



Structures of Education,
Vocational Training
and Adult Education
Systems in Europe

POLAND

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EURYDICE Unit
Foundation for the Development
of the Education System
SOCRATES Agency
Mokotowska 43
00-551 Warsaw

If you wish to have more detailed information on education systems in Europe, we warmly recommend that you consult the EURYBASE database (<http://www.eurydice.org>) and the CEDEFOP monographs (<http://www.cedefop.eu.int>)

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INTRODUCTION

Europe is characterised by a very wide variety of education and training systems. In order that this diversity should be fully appreciated, EURYDICE, the information network on education in Europe, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) and the European Training Foundation (ETF) regularly update a set of national monographs entitled *Structures of Education, Vocational Training and Adult Education Systems in Europe*.

Descriptions relating to individual countries in turn include basic information on the administration and structure of their systems of education and initial vocational training at all levels (from pre-primary to tertiary). Also included are descriptions of initial vocational education and training in alternance and adult education and training within provision for lifelong learning. The initial and in-service training of teachers and their status are also considered.

The information is set out in accordance with a common structure to facilitate inter-country comparisons while ensuring that special features peculiar to each system are duly emphasised.

The description for each country is preceded by a diagram of its education system. Here again, the way the diagrams are presented has, as far as possible, been standardised so that common – and differing – features of the various systems can be more easily identified and compared.

The first chapter within each country section is devoted to a short presentation of the country concerned, together with the basic principles governing its education and training, the division of responsibilities and then more specific information (relating to administration, inspection, financing, private schooling and advisory bodies). The major reforms of education systems are also considered.

The other chapters deal in turn with pre-primary education, compulsory and post-compulsory education (general, technical and vocational provision entirely within schools). The way these chapters are structured depends on each national context. Where pre-primary education is not in reality separate from primary education, or where compulsory education spans different levels, no artificial division has been created. In the case of all countries, a brief description of the aims and structure of the level of education concerned is followed by further headings devoted to the curriculum, assessment, teachers and statistics.

Initial vocational education and training in alternance is the subject of a chapter in its own right. It includes all education and training for young people that is not essentially school-based, and thus covers for example apprenticeships based on the 'dual system' pattern, sandwich course training and any other initiatives and experiments with major elements of 'on-the-job' experience.

This is followed by a chapter on tertiary education, in which a summary description is supplemented by sections on admission, tuition fees, the academic year, courses, qualifications and assessment. The chapter includes any initiatives implemented as part of the Bologna process.

The last chapter deals with continuing education and training for adults (whether in or outside the labour market, employed or unemployed). It provides information on the political, legislative and financial framework of this kind of education, on the authorities concerned and their responsibilities, as well as on the general organisation of training for adults (types of institution, access requirements, programme objectives, the curriculum and quality assurance). There is also a brief description of guidance/counselling services, as well as of questions relating to assessment and accreditation including the recognition of non-formal kinds of learning.

The situation regarding teachers is dealt with in a specific section for each level of education discussed. Also provided are national statistics on the number of pupils, students, teachers and educational institutions and, where figures are available, on pupil or student/teacher ratios, attendance and attainment rates or, yet again, on the choice of branches of study or areas of specialisation.

The National Units in the EURYDICE Network have drafted the descriptions for their countries, each using the same proposed outline of content as a common framework. The information on initial vocational education and training in alternance, and on adult education has been prepared in close collaboration with members of the CEDEFOP REFER Network (in the case of the European Union and EFTA/EEA countries) and the National Observatories of the European Training Foundation (ETF) in the case of the 12 candidate countries. We are extremely grateful to them and to all those who were involved in this project in the EURYDICE European Unit in Brussels, CEDEFOP in Thessaloniki, and the ETF in Turin for their invaluable contribution to this fundamental source of information which is vital to a better understanding of education and training systems in Europe.

Given the number of countries now covered ⁽¹⁾ and the amount of data available, the description of each system of education and training may be consulted solely electronically on the website of the EURYDICE Network (<http://www.eurydice.org>), which brings it to the attention of the largest possible number of people and enables it to be updated on a more regular basis.

Patricia Wastiau-Schlüter
Head of the EURYDICE
European Unit

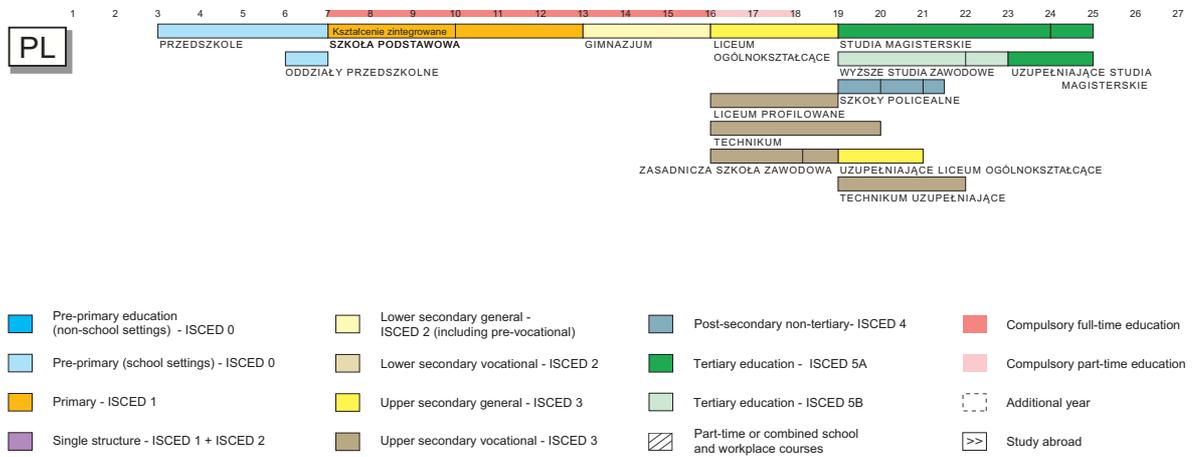
Johan van Rens
Director of CEDEFOP

Peter de Roij
Director of the ETF

June 2003

(1) The 30 European countries taking part in the EU Education Programme, Socrates.

Organisation of the education system in Poland, 2003/04



Source: Eurydice.

1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION

1.1 Background

Poland is situated in the centre of Europe and covers 312 685 square kilometres. In the year 2002 Poland had a population of 38.23 million (based on the census, 20 May 2002), 61.8% of whom lived in 884 towns and urban areas and 38,2% in rural ones. The country is divided into 16 voivodships (provinces), 380 districts (*powiaty*) and 2478 local government communes (*gminy*) (31 December 2002).

There is only a small annual increase in population, which is connected with the decreasing birth-rate. In 2002 this rate equalled -0.1‰.

In accordance with the Constitution, Poland is a Parliamentary Republic headed by the President of the Republic elected by direct popular vote for five years. The bicameral Parliament consists of the 460 members of the *Sejm* (lower chamber) and of the 100 members of the Senate. Members of the *Sejm* and the Senate are elected by General Election for a four-year term. In September 2001 the left wing coalition of SLD and UP (Labour Union) won the election with a result of 216 seats, which however did not enable it to rule on its own. Finally the Polish Peasants' Party (PSL) with its 42 seats agreed to form the coalition with the two winning parties. In March 2003 the coalition broke up.

The overwhelming majority of the population are native Poles. Poland is predominantly Roman Catholic (about 35 million baptized). Other religions and denominations are represented by a large number of relatively small communities (among them the greatest are: Orthodox – 510 000, *Uniate* – 123 000, Evangelical-Augsburg – 87 000).

In 2002 the annual increase of the Polish GDP amounted to 1.3% (estimation).

62.8% of the GDP is generated by the private sector with 74.9% of the total manpower employed there (2001).

In 2002 the rate of unemployment was 18.1%(December 2002).

1.2 Basic principles – education

The period of political transformation, started in 1989, has brought about new legislation, which became the basis for changes in education. The new legislation permitted the development of non-state schools and changes in the structure of enrolment at the post-primary level (a higher percentage of youth attending secondary schools), as well as the doubling of the number of students attending higher education institutions.

The Polish education system (education of all levels below the level of higher education) is based on the following legislation (parliamentary acts):

- The Act of 7 September 1991 on the Education System (with further amendments)
- The Act of 8 January 1999 on the Implementation of the Education System Reform (with further amendments)
- The Act of 26 January 1982 – Teachers' Charter (with further amendments)

The higher education system in Poland is based on the following legislation (parliamentary acts):

- The Act of 12 September 1990 on Schools of Higher Education (with further amendments)
- The Act of 12 September 1990 on the Academic Title and Academic Degrees (with further amendments)
- The Act of 26 June 1997 on Higher Vocational Schools (with further amendments)
- The Act of 17 July 1998 on Loans and Credits for Students with further amendments

The basic principles of the Polish education system are included in the Act on the Education System of 7 September 1991, with further amendments.

Education is defined as part of 'the common welfare of the whole of society'. It should be guided by the principles contained in the Constitution and by instructions contained in universal, international legislation and conventions.

In particular, this system should provide, among other things, a fulfilment of the right of each citizen in the Republic of Poland to learn and the right of children and young people to be educated and cared for; support provided by schools to back up the educational role of the family; the possibility for various entities to establish and run schools and institutions; the adjustment of the contents, methods and organisation of education to pupils' psycho-physical abilities, and the possibility to avail oneself of psychological assistance and of special forms of didactic work; the possibility for disabled and maladjusted children and young people to learn at all types of schools and general access to secondary schools.

1.3 Distribution of responsibilities for the organisation and administration of the education and training system

The main role in initiating and exercising control over current and long-term educational policy is played by the Minister of National Education and Sport.

Through its members in the Education Committee, the *Sejm* [Lower Chamber of the Parliament] may present its proposals and initiatives, although, in the majority of cases, the Committee works on materials that have originally been prepared by the Ministry of National Education and Sport. The Parliament is responsible for the final version of legal Acts that determine the orientation of educational policy and the amount of money earmarked for education.

Teachers' Unions have a considerable role in shaping current educational policy. The minister for education is obliged to consult Teachers' Unions on the most important decisions, and in certain cases he must have their approval.

The Ministry of National Education and Sport is responsible for nearly the whole system of education. Vocational schools, which in the past were run by other ministries, are now the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education and Sport. At present only a few schools (artistic – only with respect to artistic subjects, as well as correctional institutions) are under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture, and the Ministry of Justice respectively.

The reform of the State administration system and the education reform assume that only the national educational policy will be developed and carried out centrally, while the administration of education and the running of schools, pre-school institutions and other educational establishments are decentralised. The responsibility for the administration of public nursery and primary schools (and since

1999/2000 also gymnasia) has been delegated to local authorities (communes). It has become the statutory responsibility of *powiaty* (districts) to administer upper secondary schools, artistic and special schools. The provinces (voivodships) have the co-ordinating function, supervising the implementation of the policy of the Ministry and being responsible for pedagogical supervision.

Central Level

This is the responsibility of the Minister of National Education and Sport, deputy-ministers and the director general. Deputy-ministers are responsible for such matters as e.g. school system, higher education, scientific research, international co-operation, physical culture, sport and tourism.

The Minister of National Education and Sport co-ordinates and carries out the state education policy, supervises partially the work of education superintendents (*kuratoria*) and co-operates with other organisational bodies and units in the field of education.

