



The System of Education in Poland

2018

Eurydice



FRSE
Publications

The System of Education in Poland

2018

Eurydice



FRSE
Publications

The System of Education in Poland 2018

Prepared by the Polish Eurydice Unit in consultation with experts from the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education

Editor:	Ewa Kolanowska
Managing editors:	Magdalena Górowska-Fells, Beata Płatos
Editing cooperation:	Michał Chojnacki, Dorota Kuczara
Editing and proofreading:	Leila Chenoir
Design and DTP:	Papercut
Printing:	Pracownia Poligraficzno-Introligatorska INTRO-DRUK Anna Będzińska
Publisher:	Foundation for the Development of the Education System Polish National Agency for the Erasmus+ Programme Al. Jerozolimskie 142a, 02-305 Warszawa www.frse.org.pl

Polish Eurydice Unit

www.eurydice.org.pl | eurydice@frse.org.pl

© Foundation for the Development of the Education System, Warsaw 2018

ISBN: 978-83-65591-56-2

Free copy



Please cite this publication as: *The System of Education in Poland 2018*, Ewa Kolanowska, Foundation for the Development of the Education System, Warsaw 2018

Table of content

1. Legislative and Policy Framework	6	5.1.3. Student Grouping for Learning	45
1.1. Key Legislation	6	5.1.4. Organisation of Time	46
1.2. Lifelong Learning Strategy	7	5.1.5. Curriculum	46
1.3. Ongoing Reforms	9	5.1.6. Assessment and Certification	47
2. Organisation, Governance and Funding	10	5.2. General Upper Secondary Education	48
2.1. Organisation	10	5.2.1. Organisation	48
2.2. Governance	16	5.2.2. Admission	49
2.3. Funding	23	5.2.3. Student Grouping for Learning	49
3. Early Childhood and Care	27	5.2.4. Organisation of Time	50
3.1. Organisation	27	5.2.5. Curriculum	50
3.2. Admission	29	5.2.6. Assessment and Certification	52
3.3. Pupil Grouping for Learning	30	5.3. Vocational Upper Secondary Education	54
3.4. Organisation of Time	31	5.3.1. Organisation	55
3.5. Curriculum	32	5.3.2. Assessment	56
3.6. Assessment	32	5.3.3. Student Grouping for Learning	56
4. Primary Education	34	5.3.4. Organisation of Time	56
4.1. Organisation	34	5.3.5. Curriculum	57
4.2. Admission	36	5.3.6. Assessment and Certification	62
4.3. Pupil Grouping for Learning	37	6. Post-Secondary Education	65
4.4. Organisation of Time	37	6.1. Organisation	65
4.5. Curriculum	38	6.2. Admission	65
4.6. Assessment and Certification	41	6.3. Student Grouping for Learning	66
5. Secondary Education	43	6.4. Organisation of Time	66
5.1. Lower Secondary Education	44	6.5. Curriculum	66
5.1.1. Organisation	44	6.6. Assessment and Certification	67
5.1.2. Admission	45		

7. Colleges	69	11.2. Academic Teachers	102
		11.2.1. Initial Training, Required Qualifications and In-Service Training	103
8. Higher Education	71	11.2.2. Conditions of Service	103
8.1. Organisation	71	11.2.3. Assessment and Promotion	105
8.2. Admission	74		
8.3. Organisation of Time	75	12. Quality Assurance	106
8.4. Curriculum	75	12.1. School Education	106
8.5. Assessment and Certification	77	12.2. Higher Education	108
		12.3. Adult Education	112
9. Adult Education	79	13. Practical Information for International Learners and Education Staff	113
9.1. Providers and Programmes	79	13.1. Access to Education	113
9.2. Admission	83	13.2. Learning Support and other Services	114
9.3. Curriculum	83	13.3. Recognition of Qualifications	116
9.4. Assessment and Certification	85	13.4. Programmes and Other Initiatives Supporting International Learning Mobility	118
10. Education for Students with Special Needs	87	13. Useful Links	121
10.1. Organisation	88		
10.2. Curriculum	90		
10.3. Assessment and Certification	94		
11. Teachers	95		
11.1. School Education Teachers	95		
11.1.1. Initial Training, Required Qualifications and In-Service Training	95		
11.1.2. Conditions of Service	98		
11.1.3. Assessment and Promotion	101		

Basic figures: school / academic year 2016/2017

21,675

preschool institutions, incl. nursery schools, preschool units and centres, and preschool classes in primary schools

31,556

schools at all levels, incl. schools for adults; 25,518 public and 6,038 non-public schools

390

higher education institutions, incl. 132 public and 258 non-public HEIs

1,299,138

children in preschool institutions

4,952,219

pupils, students and learners in all types of schools, incl. schools for adults

684,497

teachers in all types of schools (673,232 FTE)

1,348,822

students in first-, second- and long-cycle programmes in HEIs, incl. 1,034,161 (76.7%) in public HEIs and 314,661 (23.3%) in non-public HEIs

43,181

students in third-cycle programmes in HEIs and research institutions

95,685

academic teachers in HEIs, incl. 83,796 (88%) in public HEIs and 11,889 (12%) in non-public HEIs

1. Legislative and Policy Framework

1.1. Key Legislation

The 1997 Constitution of the Republic of Poland stipulates that education is compulsory until the age of 18 and sets out a number of fundamental rights and freedoms relating to education:

- » Every individual has the right to education
 - » Education in public schools and higher education institutions is free
 - » Public authorities ensure universal and equal access to education; to this end, they provide financial and organisational support to pupils and students
 - » Citizens and institutions have the right to establish schools and higher education institutions
 - » Parents are free to choose schools other than public ones for their children
 - » The autonomy of higher education institutions is ensured in accordance with the principles laid down in the relevant Act of Parliament
-

The education system is governed by Acts of Parliament and ministerial regulations adopted, in particular, by the Minister of National Education, responsible for general education, vocational education and skills, and the Minister of Science and Higher Education. The main Acts concerning **school education**, which covers all levels from preschool to post-secondary non-tertiary education, are the **School Education Act** of 1991 and the **Teachers' Charter** of 1982, as subsequently amended, as well as the recently enacted **Law on School Education** and the **Provisions Introducing the Law on School Education** of 2016. They regulate key aspects, including the structure of the school education system, management and funding, matters related to the organisation of education and curricula, admissions, assessment and certification, support for pupils and students, education for foreign nationals,

and qualification requirements, employment conditions and promotion arrangements for teachers. **Regulations** of the Minister of National Education lay down detailed arrangements in these areas and establish, in particular, core curricula for general and vocational education, and outline timetables for public schools.

The key Act governing **higher education** is the **Law on Higher Education** of 2005, as subsequently amended. It defines the remit of the main bodies in the higher education system, grants autonomy to higher education institutions (HEIs) in all areas of their activity and sets out their rights and responsibilities, and lays down general arrangements concerning the establishment and liquidation of HEIs, supervision over HEIs, governance system and internal structure of HEIs, types of degree programmes, international co-operation, qualification requirements and employment conditions for academic staff, rights and duties of, and financial support for, students and doctoral students, and student and doctoral student self-government bodies. Doctoral and postdoctoral degrees and professorial titles are awarded on the basis of the 2003 **Act on Academic Degrees and Titles and Degrees and Titles in the Field of Art**. Other main Acts regulate matters specifically related to research. **Regulations** of the Minister of Science and Higher Education define, for example, areas of knowledge, fields of science and scientific disciplines in which HEIs provide degree programmes and related requirements, and national standards for degree programmes in selected fields, including, in particular, those for regulated professions.

There is **no single Act** of Parliament governing **adult education** as a whole. **Relevant** provisions are included in the legislation on school education and higher education. Regulations of the Minister of National Education address selected aspects such as continuing education in non-school settings, accreditation of institutions providing continuing education in non-school settings, and outline statutes of public institutions providing continuing education.

1.2. Lifelong Learning Strategy

The Government which took office in 2015 has adopted the Responsible Development Plan and Strategy which identify education as a key element of social and regional development. The objectives of the lifelong learning (LLL) policy are based on the *Lifelong Learning Perspective*, adopted in 2013 in response to the European Commission's *Europe 2020 Strategy*. The LLL policy focuses on five principal objectives which have been addressed through education reforms and other measures:

Objectives

Stimulating creativity and innovation at all levels of education



Integrating the national qualification system



Increasing participation rates in early childhood education and care (ECEC)



Adapting education and training to the labour market and social needs



Introducing a new approach to adult learning based on the recognition of the value of learning in the workplace and as part of structured social engagement



Measures

School and higher education reforms

implemented since 2009: curricula based on **learning outcomes (LOs)**; **individualised teaching and learning**; emphasis on **active learning and problem-solving**

8-level Polish Qualifications Framework

adopted and referenced to the European Qualifications Framework; **Act on the Integrated Qualifications System** passed in December 2015

Government programme to extend the range and improve the quality of ECEC provision implemented since 2008

Revised **classification of occupations**, redefined qualifications for each occupation and related changes in **vocational exams**; **structural reforms**, incl. the establishment of sectoral vocational schools; modernisation of **core curricula** for vocational education (LOs; more robust component developing key competences); practically-oriented vs academically-oriented programmes in higher education; and greater **flexibility in continuing education** through wider use of non-school settings

Mechanisms for **validation of non-formal and informal learning** introduced as part of vocational exams and in higher education; **National Training Fund** established in 2014 to support employers investing in continuing the education of their employees; **trilateral agreements** (labour office, employer and training institution) introduced for the training of adult learners; **programmes for seniors** launched

1.3. Ongoing Reforms

A major reform in the **school education system** was initiated in the school year 2016/2017 to strengthen general education as the basis for further personal development of pupils and students, and to address evolving needs of today's labour market. The reform will be completed in the school year 2022/2023.

