and students**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Schools</b>	54.6	54.4	54.0	53.6	54.7
<b>Students</b>	18.4	17.7	16.9	16.8	17.6

Source: Local Data Bank of Statistics Poland <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start> Accessed on September 24, 2018.

Apart from higher education institutions, colleges of social work (*kolegia pracowników służb społecznych*) exist, offering programmes at ISCED 5 level <sup>(14)</sup>. These colleges provide three-year programmes for the occupation of social worker. In the 2017/2018 school year, there were four colleges of social work with 234 student, 84% of whom are women (Statistics Poland, 2018c).

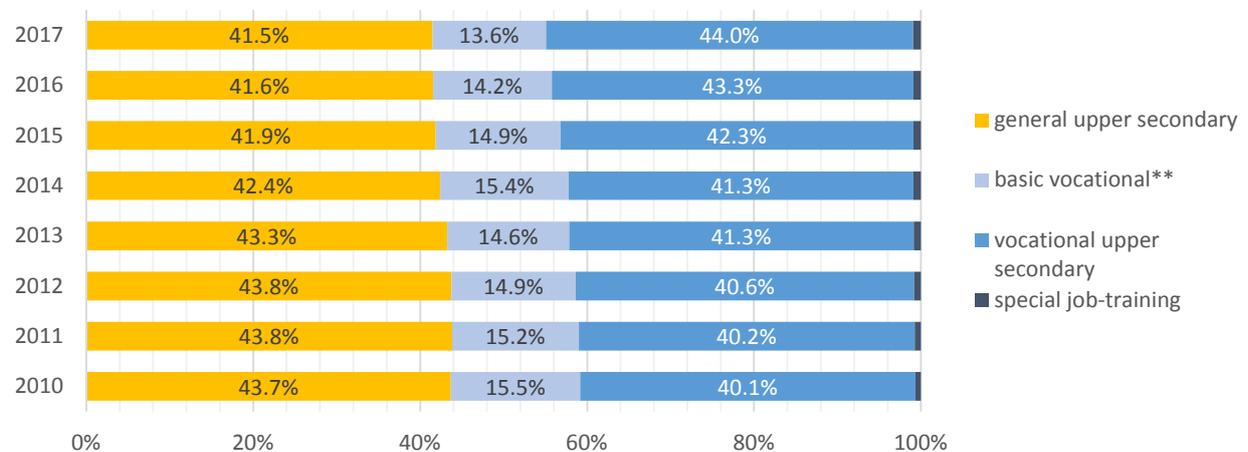
<sup>(14)</sup> Teacher training colleges (*kolegia nauczycielskie*) and foreign language teacher training colleges (*nauczycielskie kolegia języków obcych*) were closed as of 1 October 2016.

### 2.2.1. Educational pathways

Up to the 2018/19 school year, more than half of the students chose a vocational path at age 16 after completing lower secondary education. Admission to an upper secondary programme depended on the results of the lower secondary school leaving examination and school leaving certificates. The age at which students can choose a vocational pathway was lowered by one year by the introduced reform of the structure of the education system. In the new system, a vocational path is accessible after completing primary school at the age 15. Admission to an upper secondary programme will also depend on the results of the school leaving examination and school leaving certificates.

The structure of young students by school type (Figure 8) provides more information on this issue. In 2017, over 58% of youth participated in VET programmes, with more learners in vocational upper secondary programmes than in basic vocational ones (44% in the first type and 14% in the latter). Since 2010, there has been a small rise in the share of young students in VET programmes, which is probably due to the 2011 government reform and the improving image of VET in society. This growing popularity of VET programmes is mainly visible for vocational upper secondary schools, but not so for basic vocational schools, where the share of learners is fluctuating. Recent changes in shares between vocational upper secondary schools and basic vocational schools correspond to longer-term trends (see Section 1.1.).

**Figure 8. The distribution of youth in general upper secondary programmes and VET programmes\***

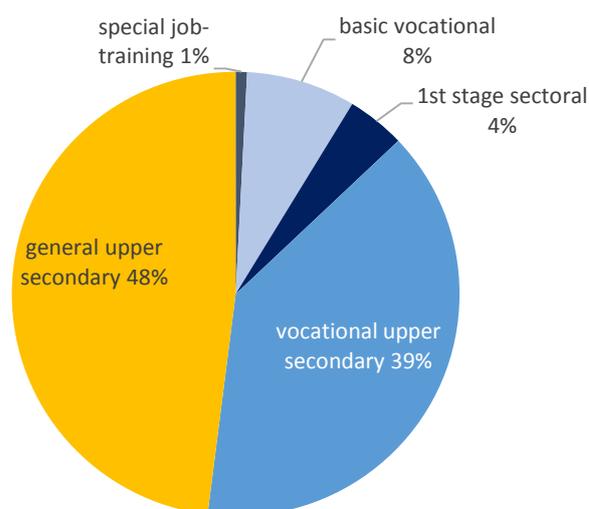


\*only schools for youth included \*\* in 2017 the first stage sectoral programme is included

Source: own calculation based on Local Data Bank, Statistics Poland <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start> and (Statistics Poland, 2018b). Accessed on September 24, 2018.

The structure of learners in all age groups, including adults, differs slightly – the shares of VET and general education learners are almost equal. The difference between both structures (Figures 8 and 9) is due to the significant number of learners in the general upper secondary programme for adults.

**Figure 9. The structure of students in all age groups in general upper secondary programmes and VET programmes in 2017**



Source: own calculation based on Local Data Bank, Statistics Poland <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start>. and (Statistics Poland, 2018b). Accessed on September 24, 2018.

### 2.2.2. Practical training in VET

The curriculum for programmes at the upper secondary level currently combines general and vocational education; post-secondary programmes provide only 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 practical training – work-based learning – can take place in school workshops, continuing education centres and practical training centres <sup>(15)</sup> or with an employer. Practical training with an employer can be organised in different ways, partially or fully at an employers' premises, including also dual training.

A distinctive form of practical training is “on the job training” (traineeship at an employer’s premises) – mandatory for vocational upper secondary, post-secondary and – according to plans – second stage sectoral programmes. On the job training is organised to apply and deepen learners’ knowledge and skills and has to last from 4 to 12 weeks, depending on the type of occupation.

A special type of practical training <sup>(16)</sup> is provided through juvenile employment for the purpose of vocational training (*przygotowanie zawodowe młodocianych pracowników*) for young people who are at least 15 years old but have not yet reached 18, with a lower secondary education or primary education. Juvenile employment is an apprenticeship based on a contract between the learner and employer. In the 2017/2018 school year, juvenile workers constituted about half of all the learners in the first stage sectoral schools (Statistics Poland, 2018c).

Juvenile employment for the purpose of vocational training can take the form of:

<sup>(15)</sup> The structure of institutions providing VET training will change as of September 2019.

<sup>(16)</sup> An additional new form – the student apprenticeship – will be available as of September 2019.

- (a) Training for a profession (*nauka zawodu*) – this is an apprenticeship with the theoretical education taking place at school (first stage sectoral) or in an out-of-school system (e.g. courses) and the practical training is organised by the employer on the basis of a work contract. It lasts not more than 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 not more than 36 months and is finalised with a journeyman’s examination (*egzamin czeladniczy*).
- (b) Training for a specific job (*przyuczenie do wykonywania określonej pracy*) – this 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.

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. The employer may be reimbursed for the salary and social security contribution for the juvenile worker for the period of vocational training from the Labour Fund (established to counter unemployment and financed by mandatory contributions paid by employers). Each year however, the minister responsible for labour sets financial limits on the reimbursements.

If the juvenile worker passes the examination, the employer is entitled to financial support for the training period approximately equal to 1 850 EUR in the case of 36 months of training (if the training is shorter, the amount is calculated proportionally to the training period), as well as to 58 EUR for each month of training. This financial support is financed from the Labour Fund.

### 2.2.3. Vocational Qualifications

Completing any type of VET programme is not the same as attaining a vocational qualification. The educational level is certified, but not the vocational qualification. Vocational qualifications can only be attained by passing an external State vocational examination.

**Table 7. Main types of vocational examinations and vocational certificates <sup>(17)</sup>**

Name	Managing institution	Name of certificate	Short description
<b>State vocational examination</b> ( <i>egzamin potwierdzający kwalifikacje w zawodzie</i> )	Central Examination Board ( <i>Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna</i> ) together with 8 regional examination boards ( <i>okręgowe</i> )	<b>Vocational certificate - Certificate of a vocational qualification in an occupation</b> ( <i>świadcstwo potwierdzające kwalifikację w zawodzie</i> )	Certifies a qualification in an occupation or all qualifications in an occupation. Has two parts: written and practical; the candidate has to pass both in order to receive a certificate or diploma. It is 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. It is free for school graduates.

<sup>(17)</sup> Changes in some of the names of the examinations and certificates are expected as of September 2019.

	<i>komisje egzaminacyjne)</i>	<b>Vocational qualifications diploma</b> ( <i>Dyplom potwierdzający kwalifikacje zawodowe</i> )	Awarded to holders of vocational certificates for all qualifications in a given occupation who also have completed education at the upper secondary level.
<b>Journeyman's examination</b> ( <i>egzamin czeladniczy</i> ) <b>Master's examination</b> ( <i>egzamin mistrzowski</i> )	Examination boards of crafts chambers	<b>Journeyman's certificate</b> ( <i>świadcstwo czeladnicze</i> ) <b>Master's diploma</b> ( <i>dyplom mistrzowski</i> )	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. It is fee based.
<b>Verifying examination for selected qualifications in crafts</b> ( <i>egzamin sprawdzający wybrane kwalifikacje zawodowe w rzemiośle</i> )	Examination boards of crafts chambers	Document certifying that the verifying examination has been passed. ( <i>zaświadczenie o zdaniu egzaminu sprawdzającego</i> )	It certifies selected qualifications in an occupation that correspond to a specific craft. Has two parts: practical and theoretical. The theoretical part is oral. It is fee based.
<b>Verifying examination after training for a specific job</b> ( <i>egzamin sprawdzający po przyuczeniu do wykonywania określonej pracy</i> )	Employer or examination boards of crafts chambers	Document certifying the specific skills acquired during training for a specific job. ( <i>zaświadczenie stwierdzające nabycie umiejętności w wykonywaniu prac których dotyczyło przyuczenie</i> )	This is for both adult and juveniles after the training. In the case of unemployed persons, the form of the examination is individually determined during the training in the programme.

Source: own elaboration based on legal acts

In the 2016/2017 school year, the State vocational examination was administered for over 200 qualifications; 76% of the participants (including graduates of VET programmes, participants of vocational qualification courses as well as extramural participants) passed both the theoretical and practical parts of the examination (CKE, 2017). Success rates differ among various types of qualifications and groups of learners and are higher for the theoretical (written) part compared to the practical one <sup>(18)</sup>.

<sup>(18)</sup> Passing the exam requires at least 50% of the points from the written part of the exam and at least 75% from the practical part.

**Table 8. The most popular qualifications for which State vocational examinations were taken in the 2016/2017 school year**

Qualification	Number of candidates	Share of students who passed the examination
Assembly and use of personal computers	17322	77.9
Designing and administering local computer networks	15672	76.3
Organisation and monitoring of resources and information flows in the processes of production, distribution and storage	8178	81.2
Planning and managing activities in organisations	7975	73.4

Source: own calculation based on Central Examination Board data, (CKE, 2017).