The Minister determines the following groups of problems and tasks:

1. Outline timetables;
2. Core curricula for pre-primary education, for compulsory general subjects and, additionally, in relation to vocational education, core curricula for particular profiles, as well as general vocational education in particular vocations;
3. Conditions and procedures for the approval of curricula and textbooks for the school use; the recommendation on teaching aids as well as lists of those curricula, textbooks and aids;
4. Rules for assessing and promoting pupils and for conducting tests and examinations;
5. Requirement standards being the basis for tests and examinations;
6. The way of keeping records concerning the teaching process and educational activities, as well as types of these records;
7. Rules and conditions for implementing innovations and experiments by schools or other institutions;
8. Organisation of the school year;
9. Establishing rules for subject competitions and national competitions;
10. Procedures for organising correctional gymnastics and optional lessons of physical education;
11. Rules and procedures for organizing tourism by schools.

Regional Level

Regional level in Poland is the level of

voivodship. As from 1999 the number of voivodships is 16.

The education superintendent (*kurator*) is the chief educational body at regional level. He is responsible for general administration of education in a voivodship. Up to the recent times he was appointed by the minister of education. At present he is appointed by the head of province, the *voivode*, so he is a regional administration official supervised by the *voivode* (a *voivode* is subordinated to the prime minister). The education superintendent implements the policy of the minister of education.

On behalf of the *voivode*, the superintendent is responsible for:

- pedagogical supervision over public and non-public schools and educational institutions;
- administrative decisions in certain fields (e.g. withdrawal of the resolutions of teachers' councils);
- co-operation with bodies running schools in the field of the organisation of in-service teacher training;
- co-operation with regional educational councils.

At the motion of the *kurator*, the respective head of province (*voivode*) can establish representations, or branches, of superintendent's office (so-called *delegatury*) for smaller areas of the voivodship. The branches have the same powers as *kurator*.

At the regional level, voivodship self-governments are responsible for running certain types of educational institutions. These institutions are: teacher training centres (colleges), teacher in-service training centres, pedagogical libraries, schools and institutions of importance for a given region.

District Level

District level in Poland is the level of *powiat* (an intermediate administrative unit between the voivodship and the commune, established on the force of the Act on the introduction of the three-tier administrative division of the country of 24 July 1998). There are 380 *powiaty* now.

Powiaty exercise administrative control over upper secondary general (*liceum ogólnokształcące*) and vocational (*liceum profilowane, technikum, zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa*) schools, as well as over post-secondary schools (*szkoła policealna*) and public special schools. They are also responsible for the management of artistic schools, sports schools, lifelong education centres, psychological and pedagogical guidance centres, out-of-school education centres.

Local Level

Local level in Poland is the level of commune (*gmina*). In 2002 there were 2 478 *gminy*, of which most were rural ones.

Communes exercise administrative control over pre-school institutions, primary schools and lower secondary schools called gymnasium (*gimnazjum*), established in 1999/2000. Pedagogical supervision is excluded from their control – it is the responsibility of education superintendent (*kurator*).

Educational Institutions

School heads are recruited on the basis of an open competition and employed by the school running body for 5 years. In justified cases this period may be shortened, but not shorter than 1 year.

In consultation with the body running the school, e.g. the commune or the *powiat*, the head teacher appoints and dismisses his/her deputy and other executive staff, if those posts are in agreement with the statute of a school (pre-school institution).

In particular, the school head:

- manages the school (institution) and represents it to the outside;
- takes care of pupils and provides background for their harmonious psychological and physical development through various pro-health activities;
- brings into life the resolutions of the school council or the pedagogical council (undertaken in accordance with their competencies);
- has financial means at his/her disposal and is responsible for their proper use;
- co-operates with higher schools and teacher training institutions in the field of organising teacher pedagogical training.

The school head, being the manager of the institution employing teachers and non-teaching staff, decides for example on the following matters:

- employment and dismissal of teachers and non-teaching staff;
- assessing the performance of teachers.

1.4 Inspection, supervision and guidance

Administrative and pedagogical supervision have become separated.

Pedagogical supervision over the school is exercised by regional education authorities: *kurator* (superintendents), while general supervision (organisational, administrative and financial) is carried out by bodies running the school (commune, *powiat* or voivodship self-government authorities).

Upon the implementation of the 1991 Act, the Ministry of Education declared that ‘... supervisory and disciplinary aspects of pedagogical supervision have been rejected in favour of the evaluation (diagnosis) of educational achievements...’. The measurement of educational achievements and the partial assessment of school performance are carried out now by Regional Examination Commissions. The external examinations at the end of the primary school and the gymnasium have already been implemented (for the first time organized in 2002). These examinations are organized by 8 Regional Examination Commissions.

External support for schools and teachers is mainly provided by the National In-Service Teacher Training Centre, by regional centres and by educational advisors.

There are about 500 centres for guidance and counselling in Poland. They are intended mostly for primary and lower secondary school pupils, with the aim of psychological assistance. The other field of activity of these centres is focused on counselling and guidance when a child chooses upper secondary school (it is intended for those who are either hesitant or have poor results at the gymnasium).

Some large schools employ school pedagogues or psychologists who contribute to the solving of individual or internal school problems.

1.5 Financing

As from 1999, and in its complete form from 2000, all educational tasks carried out by the three levels of local government are financed in the framework of general subsidy from the State Budget.

In the year 2000 a uniform system of allocation of funds with the use of the algorithmic formula based on the number of pupils was adopted for the whole education system.

This formula is based on the real number of

pupils, adequately increased by the system of 21 weightings (taking into account specific conditions, i.e. rural areas, small towns, as well as specific educational tasks, i.e. presence of SEN pupils, integration of SEN pupils in mainstream education, vocational training, sports schools).

The local government unit, as a body running or subsidising the school, is responsible for the designing of a budget programme (i.e. a plan of expenditures) for all schools and educational institutions in its respective area.

Educational investments belong to local governments’ own tasks, although they can be co-financed from the State Budget through voivodship authorities.

1.6 Advisory and consultative bodies

Teachers’ Unions have a considerable role in shaping current educational policy. The Minister of National Education and Sport is obliged to consult Teachers’ Unions on the most important decisions, and in certain cases he must have their approval. The participation of social partners (individuals, institutions and organisations) in school work does not occur on a large scale. However, the legislative framework concedes significant rights to parents and pupils as members of the school councils – they have the same rights as teachers – and all these three groups have equal representations (one-third each) on the school councils. In several towns, at the initiative of teachers and educators, social councils for education have been established.

A national education council which includes parents’ representatives is enshrined in the legislation (Act on the Education System of 7 September 1991, with further amendments). This council has not yet been established, but it should act in a consultative capacity on education policy, the budget, the curriculum and legislation.

1.7 Private schools

In line with the Education Act of 1991, schools can be of two types: public (state) schools, which offer free education within the framework of the core curricula, and non-public schools. The latter can be civic (social), church or private schools. The schools were called ‘social’ or ‘civic’ because of the huge amount of work that was invested in them by people from local social groups – mostly parents and teachers.

All these schools may have their own curricula,

which are approved by the minister of education. They are financed by fees received from parents. Funds can also come from private enterprises and foundations. Since February 1990, non-public schools have been eligible for a grant calculated according to the number of pupils, of up to 50% of the average cost of educating a pupil in a state school.

Private schools have also been opened (in the 2001/2002 school year there were 482 of them), functioning as profit-making enterprises. Unlike the 'civic' or church schools, these private schools are clearly intended for children from better-off families.

Non-public schools in Poland have the right to issue school certificates that are recognised by all other schools and by the universities.

Most non-public schools have small numbers of pupils and small classes. They may be distinguished from the public schools by their

personalised instruction programmes, by a wider range of curriculum choice and by a higher standard of foreign language teaching.

In the 2001/2002 school year, there were 420 non-public primary schools (140 private, 53 church and 227 civic), 401 non-public lower secondary schools (155 private, 77 church and 219 civic), 463 non-public general upper secondary schools (187 private, 88 church and 188 civic), and 370 non-public vocational secondary and basic vocational schools – 1654 non-public schools altogether.

Non-public primary school pupils make up 0.95% of the total number of pupils attending primary schools, pupils in non-public lower secondary schools make 1.3%, non-public general upper secondary school pupils about 4.6% and non-public vocational secondary and basic vocational school pupils – 2.3%.

2. PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

A child aged 3 to 6 may receive pre-primary education, which is not compulsory, but the majority of six year-old children attend either kindergartens (*przedszkola*) or pre-primary classes attached to primary schools (*oddziały przedszkolne*). The Ministry of National Education and Sport plans to introduce an obligatory 0 grade starting the school year 2004/2005 and therefore lower the age of beginning of the compulsory schooling from 7 to 6.

Pre-school education in Poland underwent certain changes caused by a decrease in the number of pre-school children and by the partial introduction of fees into this type of educational institution. In 1995 the attendance rate was calculated as 46.2% of children aged 3 to 6 and in 1998 – 49%. In the school year 2002/2003, 51.3% of 3 to 6 year olds attended pre-school institutions.

Public nursery schools are administered and financed by local governments – the communes.

Parents' payments cover children's meals, extra lessons, and a so-called extra fee if a child attends the nursery school for more than 5 hours a day. The fee is set by the commune upon consultation with the nursery school. Payments made by parents vary widely and depend on the revenues of the nursery school generated from its own economic activities.

According to the Education Act of 1991, pre-school education is treated as the first level of the education system in Poland.

Children aged 6 have the right to one year of pre-primary education (the 'zero year'), and the communes are obliged to provide this.

The main goal of pre-primary education is to support and stimulate the child's development, in the process of which the needs and possibilities of each child ought to be taken into account.

Education for a child of 6 consists of stimulating its general development and teaching primary reading skills and basic mathematics. In the school year 2002/2003, 97.7% of 6 year-olds attended pre-schools or 0 grade classes at schools.

2.1 Organisation

Starting from September 1990, a nursery school is obliged to provide unpaid teaching and nursing for at least 5 hours a day – the time necessary for the implementation of the contents included in the Core Curriculum of Pre-School and General Education. The majority of pre-school institutions work for 5 to 11 hours a day. As a rule, two teachers working in shifts take care of one section (group of children) – one up to 12 o'clock, the other from 12 o'clock.

The number of children in one section cannot exceed 25, with exception of integrational and special pre-school classes, where the limits are lower (15-20, among which 3-5 are SEN children).

The main criterion used for grouping children is age. Most kindergartens are divided into 4 sections (3-, 4-, 5-, and 6- year-olds). Using other criteria is also possible (children's interests, talents or disabilities). Grouping together children of different age is also justified and possible for educational reasons – children of different age stimulate each other's development.

2.2 Curriculum/assessment

Curriculum

There are three sets of curricula (prepared on the basis of the core curriculum and approved by the Minister of Education and Sport) for pre-school education. Two of them concern children aged 3-6, one deals with six year-olds only. Nursery schools and pre-school classes attached to primary schools are obliged to follow one of these curricula. On the force of the Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 21 September 2000 amending the regulation on the rules of the approval of curricula and textbooks and the recommendation of teaching aids, pre-primary teachers can write so-called 'author's curricula', always based on the national core curriculum.

The Regulation of 26 February 2002 of the Minister of National Education introduced the 'Core curriculum for pre-school education in kindergartens and pre-school sections in primary schools'. It comprises the basic

objectives and the teacher's tasks in a framework of 4 education areas.

The following areas of activities for teachers and children have been defined:

- Acquisition of knowledge and understanding of oneself and the world
- Acquisition of skills through activities
- Finding your place in the peer group and community
- Construction of the system of values

Methods

There are no official recommendations or guidelines with respect to methods. A pre-primary school teacher has the right to choose the most suitable methods.

Assessment

There are no formal principles for evaluating or monitoring pre-primary schoolchildren. The only exception was so called 'balance-sheet of the child aged 6' which was connected with the recruitment to primary schools. This form of evaluation concerned only health state and physical development of a child. It aimed at the selection of pupils that ought to be directed to special schools.