Key aspects of the school education reform

➤ 6-year-olds required to follow a one-year pre-primary education programme

➤ Establishment of 8-year primary school integrating the pre-reform 6 year primary school and 2 years of the pre-reform 3-year lower secondary school, with the lower secondary school being phased out, and the duration of education extended by 1 year in general and technical secondary schools

➤ Phasing out of 3-year basic vocational schools and establishment of 3-year stage I sectoral vocational schools leading to a vocational qualification and of 2-year stage II sectoral vocational schools where students may upgrade their qualifications and prepare for the maturity exam

➤ New national core curricula for general and vocational education

➤ Promotion of dual vocational training in collaboration with business partners

➤ Greater participation of employers in the co-financing of vocational education through the establishment of the Vocational Education Development Fund

➤ Free textbooks provided to pupils and students

A new **Law on Higher Education** has been drafted and **passed to the Parliament** by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. Aiming to improve the quality of higher education and enhance the international competitiveness of HEIs, the draft proposes, in particular, extending the autonomy of HEIs, dividing HEIs into academically- and professionally-oriented institutions, introducing a new model of governance together with increased funding, re-introducing entrance exams, extending the duration of full-time programmes, and introducing a new model for the training of doctoral students, with doctoral schools to be established. The new law has been approved for implementation starting 1 October 2018.

2. Organisation, Governance and Funding

2.1. Organisation

Institutions for children aged 0 to 3 years, supervised by the minister responsible for family, labour and social policy, are not part of the school education system. The system of education comprises preschool settings and schools as part of the school education system, and higher education institutions (HEIs), which form a separate higher education system.

Compulsory Education

Compulsory education is divided into:

- » **One-year compulsory pre-primary education for 6-year-old children.**
- » **Full-time compulsory education** (obligation to attend school) for children and young people **aged 7 to 16 years** in the old school education structure being reformed or **7 to 15 years** in the new structure to be established.
It starts at the beginning of the school year in the calendar year in which the child reaches the age of 7 and lasts until the completion of education in the primary school (or in the lower secondary school in the transition period when it is phased out as part of the ongoing reform) but not beyond the age of 18. Upon parents' request children who have completed one year of preschool education or have a positive psychological diagnosis can start education in primary school at the age of 6.
- » **Part-time compulsory education** (obligation to participate in education or training) for young people **aged 16 to 18 years** in the school education structure being reformed or **15 to 18 years** in the new structure to be established.
It may be provided in an upper secondary school within the school education structure being reformed / a secondary school within the new structure to be established or in a non-school setting (for example, as part of vocational training at an employer's organisation).

Levels of Education and Types of Institutions

The education system comprises a school education system (from preschool to post-secondary education) and a higher education system, each operating on the basis of separate legislation. There is no single or integrated adult education system.

With the school education structure being transformed as part of the ongoing reform (see Section 1.3), the current and new structures of the education system exist side by side until the former is gradually replaced with the latter by the end of the school year 2022/2023. The school education reform has no implications for the higher education system. Adult education is affected by the reform insofar as education provided in schools for adults is being reorganised to fit into the new school education system.

Education levels in the pre-reform and new education systems

Early childhood education and care:

- » Crèches, kids clubs and nanny care for children aged 0–3 years

Before the reform

Primary education: 6-year primary school for pupils aged 6/7 to 13 years

Lower secondary education: 3-year lower secondary school for pupils aged 13 to 16 years (being phased out from 2017/2018)

**Upper secondary education
for students aged 16 to 19/20 years:**

- » 3-year general upper secondary schools (transformed into 4-year schools from 2019/2020)
- » 4-year technical upper secondary schools (transformed into 5-year schools from 2019/2020)
- » 3-year basic vocational schools (transformed into stage I sectoral vocational schools from 2017/2018)

Post-secondary non-tertiary education

Colleges of social work

Higher education:

Degree programmes provided by HEIs:

- » First-cycle programmes leading to a Bachelor's degree: 3 to 4 years (*licencjat*) or 3.5 to 4 years (*inżynier*)

Adult education:

- » Education provided in primary, lower and upper secondary and post-secondary schools for adults (to be phased out or transformed as part of the school education reform, see above)

- » Preschool / pre-primary education in a nursery school, a preschool class of the primary school, a preschool unit or preschool centre for children aged 6 years

Single-structure education: 8-year primary school for pupils aged 6/7 to 15 years
(Pupils finishing grade VI of the pre-reform primary school moving on to grade VII of the new school)

Secondary education for students aged 15 to 18/20 years:

- » 4-year general secondary schools
- » 5-year technical secondary schools
- » 3-year stage I sectoral vocational schools
- » 2-year stage II sectoral vocational schools (new schools to be established)

After the reform

Schools offering programmes of 1 to 2.5 years (reorganised from 2017/2018 to fit into the new school education structure)

3-year programmes considered part of the school education system in national legislation and classified as tertiary education for international comparisons

- » Second-cycle programmes leading to a Master's (*magister*) degree: 1.5 to 2 years
- » Long-cycle programmes, leading to a Master's (*magister*) degree, in selected areas: 4.5 to 6 years
- » Third-cycle programmes leading to a doctoral (*doktor*) degree: 2 to 4 years

- » Various general and vocational courses offered in non-school settings
- » Non-degree postgraduate programmes offered by HEIs

Art and Sports Schools

In parallel to mainstream general schools art education constitutes a separate system, which is supervised by **the minister responsible for culture and national heritage**. Art schools are intended for children and youth with particular artistic abilities and offer both general and art education or art education only at all levels (ISCED 1 to 3). Art education can be continued in higher education institutions (specialised in higher art education).

For children and youth excelling in sports there are sport classes, sport schools and schools for sport champions.

Integrated Qualifications System

An **Integrated Qualifications System** (IQF) has been in place since 2016. It is based on the **8-level Polish Qualifications Framework** (PQF), referenced to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), and the Integrated Qualification Register, which includes qualifications awarded in Poland. Qualifications in the PQF are defined in terms of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and social competences).

The IQS makes a distinction between full, partial, regulated and market qualifications. **Full qualifications** are awarded only within the school education system upon completion of specific education levels, and within the higher education system upon completion of first-, second-, long- and third-cycle programmes. **Partial qualifications** may be established both within the school education and higher education systems and outside these systems as part of non-formal education; the range of learning outcomes to be achieved for a partial qualification is normally narrower than for a full qualification. **Regulated qualifications** are established by specific national regulations and awarded pursuant to such regulations, except for qualifications awarded within the school education and higher education systems. **Market qualifications** are not regulated by national legislation and are awarded as part of the freedom of economic activity. These qualifications have to be registered by the minister responsible for a given industry or sector of economy.

Main full qualifications awarded		PQF/EQF Level / ISCED level
Education system before the ongoing school education reform	Education system after the ongoing school education reform	
6-year primary school leaving certificate		Level I ISCED 1
3-year lower secondary school leaving certificate	8-year primary school leaving certificate	Level II ISCED 2
Diploma confirming vocational qualifications obtained after finishing a 3-year basic vocational school	Diploma confirming vocational qualifications obtained after finishing a 3-year stage I sectoral vocational school	Level III ISCED 3
Diploma confirming vocational qualifications obtained after finishing a 4-year technical upper secondary school or a post-secondary school	Diploma confirming vocational qualifications obtained after finishing a 5-year technical upper secondary school or a post-secondary school, or a stage II sectoral vocational school	Level IV ISCED 3 and 4
Maturity certificate obtained upon passing the maturity exam in a general or technical upper secondary school	Maturity certificate obtained upon passing the maturity exam in a general or technical secondary school, or stage II sectoral vocational school	Level IV ISCED 3
Diploma of a college of social work		Level V ISCED 5
Diploma confirming completion of a first-cycle programme (Bachelor's degree (<i>licencjat</i> or <i>inżynier</i>))		Level VI ISCED 6
Diploma confirming completion of a second-cycle or long-cycle programme (Master's degree (<i>magister</i>))		Level VII ISCED 7
Doctoral diploma (doctoral degree (<i>doktor</i>))		Level VIII ISCED 8

Public and Non-Public Institutions

Institutions at all levels may be **public** or **non-public**. However, primary and lower secondary schools (the latter until phased out as part of the ongoing reform) can operate only as public schools or non-public ones with so-called public-school status as they provide full-time compulsory education. A non-

public school may be granted public-school status if it provides education based on the national core curricula and outline timetables, and, where providing vocational education, trains for occupations included in the Classification of Occupations for Vocational Education, complies with the national legislation concerning internal and external pupil / student assessment and progression, and employs teachers who hold qualifications required in public schools.

Except for very few, non-public institutions began to be established in the early 1990s, based on national legislation enacted after the political changes in 1989. Currently, there are 31,556 schools, including 25,518 public (81%) and 6,038 non-public ones (19%). Among 390 HEIs, 132 (34%) are public and 258 (66%) are non-public. However, public HEIs enrol a total of 77% of all students.

Public **institutions providing early childhood education and care** and public **schools** are set up mainly by central or local government bodies, and non-public ones by legal entities or natural persons. Non-public schools and other non-public institutions should be entered on the register kept by the competent local government body.

Public **HEIs** are founded by the State as represented by the competent authority or public administration body. Non-public HEIs are established by natural persons or legal entities, except for those administered by a central or local government body, and are entered onto the register of non-public HEIs on the basis of a permit issued by the Minister of Science and Higher Education.

Education and / or care is **free** in public institutions, though public HEIs may charge fees for some education services.

2.2. Governance

School Education

The responsibility for school education governance is shared among the national, regional, local and institutional levels. National school education policies are developed centrally, and management and administration are decentralised.