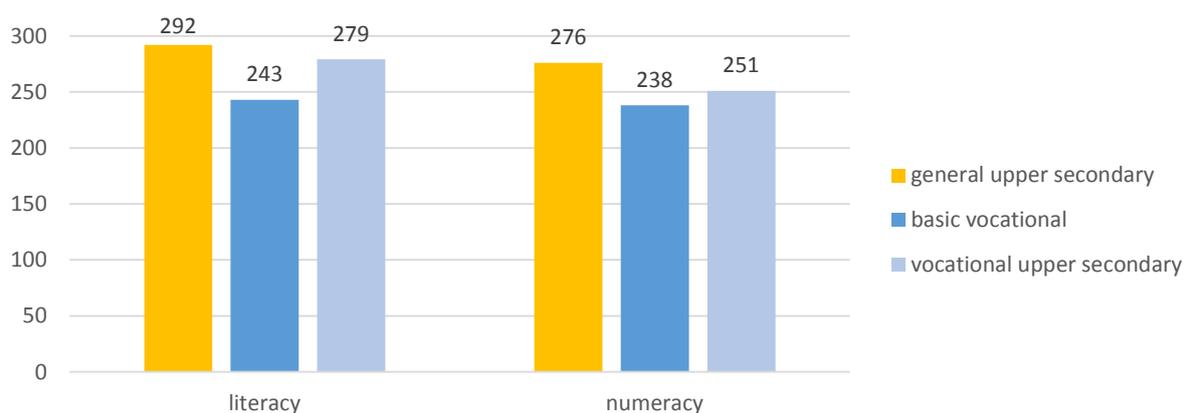
Adults aged 18 and older can be awarded a certificate for a vocational qualification after passing State vocational examination extramurally (*eksternistycznie*). They can be awarded a vocational qualification diploma when all the qualifications in an occupation have been certified and they have completed their education at the basic vocational, 1<sup>st</sup> stage vocational or vocational upper secondary level. A candidate for an extramural State vocational examination has to have at least a primary or a lower secondary education and at least two years of education or employment in an occupation relating to the qualification for which the examination is being taken. Adult candidates pay a fee for taking the examination.

Young people over 15 years of age without a lower secondary education can attain vocational qualifications and/or supplement their education in one of the 217 agencies of the Voluntary Labour Corps (*Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy - OHP*). This organisation provides education in over 60 professions, both in their own workshops or as on-the-job training with an employer. Each year, over 800 000 young people receive various forms of help from Corps agencies. The Voluntary Labour Corps support youth at risk of social exclusion, frequently from disadvantaged families. For more information on Voluntary Labour Corps activities, see Section 4.1.

#### **2.2.4. Educational Outcomes**

The cognitive skills level of VET students, especially those in basic vocational programmes, are significantly lower than those of general education students, which was evident in the Polish PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) results of 2009 and also in the PIAAC (The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies) study (Federowicz, 2011; Rynko, 2013). The difference in skills levels applies both for reading and mathematics, but is a bit smaller in the latter case.

**Figure 10. PIAAC mean cognitive skills level of students aged 16-19 by programme type in 2011-2012**



Source: Rynko, 2013

According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), in the 1st quarter of 2017 the employment rate of recent graduates (one year after completing education) was 55.8% for post-secondary and vocational upper secondary programme graduates and 54.5% for basic vocational programme graduates (in both cases was higher than the employment rate of general upper secondary programme graduates). In comparison, the employment rate of tertiary graduates was 84.4% (Statistics Poland, 2017).

**Table 9. Employment and unemployment rates of recent graduates (up to one year after leaving education) in the age group of 15-30**

First quarter of the year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>employment rate</b>								
basic vocational programmes	51.2	43.8	38.0	47.6	37	50.0	48.8	54.5
vocational upper secondary programmes and post-secondary programmes	59.6	49.5	49.5	52.1	52.3	62.1	58.6	55.8
general upper secondary programmes	50.0	44.2	37.5	43.8	28.6	36.6	49.1	52.8
tertiary	72.1	74.0	73.3	67.9	70.8	71.7	75.9	84.4
<b>unemployment rate</b>								
basic vocational programmes	42.1	50.0	51.3	47.2	57.1	41.9	46.2	34.5
vocational upper secondary programmes and post-secondary programmes	34.3	44.2	40.7	41.0	42.9	31.8	30.7	34.3
general upper secondary programmes	30.0	47.1	44.4	41.7	60.0	48.4	33.3	36.7
tertiary	21.5	19.8	21.3	26.2	23.7	23.2	17.9	12.5

Source: (Statistics Poland, 2017) and earlier issues

The share of young people aged 20-24 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) is relatively high in Poland and amounts to 15.4%. In the last two of years, this indicator level has dropped significantly, reaching the EU 28 level. The NEET rate is almost 3

times higher for vocational education graduates than for general education ones. This is because a large share of general upper secondary education graduates continues their education at higher levels, while most VET graduates enter the labour market. Chances of women being NEETs are higher, probably due to responsibilities related to motherhood.

**Table 10. The share of young people aged 20-24 not in education, employment or training (NEET) in 2017**

Education attainment	men	women	total
Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)	3.0%	3.6%	3.3%
Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary (levels 3 and 4) – <b>general</b>	1.9%	3.7%	2.8%
Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary (levels 3 and 4) – <b>vocational</b>	7.7%	8.7%	8.2%
Tertiary education (levels 5-8)	0.5%*	1.4*	0.9%
<b>All education levels</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>17.6%</b>	<b>15.4%</b>

NB: level of education – ISCED 2011 \* low reliability

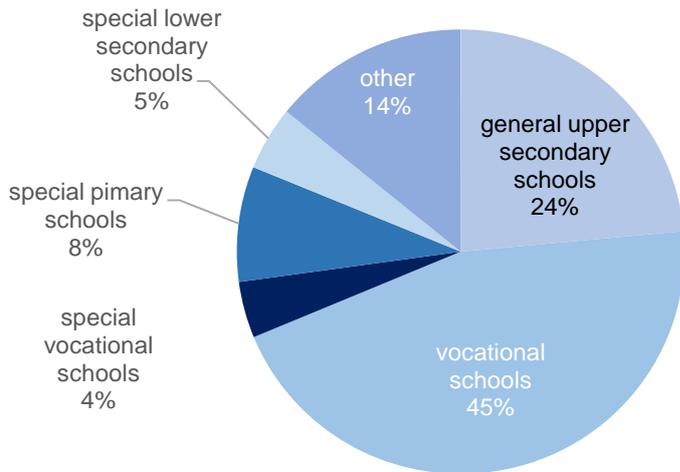
Source: Eurostat [edat\_ifse\_21] Accessed on September 24, 2018.

## 2.3. VET governance

VET has three governance levels: national (ministries), regional (school superintendents, mainly in pedagogical supervision) and county (*powiat*). The education ministry is in charge of VET policy at the 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. Municipalities (*gminy*) are responsible for establishing and managing pre-schools, primary and lower secondary schools (currently being phased out), excluding schools for learners with special needs; 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). The chart below illustrates the structure of the educational expenditures of counties in 2017.

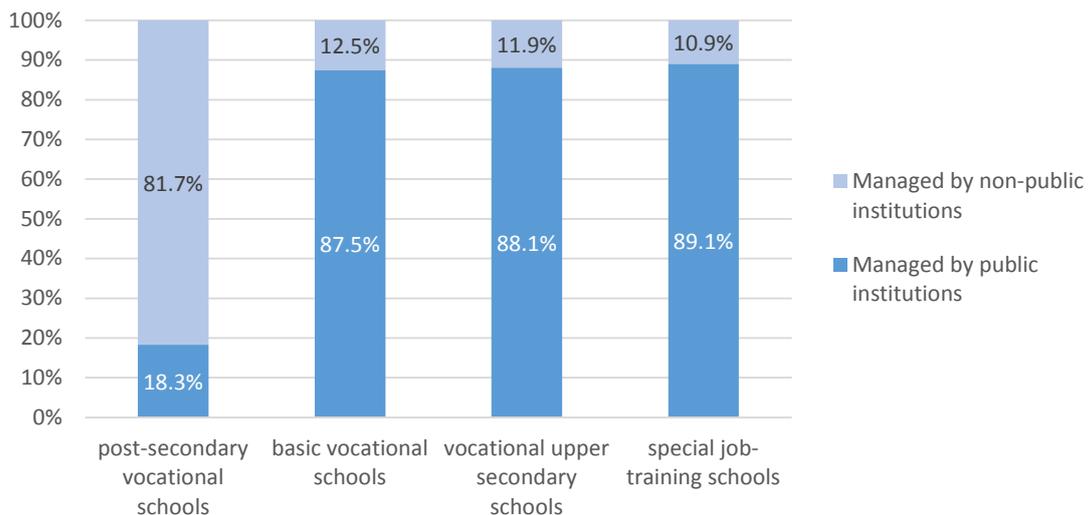
**Figure 11. The structure of the educational expenditures of counties in 2017 by school type**



Source: own calculation based on Local Data Bank, Statistics Poland <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start>  
 Accessed on September 24, 2018.

Central government units (usually ministries) also manage schools, typically vocational and fine arts schools, but also schools for prisoners. All types of schools can also be established and managed by non-public institutions, such as religious and social associations, etc. The chart below presents the structure of vocational schools by type and management institution in 2016. Generally, in Poland, the higher the education level, the higher the share of non-public institutions (Federowicz, Choińska-Mika and Walczak, 2014).

**Figure 12. The structure of VET schools by type and managing institution in 2016**



Source: own calculation based on Local Data Bank, Statistics Poland <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start>  
 Accessed on September 24, 2018.

In the 2017/2018 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 (Statistics Poland, 2018b). Since 2010, the total number of all VET schools has decreased from 8 864 to 6 071. The decreasing number of VET schools is primarily due to government reforms, which have gradually closed adult VET schools and supplementary VET schools. These types of schools are being replaced by vocational qualifications courses, which enable students to attain certification in a single vocational qualification after passing the State vocational examination. The first courses started in September 2012 and can be provided by public or non-public schools, as well as continuing education centres and practical training centres.

### 2.3.1. Teachers

Teachers <sup>(19)</sup> in public schools and pre-schools comprise 87% of all teachers and are employed on the basis of the Teacher's Charter <sup>(20)</sup> (*Karta Nauczyciela*), which specifies working conditions, duties, rights, professional development requirements, and teachers' salaries – providing this profession with greater legal protection and a unique position in terms of employment. In non-public schools, teachers are employed only on the basis of labour and civil law regulations.

The entry requirement for general education teachers in vocational programmes is at least a master's degree. Different regulations concern vocational education teachers. The minimum requirement for theoretical vocational education teachers is a licentiate degree, while for practical training teachers – the title of master in a craft or pedagogical technical college (currently non-existing) diploma or a *matura* examination together with vocational qualifications certificate and two years of work experience. All teachers are also required to have a pedagogical qualification <sup>(21)</sup>. Moreover, specialists who are not teachers can be employed by vocational schools.

The Teacher's Charter specifies four categories of job positions in the profession of teaching, which among others, have direct impact on a teacher's basic salary level. Promotion to the next position requires a given number of years of school work experience, completion of an internship and a positive assessment of professional achievements during the internship, as well as additional conditions:

- (a) trainee teacher – first stage in a teacher's career;
- (a) contractual teacher – awarded after one year and nine months of internship and passing an examination given by an examination commission;
- (b) appointed teacher – awarded after two years and nine months of internship and after passing an examination given by an examination commission;

---

<sup>(19)</sup> This chapter refers to non-academic teachers. The requirements for academic teachers are governed by separate legislation.

<sup>(20)</sup> Act of 26 January 1982 - Teacher's Charter (Journal of Laws 1982, No. 3, item 19 with further amendments).

<sup>(21)</sup> Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 1 August 2017 on the detailed qualification requirements for teachers (Journal of Laws 2017, item 1575).

- (c) chartered teacher – awarded after two years and nine months of internship, after having their professional achievement accepted by a qualification commission, and an interview.

Teachers with outstanding performance may also be awarded the title of honorary school education professor <sup>(22)</sup>.