On the force of the Regulation by the Minister of National Education introducing the statutes of public kindergartens, the teacher was made responsible for continuous observation of the child and keeping up-to-date records of his/her achievements.

2.3 Teachers

The pre-primary school teachers have the same rights, duties and salaries as teachers in primary education (years 1 to 3). The differences concern the teaching load which is 18 hours per week for primary school teachers, 25 hours for pre-school teachers of the younger age groups, and 22 hours for pre-school teachers of six-year-olds.

The system of pre-primary teacher training is constantly changing. At present, the forms of training offered are: three-year teacher training colleges, teacher higher education schools (pedagogical academies), and teacher

education faculties at universities. The previously existing two-year post-secondary teacher training schools were abolished in 1994. In 2000/01 graduates of those schools constituted a large group among pre-primary teachers (36%).

Out of the total number of teachers working in pre-primary schools, as few as 6.2% have completed only secondary education. Teachers with a Master's degree constitute 44.6% of pre-school teaching staff.

The pre-school teachers are mostly female – women make up 98.2% of teachers at this level.

As of 1990, 16 new colleges were established for the training of pre-primary and primary school teachers (years 1 to 3). Graduates of these colleges acquire the title of 'licencjat'. They may take a job or enter a teacher higher education school, or a university faculty.

See also: Sections 3.A, 3.B and 4.A (Teachers).

2.4 Statistics

Table 1. Pre-primary attendance rate (2002/03)

Age of children	Population	Children in pre-school institutions	% of total population of children
3 -6 years	1 601 683	821 142	51.27
3 -5 years	1 178 950	408 217	34.63
6 years	422 733	412 925	97.68

Table 2. Pre-primary education institutions (2002/03)

	Pre-school institutions	Kinder-gartens	Pre-school classes attached to primary schools
Total	17 206	8 015	9 191
Towns	6 699	5 257	1 442
Rural areas	10 507	2 758	7 749

3. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

From the school year 1999/2000, the reformed full-time compulsory education (the Act of 25 July 1998 amending the Act on the Education System of 1991, Article 15) starts during the civil year in which the child reaches 7 years of age and lasts 9 years (between 7 and 16 years of age, but not longer than the child reaches 18 years of age). It covers education in 6-year primary schools (*szkoła podstawowa*) and 3-year *gymnasia* (lower secondary schools).

In 1997 part-time compulsory education was prolonged until 18 years of age (The Constitution of the Republic of Poland adopted in 1997).

Compulsory education is free of charge for all pupils.

3.A. Primary education

From 1999/2000 children between the ages of 7 and 13 attend new primary schools (*szkoła podstawowa*) for a period of 6 years. Admission is based on age.

General objectives of the primary school are formulated as follows: to develop in children the ability of self-expression, reading and writing, the ability to solve arithmetic problems, the ability to use simple tools, to develop habits of social life, to develop cognitive abilities enabling mature understanding of the world, to develop conscious motivation to prepare for undertaking tasks requiring systematic intellectual and physical effort, to develop esthetic and moral sensitivity of children and their creative abilities, etc.

3.A.1 Organisation of the school

Lessons start at 8 a.m. and finish at 2 or 3 p.m. in the senior years if a school works in one shift. Each lesson lasts 45 minutes. Breaks are considered sufficient if they last at least 5-10 minutes, but no longer than 25 minutes. Pupils attend primary school five days a week, from Monday to Friday.

Schools usually are used for one set of pupils per day – sometimes for two, working in shifts. The length of the school day is determined by legislation (outline timetables are prescribed for each age group). It is not dependent on the availability of schools.

The organisation of the school year is defined by the Ministry of National Education and Sport in a separate regulation. The Ministry of National Education and Sport issues the calendar for the school year on an annual basis, specifying the dates of the start and the end of the school year and school holidays. The school year is divided into two semesters: (1) from 1 September, until the end of January; (2) from 1 February, until the end of the year (the last Friday of June).

Classes are organised:

- by age (1st level of division)
- by subject (foreign languages, computing, physical education – classes are subdivided into smaller groups)
- by level of competence (more and more often FL teaching classes are subdivided)

Principal teaching materials used are textbooks, audio-visual aids, computer, internet.

Teachers are free to choose teaching materials, depending on the finances of the school. They also choose textbooks, but only from the list approved by the Minister of National Education and Sport.

3.A.2 Curriculum

The scope of primary education is determined by three elements: the core curriculum, outline timetables and requirement standards.

Core curricula have to be respected by each school.

Education in the new 6-year primary school is divided into 2 stages:

- Stage I – grades 1 to 3, called integrated teaching;
- Stage II – grades 4 to 6.

The teaching at Stage 1 is meant to provide a smooth transition from pre-primary to school education. Educational activities are conducted

according to a flexible timetable prepared by the teacher, in which the duration of lessons and breaks is influenced by the pupils' activity.

Core curriculum for this education stage is included in the Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 26 February 2002 on Core Curriculum for Pre-school and General Education.

The outline timetable for this stage is included in the Annex to the Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 12 February 2002 on Outline Timetables for Public Schools.

Stage 1 (grades 1-3, primary school)		
Lp.	Compulsory educational activities	Number of teaching hours per week in a period of 3 years
1.	Integrated teaching	54
	Religion/ Ethics	6
	Hours left to the School Head's discretion	12
	Total	72

The school running body is allowed to increase the number of compulsory teaching hours by a number not exceeding 3 hours per week for one grade in one school year. However, the weekly number of compulsory teaching hours, as well as religion/ ethics classes and additional classes, cannot exceed a maximum of 23 hours in grades 1 to 3.

Stage 2 of the reformed 6-year primary school covers grades 4, 5 and 6. Teaching at this stage is arranged by subjects listed in the outline timetable (Polish language, History and civics, Modern foreign language, Mathematics, Natural science, Music, Art, Technology, Computer science, Physical education, Religion/Ethics).

In addition to subjects, the following 'educational paths' (cross-curricular themes) have been introduced at this stage:

- 1) health education
- 2) ecological education
- 3) reading and media education
- 4) education for society
 - a) education for family life
 - b) cultural heritage of the region
 - c) patriotic and civic education

The school head is responsible for the inclusion of the cross-curricular themes in the school curriculum.

Core curriculum for this education stage is included in the Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 26 February 2002 on Core Curriculum for Pre-school and

General Education (with further amendments).

The outline timetable for this stage is included in the Annex of the Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 12 February 2002 on Outline Timetables for Public Schools.

Stage 2 (grades 4-6, primary school)		
Lp.	Compulsory educational activities	Number of teaching hours per week in a period of 3 years
1.	Polish language	16
2.	History and civics	4
3.	Modern foreign language	8
4.	Mathematics	12
5.	Natural science	9
6.	Music*	2
7.	Art*	2
8.	Technology	2
9.	Computer science	2
10.	Physical education	9 + 3
11.	Lessons with Class Tutor	3
	Total	72
	Religion/Ethics	6
	Hours left to the School Head's discretion	9
	Total	87

* These subjects can be combined in one art subject

On the basis of the outline timetable, the school head develops the school timetable, divided into school years.

The school running body is allowed to increase the number of compulsory teaching hours by the number not exceeding, however, 3 hours per week for one grade in one school year. However, the weekly number of compulsory teaching hours, as well as religion/ ethics classes and additional classes, cannot exceed a maximum of 28 hours in grades 4 to 6.

Teachers have the right to choose forms and methods of teaching. The methods depend on the number of pupils per class and on school equipment (e.g. the number of computers or videos).

Teachers are free to choose textbooks from the list approved by the Minister.

3.A.3 Assessment/certification/guidance

Pupils are assessed separately in each subject. The evaluation depends entirely on the teacher. Only final marks per semester and at the end of the school year have to be approved by a pedagogical council in each school. The results of the assessment carried out during the year are taken into account in the end-of-year assessment. The assessment is divided into partial, periodical and annual assessment.

In years 1-3 it is descriptive assessment. Starting with grade 4, the teacher has the following scale of marks at his/her disposal: 6 -excellent, 5 – very good, 4 – good, 3 – satisfactory, 2 – acceptable, 1 – unsatisfactory. School marks, as well as assessment criteria, should be overt to the pupil and his/her parents.

Pupils also receive marks for their behaviour (conduct) on the scale: excellent, good, acceptable, unacceptable. Moreover, pupils have the right to take a verifying examination if the periodical or annual mark, given by the teacher, is in their or their parents' opinion too low.

An external standardised test upon the completion of the primary school (grade 6) has been introduced. For the first time it was conducted in 2002 by Regional Examination Commissions. It provides pupils and parents as well as schools with information about the level of achievements of the six-year primary school leaver. These tests are comparable on the national scale.

In grades 1-3 pupils are promoted automatically if their achievements are assessed positively. Repetitions of the year are exceptional, and have to be justified by psychologists and accepted by parents.

Starting with grade 4, a pupil is promoted to a higher grade if he has received 'acceptable' (2) marks or above for all compulsory subjects at the end of the school year. If he receives 'unsatisfactory' mark in one subject, he can take a repeating exam in this subject.

A pupil who has failed the repeat is not promoted and remains in the same grade. The teachers' council of a school can decide about conditional promotion of a pupil who got 'unsatisfactory' mark in one subject only.

Certificates of completing each year are necessary when children change school (place of living), while the primary school leaving certificate is required for admission to lower secondary schools. (From 2002 the result of the competence test is mentioned in the primary school leaving certificate.)

Institutions of special assistance for pupils (i.e. psychological and vocational counselling centres) perform important diagnostic and therapeutic functions. They are the following: early detection of psychosomatic disorders, being a requisite of success when starting primary education, and diagnosing predispositions and contraindications relating to post-primary school selection.

3.A.4 Teachers

In the lower years (1-3), one teacher teaches all subjects (integrated teaching), while in the years 4-6 each subject has a different teacher and pupils change classroom for each subject. As a rule, teachers are trained to teach one subject.

Teacher training consists of training in subject matter (biology, mathematics, etc.) and pedagogical training (teaching methods, psychology, pedagogy). Teachers may receive their initial training in three-year teacher training colleges providing vocational studies and awarding the title of licentiate or a diploma. Graduates with *licencjat* may complement their education with two-year university study courses and obtain a Master's degree (*Magister*).

In 2000/01 almost 84.3% of all primary school teachers had completed higher education (74.7% – held a Master's degree), 9.9% were graduates from the two-year teacher training colleges (phased out at the beginning of the 1990s), and 4.7% of teachers had only completed secondary education. Many primary school teachers who have completed higher education are graduates from universities or teacher higher education schools (pedagogical academies).

The legal act defining the professional status and conditions of service of teachers employed in the school education sector is the Act of the 26th of January 1982 – *The Teachers' Charter* (with further amendments). The amendments introducing the most important changes were those of the 18th of February 2000 and 24th of August 2001.

According to the *Teachers' Charter*, the post of teacher may be taken by a person who has completed either a higher education course with appropriate pedagogical preparation or a course of study in a teacher training establishment (college). Any person graduating from a higher education institution with pedagogical preparation or a teacher training college is as such recognised as a qualified teacher within the specialisation he/she has completed.

A teacher starting his/her first ever job undertakes a year-long *staż* in order to obtain a promotion degree of contract teacher, and then embarks on another *staż* of 2 years and 9 months leading to a promotion degree of appointed teacher. The appointment does not lose its validity if a break in service has not lasted longer than 5 years.