NATIONAL LEVEL	MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES
Minister of National Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Coordinating and implementing national school educational policy » Establishing national core curricula for preschool, general and vocational education, and outline timetables for public schools » Laying down arrangements concerning admissions to public nursery schools and schools, organisational arrangements for public nursery schools and schools, and for the school year, and for pupil / student assessment and promotion » Establishing detailed qualification requirements and remuneration rules for teachers » Establishing and administering selected types of public schools (e.g. schools at diplomatic missions, experimental schools...) » Providing governmental funding for schools managed by local authorities

REGIONAL LEVEL	MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES
Head of the Regional Education Authorities (REA) (a government administration unit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Implementing national school education policy » Exercising pedagogical supervision over nursery schools, schools and other educational institutions, incl. evaluation as part of external quality assurance
Local government bodies at the province level (highest local-government level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Administering a small number of public schools and other educational institutions operating at the regional or supra-regional level

LOCAL LEVEL	MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES
Local government bodies at the district level (intermediate local-government level – <i>powiat</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Establishing and administering public special primary and lower secondary schools (until the latter are phased out as part of the ongoing reform), and schools above the lower secondary level, except for those operating at the regional or supra-regional level
Local government bodies at the commune level (lowest local-government level – <i>gmina</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Establishing and administering public nursery schools, special nursery schools and primary schools, except for special schools, art schools, and schools within other institutions (e.g. prisons, youth detention centres...) (No responsibility for pedagogical supervision)

SCHOOL LEVEL	MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES
Head of the school (nursery school or institution)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Managing the nursery school / school / institution » Providing conditions for the development of pupils / students, incl. overall responsibility for psychological and educational support offered » Exercising pedagogical supervision, incl. evaluation as part of internal quality assurance
Teaching council (all teachers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Approving nursery school / school / institutional activity plans » Taking decisions on results of pupil / student assessment and promotion to the next grade, and decisions to strike pupils / students from the register of pupils / students » Giving opinions on the organisation of work, draft financial plans and the allocation of tasks and classes among teachers

<p>(Nursery) school council / institution's council (representatives of teachers, parents, and pupils / students, except in nursery and primary schools and some special schools)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Adopting the statutes » Giving opinions on activity plans and financial plans » Making proposals for innovations in education » Making proposals concerning evaluation of the nursery school's / school's / institution's activities to the Head of the REA, and evaluating activities on its own initiative
<p>Parents' council (parents of all pupils / students)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Adopting education-and-care and problem prevention programmes in consultation with the teaching council » Giving opinions on financial plans and action programmes to improve performance of the nursery school / school / institution
<p>Pupil / student self-government (representatives of all pupils / students)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Making proposals and giving opinions on all matters, and in particular those related to exercising pupil / student rights

Higher Education

Governance in higher education involves the Minister of Science and Higher Education and several bodies at the national level and single-person authorities and collective bodies at the institutional level.

NATIONAL LEVEL	MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES
<p>Minister of Science and Higher Education</p>	<p>MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Developing national higher education and research policies » Supervising the activities of HEIs in respect of compliance with the law, incl. financial regulations, HEI statutes, and permits for the establishment of non-public HEIs

- » Granting and withdrawing permits for the establishment of non-public HEIs
- » Granting, suspending, re-granting and withdrawing authorisations for HEIs to provide first-, second- and long-cycle programmes in cases extending beyond their autonomy
- » Regulating a number of key issues for higher education, including:
 - areas of knowledge, fields of science and scientific disciplines in which HEIs may provide degree programmes;
 - requirements for HEIs to provide programmes and award degrees upon completion of first-, second- and long-cycle programmes;
 - national standards for programmes in several fields, incl. those for regulated professions;
 - general arrangements for external quality assurance

NATIONAL LEVEL

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

General Council for Science and Higher Education

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

- » Contributing to national higher education and research policies
- » Making proposals and giving opinions on all matters related to higher education and research
- » Giving opinions on draft legislation, State-budget funding and funding arrangements for higher education and research

Polish Accreditation Committee

- » Conducting external evaluations as part of initial and periodic programme accreditation
- » Giving opinions on draft legislation on higher education and research

<p>Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland and Conference of Rectors of Professional Higher Education Schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Representing HEIs in matters relevant to higher education and research » Contributing to national higher education and research policies » Giving opinions on draft legislation, State-budget funding and funding arrangements for higher education and research » Promoting quality in higher education
<p>The Degrees and Titles Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Ensuring the harmonious development of the scientific community in compliance with the highest standards in research as required for the award of academic degrees and titles » Granting the right to award degrees of <i>doktor</i> and <i>doktor habilitowany</i> » Carrying out a periodic evaluation of the compliance of academic units with the requirements necessary for awarding the degree of <i>doktor</i> and <i>doktor habilitowany</i>, including the execution of the awarding process and substantiation of the resolutions regarding the award of degrees
<p>Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland, and National Representation of Doctoral Students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Representing students or doctoral students in matters relevant to, respectively, the student or doctoral student community » Giving opinions on draft legislation relevant to, respectively, students or doctoral students

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION LEVEL	MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES
Rector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Managing the HEI, incl. taking decisions on business matters » Developing and implementing an institutional development strategy » Supervising teaching and research activities » Overseeing the implementation and improvement of the internal quality assurance system
Senate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Adopting the statutes of the HEI and its institutional development strategy, and approving its activity and financial plans » Adopting general internal regulations related to programmes (e.g. student admissions, study regulations) » Assessing the performance of the HEI and the Rector
Dean of Faculty / Head of basic organisational unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Developing and implementing a faculty development strategy in line with the institutional development strategy (Detailed powers and responsibilities set out in the statutes of an HEI)
Faculty Council / Council of basic organisation unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Setting the main lines of the faculty's activities » Adopting curricula for degree and non-degree postgraduate programmes

2.3. Funding

Education is funded primarily from public sources. Public funds represent around 92% of funding in school education and around 81% in higher education. The main sources of public funding include general and targeted State-budget subsidies or grants, local government bodies' own resources, other public funds (for example, the Labour Fund and budgets of central government agencies supporting the training of specific occupational groups), and European Union (EU) funds.

Public funding is provided not only to public institutions but also to non-public institutions which fulfil the requirements set out in the national legislation.

SCHOOL EDUCATION

Funding

School education is funded mainly from the overall State-budget school education subsidy and targeted State-budget subsidies (for example, for school textbooks and learning resources) distributed among the relevant local government bodies on an annual basis. Public and non-public nursery schools and schools may receive both types of subsidies. There are also multiannual government programmes focusing on specific areas (for example, the 2017–2019 Active Blackboard Programme for the development of infrastructure and ICT skills of pupils or students and teachers).

Public expenditure
on school education:

3.7%
of the GDP

(2016)

Fees

Education and / or care in **public nursery schools and schools** is free, but some financial contributions can be required. Parents of all pupils pay for meals in public nursery schools and for accommodation and meals in a dormitory. Where children aged up to 5 years attend a public nursery school for more than 5 hours, parents also usually pay for additional time and classes. Meals in public schools are, likewise, offered on a fee-paying basis, and parents pay voluntary contributions to the School Council which are used for statutory activities of the school. **Non-public nursery schools and schools** charge full or partial fees for education and / or care (unless they are granted a full or partial subsidy for provision by the relevant local government body) and other services.

Financial support

Families receive support in various forms, including: family and other cash allowances, family tax benefits, child benefits and in-kind benefits such as free transport to the nursery school or school where the distance is longer than specified in the national legislation, textbooks and other learning resources, and State-funded meals for pupils or students. The relevant local government bodies may waive fees for, for example, classes in nursery schools beyond the above-mentioned 5-hour limit or accommodation and meals in a dormitory for pupils or students in a difficult financial situation. Additional allowances, benefits and services are provided to families of pupils or students with special educational needs.

As part of **maintenance-type** support, **pupils** or **students** in a difficult situation may be awarded a school grant or allowance to cover costs related to education. **Merit-based scholarships** awarded by school heads, the Prime Minister and / or the ministers responsible for school education and culture are available to high-achieving or outstandingly gifted and talented pupils and students.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Public expenditure
on higher education:

1.2%
of the GDP

(2016)

Funding

Subsidies for HEIs are granted from the State-budget section managed by the Minister of Science and Higher Education. **Public HEIs** receive a basic annual subsidy for their statutory activities, including financial support for students and doctoral students, and targeted subsidies (for example, for infrastructure development or for facilities for students and doctoral students with disabilities, or a pro-quality subsidy for best organisational units of HEIs). **Non-public HEIs** are entitled to subsidies for financial support for students and doctoral students, and for

facilities ensuring full participation of students with disabilities and doctoral students in the learning process, they may also be granted a pro-quality subsidy. Like in school education, there are targeted multiannual government programmes open to both public and non-public institutions (for example, the 2015–2018 programme which supports practical placements undertaken by students of non-university HEIs and the 2016–2020 International Accreditation programme to facilitate international accreditation of HEIs).

Fees

There are no tuition fees in **public HEIs** for full-time first-, second-, long- or third-cycle programmes. Public HEIs may charge fees only for part-time programmes at all levels, degree programmes delivered in a foreign language, courses or classes which are not included in the class timetable, courses or classes in full-time programmes repeated by students due to academic failure, and for the validation of learning outcomes. Places in dormitories and meals in canteens are offered on a fee-paying basis. Non-public HEIs charge tuition fees, except for full-time third-cycle programmes if they receive a State-budget subsidy, and fees for other services.

Financial support

Like in school education, **families** of higher education **students** may be granted a family allowance and family tax relief, and students benefit from reduced public transport fares. Public HEIs may waive fees for students and doctoral students who have outstanding academic achievements, participate in international scholarship programmes and / or are in a difficult financial situation; similar benefits may be offered in non-public HEIs if provided for in their statutes.

Students and doctoral students in public and non-public HEIs may receive support in cash as both **non-repayable grants and student loans and credits**. Grants include a means-tested maintenance grant for students in a difficult financial situation, an aid payment for students who are temporarily in a difficult financial situation, a maintenance grant for students with disabilities, the Minister's and Rectors' scholarships for top performing students and outstanding achievements, respectively, a doctoral scholarship for full-time doctoral students, and a Diamond Grant for outstandingly gifted first-cycle graduates and students in long-cycle programmes. Loans and credits are available to first-, second-, long- and third-cycle students who began studies in any type of HEI before reaching the age of 25; priority is given to low-income students. Loans and credits are offered by commercial banks, with a State-budget contribution towards interest charged.

ADULT EDUCATION

Funding

There is **no overall or single funding system** for adult education. Adult education in **school settings** is funded from the overall State-budget school education subsidy. Funding for provision in **non-school settings** comes from

the same State-budget subsidy, the Labour Fund (including the National Training Fund), EU and other international funds, budgets of central government agencies allocated for the training of specific occupational groups (e.g. government officials, medical doctors, teachers), and private funds.