In the 2017/2018 school year, the majority of teachers were chartered teachers, making up 55% of all teachers, and in the case of first stage sectoral schools, vocational upper secondary schools and special job-training schools this share was even higher (61%, 65% and 63% respectively). The situation is different in post-secondary schools, where the share of chartered teachers is only 23% (Statistics Poland, 2018c).

Continuous professional development (CPD) is required from teachers on the path to a higher position, as – during internships - they implement agreed professional development plans. Additionally, all teachers are also formally required to undertake CPD by the Teacher's Charter.

There are also requirements for in-company trainers (practical vocational training instructors), who are not teachers. In-company trainers – employers or employees designated by them - are required to have both adequate preparation in a given occupation (e.g. title of master of crafts or equivalent – as defined in the regulations - a combination of the various formal qualifications and years of work experience) and the pedagogical qualification <sup>(23)</sup>.

### **2.3.2. Financing education in Poland**

The main resources for educational expenditure are: the educational part of the State budget's general subsidy for local government units, central government targeted grants, the local government unit's own income, and foreign funds (mainly EU funds).

The educational 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 <sup>(24)</sup>. Weights for vocational and post-secondary schools are part of the algorithm. Since January 2018, the weights for vocational secondary schools are 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 qualifications courses who passed the State vocational

---

<sup>(22)</sup> Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 26 July 2018 on the attainment of advanced professional levels by teachers (Journal of Laws 2018, item 1574).

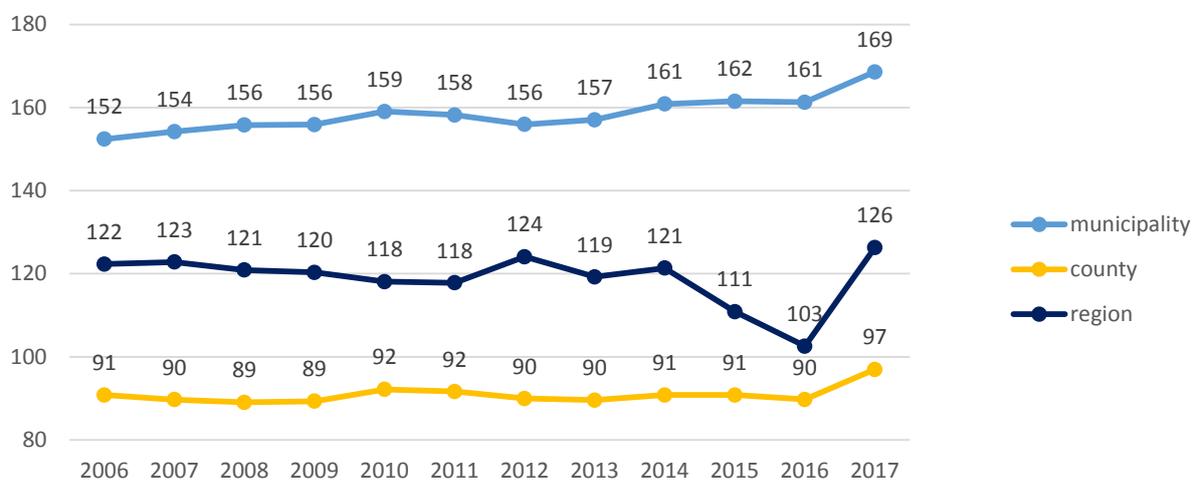
<sup>(23)</sup> Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 24 August 2017 on practical vocational training (Journal of Laws 2017, item 1644).

<sup>(24)</sup> 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.

examination <sup>(25)</sup>. Further modifications of VET education financing (e.g. increased state subsidies for VET schools educating in the special demand occupations indicated by the forecast of the demand for employees in vocational education occupations) are planned to 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 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.

**Figure 13. 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: own calculation based on Local Data Bank, Statistics Poland <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start>  
 Accessed on September 20, 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 that of 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 (Statistics Poland, 2018c).

<sup>(25)</sup> 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).

## 2.4. Other forms of training

Public and private training providers offer various forms of continuing vocational training (CVET), e.g. courses, seminars, lectures and workshops. In Section 4.1, vocational training offered by public employment services is described.

### 2.4.1. Adult participation in non-formal education

Many surveys (Statistics Poland, 2013a; Statistics Poland, 2013b; Turek and Worek, 2015) show that non-formal education is in most cases work-related and vocation oriented. According to the Labour Force Survey participation in non-formal education in Poland has been decreasing since 2010. In 2017, only 4.0% of adults aged 25-64 participated in some form of organised training (during the 4 weeks before the survey); this percentage remains at about the same level for more than a decade. The EU average is 10.9%, while in some countries it is 30% or more. If the last 12 months are taken into account, the rate rises to 25.5%, but the comparison with the EU mean (45%) is still not favourable. Most people in Poland also do not plan on participating in training activities in the next 12 months – only 21% of people aged 24 to 59/64 declared that they plan to participate in some form of educational activity (Turek and Worek 2015).

Data show that a traditional model of education activity is dominant in Polish society, where education is mostly concentrated in the early stages of life preceding a person's professional career.

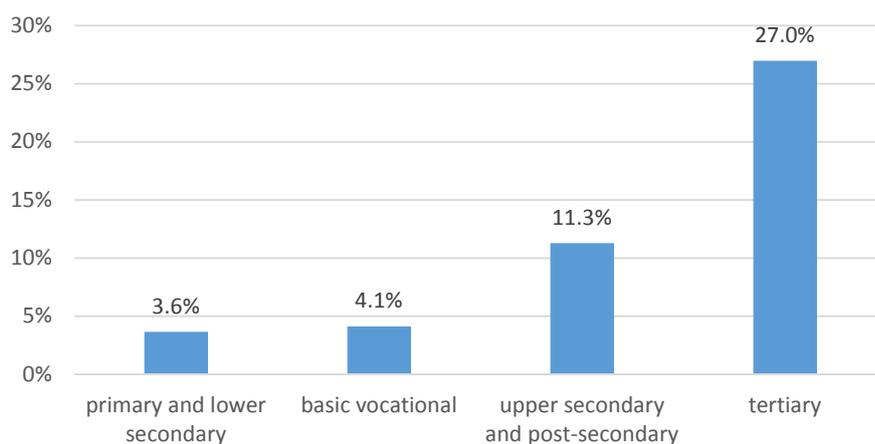
**Table 11. Adult participation in lifelong learning, age group: 25-64 (%)**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Labour Force Survey (last 4 weeks)	5.1	4.7	4.7	5.2	4.4	4.5	4.3	4.0	3.5	3.7	4.0
Adult Education Survey (last 12 months)	21.8				24.2					25.5	

Source: Eurostat <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database> [trng\_aes\_100] and [trng\_lfs\_01] Accessed on September 20, 2018.

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.

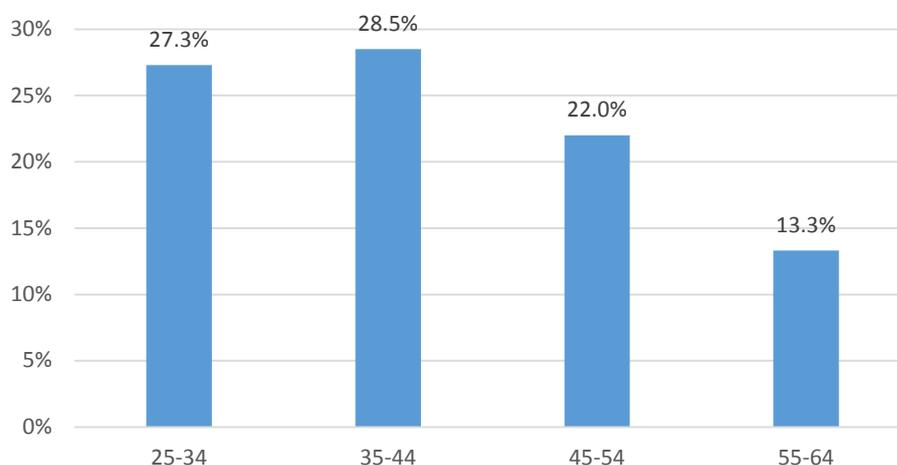
**Figure 14. The share of 20 to 65 year-olds participating in training in 2014 by level of education**



Source: own elaboration based on the Determinants of Educational Decisions Panel Study IBE. No newer editions of the study available.

Age is 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). In the Polish SHARE study (Survey on Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe), the main reason given by people 55 and older for not participating in non-formal education was the lack of need. It appears that for older people, training in the traditional form is not attractive and therefore perceived as not needed (Chłoń-Domińczak, 2014).

**Figure 15. The share of 25 to 64 years old participating in non-formal training in 2016 by age**



Source: Eurostat <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database> [trng\_aes\_101] Accessed on September 28, 2018.

The majority of learners in non-formal education are employed (90%). In comparison, only about 5% of unemployed persons participate in some kind of training. The topic of the training undertaken usually relates to the learner's current job (73% of non-formal education participants) (Statistics Poland, 2013b), with the employer financing this training in most cases (62%) (Turek and Worek, 2015). The most popular form of non-formal education is traditional school classroom education (Statistics Poland, 2013b). It is not surprising, then,

that the respondents of many surveys indicate the lack of need as the reason for not participating in training (Chłoń-Domińczak, 2015; Turek and Worek, 2015).

#### **2.4.2. Employers**

Employers can support their employees' vocational development by financing/co-financing their education at all levels, including higher education, short courses, seminars, workshops, etc. Large companies offer training more frequently than small ones, and the training offered is more diverse. The most popular form of human resource development were courses; 42% of employers invested only in external training, 18% offered in-house training and 40% a mix of both (Turek and Worek, 2015). In 2013, training related to construction and other industries were most popular among employers, followed by law and sales courses. In the majority of cases, employers used their own resources to finance training – only 15% used public funds (Turek and Worek 2015).

Employers can also apply for financial support from the National Training Fund (*Krajowy Fundusz Szkoleniowy*), which uses the strategy of employee professional development to counter layoffs (see Section 4.1).

#### **2.4.3. Training institutions**

The market for training services is fragmented and dominated by small and micro companies, which accounted for 86% of training institutions in 2014. 87% of training operators are private. The majority of training institutions specialise in personal development training (Turek and Worek, 2015). Training companies are usually located in large regional cities – Warsaw has the greatest share of training institutions (14%). There is a high rotation of institutions in the training market, thus they have had a short working experience.

## Shaping VET qualifications

### 3.1. Designing qualifications

The VET programmes available at the national level are developed on the basis of three regulations of the education ministry <sup>(26)</sup>:

- the classification of occupations for vocational education (KZSZ) <sup>(27)</sup>;
- the core curriculum for vocational education (PPKZ) <sup>(28)</sup>;
- the core curriculum for general education (PPKO) <sup>(29)</sup>.

KZSZ includes the list of occupations for which VET programmes can provide education. Qualifications <sup>(30)</sup> are distinguished within occupations. In the new system, each occupation can be made up of either one or two qualifications.

Prior to the 2016/2017 changes in VET, the KZSZ relating to VET schools included 209 vocational occupations and 264 vocational qualifications. The new regulation, signed in March 2017, defines 213 vocational education occupations in which education may be conducted as of September 1, 2017. It covers learning in first stage sectoral programmes, vocational upper secondary programmes, and post-secondary programmes. The regulation introduced two new occupations <sup>(31)</sup>, there are also five new so-called ancillary occupations for people with minor intellectual disabilities <sup>(32)</sup>. The new occupations were developed in response to labour market needs. Other regulations introducing the new classification of occupations and the new core curriculum for vocational education are expected to come into force in September 2019.

---

<sup>(26)</sup> A new, streamlined process of introducing new occupations to the system (ministry introducing a new occupation to the classification of professions will simultaneously determine its core curriculum) will come into force in 2019. Other planned changes include, among others, a new occupational classification structure, an increased number of entities entitled to propose a new profession, changes in the application procedure.

<sup>(27)</sup> Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 13 March 2017 on the classification of occupations for vocational education (Journal of Laws 2017, item 622).