Teachers working in 6-year primary schools ought to have one of the following qualifications:

- university education or equivalent completed (the title of *Magister* or *Magister edukacji*),
- 3-year teacher training college completed (the title of *Licencjat*),
- 3-year teacher training college completed (ended with the diploma, without the title of *Licencjat*),
- a diploma of the formerly existing 2-year teacher training colleges (phased-out at the beginning of the 1990s).

According to the Teachers' Charter, a teacher can obtain the following professional promotion grades:

- Trainee teacher,
- Contract teacher,
- Appointed teacher,
- Chartered teacher.

A possibility of granting an honorary title of education professor is also envisaged for chartered teachers with outstanding professional achievements.

In the school year 2001/02, 76% of teachers were employed on the basis of appointment, chartered teachers accounted for 2% of all employed teachers, contract teachers for 14% and trainee teachers for around 8%.

In implementing the curriculum, the teacher is free to apply the methods chosen from those recognised in the contemporary pedagogy which he/she considers to be most appropriate and the textbooks and other teaching aids chosen from those approved for use in school. However, he/she is required to improve his/her knowledge, using his/her priority right to participate in all forms of in-service training.

See also: Sections 2.3, 3.B and 4.A (Teachers).

3.B. Compulsory secondary education (*Gimnazjum*)

Before 1999 there was no distinction in the Polish education system between lower and upper secondary schools. The lower secondary

level was included in the 8-year single structure school.

In the school year 1999/2000 a new type of school, i.e. *gimnazjum*, was established. This school constitutes lower secondary level.

The only admission requirement is successful completion of the 6-year primary school (*szkoła podstawowa*) and the attainment of the primary school leaving certificate.

The main objectives are formulated as follows:

- to introduce the pupil in the world of science by means of teaching the language, concepts, theories and methodologies characteristic of a given discipline at the level enabling further education;
- to arouse and develop individual interests;
- to introduce the pupil to the world of culture and arts;
- to develop in pupils social skills and abilities through creating possibilities of experience in co-operation in peer groups.

3.B.1 Organisation of the school

See Section 3.A. Primary education

3.B.2 Curriculum

Core curriculum for the *gymnasium* is included in the Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 26 February 2002 on Core Curriculum for Pre-school and General Education.

Core curriculum has to be respected by each school. The teaching at this stage is arranged in subjects, taught by specialist teachers.

Beside separate subjects, the following 'educational paths' (cross-curricular themes) have been introduced at this stage:

- 1) philosophical education
- 2) reading and media education
- 3) health education
- 4) ecological education
- 5) regional education – cultural heritage of the region
- 6) civil defence
- 7) European education
- 8) Polish culture in the context of Mediterranean civilisation.

The school head is responsible for the inclusion

of these paths in the school curriculum. Subject teachers are responsible for the implementation of these in their curricula or teaching them during separate modular classes.

The outline timetable for this stage is included in the Annex of the Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 12 February 2002 on Outline Timetables for Public Schools (with further amendments).

Stage 3 (grades 1-3 of the gymnasium)		
No.	Compulsory educational activities	Number of teaching hours per week in a period of 3 years
	Polish language	14
	History	6
	Civic education	3
	Modern foreign language	9
	Mathematics	12
	Physics and astronomy	4
	Chemistry	4
	Biology	4
	Geography	4
	Fine art/ Music*	3
	Technology	2
	Computer science	2
	Physical education	9 + 3
	Lessons with Class Tutor	3
Total		82
	Religion /Ethics	6
	Hours left to the School Head's discretion	6
Total		94

* can be taught as one Art subject

On the basis of the outline timetable, the school head develops the school timetable, divided into school years.

The school running body is allowed to increase the number of compulsory teaching hours by the number not exceeding, however, 3 hours per week for one grade in one school year. The weekly number of compulsory teaching hours, additional teaching hours and religion/ ethics classes cannot exceed a total maximum of 31 hours in all grades of the lower secondary school.

Subject teachers have the right to choose methods of teaching, depending on the number of pupils per class and on school equipment (e.g. the number of computers or videos).

3.B.3 Assessment/certification/guidance

Internal evaluation is the same as that in primary education (see Section 3 A).

A pupil is promoted to a higher grade if he has received 'acceptable' (2) marks or above for all compulsory subjects at the end of the school year. If he receives 'unsatisfactory' mark in one subject, he can take a repeating exam in this subject.

A pupil who has failed the repeat is not promoted and remains in the same grade.

The teachers' council of a school can decide about conditional promotion of a pupil who got 'unsatisfactory' mark in one subject only.

At the end of each school year pupils will receive certificates in a standardised form.

At the end of the 3rd year of the gymnasium, an external standardised examination has been introduced. For the first time it was conducted in 2002 by Regional Examination Commissions. This examination checks both abilities, skills and knowledge in the field of humanities and science. It is compulsory for all pupils. The results are indicated on the gymnasium leaving certificate. They are comparable on the national scale.

3.B.4 Teachers

Teachers employed in the 3-year gymnasias ought to have – at the minimum – the qualifications confirmed with the title of *Licencjat*.

3-year gymnasium teachers are employed according to the same rules as apply to 6-year primary school teachers.

In 2000/01 almost 95.4% of all lower secondary school teachers had completed higher education (87.2% held a Master's degree), 1.4% were graduates from the two-year teacher training colleges (phased out at the beginning of the 1990s), and 2.2% of teachers had only completed secondary education.

See also: Sections 2.3, 3.A and 4.A (Teachers).

3.B.5 Statistics (3A and 3B)

Special education is excluded from the following statistics.

Table 1. Number of schools, pupils, and teachers, 2001/02

Type of school	schools	pupils	teachers
Primary school	15079	3062742	232193
Gymnasium	5668	1703346	116972

Table 2. Enrolment rates, 2001/02

Type of school	Age group	% of youth population	
		Gross	Net
Primary school	7-12	100.6	98.9
Gymnasium	13-15	98.4	94.3

4. POST-COMPULSORY EDUCATION

The upper secondary education covers the age group 16 to 18 or 19/20.

In the reformed post-gymnasium education the following post-gymnasium schools are operational starting the school year 2002/03:

- a) *liceum ogólnokształcące* (3-year general secondary school) offering 3 years of full-time general upper secondary education for students aged 16 to 19. It will offer the *Matura* examination necessary for admission to higher education.
- b) *liceum profilowane* (3-year specialised secondary school) – new institution established in 2002/03 offering 3 years of full-time general and specialised upper secondary education for students aged 16 to 19. It will offer the *Matura* examination necessary for admission to higher education.
- c) *technikum* (4-year technical secondary school) – institution offering 4 years of full-time technical and vocational upper secondary education for students aged 16 to 20. It will offer the *Matura* examination necessary for admission to higher education.
- d) *zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa* (2 to 3-year basic vocational school) – institution offering 2 to 3 years of full-time upper secondary vocational education for students aged 16 to 18. The leavers will be given access to the trade or occupation or to the *Liceum uzupełniające* or *Technikum uzupełniające*.

At the levels of upper secondary/post – secondary education in Poland there are also the following types of institutions:

- e) *uzupełniające liceum ogólnokształcące* (2-year supplementary general secondary school) – new institution to be introduced in 2004/05 offering 2 years of full- or part-time general upper secondary education for students aged 18 to 20 in preparation for the *Matura* examination. This school is meant for the leavers of the 2/3-year vocational school.
- f) *technikum uzupełniające* (3-year supplementary secondary vocational school) – new institution to be introduced in 2004/05 offering 3 years of full- or part-time vocational upper secondary education for students aged 18 to 21 in preparation for the *Matura* examination. This school is meant for the leavers of the 2/3-year vocational school.

- g) *szkoła policealna* (maximum 2,5-year post-secondary school) – this institution enables people with secondary education to obtain a vocational qualifications diploma upon passing of an exam.

Apart from the above mentioned schools, in 2002/03 two institutions of the old structure were still operational:

- *liceum techniczne* – this institution will cease to exist in 2004. It offers 4 years of full-time general and vocational upper secondary education for pupils aged 15 to 19. It offers the *Matura* examination necessary for admission to higher education.
- *liceum zawodowe* – this institution will cease to exist in 2004. It offers 4 years of full-time general and vocational upper secondary education for pupils aged 15 to 19. It offers the *Matura* examination necessary for admission to higher education.

Upper secondary schools are mostly coeducational. Those schools are free and non-compulsory. There are also a small number of single-sex schools within vocational and professional education.

The number of points indicated on the gymnasium leaving certificate (based on results achieved in chosen areas of study and other achievements), including the points received at the gymnasium examination, decides about the pupils' admission to an upper secondary school.

The detailed admission rules are defined by each upper secondary school which opens admissions to new pupils (starting 1 September 2002 these schools have become post-gymnasium schools).

Schools with open admissions define the following:

- Maximum number of points to be gathered in chosen study areas and for additional achievements,
- Educational activities which will become basis for the calculation of points,
- Calculation rules (how many points for the given mark),
- Rules for the calculation of points for particular achievements listed on the school leaving certificate.

The winners of regional competitions (subject competitions which encompass the curriculum of at least one subject) are admitted to the post-gymnasium school of their choice regardless of the criteria applied to other candidates.

The admission to the 2/3-year basic vocational school (*Zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa*) is based on successful completion of the 3-year gymnasium, certified by the school leaving certificate.

The admission to *Liceum uzupełniające* and *Technikum uzupełniające* will be based on successful completion of *Zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa* (2/3-year basic vocational school).

4.A. General secondary education

The main objective of general upper secondary education is to prepare youth for admission to higher education establishments of various types.

4.A.1 Organisation of the school

The use of school buildings and the organisation of school time are arranged according to the same rules as those established for primary schools (see Section 3.A.).

4.A.2 Curriculum

Core curricula for general education in all types of upper secondary schools are included in the Annex to the Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 26 February 2002 on Core Curriculum for Pre-school and General Education.

They are divided by subjects: Polish Language, Modern Foreign Language, Latin and Ancient Culture, Mathematics, History, Civics, Geography, Biology, Physics and Astronomy, Chemistry, Technology, Computer Science, Art, Music, Defence Training, Physical Education, Ethics (optional), Philosophy (optional), Education for Family Life, Cultural Studies, Entrepreneurship, Minority Language.

In all upper secondary schools there are obligatory core curricula defined for the basic level of teaching. In general upper secondary schools (*liceum ogólnokształcące*), however, starting grade 1, there are 2 to 4 subjects chosen to be taught at the advanced level.

The curriculum for each subject is structured around the following topics: aims, objectives, content, expected achievements.

Core curriculum has to be respected by the school – but the teachers are free to follow one of the selected curricula (from the set of those approved by the Ministry) with the use of variety of textbooks (selected from the list approved by the Ministry).

The number of teaching hours (45-minute periods) per week (the Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 12 February 2002 on the Outline Timetables for Public Schools) in a period of 3 years in the general secondary school is as follows:

Compulsory subjects	Number of lessons per week in a period of 3 years
Polish language	14
2 foreign languages	15
History	5
Civic education	2
Culture studies	1
Mathematics	9
Physics and astronomy	3
Chemistry	3
Biology	3
Geography	3
Introduction to entrepreneurship	2
Information technology	2
Physical education	9
Defence training	2
Lessons for Class Tutor	3
Lessons for additional subject teaching envisaged in the curriculum	10
Total	88

Additionally, there are 6 non-compulsory hours of religion or ethics and 4 hours left to the school head's discretion, which gives a total of 98 hours of classes a week in a three-year cycle.