Fees

Education in public schools for adults is free; learners may support statutory activities of their school by paying voluntary contributions to the learner self-government. Training as part of human resources development programmes run by labour offices and some EU-supported training courses are, likewise, offered on a fee-free basis. Public providers may charge fees for continuing education courses provided in non-school settings unless learners take such courses to complete part-time compulsory education. Learners normally pay tuition fees for education in non-public schools and non-school settings, and for non-degree postgraduate programmes in public and non-public HEIs.

Financial support

There is **no single system** of financial support for adult learners. Low-income learners may be granted full or partial tuition fee exemption. **Learners in public schools for adults** and non-public schools for adults with public-school status may benefit from the same forms of **maintenance- and incentive-type support** as children and young people in school education (see above). Such support is, however, available only until they complete education or reach the age of 24. Learners in non-public schools for adults without public-school status may receive maintenance-type support until they complete part-time compulsory education. **Job seekers and the unemployed** may apply to a labour office for a grant to cover costs of training or of studies in an HEI, and for a Labour Fund grant to follow a programme in a post-primary school, a degree or non-degree postgraduate programme in an HEI or a training course, or to undertake a practical placement. **Employees** may receive in-cash and in-kind support from their employers if they follow a programme in a school at the latter's request.

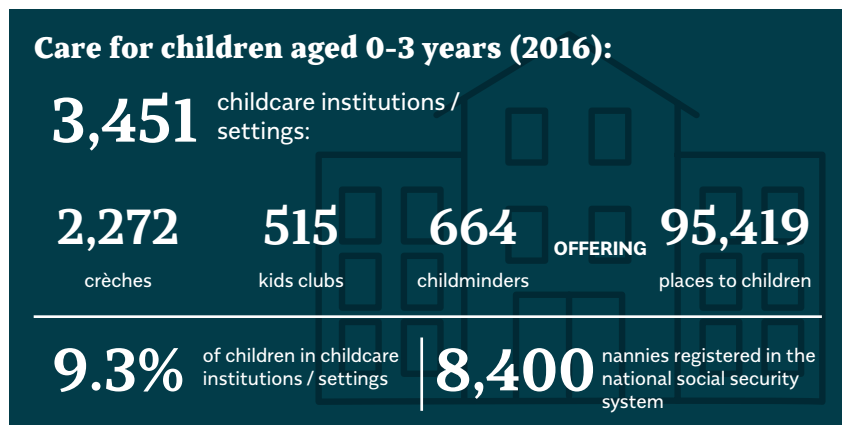
3. Early Childhood Education and Care

3.1. Organisation

Early childhood education and care is divided into two stages:

- » **care for children aged 0 to 3 years** provided in childcare institutions, including crèches and kids clubs, and by childminders and nannies in other settings;
- » **preschool education for children aged 3 to 6 years** provided in nursery schools, preschool classes in primary schools and alternative preschool settings, including preschool education units and centres.

Crèches are the main childcare setting. **Childminders** are natural persons hired by a commune, legal entity or another institution on the basis of a service contract. **Nannies** are hired by parents on the basis of a civil law contract. Crèches, childminders and nannies provide care to children aged at least 20 weeks and up to the age of 3 years, and **kids clubs** to children aged 1 year and above. Care can be provided until the end of the school year in which the child reaches the age of 3 or up to the age of 4 if the child is unable to participate in preschool education (with reasons to be explained in a statement from their parents).



Preschool education (2016/2017):

21,675 preschool institutions / settings, incl.

11,762

nursery schools

79

preschool education units

1,788

preschool education centres

8,046

primary schools with **13,120** preschool classes

1,299,138 children enrolled:

1,024,668

in nursery schools

1,426

in preschool education units

35,335

in preschool education centres

237,709

in preschool classes in primary schools

Preschool education is considered the first level of school education. Children aged 3 to 5 years have the statutory right to participate in preschool education and they attend preschool institutions on a voluntary basis. Where parents choose to enrol their children, places in institutions have been available to all 4- and 5-year-olds since the school year 2015/2016 and to all 3-year-olds since 2017/2018. Children **aged 6 years** may either complete **compulsory one-year pre-primary education** in a nursery school, a preschool class in the primary school or another preschool setting, or start primary education. The choice is left to parents, but children may enter the primary school at the age of 6 only if they completed one-year preparatory pre-primary education in the year preceding entry into school or have a school readiness certificate issued by a counselling and guidance centre.

The **aims** of preschool education are defined in the national core curriculum. Preschool education aims, in particular, to:

- » develop children's talents and intellectual skills for everyday life and for learning at subsequent stages of education
- » help them build a system of values
- » develop their emotional resilience and social skills
- » take care of their health and support their physical development
- » build their knowledge about the world

- » introduce them into the world of aesthetic values
- » develop their sense of patriotism and belonging to a community
- » ensure better educational opportunities for children by helping them to develop curiosity, activeness and independence, and the knowledge and skills which they will need in school education.

In 2016/2017, the **overall rate of participation** in preschool education for **3- to 5-year-olds** was **81.1%**, varying from 67.1% for 3-year-olds to 90.7% for 5-year-olds. Preschool institutions were still attended by a much larger proportion of children in urban areas (88.0%) than in rural areas (71.6%) (data collected by children's place of residence). An overwhelming majority (nearly 100%) of 6-year-olds followed the compulsory one-year pre-primary education programme (rather than starting primary education).

Participation rates in preschool education by age, 2016/2017			
Age cohort	Overall participation rate	Participation rate in urban areas	Participation rate in rural areas
3-year-olds	67.1%	77.0%	53.4%
4-year-olds	84.6%	91.8%	74.3%
5-year-olds	90.7%	93.9%	85.7%

3.2. Admission

The legislation does not define any conditions or criteria, other than age, for admission to **childcare institutions and settings**. Parents should, however, provide some basic data, including details of the child's state of health, diet and psychological and physical development. Conditions of admission are set out by individual institutions and settings.

Public nursery schools enrol children on a free-access basis. Parents normally choose a nursery school within the area of the commune (lowest-level local government unit) in which they live. The **age of the child** is the main criterion. Children should have reached the age of 3, but 2.5-year-olds may be enrolled with the consent of the head of the nursery school. Children aged 3 to 6 living within the area of a given commune have priority. Where the number of applicant children exceeds the number of places available, nursery schools apply additional criteria laid down in the national legislation (e.g. difficult family situation or health problems) and by the

commune (e.g. specific needs of the family or local community, or family income).

Non-public nursery schools define their own admission criteria. Where a commune is unable to provide places to all children who are required or have the statutory right to participate in preschool education, it grants a subsidy to a non-public nursery school, selected on a competitive basis, which is obliged to follow the rules laid down for public nursery schools.

3.3. Pupil Grouping for Learning

The **maximum number of children** supervised by one childminder in a **crèche or a kids club** is 8 (or 5 where a group includes a child with disabilities, a child requiring special care or a child under 1 year of age).

Children in **nursery schools** are normally grouped according to their **age**. Most nursery schools are divided into four grades (classes for 3-, 4-, 5- and 6-year-olds). Mixed age groups may be created when other criteria are taken into consideration: children's needs, interests and abilities in mainstream nursery schools, and the extent and type of disability in special nursery schools. Due to a small number of children, nursery schools in rural areas usually have mixed age groups: two classes (6-year-olds and other children) or one class only.

The **number of children in a class / group** in a nursery school may not exceed **25**, with the exception of integration and special nursery schools and special preschool classes where the limits are lower (20, including up to 5 children with disabilities in integration nursery schools and classes, and between 4 and 12 in special nursery schools or preschool classes, depending on the degree and type of disability). Activities in preschool education units and centres are organised for groups of 3 to 25 children.

Two **teachers** working in shifts usually supervise one class (e.g. one until 12.00 and the other from 12.00). They should either work with one age group or follow children throughout the 4-year period in a nursery school. Integration nursery schools and mainstream nursery schools with integration classes also employ additional teachers trained in education for children with special needs, and rehabilitation specialists.

3.4. Organisation of Time

Working hours in **crèches and kids clubs** are set in their internal regulations. Crèches provide care to each child for up to 10 hours per day and kids clubs for up to 5 hours per day. Activities are suited to individual needs and psychomotor abilities of children. Working hours for childminders are agreed in a contract between the childminder and the employing entity.

Based on the national core curriculum for preschool education, play, learning and leisure in **nursery schools** and other preschool settings are organised so as to follow the rhythm of the day, i.e. regularly repeated phases which enable children to gradually understand the concept of time and organisation and give them a sense of security and tranquillity, ensuring their healthy development. The head of a nursery school establishes an overall **timetable** of classes / activities, and the teacher supervising a given class / group prepares a detailed timetable on this basis, taking into consideration the needs and interests of the children.

Nursery schools and preschool classes in primary schools:

- » Open throughout the year, except for breaks in classes; at least 5 hours a day
- » Most working around 9 hours per day

Preschool education centres:

- » Open on all weekdays throughout the year, except for breaks in classes; at least 3 hours per day and 12 hours per week (the actual number of hours depending on the number of children enrolled)

Preschool education units:

- » Open on some weekdays throughout the year, except for breaks in classes; at least 3 hours per day and 12 hours per week (the actual number of hours depending on the number of children enrolled)

3.5. Curriculum

Crèches and kids clubs do not follow any specific core curriculum. The national legislation recommends only that activities should serve care and education purposes, involve play with elements of education, and be adequate for the level of physical and psychological development of children and their age. Children participate in care-related, educational and play activities, and childminders choose aids depending on children's age, individual development needs and abilities.

All institutions providing **preschool education** are required to follow curricula based on the national core curriculum. A curriculum is approved by the head of a given nursery school or school, or, in the case of alternative preschool settings, by the head of the nursery or primary school which employs teachers who teach classes in such settings.

There are no subjects as these are understood in school. Education is based mainly on play activities which are designed so as to create adequate conditions for children's individual development and prepare them for school education. Teachers enable children to engage in various forms of activity so that they develop their self-reliance and ability to cooperate and coexist in a group in safe conditions suited to their needs and abilities. Children participate in games designed to improve their speaking, visual and aural skills and arouse their interest in reading.