<sup>(28)</sup> Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 31 March 2017 on the core curriculum for training in individual occupations (Journal of Laws 2017, item 860).

<sup>(29)</sup> 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, incl. for 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).

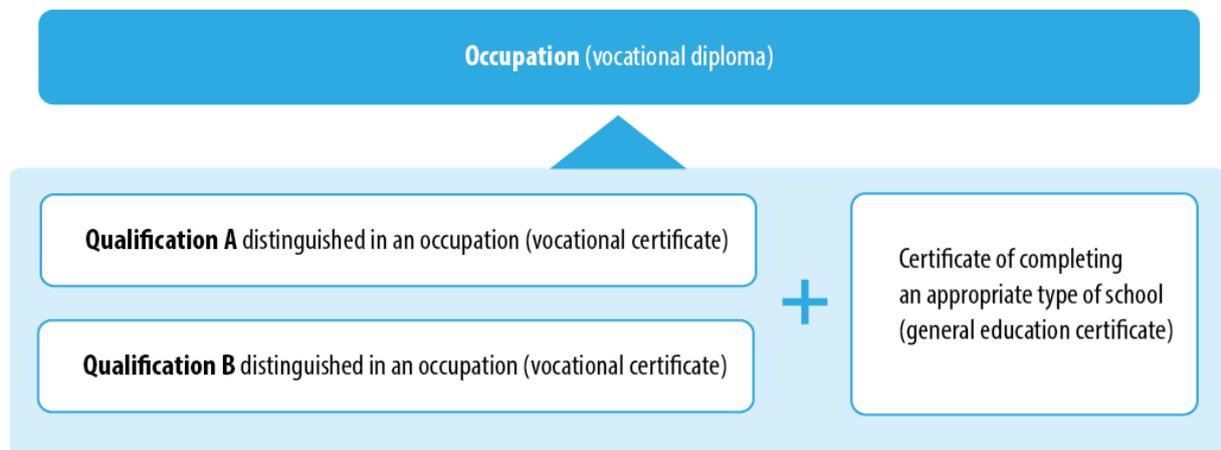
<sup>(30)</sup> The term 'qualification' is defined in the School Education Act, similarly as in the European Qualifications Framework Recommendation (2008).

<sup>(31)</sup> Finishing works technician in construction and warehouse logistician (constituting the foundation for training in the profession of logistics technician).

<sup>(32)</sup> Tailor's assistant, auxiliary mechanic, locksmith's assistant, carpenter's auxiliary worker and hairdresser's assistant.

Following the KZSZ, learners in the formal vocational education and training system can be awarded two types of documents confirming attained learning outcomes (see Figure 17.): vocational certificates (*Certificate of a vocational qualification in an occupation*) and vocational diplomas (*Vocational qualifications diploma*). Attaining qualifications (vocational certificates) together with holding a school leaving certificate enables a learner to obtain a vocational diploma <sup>(33)</sup>.

**Figure 16. Distinguishing qualifications in the occupations listed in the KZSZ**



To be awarded a vocational diploma, a learner must achieve all the qualifications distinguished in the given occupation (vocational certificates) and the certificate of completing an appropriate type of school. The qualifications (vocational certificates and school completion certificate) can be attained at different times and through the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Source: Based on Dębowski and Stęchły, 2015.

Each qualification includes specific sets of learning outcomes defined in the core curriculum for vocational education (PPKZ). 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 (PPKO) determines the learning outcomes related to the general education component and key competences provided by VET programmes <sup>(34)</sup>.

The decision to provide education for a particular occupation listed in the KZSZ is made at the local level by the school principal in agreement with local authorities (see more in Section 3.1.1 below). Thus, the KZSZ classification serves as a ‘menu’ for the choices made by schools and local authorities about which occupations to teach. 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.

### 3.1.1. Developing occupations within the KZSZ

The introduction of new occupations to the KZSZ is regulated by the Education Law. The KZSZ is determined by the education minister in cooperation with the relevant ministers

<sup>(33)</sup> Changes in the names of some examinations and certificates are expected as of September 2019.

<sup>(34)</sup> 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.

responsible for a given sector of the economy, who can submit their requests to include particular occupations in the KZSZ. To anticipate labour market needs, representatives of employers and employees are consulted during the development stage of the KZSZ.

Professional associations, 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 KZSZ and appoints a working group to design the core curriculum for vocational education (PPKZ) 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.

It is assumed that this procedure of introducing a new occupation in the classification will guarantee that developments in the labour market are accounted for and that the KZSZ as well as the PPKZ incorporate employers' expectations.

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). The decision of the principal must be made after asking the county and regional labour market councils for their opinion concerning compliance with labour market needs. The councils are advisory bodies to the county and regional labour offices. It is assumed that this procedure will guarantee that VET schools are providing the type of education that will meet local labour demands and stimulate cooperation between VET schools and local enterprises <sup>(35)</sup>.

### **3.1.2. Modernising VET curricula**

There were two waves of modernising the initial VET system in recent years. First, a reform of the VET system was introduced in 2012/13. Among the key instruments of the reform were: a learning-outcomes-based curriculum, new form of external assessment (external examination), new procedures for validating non-formal and informal learning, and the out-of-school system of vocational education courses. The core curriculum for vocational education was developed as the result of an ESF project <sup>(36)</sup> implemented by the National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education <sup>(37)</sup> – an agency supervised by the education ministry. Broad consultations were conducted with representatives of different stakeholders. Work on the new core curriculum involved around 600 persons (authors and reviewers), including more than 270 employers and representatives of higher education institutions.

The second wave of modernisation is linked to the reform of the VET system implemented as of the 2017/18 school year, which introduced first stage sectoral

---

<sup>(35)</sup> New regulations regarding the procedure of launching new occupation by school will come into force in September 2019.

<sup>(36)</sup> Project title: 'Improvement of core curricula as the key for modernisation of vocational education'. Implemented in 2008-2013. Human Capital Operational Programme.

<sup>(37)</sup> As of July 2016, the National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education was merged with the Centre for Education Development, a national agency supervised by Ministry of National Education.

programmes, followed by second stage sectoral programmes and extended the vocational upper secondary programmes to five years instead of four. The new programmes required new core curricula.

In order to improve the labour market relevance of VET education, the education ministry together with the Education Development Centre, initiated a project focusing on developing partnerships in vocational education and training. The three stages of the ESF-funded project 'Partnership for Vocational Education and Training' are being implemented between January 2016 and February 2019. The aim of the project is to adapt vocational education and training to the needs of the labour market. These activities are conducted in cooperation with employers and other social partners.

The first stage of the project established a Social Partners Forum (until February 2018). At this stage, 25 sectoral teams were created, representing occupations in the IVET system. During this stage, 12 seminars for 25 sectors were organised by the ministry together with the Education Development Centre, in cooperation with the Educational Research Institute and the Central Examination Board. In the end, 60 curricula for VET occupations were proposed, including: 53 modernised curricula, 2 new curricula for new occupations (warehouse logistician and technician of finishing work in construction) and 5 curricula for supporting professions addressed to students with minor intellectual disabilities).

The second stage of the project, implemented until June 2018, focused on developing qualifications and occupations corresponding to the needs of the labour market. A total of 75 curricula for VET occupations were prepared, including supplements to diplomas and recommendations for programme content.

The third stage was completed in February 2019 and adapted VET to the needs of the labour market by involving representatives of employers and employees at all stages of its programming. The main expected results of the third stage of the project are: 73 curricula, supplements to diplomas and qualifications developed on the basis of 73 modified curricula, career development paths for 73 occupations with modernised core curricula, recommendations for teaching programmes for 73 occupations, plans and teaching programmes for 202 occupations.

New regulations introducing the new classification of occupations and the new core curriculum are expected to come into force in September 2019.

### **3.1.3. National qualifications framework**

The Act on the Integrated Qualifications System <sup>(38)</sup> (*Zintegrowany System Kwalifikacji - ZSK*) that established the Polish Qualifications Framework (PRK – *Polska Rama Kwalifikacji*) and the Integrated Qualifications Register (ZRK – *Zintegrowany Rejestr Kwalifikacji*) came into force in January 2016. The main aim of the Integrated Qualifications System is to support lifelong learning. The integrated qualifications system is open to all types of qualifications (school and outside-of-school, sectoral, state regulated and non-regulated (market) qualifications). All qualifications included in the ZSK have an assigned PRK level.

---

<sup>(38)</sup> Act of 22 December 2015 on the Integrated Qualifications System (Journal of Laws 2016, item 64 with further amendments).

The PRK was developed on the basis of reforms in higher education, general education and VET. As a result, the approach of developing qualifications that takes into account learning outcomes, the accumulation and transfer of credits, validation and quality assurance in accordance with European standards became part of the entire formal education system (general, vocational and higher) before the PRK was adopted.

The implementation of the PRK, which includes all types of qualifications, is therefore seen as an action that concludes the series of reforms in the formal education system. It provides a new impetus for change in non-formal education and enables the greater integration of Poland's qualifications system.

Every qualification included in the integrated qualifications system and referenced to the PRK will have to follow regulations regarding:

- the description of qualifications (common description template);
- quality assurance (internal and external);
- the quality of validation/examination;
- the quality of the process of assigning a PRK level to a qualification.

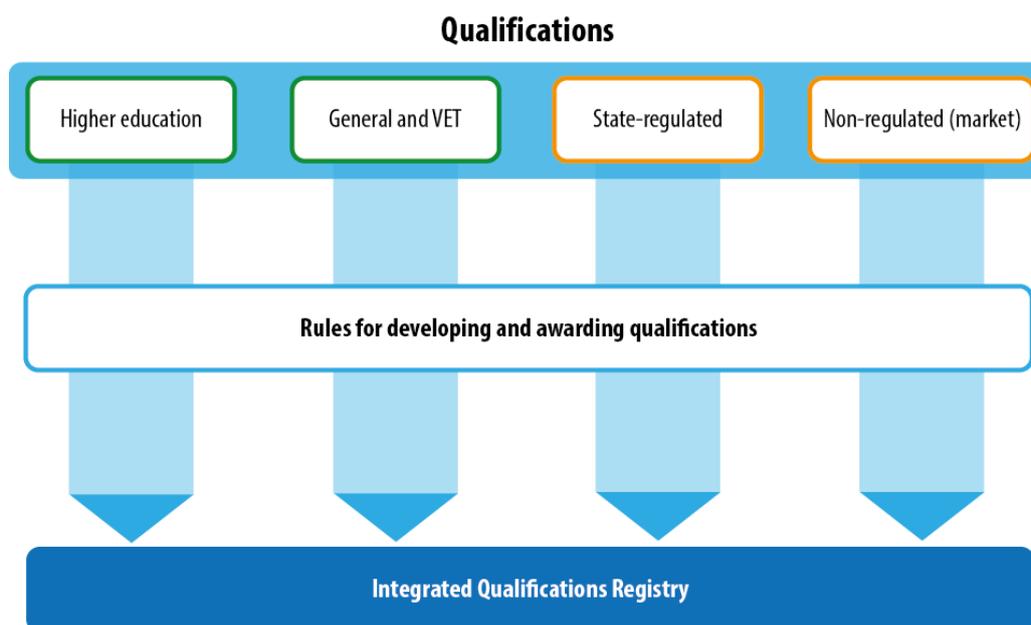
Every qualification included in the ZSK will be registered in the ZRK. All information about qualifications included in the ZSK is publicly available via an internet portal <sup>(39)</sup>. The portal was launched in July 2016, and as of 2018, the ZRK is operated by the Educational Research Institute in Warsaw.

Currently, the register includes predominantly qualifications in higher and IVET education. As of September 2018, eight non-statutory market-based qualifications were included in the ZRK. Further qualifications are in the process of being assessed by the relevant ministers.