The number of teaching hours in the 4-year *technikum* (the Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 12 February 2002 on the Outline Timetables for Public Schools) is as follows:

Compulsory subjects	Number of lessons per week in a period of 4 years
Polish language	14
2 foreign languages	15
History	} 5 + 2 }
Civic education	
Culture studies	
Mathematics	9
Physics and astronomy	3
Chemistry	} +1 }
Biology	
Geography	3
Introduction to entrepreneurship	2
Information technology	2
Physical education	12
Defence training	2
Lessons for Class Tutor	2
Lessons for additional subject teaching envisaged in the curriculum	50
Total	129

Additionally, there are 8 non-compulsory hours (45-minute periods) of religion or ethics and 3 hours left to the school head's discretion, which gives a total of 140 hours of classes a week in a four-year cycle.

The number of teaching hours in the basic vocational school (the Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 12 February 2002 on the Outline Timetables for Public Schools) is as follows:

Compulsory subjects	Number of lessons per week in a period of 2 years
Polish language	5
Foreign language	3
History and civic education	2
Mathematics	4
Physics and astronomy	2
Geography with environmental protection	2
Introduction to entrepreneurship	1
Physical education	6
Defence training	2
Lessons for Class Tutor	2
Vocational training according to relevant curriculum	34
Total	63

Moreover, there are 4 non-compulsory hours of religion or ethics and 3 hours left to the school head's discretion, which gives a total of 70 hours of classes a week in a two-year cycle.

The number of teaching hours in the 3-year specialised lyceum (the Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 12 February 2002 on the Outline Timetables for Public Schools) is as follows:

Compulsory subjects	Number of lessons per week in a period of 3 years
Polish language	14
2 foreign languages	15
History	5
Civic education	2
Culture studies	1
Mathematics	9
Physics and astronomy	3
Chemistry	3
Biology	3
Geography	3
Introduction to entrepreneurship	2
Information technology	2
Physical education	9
Defence training	2
Lessons for Class Tutor	3
Lessons for profile teaching	13
Total	91

Additionally, there are 6 non-compulsory hours of religion or ethics and 3 hours left to the school head's discretion, which gives a total of 100 hours of classes a week in a three-year cycle.

The weekly number of compulsory teaching hours, additional teaching hours and religion/ethics classes cannot exceed a total maximum of 35 hours in all grades of the 3-year upper secondary general school, 3-year upper secondary specialised school, 4-year upper technical school and 2/3-year basic vocational school.

Subject teachers have the right to choose methods of teaching, depending on the number of pupils per class and on school equipment (e.g. the number of computers or videos).

Teachers are free to choose textbooks from the list approved by the Ministry.

4.A.3 Assessment/certification/guidance

The system of pupil evaluation for all types of upper secondary schools is based on the Act of 25 July 1998 amending the Act on the Education System and the Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 21 March 2001 on Pupil Evaluation, Eligibility for Assessment, Promotion and Examinations and Tests in Public Schools (with further amendments).

The principles of internal evaluation are the same as those at primary schools (see Section 3.A).

A pupil is promoted to a higher grade if he/she has received 'acceptable' (2) marks or above for all compulsory subjects at the end of the school year. If he receives 'unsatisfactory' mark in one subject, he can take a repeating exam.

A pupil who has failed the repeat is not promoted and remains in the same grade.

The teachers' Council of a school can decide about conditional promotion of a pupil who got 'unsatisfactory' mark in one subject only.

On the completion of the 3-year general upper secondary school (*liceum ogólnokształcące*) pupils are awarded a school leaving certificate (*świadectwo ukończenia liceum ogólnokształcącego*), on the basis of school results, without a final examination. It mentions the subjects and the marks obtained at the end of the final year. It gives access to the *Matura* examination or to post-secondary education.

At the end of upper secondary general education (3-year *liceum ogólnokształcące*) pupils may sit for *egzamin dojrzałości (Matura)*, a national examination, which is compulsory only to receive the *Matura* certificate and to gain access to higher education. It consists of written and oral parts. Topics for the written part are set by regional educational authorities (*kuratoria*), but the assessment is done by teachers. The oral part is totally the responsibility of teachers.

A new *Matura* examination, with its written part totally external – both in terms of setting the topics and the assessment – was conducted as an option for the first time in 2002, in the school types of the 'old' system. The introduction of the new *Matura* is planned for 2005.

Newly established institutions, i.e. the Central Examination Commission and 8 Regional Examination Commissions, are totally responsible for the new *Matura* examination, as well as for all external evaluation in Poland.

In the reformed education system, the new principles of pupil assessment have been adopted – at the end of all school types there are held external standardised tests or examinations. The Central Examination Commission, as well as Regional Commissions, appointed by the minister of education, are responsible for pupil assessment in Poland.

The new *matura* examination will be held at the end of the 3-year **general or specialised lyceum** [*Liceum ogólnokształcące* or *Liceum profilowane*] and at the end of the 4-year *Technikum*. It will consist of the written part, prepared and assessed by Regional Examination Commissions, and oral examinations, prepared and assessed by school teachers. The new *Matura* examination will be introduced in *Liceum ogólnokształcące* and *Liceum profilowane* in 2005, in *Technikum* and *Liceum uzupełniające* in 2006 and in *Technikum uzupełniające* in 2007.

Works on certification upon the completion of the 3-year *liceum profilowane*, 2-year *szkoła zawodowa*, 2-year *liceum uzupełniające* and 3-year *technikum uzupełniające* are under way.

4.A.4 Teachers

Secondary school teachers ought to have completed a university education or equivalent. The highest qualifications are held (school year 2000/01) by general secondary school teachers – 98% of those (full-time) teachers have completed higher education. In vocational schools, this percentage is lower, 95% in vocational secondary schools and 72% in basic vocational schools.

Secondary school teachers are employed according to the same rules as apply to primary and lower secondary school teachers.

On the 18th of February 2000 a new Law was adopted by the Polish Parliament (*Sejm*). It introduced fundamental changes to the Teachers' Charter, especially with respect to the status of the teacher.

The key element underlying changes in this area is a new definition of teacher status which opens the way for real promotion as well as pay rises. Promotion requires the upgrading of qualifications, and pay rises are tied to the teaching post category (see below).

The following four categories of teaching posts were established in the Teachers' Charter: trainee teacher, contract teacher, appointed teacher, and chartered teacher. Chartered teachers with an outstanding record may also be awarded the honorary title of school education professor.

The new Teachers' Charter established new rules for the remuneration of teachers as well as a new mechanism for the State to guarantee the availability of funds for their salaries. The average salaries for teachers classified in individual categories are calculated on the basis of the average salary of the trainee teacher, fixed at a level of 82% of the base amount which serves to calculate salaries for civil servants. This is a fixed mechanism for the annual revaluation and rise of teachers' salaries, identical to that for other parts of the public sector.

The average salaries for teachers classified in the remaining categories are calculated as the following percentages of the average salary of the trainee teacher (target percentages have been achieved gradually):

- contract teacher: 125%,
- appointed teacher: 175%,
- chartered teacher: 225%.

As an important change, the new remuneration system introduced a different division of powers concerning pay regulations. The powers of the Minister of National Education and Sport are limited to fixing the minimum rates of basic pay, whereas the rates for bonuses or allowances (except the allowances for the period of service and for work in rural areas, which are directly fixed by the law) and the rules for granting these are determined by the body responsible for the administration and management of a given school.

According to the Teachers' Charter, the working time of the teacher may not exceed 40 hours per week. This workload includes the minimum teaching load which for the basic group of teachers (in all types of schools) is 18 hours per week (45-minute lessons). At the teacher's request, his/her weekly workload may now comprise up to 27 hours per week, with any increase in the workload implying a proportionally higher salary.

See also: Sections 2.3, 3.A and 3.B.

4B Vocational secondary schools

The main objective of vocational upper secondary education is to prepare youth for the world of work.

4.B.1 Organisation

The use of school buildings and the organisation of school time are arranged according to the same rules as those established for primary schools (see Section 3.A.).

4.B.2 Curriculum

See section 4.A. Curriculum

4.B.3 Assessment/certification/guidance

The principles of internal evaluation in upper secondary vocational schools – i.e. partial, periodical and annual assessment – are the same as for primary education (see Section 3.A.).

At the end of upper secondary technical and vocational education (*technikum* or *liceum profilowane*) pupils may sit for *egzamin dojrzałości (Matura)*, a national examination, which is compulsory only to receive the *Matura* certificate and to gain access to higher education. It consists of written and oral parts. Starting year 2005 the new external *Matura* exam will be introduced in upper secondary schools (apart from the *zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa*).

At the end of the *zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa* vocational preparation of pupils is evaluated by means of *egzamin z nauki zawodu*, a compulsory vocational examination. Its content and the level of requirements are defined by each school. Success in the theoretical and practical parts of this examination, relating to the occupation, gives entitlement to the respective vocational school leaving certificates.

At the end of the *technikum* pupils are evaluated by means of *egzamin z przygotowania zawodowego*, a compulsory vocational proficiency examination. Its content and the level of requirements are defined by each school. Success in this examination gives entitlement to the *technikum* school leaving certificate.

At the end of the *technikum*, pupils are awarded *świadectwo ukończenia technikum*, based on the results in the final year and on the marks in the examination called *egzamin z przygotowania zawodowego*. It confers the title of a technician (*Technik*). It gives access to the trade or occupation and the entitlement to sit for the *Matura* examination.

At the end of the basic vocational school

(*zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa*), pupils obtain *świadectwo ukończenia szkoły zasadniczej*, based on the results in the *egzamin z nauki zawodu* examination, conferring the title of a skilled worker (*Robotnik wykwalifikowany*). It gives access to the trade or occupation or to supplementary upper secondary education (full-time or evening classes) preparing for the *Matura* examination.

All those pupils who completed the study programme in upper secondary vocational schools, and passed the *Matura* examination are awarded *świadectwo dojrzałości (Matura certificate)*. It is a qualification required for admission to university or non-university higher education.

Two types of schools are still operational, but they will cease to exist with the completion of the reform in the upper secondary school system:

- At the end of the final year of the 4-year upper secondary technical lyceum (*liceum techniczne*), pupils are awarded on the basis of school results, without a final examination, a certificate called *świadectwo ukończenia liceum technicznego*. It gives access to the trade or occupation or to the *Matura* examination. This type of school will cease to exist in 2004.
- At the end of the final year of the 4-year vocational lyceum (*liceum zawodowe*) pupils are awarded *świadectwo ukończenia liceum zawodowego* on the basis of *egzamin z nauki zawodu* examination. It gives access to trade or occupation or to the *Matura* examination. This type of school will cease to exist in 2004.

4.B.4 Statistics (4A and 4B)

Special education is excluded from the following statistics.

The statistics attached below present the pre-reform system of upper secondary education. The new types of schools have been operational since the school year 2002/03.

Table 1. Number of schools, pupils, and teachers, 2001/02

Type of school	schools	pupils	teachers
General upper secondary schools	2270	715973	48598
Technical and vocational upper secondary schools	5967	786179	61414
Basic vocational schools	1868	327757	24086

Table 2. Enrolment rates, 2001/02

Type of school	Age groups	% of youth population	
		Gross	Net
General upper secondary schools	16-18	42.4	36.1
Technical and vocational upper secondary schools	16-18	48.2	33.3
Basic vocational schools	16-17	27.1	21.7

4.C. Post-secondary vocational education

Post-secondary schools (*Szkoły policealne*), because of the type of qualifications they offer, are included as part of secondary education in the Polish classification, and assigned to level 4 in the ISCED (Revised Version).

Post-secondary schools admit first of all graduates of general upper secondary schools. Most of them require only a secondary school leaving certificate, not the *Matura certificate*.