Compulsory and fee-free foreign language classes have been taken by 5-year-olds since the school year 2015/2016 and by all children in preschool education since 2016/2017.

3.6. Assessment

There is no assessment for children in **crèches and kids clubs**. Staff should, however, regularly inform parents about children's achievements, their problems and any worrying symptoms related to their health.

Teachers in institutions providing **preschool education** should observe individual children on an ongoing basis and keep records of their achievements. This is intended to help them assess children's needs, adapt teaching and learning methods accordingly, and collaborate with a counselling and guidance centre and parents in supporting children's development. If teachers identify

any education- or behaviour-related issues, public preschool institutions should provide psychological and educational support to the children concerned. All children with individual development and educational needs are entitled to receive such support; support is also offered to their parents.

Teachers are also required to assess school readiness of 6-year-olds (or 5-year-olds at their parents' request) and provide a report to their parents. Aside from giving parents information about their children's school readiness, the assessment may help teachers develop an individualised programme supporting the child's development and specialists in a counselling and guidance centre to conduct a more in-depth assessment, where necessary.

At parents' request, entry into compulsory education in the primary school may be deferred for up to one year. The decision is taken by the head of a primary school after consultation with a counselling and guidance centre. In such cases, children continue preschool education.

4. Primary Education

4.1. Organisation

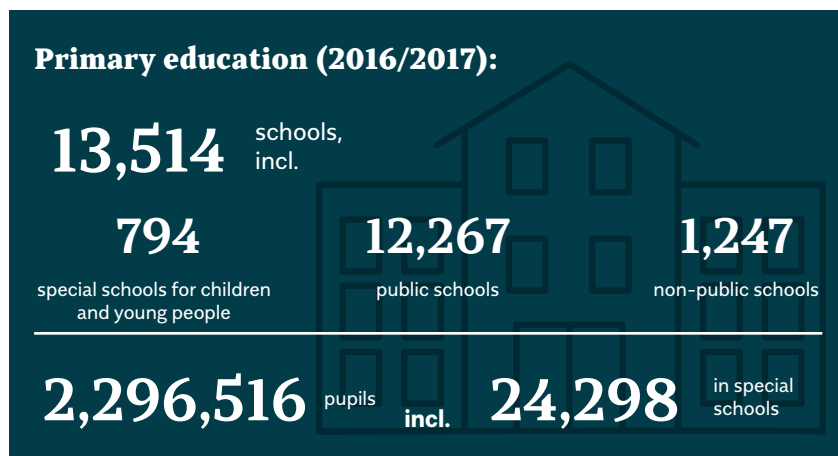
Primary education is part of compulsory education. The ongoing reform of the school education system (see Sections 1.3 and 2.1) has extended primary education by two years, establishing 8-year primary school for children and young people aged **7 to 15 years**. Pupils who finished grade VI of the old 6-year primary school in the school year 2016/2017 moved on to grade VII of the new school in 2017/2018. The new primary schools cover two ISCED levels of primary and lower secondary education (so-called single structure education). Primary education is divided into two ISCED levels and three distinct curricular stages:

ISCED LEVEL 1: PRIMARY EDUCATION

Stage I, Grades I to IV: integrated early school education (grades I-III) and introduction to subject-based education (grade IV)

ISCED LEVEL 2: LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION

Stage II, Grades V to VIII: subject-based education



The main aims of primary education and key skills which pupils should acquire by the end of this education stage are set out in the national core curriculum.

General education in the primary school aims to:

- » introduce pupils to the world of values (generosity, collaboration, solidarity, altruism, patriotism and respect for traditions), identify models of behaviour and build social relationships to support pupils' development
- » strengthen pupils' sense of individual, cultural, national, regional and ethnic identity
- » develop pupils' sense of personal dignity and respect for the dignity of other people
- » develop competences such as creativity, innovativeness and entrepreneurship
- » develop critical and logical thinking, as well as reasoning, argumentation and deduction skills
- » demonstrate the value of knowledge as the basis for the development of skills
- » encourage intellectual curiosity among pupils and their motivation to learn
- » provide pupils with a body of knowledge and skills so that they understand the world in a more mature and structured way
- » support pupils in identifying their own aptitudes and future learning paths
- » ensure comprehensive personal development of pupils by enhancing their knowledge and encouraging and satisfying their intellectual curiosity
- » develop open-minded attitudes towards the world and other people, activity in social life and a sense of responsibility for community
- » encourage pupils to undertake structured and purposeful self-education based on the ability to develop one's own working methods
- » guide pupils towards values

Key skills to be developed as part of general education in the primary school:

- » Efficient communication in the Polish language and modern foreign languages
- » Efficient use of mathematical tools in everyday life, and mathematical thinking
- » Searching, sorting out, and critical analysis and use of information from various sources
- » Creative solving of problems in various areas while using purposefully ICT-based methods and tools, including programming
- » Solving problems, also with the use of mediation techniques
- » Team work and societal engagement
- » Active participation in the cultural life of the school, local community and country

Primary schools may operate only as public schools or non-public schools with public-school status. Non-public primary schools acquire public-school status on the date when they start working (for public-school status, see 'Public and Non-Public Institutions' in Section 2.1).

4.2. Admission

Primary education is compulsory for all children from the age of 7 (with the school starting age raised from 6 to 7 years starting from the school year 2016/2017). Where their parents wish so, **6-year-olds** may enter the primary school if they have completed one-year preparatory pre-primary education or hold a school readiness certificate from a counselling and guidance centre. Where justified, entry into the primary school may be **deferred** for up to one year (for a longer period only in exceptional cases, due to the pupil's disability confirmed by a certificate recommending education for students with special needs); the decision is taken by the head of a given school upon consultation with a counselling and guidance centre.

Communes are divided into **catchment areas** to provide even access to schools. Primary schools are required to take children living in their catchment area. Where places are available, the school can additionally take children living

outside a given catchment area at their parents' request. Admission criteria for free places in primary schools are defined by the relevant local government body.

4.3. Pupil Grouping for Learning

Pupils are grouped into **grades I to VIII** according to their **age**. Each class is supervised by a **class tutor / form teacher**. Teachers usually hold this function throughout a given education stage (early school education, grades I to III, and subject-based education, grades IV to VIII).

The national legislation does not set a minimum or maximum **number of pupils per class**. There are, however, some exceptions: for example, the maximum number per class is 25 for grades I to III of the primary school, and 20, including up to 5 pupils with disabilities, for integration classes (attended by pupils with and without disabilities) in mainstream schools and in integration schools.

Pupils are further subdivided into **groups** for some school activities or classes. In grades IV to VIII of the primary school, this is obligatory for: compulsory ICT and foreign language classes where a class has more than 24 pupils; no more than half of compulsory general education classes which, as set out in the curriculum, should comprise a practice component (including lab work) where a class has more than 30 pupils; and physical education classes. Detailed arrangements are laid down by individual schools. Primary schools can offer special bilingual tracks of education in grades VII and VIII.

4.4. Organisation of Time

Pursuant to the national legislation, the **school year** starts on 1 September each year and ends on 31 August of the subsequent year. Classes in a school year last from the first working day of September until the first Friday after 20 June. The school year is divided into **two semesters**, which are separated by a winter break. The dates of the **winter break**, which lasts two weeks, are set between mid-January and the end of February and vary between the provinces. The **summer break** begins on the Saturday following the last day of classes and ends on 31 August.

Primary school pupils normally go to school 5 days a week (from Monday to Friday). Classes may be taught for **5 or 6 days per week**, depending on the

working conditions in a school. Where the ratio of classes to classrooms is at least 2, schools may conduct classes 5 or 6 days per week throughout the school year or follow an alternating workweek schedule (for example, 5 days in one week and 6 days in the following week). Decisions are taken by individual schools.

Classes normally start at **8 a.m.** and finish around **2–3 p.m.** in upper grades where the school works in one shift (and last longer where the school works in two or three shifts). The duration of the school day also depends on the size of the school building, the number of classrooms and other facilities for after-school activities. Each lesson (period / class hour) lasts **45 minutes**, except in grades I to III where it is determined by the teacher. Breaks usually last from 5 to 25 minutes.

Detailed weekly timetables are established by individual schools on the basis of national outline timetables (see Section 4.5, Curriculum).

4.5. Curriculum

An overall framework for primary education is set by the national **core curriculum** for general education and by **outline timetables**. The core curriculum defines curricular contents, aims and knowledge, skills and competences which pupils are expected to acquire by the end of primary education. The outline timetable specifies the **minimum weekly number** of hours to be allocated to classes / subjects in individual grades, in particular to compulsory general education classes. Curricula adopted by individual schools should be based on the core curriculum.

A new core curriculum and new outline timetables have been established for the new 8-year primary school. The new core curriculum and outline timetables are implemented in grades I, IV and VII of the primary school in the school year 2017/2018 and will be implemented in the other grades over the coming years.

Stage I of the primary school, **grades I to III**, is designed to ensure smooth transition from preschool to school education and is organised on an integrated basis. Classes are taught according to a timetable developed by the teacher, with the duration of lessons and breaks depending on pupils' activity. Education at **stage II, grades IV to VIII**, is based on subjects.

Outline timetables

Stage I. Grades I to III

- » Compulsory integrated education: Polish Language, Mathematics, Social Education, Natural Sciences, Art Education, Technology, ICT Education, Music Education, Modern Foreign Language; and Physical Education
- » Hours distributed among the individual types of classes by the teacher conducting classes

Primary school. Grades I–III. Outline timetable: minimum number of class hours per week (implemented from 2017/2018)

Compulsory classes	Weekly number of hours by grade			Total in the 3-year cycle
	I	II	III	
Early school education	20	20	20	60
Hours to be allocated by the school head		2		2
Total		62		62

- » 3 hours per week to be allocated to Physical Education as part of compulsory classes.
- » Other classes / activities: The number of hours for the following classes specified in separate regulations: Religion or Ethics; national or ethnic minority language, or regional language, and history and culture of a national / ethnic minority or the regional language community; geography of the country which a national minority identifies with; sports activities; and classes / activities as part of psychological and educational support. A number of hours for additional classes / educational activities and sign language classes may be allocated by the body administering a given school.
- » Rehabilitation classes / activities for pupils with disabilities: 12 class hours per class and per week in each year for a special class; 2 class hours per pupil and per week in each year for mainstream and integration classes.
- » Hours left to the school head's discretion: to be allocated on an annual basis to classes / activities developing pupils' interests, abilities and aptitudes, and, in particular, activeness and creativity.