---

<sup>(39)</sup> [www.rejestr.kwalifikacje.gov.pl](http://www.rejestr.kwalifikacje.gov.pl)

**Figure 17. Qualifications in the Polish Integrated Qualifications System (IQS)**



Source: IBE

*The first two types are qualifications awarded within formal education and higher education systems. The state-regulated category refers to other qualifications established on the basis of legal regulations outside the formal and higher education systems. Non-regulated, otherwise referred to as 'market qualifications', are developed by various entities (e.g. professional associations, corporations, training institutions) and are not regulated by national legislation.*

## 3.2. Anticipating skills needs

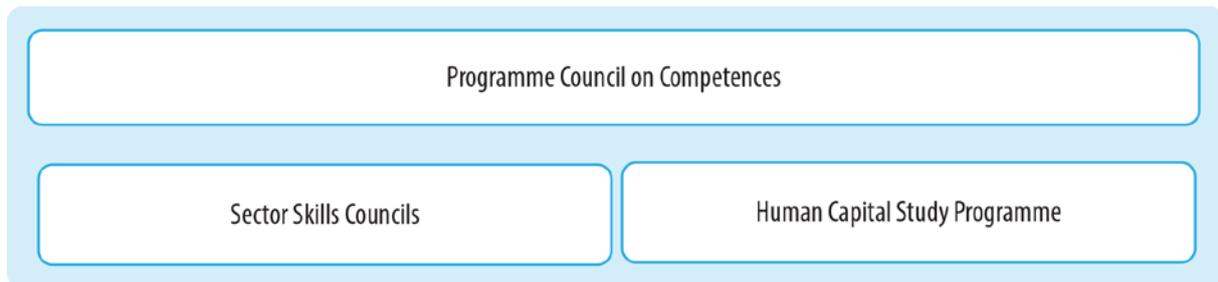
The institutional and legal regulations adopted in the Polish formal VET system are to meet the needs of the labour market by ensuring communication with employers' and employees' organisations. This channel of information exchange is used both at the central level (when defining the KZSZ, PPKZ and quality assurance principles) and the local level (when a VET school chooses the occupations which will be offered and develops their teaching programmes).

### 3.2.1. System of Sector Skills Councils

The system of Sector Skills Councils, launched in 2016, is being further developed within an ESF project managed by the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP) <sup>(40)</sup>. The system of Sector Skills Councils consists of three components, indicated in Figure 18.

<sup>(40)</sup> Project title: "Increasing knowledge about the demand for qualifications and occupations". Operational Programme Knowledge Education and Development.

**Figure 18. System of Sector Skills Councils**



Source: Polish Agency for Enterprise Development <sup>(41)</sup>

The Programme Council on Competences (*Rada Programowa ds. Kompetencji – RPK*) was appointed by the ministry responsible for the economy in 2018. The RPK consists of representatives of the ministries of economic development, education, higher education and science, training institutions, labour market stakeholders, as well as representatives of social partners, universities and non-governmental agencies. The RPK is the main part of the system of building cooperation between the education community and entrepreneurs. The main task of the RPK is to encourage the development of sector councils, including the involvement of relevant sectoral stakeholders and to implement recommendations in the areas of science and education.

Sector Skills Councils are the central part of the system. Within the scope of the project, PARP plans to establish 15 sector councils. Currently, there are seven that are already active in the following sectors:

- (a) health and social care;
- (b) construction;
- (c) finances;
- (d) tourism;
- (e) motorisation and electromobility;
- (f) fashion and innovative textiles;
- (g) ICT.

The main aims of the Sector Skills Councils are:

- (a) to collect information from various labour market stakeholders and recommend systemic solutions and changes in the area of education;
- (b) to stimulate cooperation between education providers and employers;
- (c) to provide support in identifying and anticipating competency needs in a given sector.

The work of the Programme Council on Competences and the Sector Skills Councils is complemented by a research component. This is a continuation of the Human Capital Study

---

<sup>(41)</sup> For more on the system of Sector Skills Councils see:  
<http://power.parp.gov.pl/power212elektromobilnosc/sektorowe-rady-ds-kompetencji>

that has been conducted since 2010 by the Jagiellonian University and PARP <sup>(42)</sup>. The aim of conducting this study in collaboration with entrepreneurs and experts from the Sector Skills Councils is 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.

Results of the 2017 wave of the Human Capital Study (Czarnik, Jelonek and Kasperek, 2017) indicate that among young people (18-35 years old) with basic vocational or secondary education, the share of those who believe that their job corresponds to their education is around 43% and 39%, respectively. It is much lower than among those with higher educational attainment (65%). Moreover, around half of basic vocational or secondary education graduates assess that the skills they acquired at school are useful in their jobs, which is much lower compared to those with a higher education level – 75% of higher education graduates believe that the skills they gained at university are useful in their jobs.

### **3.2.2. Integrated Skills Strategy**

The education ministry is currently working on creating an Integrated Skills Strategy (Zintegrowana Strategia Umiejętności - ZSU) for Poland. ZSU development is financed by the European Social Fund under the framework of the Partnership agreement on European structural and investment funds. The strategy will focus on building, maintaining and using the country's human capital to increase employment and economic growth and promote social inclusion.

The main goals of the ZSU are to:

- (a) design a coherent skills development policy;
- (b) coordinate stakeholders' activities;
- (c) provide equal access to information on skills demand and supply, vocational counselling and education services;
- (d) increase knowledge on the benefits of developing skills for individuals, society and economic growth;
- (e) increase education and labour market activity among all social groups, especially among those at risk of poverty.

The ZSU will cover the entire education and training system, including general and vocational education, initial, continuing and higher education. It refers not only to formal education, but also to non-formal and informal learning. The starting point for developing the strategy is the diagnosis of the strengths and weaknesses of the skills formation system in Poland. This led to the identification of the challenges and priorities of future interventions in the skills development area <sup>(43)</sup>.

---

<sup>(42)</sup> For more on the Human Capital Study programme see: <https://bkl.parp.gov.pl/>

<sup>(43)</sup> [www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/poland-developing-integrated-skills-strategy](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/poland-developing-integrated-skills-strategy)

Since January 2018, the Educational Research Institute's experts have been responsible for the analytical part of drafting the strategy <sup>(44)</sup>. In August 2018, a proposal of a strategy (general part) was presented for public consultation <sup>(45)</sup>.

### 3.2.3. Forecasting skills needs

Another potential source of information on future skills needs will be the ESF-funded project "System for forecasting the Polish labour market". The aim of the project is to develop an innovative forecasting method for the main labour market indicators for Poland.

The main challenge is to develop projections of labour market demand and supply and to calculate the resulting gap. The projections will be developed at a high level of disaggregation (spatial, by educational attainment and others) up to the year 2050. The resulting forecasting model will be made available to labour market institutions through a web-based graphic user interface, which will aid them in planning effective labour market policies.

The project is being implemented by a consortium of the Institute for Structural Research, University of Łódź and the Institute for Labour and Social Studies. The results of the project are expected in February 2020.

The main steps of the project are to:

1. Evaluate and update existing forecasting, created in the early 2010s. The assessment covers the assumed methodology and the accuracy of the forecasts. It will also be updated with the latest data, so that labour market institutions will have access to up-to-date forecasts until the new model is developed.

2. Create a new labour market forecasting system, expanded along several dimensions:

- (a) separate forecasts of labour demand, labour supply and the resulting gap between the two; the forecasts will be conducted for a finer disaggregation: for types of counties, classification of economic activities (based on Nace Rev. 2), level and field of education of the workforce;

- (b) macroeconomic module – the module will allow the simulation of custom macroeconomic scenarios through the use of a Dynamic Stochastic General Equilibrium model - it will be possible for the user to generate forecasts for different assumptions about the future trends of selected economic indicators;

- (c) integration with existing tools and databases – the model will be integrated with other existing tools and databases used by the labour ministry, such as the CeSAR platform (analytical platform of the Ministry) and the portal of the Public Employment Services ([psz.praca.gov.pl](http://psz.praca.gov.pl));

---

<sup>(44)</sup> For more on ZSU see: <http://www.ibe.edu.pl/pl/projekty-krajowe/zintegrowana-strategia-umiejtnosci>.

<sup>(45)</sup> Integrated Skills Strategy – proposal [www.bjp.men.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/08/zintegrowana-strategia-umiejtnosci-do-uzgodnien-i-konsultacji.pdf](http://www.bjp.men.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/08/zintegrowana-strategia-umiejtnosci-do-uzgodnien-i-konsultacji.pdf) [accessed on September 20, 2018].

- (d) internet job offers module, which will automatically browse, analyse and classify job offers advertised online.

A new approach to analysing the demand for professions, qualifications and skills is also being developed by the Educational Research Institute. This new tool will use data from various sources, including the School Information System (SIO), Statistics Poland and social insurance institution data, opinions of Sectoral Skills Councils and the Programme Skills Council, as well as the opinions of ministers responsible for the professions taught within the VET system. The analyses conducted by the Educational Research Institute will constitute the basis for an annual forecast of the demand for employees in vocational education occupations on the national and regional labour markets, announced by the education ministry. It is planned that the forecast of the demand will be announced annually starting from 2019. The forecast will impact, among others, VET financing. For example, state subsidies for learners of special demand occupations in VET schools, as indicated by the forecast, will be increased, as will be funding available for employers involved in training VET learners in special demand occupations.

#### **3.2.4. Monitoring the labour market entry of vocational programmes graduates.**

The education ministry is also working on developing a national system to monitor the school-to-work transition of VET students that would be based on a mix of survey-based methods and matching administrative information from the school information system to social insurance data.

The development of this system is conducted under an ESF-funded project in the Educational Research Institute. In December 2017, the Educational Research Institute (IBE) prepared a first report from the pilot monitoring round. It covered graduates from the 2014/2015 school year, who were surveyed as part of the initial project implemented in IBE. In 2016/2017, interviews were conducted with students from the last year of vocational programmes and follow-up interviews were conducted in the spring of 2018 (the first round of monitoring). In 2018, additional information from administrative data will be tested. The report from the pilot round and the first round together with recommendations regarding legal changes is planned for 2019.

In addition to activities organised at the national level, regional authorities are also developing various programmes to assess the current demand for skills of vocational programme graduates, e.g. the Małopolska region is comprehensively monitoring the school-to-work transition of VET students <sup>(46)</sup>.

---

<sup>(46)</sup> For more information and the reports see: <http://www.obserwatorium.malopolska.pl/raporty/badanie-losow-absolwentow-szkol-zawodowych-2015-podsumowanie-glownych-wynikow> [accessed on August, 20 2018].

### 3.3. Recognition of prior learning

The VET system allows learners to attain qualifications (certificates) through the validation of non-formal education and informal learning <sup>(47)</sup>. Persons can take extramural State vocational examinations carried out by the regional examination boards if they are over 18 years of age, have completed a lower secondary programme or an eight-year primary school and have at least two years of learning or work in an occupation related to the targeted qualification <sup>(48)</sup>. 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 <sup>(49)</sup>.

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, approximately 40 EUR (13 EUR for the written part and 27 EUR for the practical part) <sup>(50)</sup>.

### 3.4. Quality assurance in VET

#### 3.4.1. External and internal quality assurance systems

All VET schools are included in external and internal quality assurance systems. External quality assurance is provided by the system of pedagogical supervision. External pedagogical supervision is conducted by the Regional Education Authorities (*kurator oświaty*) overseen by the Minister of Education. Pedagogical supervision covers four aspects: evaluation, an audit of legal compliance, monitoring and support <sup>(51)</sup>.

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

---

<sup>(47)</sup> By taking extramural exams adults might also acquire certificate of completion of the general education schools (primary and secondary).

<sup>(48)</sup> Documents confirming the fulfilment of these requirements are, in particular, school certificates, indexes, education certificates or employment certificates related to work in a specific occupation, including those obtained abroad.

<sup>(49)</sup> Exactly as regular VET learners do.