Post-secondary schools prepare students for work in blue-collar and equivalent occupations or in occupations and specialities that require secondary vocational qualifications. The period of instruction varies depending on the occupation and is specified in the Classification of Occupations. For the majority of occupations it is two or two and a half years, for some only one year.

Students in these schools are trained as nurses, accountants, administrative personnel for enterprises and hotels, computer specialists or librarians. The majority are women. Those who complete a course of study for a blue-collar occupation receive the title of qualified worker in the acquired occupation. Those who have completed a two- or two and a half – year course of study or non-worker speciality receive the title of technician or other title listed in the Classification of Occupations and Vocational Education Specialities.

In the school year 2001/02 there were 2625 post-secondary schools (public and non-public) in Poland, attended by 211 thousand students.

4.C.1 Curriculum

The curriculum depends on the profession. Each school is responsible for its development.

4.C.2 Assessment/qualifications/guidance

At the end of 1-year courses, students have to take a vocational examination (*egzamin z nauki zawodu*); at the end of 2- or 2 ½-year courses, students take vocational proficiency examination (*egzamin z przygotowania zawodowego*). Successful students receive a diploma of completion of post-secondary school (*dypłom ukończenia szkoły policealnej*) and the title of skilled worker or technician. Post-secondary school graduates who are entering the labour market have access to employment services provided by private employment agencies.

4.C.3 Teachers

The teachers at post-secondary schools come from the labour market as well as from secondary and higher education.

5. INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN ALTERNANCE

5.1 Organisation

There are two forms of vocational education and training in alternance:

A) The most popular form is based on an employment contract between an employer and a young worker. The employer is responsible for the organisation of training. The practical training is organised either at the employers' enterprise or, if the employers cannot assure suitable conditions for such training, at the Continuing Education Centre, Practical Training Centre, at a school farm, school workshop, school lab or at an individual farm. The training is implemented on the basis of a contract concluded between the employer and a particular training institution.

B) School based form of training which can be considered as training in alternance in the case when practical training takes place outside school, at the employer's place and is based on a contract between the employer and the school head. In this case the school is responsible for the organisation of training.

The young employee is paid for his/her work and has to comply with the Labour Chart regulations as well as with his/her individual employment contract.

In Poland the majority of young workers are employed in the private sector (e.g. artisans). The vocational training in crafts is supervised by the chamber of artisans and the relevant guild.

The contracts between the employer and the trainee can be concluded for indefinite or limited period of time (e.g. for the time required for training in a particular vocational area).

In 2002 a requirement of in-service training was imposed on all workers below the age of 18 which is due to the Polish Constitution regulation on compulsory education for all citizens below the age of 18.

Training in alternance is considered to be at the same level as the basic vocational school.

5.2 Vocational/initial training establishments

The following institutions organise education and training in alternance: vocational schools, out-of-school education institutions and employers. The out-of-school education institutions are: Continuing Education Centres, Practical Training Centres and Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP) which enable people with learning difficulties to obtain vocational qualifications. Continuing Education Centres and Practical Training Centres are public out-of-school educational institutions.

5.3 Access requirements

Since the 1st of September 2002 a person is considered to be a young worker if he/she is over 16 years of age, has completed a lower secondary school (*gimnazjum*) and is to undertake a job which does not threaten his/her health. He/she is obliged to continue the training until the age of 18.

5.4 Financing

The financing of training for pupils differs from the financing of training for young workers. If the trainee has a pupil status, the costs of practical training are covered by the school running body. These resources cover, among others, the salaries of practical vocational training instructors. The pupil is not remunerated.

If the trainee has a status of a young worker, he/she receives wages from his/her employer, and its amount is calculated on the basis of amounts defined by the government. Under certain circumstances, employers can receive a refund of the wages paid to young workers, as well as the social security payments connected with these wages from the Labour Fund. There are also apprenticeship exam fees to be paid.

5.5 Assessment/qualifications

In the case of young workers (when the training in alternance is carried out on the basis of an employment contract) there are two kinds of qualifications which can be obtained:

- The title of apprentice – received upon the passing of the apprenticeship exam and confirmed by the receipt of the apprenticeship certificate.
- The title of master – received upon the passing of the master exam and confirmed by the receipt of the master diploma.

Both the apprenticeship certificate and the master diploma are official documents defined by the minister of education.

In the case of pupils the vocational qualifications are obtained through taking of a vocational preparation exam at the Regional Examination Commission. As in the case of apprenticeship exams, this exam consists of two parts – theoretical and practical. The exams are prepared on the basis of examination standards. The student receives a title of a skilled worker in a particular vocation.

The exam results (both theoretical and practical) are marked according to the 6-mark scale used in the school system.

5.6 Teachers/ trainers

Practical classes carried out at the employer's premises are taught either by teachers or practical vocational training instructors. In both cases pedagogical qualifications as well as specialist knowledge in the given area are required.

Qualifications required in the case of teachers are governed by separate legislation.

For employment as an instructor the following qualifications are required:

- Minimum a title of master in the given vocational area and pedagogical qualifications (either teaching qualifications or a completed pedagogical course organised according to the standards defined by the *kurator*)
- In the case when the instructor has pedagogical qualifications and no title of master – the completion of vocational secondary school, as well as a professional title or a title of a skilled worker in the relevant area, together with a suitable professional experience.

- The instructor can also hold the professional titles at the higher education level and present a suitable professional experience.

5.7 Statistics

There is no data available regarding graduates of education and training in alternance in school and out-of-school forms or on school drop-out, future careers of such graduates, their further training and professional life.

In the school year 2001/02, 13071 young workers commenced education (grade 1) in basic vocational schools providing training in alternance (source: 'Education in the school year 2001/2002', Central Statistical Office, Warsaw).

Table 1. Teachers and instructors in basic vocational and upper secondary vocational schools for youth

	2001/02
Full time teachers in total, including those teaching the following subjects:	72855
General subjects	38495
Theoretical vocational subjects	22385
Practical vocational subjects	11975
Instructors of practical vocational subjects	1869

Source: 'Education in the year 2001/2002', Central Statistical Office, Warsaw

6. TERTIARY EDUCATION

Graduates from upper secondary schools in Poland, those possessing the *Matura* certificate, have a wide variety of educational possibilities at the level of tertiary education:

- Schools of higher vocational education (*Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa*) or first cycle of university-type courses, of 3 to 4 years' duration and 3-year teacher training colleges (*kolegium nauczycielskie*)
- Schools of higher education (university-type, uniform Master-Degree studies) of 4.5 to 6 years' duration.

The latter are as follows: universities (*uniwersytet*), technical universities (*politechnika*), agricultural schools (*akademia rolnicza*), schools of economics (*akademia ekonomiczna*), pedagogical academies (*wyższa szkoła pedagogiczna, akademia pedagogiczna*), medical academies (*akademia medyczna*), academies of physical education (*akademia wychowania fizycznego*), schools of arts (*uczelnia artystyczna*), schools of theology (*akademia teologiczna*), other (remaining).

The establishment, organisation and activity of university-type higher education institutions in Poland are regulated by the 12 September 1990 **Act on Schools of Higher Education** (with further amendments). The vocational higher education sector (*wyższe szkoły zawodowe*) is governed by the **Act on Higher Vocational Schools** of 26 June 1997 (with further amendments).

A degree system based on **two main stages** has existed in Poland since 1990 when it became possible for university-type higher education institutions to offer three-year higher vocational studies leading to a **Bachelor's degree (*licencjat, inżynier*)**, which could be followed by a **Master's degree**. The title *licencjat* was introduced by legislation in 1992. As institutions are autonomous, these courses have been introduced gradually over the last 10 years, but their development has been further encouraged by the Bologna process. In 2002/03 they were already quite popular.

6.1 Admission

The requirement to apply for admission to higher education studies is the *Matura* certificate (*świadectwo dojrzałości*).

In case admission to studies is not free, enrolment is carried out by student enrolment boards established by the Rector according to the procedure laid down by the Senate.

Enrolment may be based on either an entrance examination or a qualifying interview, or admission to studies may be free. Decisions are taken by the Senate of an institution. The date of enrolment varies according to the institution and a branch of study.

6.2 Fees

The Constitution of the Republic of Poland guarantees that higher education is free of charge in public sector institutions, full-time day courses. However, there are exceptions to this rule (The Act of 12 September 1990 on Schools of Higher Education): (1) Charging fees is permitted in the case of courses that are repeated by a student as a result of his/her unsatisfactory achievements; (2) Students applying for admission have to pay for the entrance examinations (the amount is fixed by an institution, but it cannot exceed the maximum defined by the minister of education).

The majority of state higher education institutions organise fee-paying extra-mural or full-time evening classes. According to the Act of 1990, the previous obligation to have some work experience in order to be admitted to non-day classes was abolished. The proportion of students undertaking extra-mural or evening study courses, i.e. those for which fees are charged, increases every year.

Tuition fees in either State or non-State establishments of higher education vary greatly, and the amount depends not only on the real cost of studies, but also on the interest displayed in different fields of study. This applies, for example, to economics and law, where the number of students admitted to fee-paying courses has shown the largest growth and tuition fees are sometimes very high.

The minister of education allocates funds to higher education establishments taking into account the following criteria: number of enrolled students, number of students eligible for accommodation in student hostels, the number of hostels. The Rectors and the student self-government boards are responsible for the distribution of these funds (according to internal

rules).

Students in almost all educational establishments are entitled to medical care and reduced fares on public transport.

Maintenance grants are possible only in full-time higher education institutions, both public and non-public.

In 1998/99 a system of state-subsidised loans was introduced in Poland (the Act of 17 July 1998 on Student Loans, with further amendments, and the Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 30 September 1998, with further amendments).

Students of full-time or part-time higher education institutions, both public and non public, who have not yet reached 25 years of age are eligible for loans for the period of maximum 6 years, no longer than they are awarded M.A. degree.

Loans and credits are repayable at a low rate of interest.

6.3 Academic year

The academic year begins on 1 October and normally ends at the end of June. It is divided into two semesters. Apart from the summer holidays, there are also the following breaks: two weeks' winter holidays (first half of February) and two shorter breaks around Christmas and Easter.

6.4 Courses

Vocational studies last at least 6 semesters, i.e. three years. Vocational studies may be provided as full-time, extramural or evening studies. At present, a frequently adopted arrangement involves the introduction of a system based on study plans implemented in parallel: 3-year studies leading to the vocational title of *licencjat*, 4-year vocational studies leading to the title of *inżynier* and 5-year uniform master-degree studies.

Most students pursue five-year master-degree studies. These courses last longer in some branches (or specialisations), e.g. 6 years in medical sciences.

Many branches of study are now introducing subjects which are particularly sought-after on the labour market (these including, for example, computer science, marketing, fundamentals of ecology, psychology and sociology of advertising).

Doctorate studies may be provided by all types of higher university-type institutions as well as the units of the Polish Academy of Sciences and research-and-development establishments.

The freedom regarding study plans and curricula, granted to higher education institutions by the legislation, is also linked with the diversification of teaching methods. It is often the case that traditional forms of instruction are abandoned, a development which is however not infrequently imposed by the considerable (multiple in some branches) increase in the number of students. The modular study system is now becoming increasingly common.

Although adoption of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is not mandatory or as yet underpinned by legislation, it is gradually being introduced. Its implementation began under the TEMPUS PHARE programme and is being continued under the Socrates programme (Erasmus). So far, 120 higher education institutions have introduced ECTS at some of their faculties.

6.5 Assessment/qualifications

On the completion of short-term studies (3 or 4 years), students have to pass *egzamin dyplomowy*, a national examination, which is compulsory for obtaining the *dyplom ukończenia studiów wyższych*, qualification conferring the title *licencjat* or *inżynier*, depending on the field of study. These examinations are defined and assessed by each faculty and their form depends on the field of study.