Stages II and III. Grades IV to VIII

Primary school. Grades IV–VIII. Outline timetable: minimum number of class hours by subject per week (implemented from 2017/2018)							
Weekly number of class hours by grade							
No.	Compulsory classes	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	Total in the 5-year cycle
1	Polish Language	5	5	5	5	5	25
2	1 st Modern Foreign Language	3	3	3	3 (+2)*	3 (+2)*	15 (+4)*
3	2 nd Modern Foreign Language	-	-	-	2 (+2)*	2 (+2)*	4 (+4)*
4	Music	1	1	1	1	-	4
5	Art Education	1	1	1	1	-	4
6	History	1	2	2	2	2	9
7	Civic Education	-	-	-	-	2	2
8	Natural Sciences	2	-	-	-	-	2
9	Geography	-	1	1	2	1	5
10	Biology	-	1	1	2	1	5
11	Chemistry	-	-	-	2	2	4
12	Physics	-	-	-	2	2	4
13	Mathematics	4	4	4	4	4	20
14	Computer science	1	1	1	1	1	5
15	Technology	1	1	1	-	-	3
16	Physical Education	4	4	4	4	4	20
17	Safety Education	-	-	-	-	1	1
18	Lessons with the Class Tutor	1	1	1	1	1	5
Total for compulsory classes and lessons with the class tutor		24	25	25	32 (+2)*	31 (+2)*	137 (+4)*
Hours to be allocated by the school head				3			3
Total					140 (+4)*		

* Additional hours for a modern foreign language which is the second language of tuition in bilingual classes / schools.

Other classes / activities:

- » The number of hours for the following classes specified in separate regulations: Religion or Ethics; Family Education; national or ethnic minority language, or regional language, and history and culture of a national / ethnic minority or the regional language community; geography of the country which a national minority identifies with; sports activities; and classes / activities as part of psychological and educational support. A number of hours for additional classes / educational activities and sign language classes may be allocated by the body administering a given school.
- » Career guidance: min. 10 class hours per year in grades VII and VIII (min. 20 hours in 2 years).
- » Rehabilitation classes / activities for pupils with disabilities: 12 class hours per class and per week in each year for a special class; 2 class hours per pupil and per week in each year for mainstream and integration classes.
- » Hours left to the school head's discretion: to be allocated on an annual basis to classes / activities developing pupils' interests, abilities and aptitudes, and, in particular, activeness and creativity.

Please note that as far as ISCED levels are concerned ISCED 1 (primary education) corresponds to grades I–IV of primary school, and ISCED 2 (lower secondary school) to grades V–VIII of primary school (single structure education covering both ISCED levels 1 and 2). Instruction time in the table is presented according to the education stages as defined in the outline timetables.

4.6. Assessment and Certification

Internal assessment is conducted by school teachers, and external assessment by institutions external to the school: the Central Examination Board and Regional Examination Boards.

Internal assessment

Each school adopts its own detailed assessment system based on the national legislation. Pursuant to the national legislation, both **learning achievements and conduct** are subject to assessment. Pupils are assessed by teachers throughout the school year. Assessment criteria and school marks should be made available to pupils and their parents.

Pupils' learning achievements are assessed by the generalist teacher in **grades I to III** and, separately for each subject, by the teacher of a given subject in grades IV to VIII. Mid-year (semester) and end-of-year marks are based on single marks given during the semester(s) or year. Pupils in grades I to III

receive one end-of-year mark for educational activities and one end-of-year mark for behaviour. Marking is **descriptive**. In **grades IV to VIII**, teachers use a **marking scale** of 1 to 6 to assess learning achievements where 6: excellent, 5: very good, 4: good, 3: satisfactory, 2: acceptable, and 1: unsatisfactory. Starting from grade IV of the primary school, teachers may also use descriptive assessment in compulsory or optional subjects if this is provided for in the assessment system of the school.

Conduct is assessed on the following scale: excellent, very good, good, acceptable, unacceptable and inadmissible. The mark for behaviour should not influence subject marks, promotion to the next grade or completion of primary education.

Promotion to the next grade is automatic in **grades I to III**. Pupils may repeat a year only in exceptional cases where this is justified by the level of their development, achievements or health condition. In **grades IV to VIII**, pupils need to receive a positive mark for each compulsory subject or type of classes at the end of the school year in order to be promoted to the next grade. Those who have received up to two 'unsatisfactory' marks can take resit exams. In principle, if they fail in the resits, they are not promoted to the higher grade. However, the teaching council of the school may conditionally promote a pupil who has received the 'unsatisfactory' mark in one subject only.

External assessment

Before the current reform of the school education system, all pupils took a compulsory external test at the end of primary education (after grade VI). Within the new structure of school education, all pupils in grade VIII will take a compulsory written **eighth-grader exam** which will aim to assess the extent to which pupils meet the requirements set out in the national core curriculum. The exam will be conducted for the first time in the school year 2018/2019.

Results of the eighth-grader exam have no impact on completion of primary education. However, they serve as one of the criteria in the process of admission to post-primary schools.

Certification

Pupils receive a school **certificate** at the end of each school year and upon completion of primary education. In the new school education system, they will also receive a **certificate** with results of the **eighth-grader exam**, issued by the relevant Regional Examination Board.

5. Secondary Education

Secondary education **before the current reform** of the school education system was divided into:

- » **lower secondary education (ISCED 2)** provided in 3-year lower secondary schools and
- » **upper secondary education (ISCED 3)** provided in 3-year general upper secondary schools, and in vocational upper secondary schools, including 4-year technical schools and 3-year basic vocational schools (and, additionally, 3-year special schools preparing for employment – see section Education for Students with Special Needs – and general arts schools supervised by the minister responsible for culture).

The **reform** will phase out the 3-year lower secondary school by the end of the school year 2018/2019, and two years of lower secondary education will be integrated into the new 8-year primary school (see Chapter 4). Currently existing 3-year general and 4-year technical upper secondary schools will be **transformed** into 4- and 5-year schools, respectively, starting from the school year 2019/2020; and 3-year basic vocational schools were transformed into **a new type of school**, 3-year stage I sectoral vocational school, starting from the school year 2017/2018. A new type of school, 2-year stage II sectoral vocational school, will be **established** starting from the school year 2020/2021. The school education system will continue to include the above-mentioned special schools preparing for employment and arts schools. **New secondary schools provide education at upper secondary level (ISCED 3).**

As the school education system is being gradually reformed, **previous and new national core curricula** for general education, which set out the main aims of education and key skills to be acquired by pupils or students, will be in place side by side in the coming years. The new core curriculum currently covers only the stage I sectoral vocational school as the secondary education cycle which is immediately affected by the reform; it will be gradually extended to include the other types of secondary schools.

Based on the **old core curriculum**, general education at lower and upper secondary levels **aims** to enable pupils / students to acquire a body of knowledge covering facts, rules, theories and practices, acquire the ability to use the knowledge gained in carrying out tasks and solving problems, and develop attitudes which ensure efficient and responsible functioning in the modern

world. **Key skills** to be developed by lower and upper secondary students include: reading, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, communication skills in the mother tongue and foreign languages, ICT skills, information skills, learning skills, and teamwork skills.

As stated in the **new core curriculum**, general education in stage I sectoral vocational schools aims to:

-
- » prepare students to acquire vocational qualifications and, as in other types of schools, prepare them for work and life in the modern world; and
 - » provide students with a body of general knowledge as the foundation for future education and training leading to various vocational qualifications and for further education in a stage II sectoral vocational school.
-

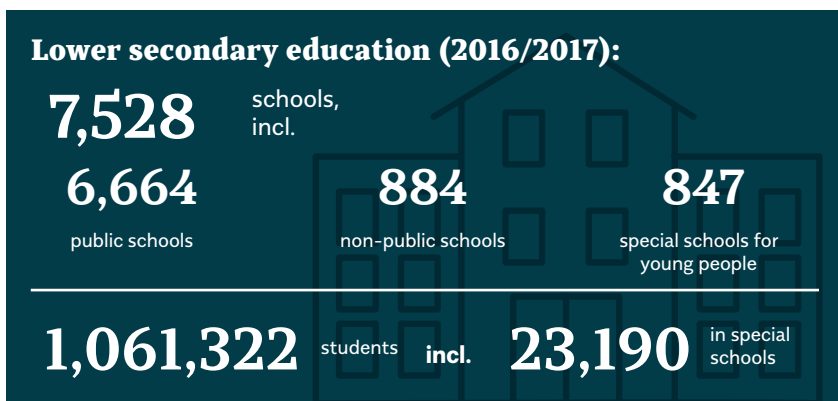
It aims to enable students to acquire a body of knowledge covering facts, rules, theories and practices, acquire the ability to use the knowledge gained in carrying out tasks and solving problems, and develop attitudes which ensure efficient and responsible functioning in the modern world. The **skills** to be acquired by students overlap, essentially, with those set out in the old core curriculum. Vocational education is based on the national core curricula for individual occupations.

5.1. Lower Secondary Education

5.1.1. Organisation

Lower secondary schools, which still exist within the pre-reform school education system, provide 3-year education (grades I to III), as part of full-time compulsory education, to students **aged 13 to 16 years** who have finished the 6-year primary school. Education ends with an external final lower secondary school exam providing access to upper secondary education.

As part of the ongoing reform, lower secondary schools are phased out between the school year 2017/2018 and the end of the school year 2018/2019. Grade I of the lower secondary school has already been replaced with grade VII of the new primary school (2017/2018); students in grades II and III of the lower secondary school continue their education and take the final exam based on the previous arrangements.