<sup>(50)</sup> Regular VET school students and participants of vocational qualifications courses are exempted from having to pay the examination fee (unless they fail to pass the exam for two times, then for taking the exam for the third time (and subsequent times) students pay the fee which is equal to the fee for the extramural exam.

<sup>(51)</sup> *Evaluation* of schools is conducted according to certain uniform requirements set in the legislation which concern (1) organisation of educational processes; (2) acquiring by students skills and knowledge defined in the national core curriculum; (3) active participation of students; (4) shaping social attitudes, and respect for social norms; (5) support to student's development taking into account their individual circumstances (6) cooperation with parents (7) cooperation with local community (8) including of findings from analyses of external exams' results as well as external and internal evaluations (9) school management. Legal compliance auditing aims to check whether the activities of schools comply with legislation. See more: Eurydice Report for Poland 2018 (2018).

are relatively free in how they design and implement these systems, but are obliged to include the four aspects of pedagogical supervision mentioned above: evaluation, compliance audit, monitoring and support. 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 (KOWEziU) prepared 'Quality Standards for VET' (2013), a document covering ten thematic areas related to quality assurance in VET<sup>(52)</sup>, which are in line with the 2009 EQARF/EQAVET Recommendation. This document can be voluntarily used by schools. Poland's EQAVET Reference Point is located at the Centre for Education Development (*Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji*).

In the case of non-statutory qualifications included in the ZRK, quality assurance is provided by external quality assurance entities (*Podmioty Zewnętrzznego 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.

### **3.4.2. 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 minister. 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.

### **3.4.3. 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<sup>(53)</sup>. Every school and education institution has to submit data regarding the number and categories of students, teachers, facilities, expenses, etc. Schools submit data through a web application. Information is collected regionally and

---

<sup>(52)</sup> 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.

<sup>(53)</sup> Act of 15 April 2011 on the school information system (Journal of Laws 2011, no. 139, item 814).

then exported by regional education authorities to the Ministry of National Education. 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 has functioned in this way since 2012.

## CHAPTER 4.

# Promoting participation in VET

Participation in IVET, as shown in Chapters 1 and 2, remains low, but is slightly rising in recent years. The recent reforms of vocational education (in 2012 and 2017) introduced changes in the organisation of the didactical content and the evaluation of the outcomes of basic vocational, vocational upper secondary and post-secondary VET. The revision of the vocational education system in 2017 aimed to further increase incentives for participation in VET, including the development of vocational guidance, the broad introduction of a dual system in VET programmes and promoting better co-operation between schools and employers. As discussed in Chapter 3, the Ministry of National Education together with the Education Development Centre and Educational Research Institute continue to work on updating the IVET core curriculum.

## 4.1. Incentives for learners, education providers and enterprises

There are two main areas of VET policy that include incentives for participation in VET. In IVET, these incentives are included in the education policy area coordinated by the Ministry of National Education. Some of the activities targeting youth from disadvantaged backgrounds and NEETs are also provided by the Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP). Adult participation in continuing VET is supported mainly through active labour market policies implemented by the public employment services and financed from the Labour Fund. This area of VET policy is coordinated by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy.

### 4.1.1. Incentives for learners

In IVET, incentives include:

#### (a) scholarships for IVET students

In 2018, school scholarships range from PLN 99.20 to PLN 248 (from 23 to 57 EUR) per month depending on the decision of local authorities. The period of receiving a scholarship can range from one to ten months in one school year, depending on the decision of the school. The support can also take the form of full or partial coverage of participation in education activities or in-kind support, such as purchasing textbooks. VET students can also receive financial support when studying away from their community.

The criteria for school scholarships include a low income (that is less than a net income of PLN 514 – around 119 EUR) per capita in the family<sup>54</sup> combined with social problems that the family is facing, such as the existence of unemployed parents or guardians, long-term illness, single parent family.

---

<sup>54</sup>) This is the threshold for receiving social assistance benefits in Poland.

Scholarships for good grades can also be granted to VET learners (e.g. scholarships from county governments, scholarships from the Prime Minister) <sup>(55)</sup>.

Apart from the country level, there are also regional initiatives aiming to promote participation in VET, including scholarships and other incentives for VET learners. For example, the Mazovian region is offering scholarship programmes for IVET students <sup>(56)</sup>.

(b) salary for juvenile workers

Students who are juvenile workers (i.e. they have a contract with employers) are entitled to a salary. The amount of their salary cannot be less than 4% (in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of training) 5% (in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of training) and 6% (in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of training) of the average monthly salary. The employer may decide on another salary amount for the trainee, which should not be lower than the amounts indicated above. Employers also pay mandatory social insurance on the basis of the salary paid to the juvenile worker. The minimum salaries for juvenile workers in 2018 are shown in the Table 12.

**Table 12. Minimum salaries for juvenile workers (2018)**

Period	1 <sup>st</sup> year of training	2 <sup>nd</sup> year of training	3 <sup>rd</sup> year of training
1.09.2018 - 30.11.2018	180,84 PLN	226,05 PLN	271,26 PLN
	42 EUR	52 EUR	63 EUR
1.06.2018 - 31.08.2018	184,91 PLN	231,14 PLN	277,37 PLN
	43 EUR	54 EUR	64 EUR
1.03.2018 - 31.05.2018	180,67 PLN	225,83 PLN	271,00 PLN
	42 EUR	52 EUR	63 EUR
1.01.2018 - 28.02.2018	170,22 PLN	212,78 PLN	255,34 PLN
	39 EUR	49 EUR	59 EUR

Source: own calculations based on legal acts.

(c) Vocational training and support by the Voluntary Labour Corps

The Voluntary Labour Corps <sup>(57)</sup> (Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy – OHP) is an organisation specialised in supporting youth at risk of social exclusion and unemployed under 25 years of age, overseen by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy. The organisation offers young people over 15 years of age without lower secondary education, the possibility to attain vocational qualifications and/or to supplement their education. Currently it has over 200 Corps agencies providing young people with the opportunity to complete their education and acquire professional qualifications before entering adult life. The Voluntary Labour Corps

<sup>(55)</sup> Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 14 June 2005 on scholarships granted by the President of the Council of Ministers, minister in charge of education and minister in charge of culture and national heritage (Journal of Laws No. 106, item 890).

<sup>(56)</sup> For more, see [www.ceziu.pl/plan/stypendium/stypendium.html](http://www.ceziu.pl/plan/stypendium/stypendium.html)

<sup>(57)</sup> For more, see [www.ohp.pl](http://www.ohp.pl) as well as Chłóń-Domińczak, A., Holzer-Żelażewska, D., & Maliszewska, A. (2018). *Guidance and outreach for inactive and unemployed - Poland* (Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.).

provides training in more than 60 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.

The Voluntary Labour Corps is one of the key institutions implementing the 'Youth Guarantee' programme. It is a part of the National Reform Programme (NPR) and includes 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 (Chłoń-Domińczak, Holzer-Żelażewska and Maliszewska, 2018: 13).

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

- (a) vocational training;
- (b) loans for financing of the cost of training;
- (c) training vouchers;
- (d) vocational practice vouchers;
- (e) scholarships for youth from low income families for the period of education;
- (f) financial support for examination fees and vocational licence fees;
- (g) statutory training leave for employees.

The Labour Fund <sup>(58)</sup> plays an important role in delivering state support for VET. It promotes participation by granting resources for vocational training initiatives. The grants are distributed through the Labour Offices – UP (*Urząd Pracy*). 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 training is offered in the form of group training in courses offered by Ups, or individual training, where the unemployed person receives financing to cover the cost of the training.

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 persons participated in various forms of training offered by the Labour Offices. The most popular form of training (more than 12 000 participants) was driver's licence courses. There was a decline in participation compared to 2015, when the number of participants in training was almost 67 000. The decline is mainly caused by the lower number of unemployed and declining unemployment rate.

---

<sup>(58)</sup> 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)

The most popular type of support is financing for training courses chosen by participants and participation in group training offered by UPs (see Table 13.). Other forms of support are much less popular. Between 2015 and 2017, the largest decline in the type of training support is noted for training loans as well as group training planned by UPs, while the financing of post-graduate studies had the smallest decline. The only form of support that increased between 2015 and 2017 is the financing of the cost of an exam or licence, which may indicate that focusing on obtaining qualifications or licences has been increased.

**Table 13. Participants in various forms of training support offered by UPs (Number of persons who applied for some type of training)**

	Training chosen by the participant	Group training planned by the UP	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: (MRPiPS, 2018) and earlier editions

UPs support the organisation of vocational training for employees, but only at the initiative of employers (the condition of obtaining such support is that the employer must have a special training fund in his / her company). 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.

Another form of support offered by UPs is the funding of apprenticeships organised in companies. After the amendment of the Act on the promotion of employment and labour market institutions in 2009 <sup>(59)</sup>, apprenticeships were made available to all unemployed, not only to young people without a job, as it had been before the change. 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 can be used to prepare for and take an examination or defend a thesis. The training leave can be up to 6 days in the case of upper secondary school completion examinations (*matura*) and the State vocational examination. More training leave (21 days) can be granted to an employee who is a student in the last year of studies and is preparing a thesis or for an examination. Training leave is payable (to cover lost income) to an employee if an employer requires or agrees to the need for the training before it starts. Training leave cannot be provided if an employee is already using another form of leave, e.g. unpaid extended post-maternity leave.

<sup>(59)</sup> 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).

#### **4.1.2. Support for education providers**

Vocational schools can receive support from Regional Operational Programmes for their modernisation and education offer development. Based on regional grant competitions, such support can be granted for the following activities:

- (a) vocational counselling;
- (b) organisation of extracurricular activities that serve the acquisition of additional knowledge and vocational skills;
- (c) organisation of preparatory courses for higher education;
- (d) supporting students in achieving additional qualifications that increase their employability on the labour market;
- (e) out-of-school forms of vocational training;
- (f) raising competences and qualifications of VET teachers;
- (g) development of vocational training conditions similar to natural working conditions;
- (h) organisation of vocational practice;
- (i) development of the new VET educational offer.

Furthermore, schools can receive support to develop their infrastructure, such as:

- (a) building new didactical facilities;
- (b) reconstructing, adapting, modernising practical training facilities;
- (c) purchasing IT equipment;
- (d) purchasing equipment to support vocational training;
- (e) purchasing equipment and software that enable the development of key competencies on the labour market.

In the area of continuous VET, training companies can offer training to unemployed persons or employees, in accordance with the rules specified above.

The database of development services (*Baza Usług Rozwojowych*) managed by PARP provides access to information on the available training offer and enables such opportunities to be registered in the National System of Services (*Krajowy System Usług – KSU*), which is a network of institutions supporting the regional development of entrepreneurship.

#### **4.1.3. Support for enterprises**

- (a) supporting employers in their involvement in VET practical training

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, and refund of the bonus for work placement supervisors.

An assessment of the co-operation between schools and enterprises in the area of work placements (Fila et al., 2014) indicates that 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.

The organisational details of practical training are specified in the regulation on practical training from 24 August 2017 <sup>(60)</sup>. The regulation specifies the conditions and mode of organising practical vocational training in school workshops, lifelong learning establishments, practical training institutions, workplaces and individual farms. It also specifies requirements for in-company trainers (practical vocational training instructors) and the content of the contract for practical training.

(b) promoting the involvement of local social partners in adapting VET to the needs of the local labour market

The European Social Fund projects in the 2014-20 programming period further promote the involvement of employers, social partners and support for VET programmes in the development of curricula adapted to labour market needs. Within the project "Partnership for vocational education development", representatives of social partners are involved in working groups that are updating VET curricula.

(c) National Training Fund supporting the financing of training organised by employers

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. The application for funding can be submitted to the UP by any employer who employs at least one employee. 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 (MRPiPS, 2018), which is an increase by around one-third compared to 2015.