Those who have completed vocational studies and higher vocational education schools are awarded a diploma of completion of studies in a particular branch and/or vocational specialisation (*dyplom ukończenia studiów wyższych*) as well as the professional title of *licencjat* or *inżynier*. The types of professional titles and the specimens of diplomas to be issued by schools of higher vocational education are determined by the Minister of National Education and Sport in a regulation.

On the completion of long-term studies (5 to 6 years) students have to pass *egzamin magisterski*, a national examination, which is compulsory to obtain the *dyplom ukończenia studiów wyższych* qualification, which confers the title of *magister* or *lekarz* (plus specialisation), depending on the field of studies. This examination consists of the defence of a dissertation (thesis) or, in the case of technical studies, of a practical application project. It also includes oral examinations, which vary depending on the faculty and the field of study. Those who have completed higher educational

institutions, following studies lasting 5 to 6 years, are awarded a diploma of completion of studies (*dyplom ukończenia studiów wyższych*). It certifies the completion of higher education. It is awarded by the academic council of the faculty concerned to those students who have passed the *egzamin magisterski* examination. It confers the title of *magister*. It mentions the field of study and the specialisation, the final marks and the title awarded. It gives the right to practice the relevant profession or to continue education at post-graduate level.

From 2004/05 onwards, the **Diploma Supplement** (*Suplement do dyplomu*) will be compulsorily annexed to all Polish higher education qualifications. It will contain full information on studies completed and the academic and vocational qualifications acquired. In 2002/03 a pilot project was implemented and related legislation is in hand. Until universal adoption of the Supplement, higher education institutions are obliged to issue it to students on request.

Those who have obtained the academic degree of *doktor* may apply for the academic degree of *doktor habilitowany*. The latter is the prerequisite for obtaining the title of *profesor* as well as the post of associate professor in a higher education institution. The academic degree of *doktor habilitowany* is conferred by the board of an organisational unit entitled to award this degree and must be approved by the State Commission for Academic Degrees.

6.6 Teachers

The faculties are entitled to decide on appointments and competitions for research-and-teaching posts.

The minimum teaching load for research-and-teaching staff is now 120 conversion hours per year, the maximum being 210 hours per year. For senior lecturers and lecturers as well as those employed at equivalent posts the minimum is 240 hours per year and the maximum is 360 hours per year. The types of teaching activities included in the teaching workload, as well as the volume of the teaching workload within the limits laid down in the Act, are determined by the Senate of a higher education institution.

6.7 Quality assurance

Currently in Poland there are the following institutions aiming at the quality assurance in higher education:

The State Accreditation Commission (*Państwowa Komisja Akredytacyjna*), established by the Decision nr 54 of 28 December 2001 by the Minister of National Education and Sport, is the legal higher education body responsible for the improvement of teaching quality. Its activities are related to all the higher education institutions regulated by the Act on Schools of Higher Education and by the Act on Higher Vocational Schools.

The commission presents opinions and motions to the Minister related to the:

- creation of higher education institutions, granting the higher education institution a right to open studies in a given area and at the given level of study, as well as a right to the creation of a branch or a faculty in a location different from the home institution,
- assessment of teaching quality in a given study area, including the training of teachers and teaching conditions.

The commission co-operates with national and international organisations, which are involved in teaching quality assessment and accreditation matters.

The General Council for Higher Education (*Rada Główna Szkolnictwa Wyższego*) is an elective body of the higher education system. The council co-operates with the Minister of National Education and Sport and with other governmental bodies in the establishment of the state educational policy in the area of higher education: 1) it issues opinions and proposes motions in all matters related to the higher education and science, 2) it issues opinions on legal regulations, 3) it issues opinions on the proposal of the state budget related to the higher education system and on the rules of distributing state subsidy to the higher education institutions, 4) it issues opinions on the proposals of statutes for higher education institutions. It is responsible for the definition of fields of study and the development of standards in education. These standards are implemented in accordance with a separate regulation by the Ministry of National Education and Sport.

6.8. Statistics

Table 1: Higher education institutions by type and the number of students in the academic year 2001/02^{x)}

Higher education institutions by type	Institutions	Students in '000
Total	344	1718,7
Universities	17	510,1
Technical universities	22	334,5
Agricultural schools	9	91,3
Schools of economics	93	386,6
Teacher education schools	17	134,1
Medical academies	10	32,8
Maritime schools	2	11,7
Academies of physical education	6	23,0
Schools of arts	22	13,3
Schools of theology	10	9,8
Higher vocational schools	102	99,8
Other	34	71,6

^{x)} Figures include non-state higher education institutions.

Source: Higher schools and their finances in 2001, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2002.

7. CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

7.1 Specific legislative framework

'Adult education' and 'continuing education' are often used interchangeably. The term 'continuing education' is defined as 'educational activities directed towards personality development, the development of knowledge, skills formation and ability development. Continuing education should take into account the needs of the labour market'.

The following legal regulations define main tasks of continuing education:

- Act on the Education System of September 7, 1991, with subsequent amendments, together with executive regulations, defines that education, training and in-service training can be provided on daily, evening, extra-mural, distance-learning, out-of-school basis or in any other system combining any of the above forms. These tasks are carried out by public and non-public adult schools, centres for continuing education, practical training centres, and other institutions of out-of-school education run by, among others, associations and foundations or folk universities. The Act on the Education System (amended in 1998) created a possibility for the Ministries of Internal Affairs and Administration, of Justice and of National Defence to run particular kinds of schools. However, these schools are a marginal phenomenon among schools for adults. The important change in functioning of adult schools was introduced by the Act of 21 November 2001 "Regulations introducing the reform of school system" which introduced the new types of post-gymnasium schools.
- The amended version of the Act on the Education System (project of September 2002 accepted by the government) introduced vital changes to adult education in Poland. In the draft version of this legislation a rule was introduced which separated the continuing education centres (CKU) and practical education centres (CKP) from schools, as they were institutions with different than schools statutory aims. This new position of CKUs and CKPs allows them to integrate actions undertaken by various continuing education institutions and to create regional or national networks

of continuing education institutions. In the amended Act changes concerning pedagogical supervision and the system of external exams have been introduced. The act also gives basis for support to education by associations, foundations and other non-government organisations in the area of education. Local authorities can delegate tasks related to education to these organisations. This change regulates the rules related to financing of non-public organisers of continuing education from the state budget. This is of particular importance in terms of support to adult education.

- The Act on employment and counteracting unemployment of December 14, 1994 with subsequent amendments, which contains regulations concerning the training of the unemployed or those threatened with unemployment. Amended legislation (February 2003) is targeted at the increase of vocational activity of the unemployed and at the extension of the scope of programmes for the unemployed. It also aims at the higher involvement of local governments in dealing with the unemployment issue. According to the newly introduced rules, the regional self-government will distribute resources from the Labour Fund to the local (*powiat*) authorities in order to support programmes targeted at the actions against unemployment. These changes are targeted at the development of efficient regional policy in this area.

The following regulations concern vocational and general education for adults:

- The Regulation by the Minister of National Education and the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of October 12, 1993. This regulation lays down principles and conditions for adult education in schools as well as for out-of-school and in-service training. One can also find there instructions concerning qualification standards (e.g. skilled worker, master) and ways of acquiring them. This regulation does not concern health service employees, teachers and academic teachers, research and research-technical workers employed in research institutions and other people subject to separate legislation.

- Other regulations, as e.g. the Regulation by the Council of Ministers on co-operation in the field of vocational training, which deals, among others, with principles of ministers' co-operation in the field of syllabuses for vocational education as well as core curricula for the training in a given vocation.

7.2 Administration and management

The Minister of National Education and Sport is responsible for co-ordination in the field of adult education. The Department of Vocational and Continuing Education is responsible for activities in the field of adult education (with the exception of higher education). Its responsibilities concerning adult education, among others, are: definition of organisational and content patterns, definition of principles underlying the acquisition, complementing and improvement of vocational qualifications on the school and out-of-school basis, the evaluation of the training quality and effectiveness, preparation and implementation of new teaching forms and methods in continuing education, e.g. distance learning. Moreover, the Department is responsible for the organisation of education in all types of schools for adults, for co-operation with various institutions in the field of adult education, for co-ordination of core curriculum development.

The Minister of Education co-operates with the Minister of Economy, Labour and Social policy, the Minister of Culture and the Minister of Health in the area of vocational and continuing education.

Kuratorzy are in charge of education at the regional level and they report to the regional authorities. Their tasks include, among others, implementation of the educational policy prepared by the minister of education and pedagogical supervision over schools and educational institutions, including non-public ones. Regional authorities are responsible for running of the regional educational institutions, including medical upper secondary schools.

The *powiat* (district) authorities are responsible for running of post-gymnasium schools, continuing and practical education centres and other non-school institutions.

The *gmina* authorities are in charge of nursery schools, primary and lower secondary schools (apart from special schools). The school head is responsible for school's management.

All public schools for adults are organised and run by territorial self-government units.

Non-public schools for adults are organised and run by physical persons or by corporate bodies (associations, companies, foundations etc.).

7.3 Funding

Adult education in public schools is financed from the territorial self-governments' resources. Educational tasks implemented by territorial self-government units are supported by the educational part of the general subvention, defined in the Annual Budget for a given year. The subvention is divided on the basis of the algorithm defined in a regulation by the minister of education. Bodies running the school, i.e. *powiaty* (districts) or *gminy* (communes) – self government territorial authorities – distribute these funds between particular schools, including schools for adults.

According to the Act on the education system of September 7, 1991 with subsequent amendments, education in adult schools is free of charge. However, because of insufficient financial resources of public schools, there is a possibility (on voluntary basis), to cover some of the expenses (except salaries) from students' self-government funds. The amount to be paid is defined by the self-government.

Education in non-public schools is paid for. Non-public schools with the rights of public schools receive a refund from the state budget.

Fees are also charged in out-of-school adult education institutions, e.g. examination fee is calculated on the average month salary basis.

Resources for continuing education in out-of-school forms can come from:

- State budget
- Employers
- Own income of students.

According to the Regulation of the Minister of National Education and the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 12 October 1993, if an employer directs an employee to school (including post-graduate studies) and the education is provided in other place than employee's place of residence, the employer can reimburse travel costs and daily allowances, he can also cover the costs of textbooks and other additional materials, cover tuition fees and agree to some extra training leave.

The Act on employment and counteracting unemployment of December 14, 1994 defines principles and procedures of financing the unemployed and those threatened with unemployment. Training, re-training, vocational qualifications improvement, can be financed

from the Labour Fund (a state intentional fund). The *powiat* labour offices are responsible for offering training schemes and other forms of professional activity to the unemployed and other job seeking persons.

7.4 Human resources

In the school year 2001/2002 there were 9468 full time teachers (FTEs – full-time equivalents) employed in secondary schools for adults (basic vocational schools, general and vocational secondary schools).

There is no data available on the numbers of teachers and trainers employed in the out-of-school system.

The National Centre for Support to Vocational and Continuing Education (KOWEZiU) is in charge of the preparation and co-ordination of activities in the area of training and in-service training of teachers working in schools for adults and in continuing education. It co-operates with CKU and CKP. The Centre organises meetings and seminars with a view to disseminating most recent developments in the area of vocational and continuing education, as well as research results, publications and pedagogical innovations. It also co-operates with social partners with respect to the quality assurance in the area of vocational and continuing education.

Some universities provide training for future specialists in the area of continuing and adult education at the teacher training faculties.