5.1.2. Admission

Successful completion of 6-year primary education, confirmed by a primary school leaving certificate, was the only admission criterion in lower secondary schools.

Since lower secondary education is / was part of compulsory education, schools operate within designated **catchment areas**. Every child had the statutory right to be admitted to a lower secondary school within the catchment area where they lived. Where places were available, schools took children from outside of the catchment area based on additional criteria.

5.1.3. Student Grouping for Learning

Student grouping into grades / classes (in still existing grades II and III) is based on **age** as the basic criterion. A **class tutor / form teacher** usually supervises one class throughout the 3-year education cycle.

The law does not specify a minimum or maximum **size of the class**, with the exception of, for example, the upper limit of 20 students, including 5 students with disabilities, per class in integration classes (attended by students with or without disabilities) of mainstream schools and in integration schools.

Classes should be split into **groups** for the following types of classes / activities: compulsory ICT and foreign language classes where a class has more than 24 students; no more than half of compulsory general education classes which, as set out in the curriculum, should comprise a practice component (including lab work) where a class has more than 30 students; and physical education classes. Detailed arrangements are laid down by individual schools.

5.1.4. Organisation of Time

See Section 4.4.

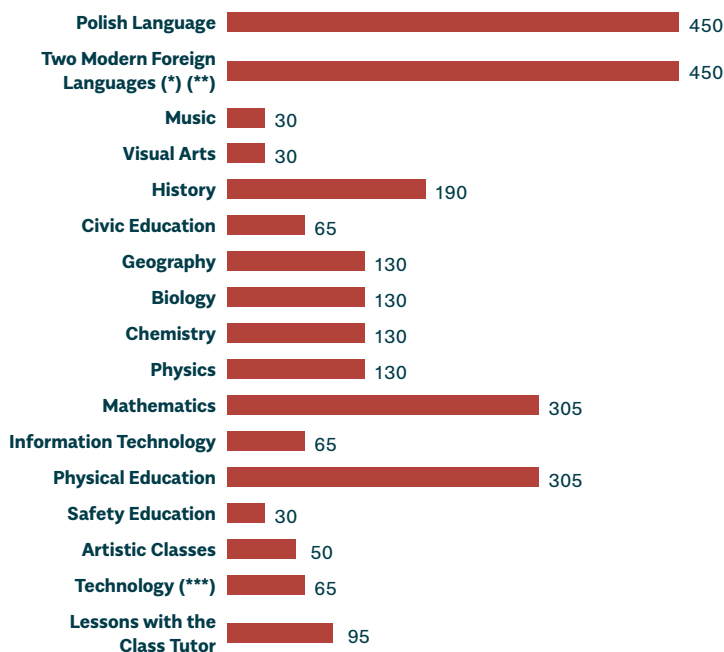
5.1.5. Curriculum

Curricula adopted by lower secondary schools should be based on the national core curriculum (see above) and outline timetables. The outline timetable specifies the minimum number of class hours to be allocated to compulsory classes in the 3-year lower secondary education cycle and per week. Pre-reform outline timetables are still in place for students in grades II and III.

Outline timetables (in place till the end of 2018/2019)

Lower secondary school. Outline timetable:

minimum number of class hours in the 3-year cycle by subject



* One modern foreign language in a special lower secondary school and a special class for students with a mild intellectual disability: 290 class hours.

** A modern foreign language which is the second language of tuition in bilingual classes / schools: additional 190 class hours.

*** In a special lower secondary school and a special class: 220 class hours.

The minimum number of class hours for rehabilitation and compensatory classes / activities for students with disabilities in the 3-year cycle is 1,150 per class in special classes, and 190 per student in mainstream and integration classes.

Other classes / activities in lower secondary schools include: Religion / Ethics; Family Education; national or ethnic minority language, or regional language, and history and culture of a national / ethnic minority or the regional language community; geography of the country which a national minority identifies with; and sports classes in sport schools and schools for sport championship. The number of hours for these classes / activities is specified in **separate regulations**. A number of **additional hours** is allocated by the **school head** in each school year, in accordance with relevant regulations.

The number of class hours to be allocated to compulsory classes and lessons with the class tutor in individual grades per week is as follows:

-
- » **Grade I: 29 hours** (31 in bilingual classes);
 - » **Grade II: 30 hours** (32 in bilingual classes);
 - » **Grade III: 31 hours** (33 in bilingual classes).
-

The minimum weekly number of class hours for rehabilitation and compensatory classes / activities for students with disabilities in each school year is 12 hours per class in special classes, and 2 hours per student with disabilities in mainstream and integration classes.

5.1.6. Assessment and Certification

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Internal assessment and promotion to the next grade are based on the same rules as in grades IV to VIII of the primary school; see Section 4.6.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Until the lower secondary school is abolished at the end of the school year 2018/2019, students are required to take a standardised and external **lower secondary school leaving examination** at the end of grade III. The exam aims to assess the knowledge and skills acquired by students against the national core curriculum.

The exam consists of three parts:

-
- » Part 1, Humanities, two components: (a) History and Civic Education; and (b) Polish Language;
 - » Part 2, Science, two components: (a) Natural Sciences, including Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Geography; and (b) Mathematics;
 - » Part 3, Modern Foreign Language.
-

Results of the exam are a key criterion in admission to upper secondary schools. In the new school education system, based on the 8-year primary school, the lower secondary school leaving exam will be replaced by the eighth-grader exam.

CERTIFICATION

Students receive a school certificate at the end of each grade. Upon completion of lower secondary education, they receive a school leaving certificate issued by the school, and a document with results of the external examination issued by the Regional Examination Board.

5.2. General Upper Secondary Education

5.2.1. Organisation

Existing general upper secondary schools offer **3-year** general education programmes (grades I to III) to young people **aged 16 to 19 years** who have finished lower secondary school. It aims, in particular, to prepare students for higher education. At the end of grade III, students with positive marks in all subjects may take an external maturity exam which provides access to higher education.

General upper secondary schools will be transformed into **4-year** secondary schools for students **aged 15 to 19 years** starting from the school year 2019/2020. In the school years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019, students continue their education based on the previous arrangements. Like the existing one, the new 4-year general secondary school will prepare students for higher education and lead to the maturity exam.

General upper secondary education (2016/2017):

2,230

(35% of all 6,414 upper secondary schools)

incl.

80

special, general upper secondary schools for young people

485,489

(41% of all 1,181,151 students in upper secondary education)

students incl.

1,182

in special schools

5.2.2. Admission

In the school years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019, students were / will be recruited to grade I of existing 3-year general upper secondary schools as before the reform. Admission is based on the number of **points for marks** which applicants have received in the **lower secondary school leaving exam**, and for marks in their certificate for the **Polish Language, Mathematics and two subjects** selected by the head of a given general upper secondary school. Heads usually select the two subjects in line with the specialisms or 'profile' of education provided (e.g. science or humanities) and related subjects taught at an extended level. Other achievements indicated in a lower secondary school leaving certificate are also taken into consideration in admission criteria. The system for converting the criteria into points and detailed arrangements for the admission process are laid down in the national legislation.

Winners of regional-level competitions, which cover or extend beyond the contents of the core curriculum for at least one subject, are accepted by the upper secondary school of their choice regardless of the criteria applied to other applicants. Secondary schools can conduct additional exams for bilingual or experimental educational tracks with an approval of the Minister of National Education.

5.2.3. Student Grouping for Learning

Like at the lower levels of education, the basic criterion for grouping into grades / classes is the **age** of students, and each class is usually supervised by the same **class tutor / teacher** throughout the 3-year education cycle.

The minimum or maximum **size of the class** is not defined in the legislation. As an exception, for example, the number of students per class in integration classes

(pupils with or without disabilities) in mainstream schools and in integration schools should range between 15 and 20, including 3 to 5 students with disabilities.

For some activities / classes, students are subdivided into **groups**, based on arrangements similar to those in lower secondary schools (see Section 5.1.3).

5.2.4. Organisation of Time

The school year calendar is the same as at the lower levels of education; see Section 4.4. However, as grade III students take the maturity exam after completion of the final year, classes for grade III end on the final Friday in April.

5.2.5. Curriculum

As at the lower education levels, curricula adopted by general upper secondary schools should be based on the national core curriculum and outline timetables. The outline timetable specifies the minimum number of class hours to be allocated to compulsory classes in the 3-year upper secondary education cycle and per week. The pre-reform outline timetables will be in place until the end of the school year 2018/2019.

Outline timetables (in place till the end of 2018/2019)

The core curriculum and outline timetable make a distinction between subjects taught at the basic and extended levels and additional subjects, with the number of hours to be allocated to them in the **3-year cycle**.

The **subjects taught at the basic level** include: Polish Language, Modern Foreign Languages, Culture Studies, History, Civic Education, Introduction to Entrepreneurship, Geography, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Information Technology, Physical Education, and Safety Education. For the number of class hours allocated to each in the 3-year cycle, see the figure below. Some of these subjects are also taught at the extended level.

The subjects **taught at the extended level** (with a total of **870 class hours** allocated to them in the 3-year cycle, in addition to the hours at the basic level; see the outline timetable below) are:

- » Polish Language, History, Geography, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History of Music, History of Art, Latin and Ancient Culture and Philosophy: **240 class hours** each in the 3-year cycle;

- » Modern Foreign Language, Civic Education, Mathematics and Information technology: **180 class hours each** in the 3-year cycle.