## 4.2. Guidance and counselling

As with the financial and other incentives supporting VET participation, vocational guidance and counselling is also under the remit of the Ministry of National Education, which is responsible for providing guidance and counselling services to young people in schools and

---

<sup>(60)</sup> Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 24 December 2017 on the practical vocational training (Journal of Laws 2017, item 1644)

the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, responsible for guidance and counselling services to adults.

#### **4.2.1. Vocational guidance and counselling in schools**

According to the 2013 rules on providing and organising psychological and pedagogical assistance in public schools and other educational institutions (<sup>61</sup>), schools and other educational institutions are obliged to provide students and teachers with pedagogical and psychological support, including vocational information and guidance to help students in choosing their educational paths and careers. The tasks of the vocational counsellors include:

- (a) systematically diagnosing students' needs for educational information and vocational training and help in planning education and career;
- (b) collecting, updating and sharing of education and occupational-specific information, relevant for the level of education;
- (c) conducting activities relating to the choice of further education and occupation, as well as education and career planning;
- (d) coordinating the information and counselling activities conducted by the school and the institution;
- (e) cooperating with other teachers in developing activities and ensuring their continuity in the field of education and vocational counselling;
- (f) supporting teachers, educators, educational groups and other specialists in providing psychological and pedagogical support.

Should there be no vocational counsellor employed at a school, the school director appoints a person (usually a teacher) to be responsible for these activities. All schools are obliged to have an interschool system of counselling, adopted in the school statute.

Counsellors provide students with information relating to vocational development and the labour market, including information on which occupations are in demand on the labour market and which are not.

An assessment by the Educational Research Institute (Podwójcic, 2015) showed that professional counsellors were employed in 15.4% of schools, while in 78.6% of the schools, other persons were responsible for counselling. A small share (5.4%) of schools declared that they do not provide counselling services to their students. Professional counsellors worked in about 20% of VET schools.

Until 2018, vocational guidance was implemented on the basis of the above-mentioned regulation on providing and organising psychological and pedagogical assistance. However, no specific programme content existed for the vocational guidance required at particular stages of education.

---

<sup>61</sup>) Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 30 April 2013 on the rules on providing and organising psychological and pedagogical assistance in public pre-schools, schools and other educational institutions (Journal of Laws 2013, item 532).

On September 1, 2018, a new regulation on vocational guidance and counselling in Polish schools entered into force. According to the regulation, occupational counselling/vocational guidance is to be implemented in a planned and systematic way, in all types of schools, including VET schools.

The new regulation is intended to change the way of thinking about career guidance/vocational counselling, which is supposed to be perceived as a process starting in pre-school and continuing at subsequent stages of education. It defines the terms and manner of implementing and organising vocational guidance, including forms of vocational guidance and programme content, which vary depending on the school level. In the secondary programmes [ISCED 3], including IVET schools, vocational guidance activities support students in the process of preparing them to make conscious and autonomous decisions on selecting the next stage of their education and occupation, taking into account their interests, talents and vocational predispositions, as well as information about the education system and the labour market.

According to the regulation, schools are expected to develop their own programme to implement the intra-school vocational guidance system for each new school year. The programme should include: activities to implement vocational guidance (including the content of the activities, methods and forms of implementation, time frame of implementation, persons responsible for implementation) as well as entities with which the school cooperates in this area.

The programme should consider the needs of students and parents as well as local or regional activities relating to vocational guidance.

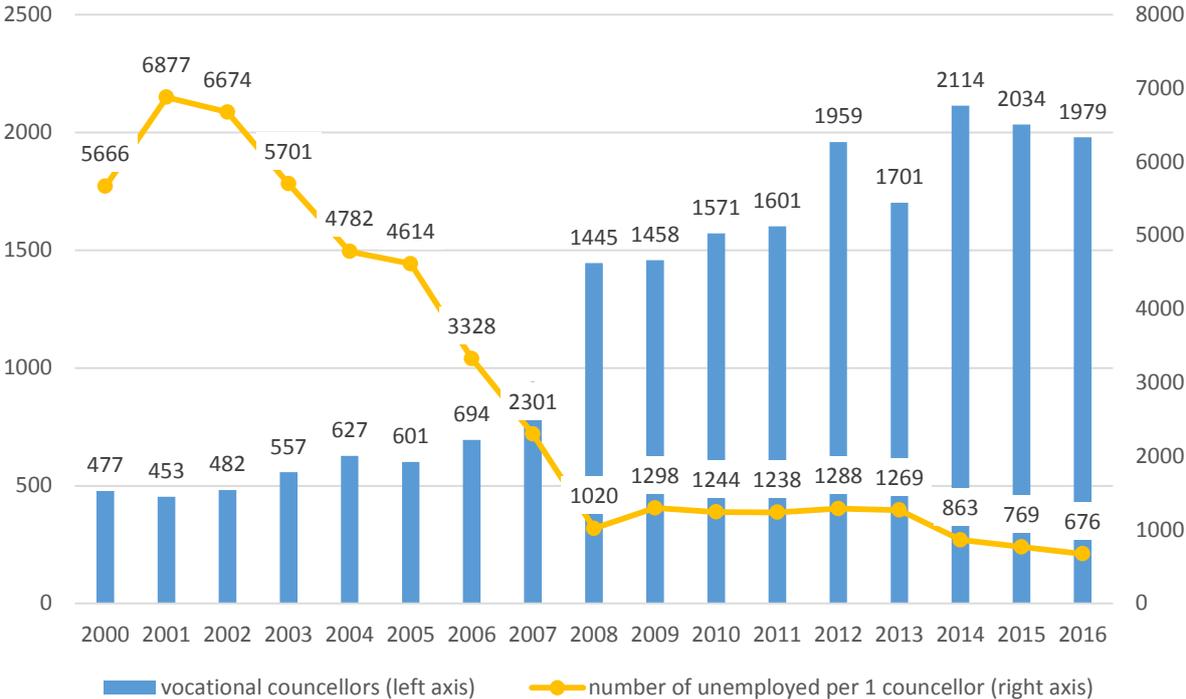
In organising vocational guidance, schools can cooperate with various institutions – employers, practical education institutions and centres for further education and training, vocational education schools, psychological and pedagogical counselling centres, teacher training centres and labour market institutions.

#### **4.2.2. Vocational guidance and counselling for adults**

In 2016, there were 2 214 vocational counsellors in UPs; 235 were employed at the regional level and 1 979 at the county level (MRPiPS, 2017).

The number of counsellors employed at county UPs had been increasing until 2014, as shown in Figure 20. As a result of this increase, but also due to a reduction in the number of unemployed persons, the number of clients per one counsellor has been decreasing. In 2016, this number fell to 676 persons, which is more than ten times less compared to 2001.

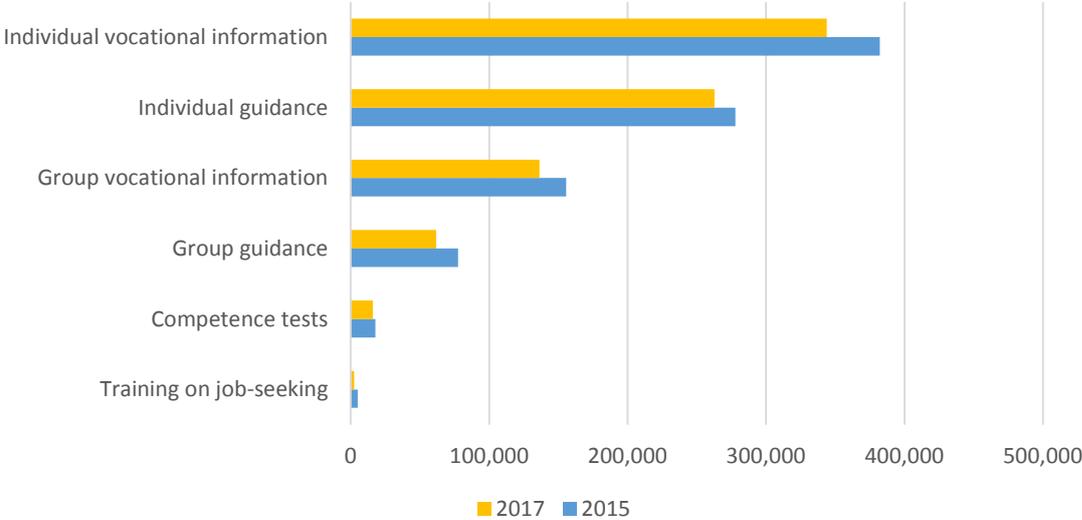
**Figure 19. Vocational counsellors and unemployed persons per counsellor at county UPs**



Source: (MRPiPS, 2017) and earlier editions

Counselling and guidance services for adults are available in the UPs to unemployed persons who are actively searching for a job. The scope of vocational counselling includes individual and group counselling and guidance. Individual counselling aims to motivate the client to discuss and solve problems relating to occupations. Group vocational counselling relates to such issues as: occupations, labour market, possibilities of vocational training, services in the labour market, etc. Vocational information is also provided individually or in groups. Unemployed persons can be tested for their competences and receive job-seeking skills training. The number of persons who received such support in 2015 and 2017 is shown in Figure 21. The most popular forms used by unemployed persons and UPs are individual information and guidance.

**Figure 20. Number of unemployed persons who received various forms of vocational counselling and guidance in 2015 and 2017**



Source: (MRPiPS, 2018) and earlier editions

In order to promote VET, UPs also provide guidance to employers. They can receive support in the recruitment of appropriate candidates (290 cases in 2017), as well as support in providing a job description for a specific post (1 233 cases) (MRPiPS, 2018).

## Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>CKE</b>	Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna [Central Examination Board]
<b>CVET</b>	continuing vocational education and training
<b>ECDL</b>	European Computer Driving License
<b>EQARF</b>	European Quality Assurance Reference Framework
<b>EQAVET</b>	European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
<b>ESF</b>	European Social Fund
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EUR</b>	Euro
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>IBE</b>	Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych [Educational Research Institute]
<b>ISCED</b>	International Standard Classification of Education
<b>IVET</b>	Initial Vocational Education and Training
<b>KOWEZIU</b>	Krajowy Ośrodek Wspierania Edukacji Zawodowej i Ustawicznej (KOWEZIU)
<b>KKZ</b>	kwalityfikacyjne kursy zawodowe [vocational qualification courses]
<b>KSU</b>	Krajowy System Usług [National System of Services]
<b>KZSZ</b>	Klasyfikacja Zawodów Kształcenia Zawodowego [the classification of occupations for vocational education]
<b>LFS</b>	Labour Force Survey
<b>MRPiPS</b>	Ministerstwo Rodziny Pracy i Polisyki Społecznej [Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy]
<b>NEET</b>	not in employment nor in education and training
<b>NPR</b>	National Reform Programme
<b>OHP</b>	Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy [Voluntary Labour Corps]
<b>PARP</b>	Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości [Polish Agency for Enterprise Development]
<b>PIAAC</b>	The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
<b>PISA</b>	Programme for International Student Assessment
<b>PLN</b>	Polish Zloty
<b>PPKO</b>	Podstawa Programowa Kształcenia Ogólnego [the core curriculum for general

	education]
<b>PPKZ</b>	Podstawa Programowa Kształcenia w Zawodach [the core curriculum for vocational education]
<b>PQF</b>	Polish Qualifications Framework
<b>PZZJ</b>	Podmioty Zewnętrznego Zapewniania Jakości [external quality assurance entities]
<b>RPK</b>	Rada Programowa ds. Kompetencji [The Programme Council on Competences]
<b>SEN</b>	special education needs
<b>SHARE</b>	Survey on Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe
<b>SIO</b>	System Informacji Oświatowej [School Information System]
<b>UP</b>	Urząd Pracy [Labour Offices]
<b>VET</b>	Vocational Education and Training
<b>ZSK</b>	Zintegrowany System Kwalifikacji [Integrated Qualifications System]
<b>ZSU</b>	Zintegrowana Strategia Umiejętności [Integrated Skills Strategy]

## References

Chłoń-Domińczak A. (ed.) (2014). *Portret generacji 50+ w Polsce i w Europie: Wyniki badania zdrowia, starzenia się i przechodzenia na emeryturę w Europie (SHARE)* [Portrait of the 50+ generation in Poland and Europe: Results of the survey on health, ageing and retirement in Europe]. Warsaw: Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych.