Continuing Education Centres are in charge of advice provision to teachers and lecturers employed in adult education. The centres can also employ professional advisers specialised in adult education. Practical Training Centres are also involved in in-service training programmes for youth and adult school teachers.

7.5 Organisation

Adult vocational training and adult general education can be provided both in the school and out-of-school forms.

Adult education in the school forms is provided in primary schools, gymnasias, upper secondary and post-secondary schools, in higher education establishments.

Vocational training and general education for adults in out-of-school forms (except post-graduate studies) can be organised by:

- public education institutions;

- non-public education institutions.

Continuing and practical education centres are the most common public education institutions.

Non-public education institutions can be organised by:

- Social organisations and associations
- Partnerships
- Foundations
- Trade unions
- Religious organisations
- Individuals ⁽²⁾

7.5.1. Types of training institutions

There are school and out-of-school forms of continuing education and training for adults

7.5.1.1. School forms

The Act of 21 November 2001 introduced the following types of post-gymnasium schools for adults (they are identical as those for youth):

- 2 to 3 year basic vocational schools which lead to the acquisition of diploma confirming vocational qualifications upon passing of a vocational examination, and allow for continuation of education in a 2 year complementary upper general secondary school or in a 3 year complementary *technikum*
- 3 year upper general secondary schools for adults (*liceum ogólnokształcące*) which lead to the acquisition of *świadectwo dojrzałości* upon passing of the *Matura* examination
- 3 year upper specialised secondary schools for adults (*liceum profilowane*), providing education within the general vocational profiles, which lead to the acquisition of *świadectwo dojrzałości* upon passing of the *Matura* examination
- 4 year *technikum* (vocational upper secondary schools), which leads to the acquisition of vocational qualifications upon passing of a vocational examination, and make possible acquisition of *świadectwo dojrzałości* upon passing of the *Matura* examination
- 2 year complementary upper general secondary schools (*uzupełniające liceum ogólnokształcące*) for graduates of basic vocational schools, which lead to the acquisition of *świadectwo dojrzałości* upon passing of the *Matura* examination
- 3 year complementary *technikum*

⁽²⁾ The course organisers have to register with the relevant territorial self-government unit in charge of public schools and institutions.

(vocational upper secondary schools) which leads to the acquisition of *świadectwo dojrzałości* upon passing of the *Matura* examination and to the acquisition of vocational qualifications upon passing of a vocational examination

- Post secondary schools (up to 2,5 years of duration) for graduates with secondary education which lead to the acquisition of a diploma confirming vocational qualifications upon passing of a vocational examination.

Apart from the above listed schools, the old types of schools are still operational (until they cease to exist) although new pupils are no longer admitted.

7.5.1.2. Out-of-school forms

According to the Ministry of National Education and Sport (estimated data) social organisations and associations account for the highest number of courses organised in the year 2002. Because of a large variety of both public and non-public institutions organising out-of-school education for adults, their presentation below is limited to those training the biggest number of students and having the longest tradition.

Continuing Education Centres (CKU)

Continuing Education Centres are public institutions of adult education established and run by *powiaty*. CKU are multifunction education units which aim at the training and in-service training of adults in schools or during out-of-school activities. The centres are also targeted at the co-operation with labour offices with respect to the retraining of staff and to the co-operation with continuing education organisers both in Poland and abroad. Apart from CKUs, so called agricultural centres (RCKU) exist in the countryside, mainly at agricultural school units in small towns or rural areas. In 2002 there were 124 CKUs and 44 RCKUs.

The centre's main tasks are: to award qualification titles, to organise extra-mural examinations, to publish handbooks and other teaching materials for students, to improve methods of adult teaching, to offer assistance to other institutions organising adult education, to co-operate with adult education organisations in Poland and abroad, to co-operate with labour offices and employers in the field of retraining. Each centre should have workshops and laboratories for practical vocational training. Educational activity of the centre is supported from budgetary and non-budgetary financial resources. Out-of-school forms of adult education are financed from non-budgetary means, coming from fees paid by individuals and institutions taking advantage of the training.

Continuing Education Centres play an important role in preparing and implementing modern curricula and methods in adult education.

Labour Offices

Regional and *powiat* labour offices organise and fund education for their own employees, the unemployed and those threatened with unemployment. The regional offices are in charge of organisation and funding from the Labour Fund of labour offices staff who are employed to tackle the unemployment issues addressed in the Employment and Counteracting Unemployment Act. The *powiat* offices are in charge of organisation of training for the unemployed and other eligible persons and co-operate in this respect with the employers, training institutions and other social partners.

Employers

Training in enterprises can be prepared and organised by either the specialists and training units within the company or by external institutions. On the basis of research carried out by the Institute of Management on a national representative sample of 600 enterprises and 1000 adults it has been disclosed that large and medium size companies used services provided by training institutions most often in the following areas: upgrading of employees' qualifications (49% of enterprises), organisational guidance (10%), recruitment and selection of staff (5%). The content of training for companies with minimum 100 employees was related to the following topics: finances and accounting (67%), technical training (48%), management (41%), production and quality control (37%), and computing (37%). The content of training for companies with minimum 5 employees was related to the following topics: finances and accounting (28%), technical training (22%), computing (14%), marketing and sales (15% each). Training in the area of finances and accounting was offered to their employees by 91% of state run enterprises.

When comparing the supply and demand, training in the area of sales (including sales techniques, negotiations and service) and marketing, promotion and advertising (including so called 'soft skills') are the most often offered ones, while enterprises expect training in the area of finances and accounting, technical training and computing, namely so called 'hard skills'.

The Union of Vocational Education Centres (ZZDZ)

The Union of Vocational Education Centres (*Związek Zakładów Doskonalenia Zawodowego*) is an educational association, acting as a union of associations and corporate bodies according to the Law on Associations. The Union, as well as Vocational Education Centres united there, are

non-governmental non-profit institutions. Participation in youth education, as well as in the training and in-service training of adults, is the main statutory aim of the Union. In the first half of 2001 there were 25 Vocational Education Centres in the Union.

Adult education was organised in education centres and their specialised laboratories all over Poland. 285 thousand trainees participated in 15 768 courses in 2001.

Federation of Scientific-Technical Associations – NOT (SNT NOT Association)

Federation of Scientific-Technical Associations – NOT is a civic organisation with over 160 years of tradition. It has been located in Warsaw since 1905. At present the Federation includes 36 specialist Scientific-Technical Associations covering all the technical areas. SNT NOT is a member of 46 international organisations including the World Federation of Engineering Organisations (WFEO) and the European Federation of National Engineering Associations (FEANI). SNT NOT has a right to award vocational specialisation degrees to engineers and technicians and to award vocational qualifications to e.g. technical experts, as well as participates, with FEANI Federation, in the award of the European Engineer title – EUR ING. It also provides training and in-service training for technical and managerial staff and takes part in organisation of practical placements and vocational training periods for young technical staff abroad.

Polish Association for Adult Education (TWP)

The Polish Association for Adult Education (*Towarzystwo Wiedzy Powszechnej*) specialises mainly in foreign language teaching for young people and adults. It runs post-secondary schools and a higher teacher education institution. It has regional units all over Poland. It is a member of the International Council for AE in Toronto.

Polish Economic Society (PTE)

PTE is an association of practical and theoretical economists. Among others, it aims at the improvement of qualifications and integration of the economists' circles. The society includes 24 regional units which are legal entities. One of its aims is to establish post-secondary schools, higher education institutions and postgraduate studies in economics. It also organises courses in economics related areas, e.g. computer assisted basic accounting for enterprises.

Scientific Association for Organisation and Management (TNOiK)

TNOiK is an association in charge of the dissemination of knowledge on professional management. It organises courses, seminars, workshops. It has a highly qualified staff of

lecturers and trainers. In 2000 it trained over 16 thousand persons. It is an active member of the World Management Council (CIOS) and European Management Council (CECIOS).

Folk Universities

Among non-public institutions of adult education folk universities play a special role. They are an important element of the continuing education system, specialised in education provided in villages and small towns. There are two types of folk universities: location based and community based ones, their number depends on the needs of the community. Community universities have not got permanent location – they are situated in schools, cultural centres or parish churches. The number of students enrolled in a community university ranges from 40 to 60, depending on specialisation.

7.5.2. Admission requirements

Everybody who is over 17 years of age can attend schools for adults. A 17-year old person can also enter for an extramural exam in all subjects included in curricula of all types of schools for adults.

The unemployed and those being threatened with unemployment are sent by labour offices for a course. If a course is provided on employer's direct order, the admission criteria are commonly agreed by both the training institution and the employer. The level of education completed, psychological and physical dispositions, work experience and some additional skills are, among others, taken into account as main admission requirements.

At the graduate's suggestion, or with his/her approval, the district labour office can send him/her to a job practice. This period of special training should not exceed 12 months and it is held on the basis of the contract signed by the district labour office and the employer. During this period the graduate is given a scholarship paid by the regional labour office.

7.5.3. Objectives of the programmes

The main objective of adult education is to complement and improve both theoretical knowledge and practical vocational skills needed for a given occupation, job or post. Vocational training aims at the adjustment of the knowledge and skills to developing technologies and work organisation, as well as to job changes.

The main objective of the training of the unemployed is to react quickly to current local market needs and to help the unemployed to adjust their qualifications to these needs.

7.5.4. Main principles of the organisation of time

Education in post-gymnasium schools can be organised in day or extramural forms. Day classes are held 3 to 4 times a week while extramural classes are organised as consultations. It is possible to organise two teaching sessions – one as an introduction to the semester's work and the other – as a preparation for exams.

7.5.5. Curriculum

Curricula in schools for adults are usually the same as in youth schools, but adapted by teachers to the needs and requirements of adult education.

7.6 Assessment, accreditation, recognition

The completion of public schools for adults is a chance to obtain a certificate or a state diploma. The student graduates from a primary school, gymnasium, or a post-gymnasium school if he/she has obtained marks above unsatisfactory in all compulsory subjects at the end of the last semester. Secondary general and vocational schools give a chance to obtain secondary school leaving certificates and to continue education at a higher level. Primary or post-primary school leaving certificates can also be obtained on the basis of extramural examinations (with the exception of medical branch) which are carried out by the State Examination Commissions (PKE). Model certificates and other school related documents are defined by the minister of education in a separate regulation.

Since 1 of January 2002 the new rules for commissions' activities have been applied which should allow for all the interested persons to be able to take the extramural exams. The State Examination Commissions can be established only at the Continuing Education Centres and in public school units which include schools for adults. Examination commissions are established by regional education superintendents (*kurator*) and can organise examinations only in the given region.

In 2002 changes to the legislation concerning the qualification exams for apprentices and masters were introduced, as well as to the rules related to so called vocational exams (confirming vocational qualifications).

Methods and principles of the recognition of qualification titles, i.e. those of skilled worker or master, are regulated with instructions issued by the Minister of National Education (in 1993) and the Minister of Labour and Social Policy. Qualification titles certify the level of acquired vocational qualifications. They are conferred by state examining bodies on the basis of the results of examinations.

The Management Board of the Federation of Scientific-Technical Associations – NOT and the Management Board of the Polish Economic Society are entitled to confer vocational specialisation degrees to people with higher or secondary education.

7.7 Statistics

Table 1. Number of schools for adults (2001/02)

Type of school	
Primary school	7
Gymnasium	96
Secondary general school	1124
Basic vocational school	148
Secondary vocational school	1752

Table 2. Number of students in schools for adults (in thousands in 2001/02)

Type of school	
Primary school	0.09
Gymnasium	8.6
Secondary general school	143.2
Basic vocational school	12.8
Secondary vocational school	198.2

Source: Education in 2001/02. Central Statistical Office 2002