Chłoń-Domińczak A. (ed.) (2015). *Regionalne uwarunkowania decyzji edukacyjnych – wybrane aspekty* [Regional conditions affecting educational decisions – selected aspects]. Warsaw: Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych.

Chłoń-Domińczak, A., Holzer-Żelaźewska, D., & Maliszewska, A. (2018). *Guidance and outreach for inactive and unemployed - Poland* (Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.).

[http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2018/guidance\\_outreach\\_Poland\\_Cedefop\\_ReferNet.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2018/guidance_outreach_Poland_Cedefop_ReferNet.pdf)

CKE (2017). *Sprawozdanie z osiągnięć zdających egzamin potwierdzający kwalifikacje w zawodzie w roku szkolnym 2016/2017*. [Report on results of the examination confirming a qualification for an occupation in 2016/2017 school year]. Warsaw: Central Examination Commission.

[https://cke.gov.pl/images/EGZAMIN\\_ZAWODOWY/informacje\\_o\\_wynikach/2017/Sprawozdanie\\_z\\_przebiegu\\_egzaminu\\_potwierdzaj%c4%85cego\\_kwalifikacje\\_w\\_zawodzie\\_w\\_roku\\_szkolnym\\_2016-2017.pdf](https://cke.gov.pl/images/EGZAMIN_ZAWODOWY/informacje_o_wynikach/2017/Sprawozdanie_z_przebiegu_egzaminu_potwierdzaj%c4%85cego_kwalifikacje_w_zawodzie_w_roku_szkolnym_2016-2017.pdf)

Czarnik, S., Jelonek, M., & Kasperek, K. (2017). *Bilans Kapitału Ludzkiego 2017* [Human Capital Study 2017].

[https://www.parp.gov.pl/images/PARP\\_publications/pdf/bkl%202017%20raport%20ludno%20180618.pdf](https://www.parp.gov.pl/images/PARP_publications/pdf/bkl%202017%20raport%20ludno%20180618.pdf)

Dębowski H.; Stęchły W. (2015). *Implementing ECVET principles. Reforming Poland's vocational education and training through learning outcomes based curricula and assessment*. Warsaw Forum of Economic Sociology 6:2(12) Autumn 2015.

Eurostat [2018]. *Real GDP growth rate* [tec00115] <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

Eurostat [2018]. *Economic activity rates by sex, age and NUTS 2 regions* [lfst\_r\_lfp2actrt] <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

Eurostat [2018]. *Activity rates by sex, age and educational attainment level* [lfsa\_argaed] <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

Eurostat [2018]. *Employment rates by sex, age and educational attainment level* [lfsa\_ergaed] <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

Eurostat [2018]. *Unemployment rates by sex, age and educational attainment level* [lfsa\_urgaed] <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database> [accessed 20.09.2018].

Eurostat [2018]. *Population by sex, age and educational attainment level* [lfsa\_pgaed] <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

Eurostat [2018]. *Early leavers from education and training* [edat\_lfse\_14] <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

Eurostat [2018]. *Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex, age and educational attainment level* [edat\_lfse\_21] <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

Eurostat [2018]. *Participation rate in education and training by sex* [trng\_aes\_100] <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

Eurostat [2018]. *Participation rate in education and training (last 4 weeks) by sex and age* [trng\_lfs\_01]. ] <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

Eurostat [2018]. *Participation rate in education and training by age* [trng\_aes\_101]

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database> [

Eurydice (2018). *The system of education in Poland: 2018*. Warsaw: Foundation for the Development of the Education System, Warsaw 2018.

Federowicz M. (2011). *OECD PISA: Wyniki badania 2009 w Polsce* [OECD PISA: 2009 study results in Poland]. [http://www.ifispan.waw.pl/pliki/1\\_pisa\\_2009.pdf](http://www.ifispan.waw.pl/pliki/1_pisa_2009.pdf) [accessed 29.08.2018].

Federowicz M.; Choińska-Mika J.; Walczak D. (2014) (eds.). *Raport o stanie edukacji: Liczą się nauczyciele* [Report on the State of Education. Teachers matter]. Warsaw: Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych.

Fila J.; Rybińska, A.; Trzciniński 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.

*Integrated Qualifications Register* <https://rejestr.kwalifikacje.gov.pl> [accessed 28.09.2018].

KOWEZIU (2013). *Standardy jakości kształcenia zawodowego* [Quality standards for VET]. Warszawa: Krajowy Ośrodek Wspierania Edukacji Zawodowej i Ustawicznej.

Local Data Bank (2018), Central Statistical Office of Poland, <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start>.

MEN (2018). *Zintegrowana Strategia Umiejętności – część ogólna* [Integrated Skills Strategy – general part]. Warsaw.

[www.bip.men.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/08/zintegrowana-strategia-umiejtnosci-do-uzgodnien-i-konsultacji.pdf](http://www.bip.men.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/08/zintegrowana-strategia-umiejtnosci-do-uzgodnien-i-konsultacji.pdf)

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

MRPiPS. (2017). *Informacja o realizacji usługi poradnictwo zawodowe w urzędach pracy w 2016 r.* [Information on vocational counselling in labour offices in 2016]. Warsaw: Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, 2017 and earlier editions.

OHP [2018]. *Voluntary Labour Corps* [website]. [www.ohp.pl](http://www.ohp.pl)

Podwójcic K. (2015). *Diagnoza stanu doradztwa w gimnazjach i szkołach ponadgimnazjalnych w relacjach dyrektorów szkół i osób realizujących doradztwo* [A diagnosis of the state of counselling in lower secondary and post-lower secondary schools as reported by school principals and persons providing counselling]. Warsaw: Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych.

Rynko M. (ed.) (2013). *Umiejętności Polaków – wyniki Międzynarodowego Badania Kompetencji Osób Dorosłych (PIAAC)* [The skills of Poles. Results of the International Survey of Adult Skills (PIACC)]. Warsaw: Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych.

Statistics Poland (2013a). *Wybory ścieżki kształcenia a sytuacja zawodowa Polaków* [Educational choices and occupational status of Poles]. Warsaw: Statistics Poland.

Statistics Poland (2013b). *Kształcenie dorosłych 2011* [Adult education 2011]. Warsaw: Statistics Poland.

Statistics Poland (2014). *Prognoza ludności na lata 2014-2020* [Population projection 2014-2050] <http://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/ludnosc/prognoza-ludnosc/prognoza-ludnosc-na-lata-2014-2050-opracowana-2014-r-,1,5.html> [accessed 20.08.2018].

Statistics Poland (2017). *Aktywność ekonomiczna ludności Polski w pierwszym kwartale 2017* [The economic activity of the population of Poland in the first quarter of 2017]. Warsaw: Statistics Poland, 2017 and earlier editions.

Statistics Poland (2018a). *Powierzchnia i ludność w przekroju terytorialnym*. [Area and population in the territorial profile in 2018]. Warsaw: Statistics Poland.

<https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/ludnosc/ludnosc/powierzchnia-i-ludnosc-w-przekroju-terytorialnym-w-2018-roku,7,15.html>

Statistics Poland (2018b). Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland 2018, Warsaw: Statistics Poland.

Statistics Poland (2018c). Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2017/2018 [Education in the 2017/2018 school year]. Warsaw: Statistics Poland, 2018 and earlier editions.

Turek K.; Worek B. (2015). *Kształcenie po szkole: Na podstawie badań instytucji i firm szkoleniowych pracodawców i ludności zrealizowanych w 2014 roku w ramach V edycji projektu Bilans Kapitału Ludzkiego: Edukacja a rynek pracy – tom III* [Learning after school: Based on a study of training institutions and firms for employers and the population performer in 2014 as part of the V edition of the Human Capital Balance Sheet: Education and the Labour Market – volume III]. Warsaw: Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości.

United Nations (2017). Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. *World Population Prospects: the 2017 revision*. [https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2017\\_Volume-II-Demographic-Profiles.pdf](https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2017_Volume-II-Demographic-Profiles.pdf) [accessed 28.09.2018]

## Legislation

School Education Act of 7 September 1991 (Journal of Laws 1991, No. 95, item 425 with further amendments)

Act of 14 December 2016 Education Law (Journal of Laws 2017, item 59)

Act of 27 July 2005 The Law on Higher Education (Journal of Laws 2005, No. 164, item 1365 with further amendments)

Act of 20 July 2018 - Law on Higher Education and Science (Journal of Laws 2018 item 1668)

Act of 15 April 2011 on the school information system (Journal of Laws 2011, No. 139, item 814 with further amendments).

Act of 26 January 1982 - Teacher's Charter (Journal of Laws 1982, No. 3, item 19 with further amendments) Act of 20 April 2004 on the promotion of employment and labour market institutions (Journal of Laws 2004, No. 99, item 1001 with further amendments)

Act of 22 December 2015 on the Integrated Qualifications System (Journal of Laws 2016, item 64 with further amendments)

Act of 22 March 1989 on crafts trades (Journal of Laws 1989, No. 17, item 92 with further amendments)

Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 14 June 2005 on scholarships granted by the President of the Council of Ministers, minister in charge of education and minister in charge of culture and national heritage (Journal of Laws No. 106, item 890 with further amendments).

Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 28 May 1996 on the vocational preparation of juveniles (Journal of Laws 1996, No. 60, item 278 with further amendments)

Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 11 April 2014 on the vocational preparation of adults (Journal of Laws 2014, item 497 with further amendments)

Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 24 August 2017 on practical vocational training (Journal of Laws 2017, item 1644)

Regulation of the Minister of Family, Social Policy of 15 September 2016 on colleges of social work (Journal of Laws 2016, item 1543)

Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 30 April 2013 on the rules on providing and organising psychological and pedagogical assistance in public pre-schools, schools and other educational institutions (Journal of Laws 2013, item 532)

Regulation of the Minister of National Education of March 28, 2017 on the teaching plan in public schools (Journal of Laws 2017, item 703).

Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 13 March 2017 on the classification of occupations for vocational education (Journal of Laws 2017, item 622)

Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 31 March 2017 on the core curriculum for training in individual occupations (Journal of Laws 2017, item 860)

Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 18 August 2017 on continuing education in non-school settings (Journal of Laws 2017, item 1632)

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, incl. for 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)

Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 25 August 2017 on pedagogical supervision (Journal of Laws 2017 item 1658)

Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 18 August 2017 on detailed conditions and methods of conducting vocational examination (Journal of Laws 2017, item 1663)

Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 1 August 2017 on the detailed qualification requirements for teachers (Journal of Laws 2017, item 1575)

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)

Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 26 July 2018 on the attainment of advanced professional levels by teachers (Journal of Laws 2018, item 1574)

Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 25 June 2014 on refunds from the Labour Fund of salaries paid to young employees (Journal of Laws 2014, item 865)

Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 16 August 2018 on professional guidance (Journal of Laws 2018, item 1675)

Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 17 March 2017 on detailed organisation of public school and public kindergartens (Journal of Laws 2017, item 649 with further amendments)

Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 10 January 2017 on the journeyman's examination, master's examinations and certifying examinations conducted by examination boards of crafts chambers (Journal of Laws 2017, item 89 with further amendments)

Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 11 January 2012 on extramural examinations (Journal of Laws 2012, item 188 with further amendments)

Proposal of the Act changing the Education Law Act, School Education Act and some other acts. <https://legislacja.rcl.gov.pl/projekt/12313102/katalog/12518250#12518250>  
[accessed 28.09.2018]