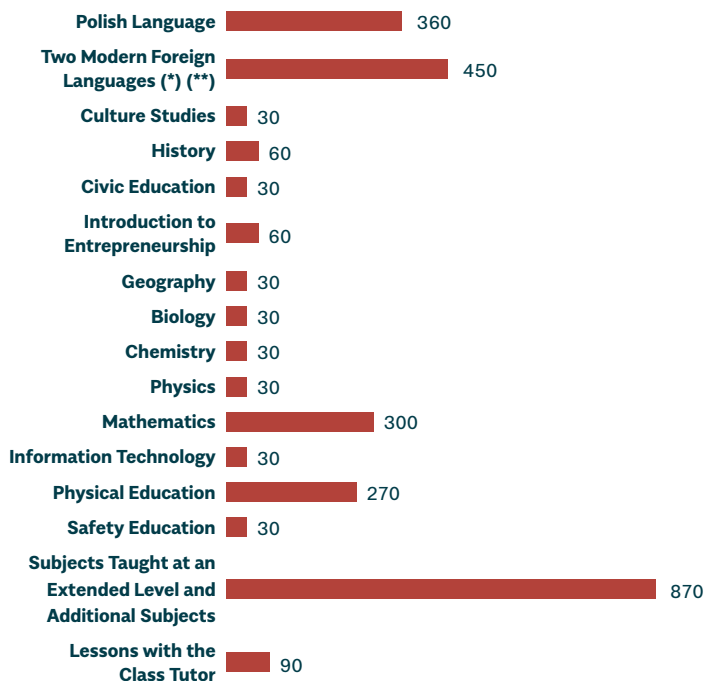
The school head identifies the subjects to be taught at the extended level, and students choose 2 to 4 from the list.

The **additional subjects** include:

- » History and Society, and Natural Science: **120 class hours each** in the 3-year cycle;
- » Artistic Classes, and Economics in Practice: **30 class hours each** in the 3-year cycle;
- » an additional subject which is not covered by the core curriculum but is included in the set of the school curricula: **30 class hours** in the 3-year cycle.

General upper secondary school. Outline timetable:

minimum number of class hours in the 3-year cycle by subject



* A modern foreign language which is the second language of tuition in bilingual classes / schools: additional 270 class hours.

** The hours are distributed between the two languages by the school head.

Students who do not take History at the extended level should follow History and Society as their additional subject. Those who do not choose Geography, Biology, Chemistry or Physics at the extended level should take Natural Sciences as their additional subject.

The minimum number of class hours for rehabilitation and compensatory classes / activities for pupils with disabilities in the 3-year cycle is 900 per class in special classes, and 180 per pupil in mainstream and integration classes.

Other classes / activities in the general upper secondary school include: Religion / Ethics classes; Family Education; national or ethnic minority or regional language classes, and national or ethnic minority or regional history and culture; and sports classes in sport schools and schools for sport championship. The number of hours for these classes / activities is laid down in **separate regulations**. A number of additional hours is allocated by the school head in each school year, in accordance with relevant regulations.

The number of class hours to be allocated to compulsory classes and lessons with the class tutor in individual grades per week is as follows:

- » **Grade I: 30 hours** (33 in bilingual classes);
- » **Grade II: 32 hours** (35 in bilingual classes);
- » **Grade III: 29 hours** (32 in bilingual classes).

The minimum weekly number of class hours for rehabilitation and compensatory classes / activities for students with disabilities in each school year is 10 per class in special classes, and 2 per student in mainstream and integration classes.

5.2.6. Assessment and Certification

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Internal assessment and promotion to the next grade are based on the same rules as in grades IV to VIII of the primary school and in the lower secondary school; see Section 4.6.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Students who have finished grade III of the general upper secondary school may take the external **maturity exam**. The exam assesses the extent to which students fulfil the requirements set for each subject in the national core

curriculum. It has replaced entrance exams at higher education institutions where results of the maturity exam are the key admission criterion.

The maturity exam consists of **two parts**:

- » the oral part, which is internal and assessed in the school;
- » the written part, which is external, set by the Central Examination Board, and assessed by examiners included in the registers of Regional Examination Boards.

The **oral part** includes **compulsory exams** in the Polish Language and a modern foreign language (and in a national minority language for students in schools and classes where a given national minority language is the language of tuition). Students also obligatorily take one **additional exam**, choosing the subject from among six modern foreign languages, a national or ethnic minority language or regional language (Kashubian). The **level** (basic or extended) of the exam is not pre-defined.

The **written part** consists of **compulsory exams** at the basic level in the Polish Language, Mathematics and a Modern Foreign Language (and in a national minority language for students in schools and classes where a given national minority language is the language of tuition). Additionally, students should choose at least one (and may choose up to six) additional subject(s) for an exam at the **extended level**. These include: Biology, Chemistry, Philosophy, Physics, Geography, History, History of Music, History of Art, Information Technology, Latin and Ancient Culture, Minority Language (ethnic or national), Modern Foreign Language, Polish Language, Regional Language, Mathematics, and Knowledge about Society.

There are six modern foreign languages that students may choose from for the maturity exam: English, French, Spanish, German, Russian and Italian.

To **pass the maturity exam**, students should score at least 30% of points in each compulsory subject in both the written and oral parts and take at least one exam in an additional subject at the extended level in the written part; there is no pass threshold for the exam in an additional subject. Those wishing to improve their results may retake the relevant part of the maturity exam.

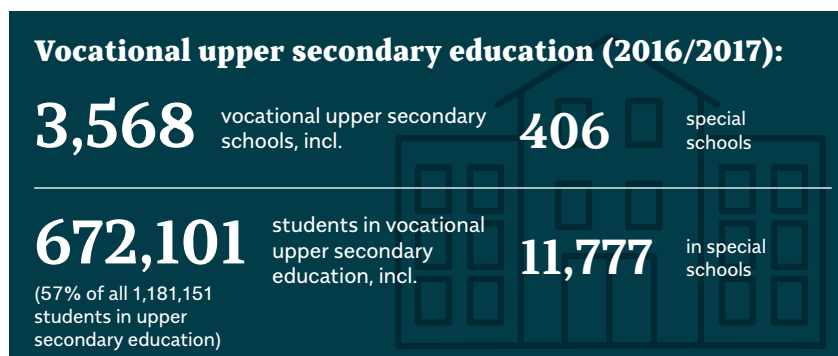
CERTIFICATION

Students receive a school certificate at the end of each school year and a school leaving certificate upon completion of the final year of education in

the general upper secondary school. The school leaving certificate does not include results of the maturity exam. Those who have passed the maturity exam receive a **maturity certificate** with results of both the written and oral parts of the exam, issued by a Regional Examination Board.

5.3. Vocational Upper Secondary Education

Major reforms have been undertaken in vocational education and training since 2011 to improve its quality and effectiveness and its relevance to labour market needs. The **Classification of Occupations for Vocational Education** has been revised and aligned with the Classification of Occupations for the Labour Market. Descriptions of occupations in the Classification are now based on **qualifications**. The classification includes around **200 occupations**. They comprise over **250 qualifications**, with one, two or three qualifications identified within individual occupations. Seven artistic occupations are identified with no qualifications specified. A new **national core curriculum** was developed for vocational education or, more precisely, for the training for individual occupations. Qualifications identified within individual occupations are defined as a set of learning outcomes (knowledge, vocational / occupational skills, and personal and social competences).



Students and adult learners can **acquire qualifications one by one throughout the learning process** rather than only upon finishing the school. Vocational qualification examinations may be taken not only at the end of education in school, but also at other stages of education or after the student or learner has obtained a specific qualification. Upon passing an exam for a single qualification, students or learners receive a certificate for a given qualification.

A diploma confirming qualifications for a given occupation is awarded when students or learners have passed exams for all the qualifications required to practise a given occupation (and have completed the required level of education).

The system of exams confirming vocational qualifications is flexible enough to accommodate **validation of non-formal and informal learning**. Since September 2012, the system has been open to individuals who have acquired vocational knowledge, skills and experience outside vocational schools.

As part of the ongoing reform of the school education system, changes in vocational education and training aim, in particular, to extend the range of learning paths available, make the vocational education and training system more flexible and, thus, make it easier for school leavers to obtain higher-level qualifications.

5.3.1. Organisation

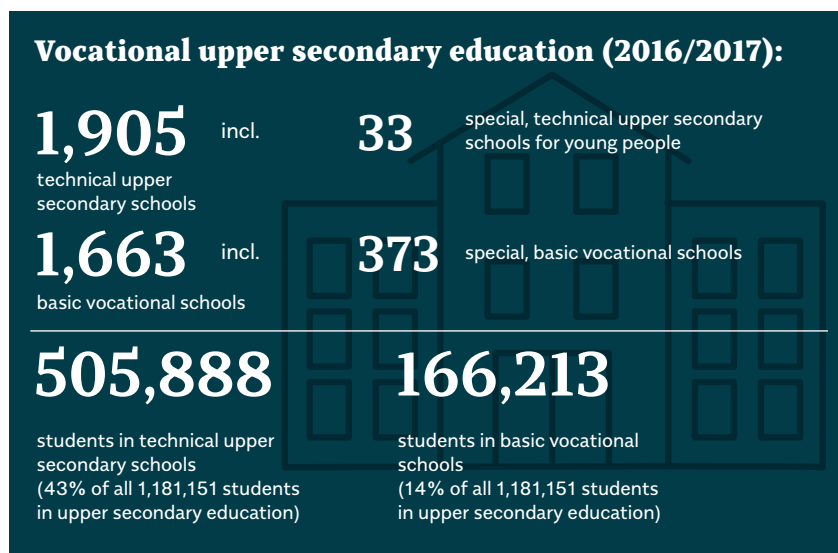
The **pre-reform vocational upper secondary education** sector comprised two types of schools for students holding a lower secondary school leaving certificate:

-
- » 4-year **technical upper secondary schools** for students **aged 16 to 20 years**, leading to vocational qualifications and to the maturity certificate providing access to higher education;
 - » 3-year **basic vocational schools** for students **aged 16 to 19 years**, leading to vocational qualifications.
-

The ongoing **reform** will transform technical upper secondary schools into **5-year technical secondary schools** for students aged **15 to 20 years** starting from the school year 2019/2020. Until then, students will continue their education based on the pre-reform arrangements. Like the existing one, the new 5-year technical school will enable students to acquire vocational qualifications and take the maturity exam.

Basic vocational schools were transformed into a new type of school, **3-year stage I sectoral vocational school** for students **aged 15 to 18 years** starting from the school year 2017/2018. A new type of school, **2-year stage II sectoral vocational school** for students **aged 19 to 20 years** will be established starting from the school year 2020/2021. Stage I sectoral vocational schools take new

students from the school year 2017/2018. However, between 2017/2018 and 2019/2020, they will continue to provide training based on the pre-reform arrangements to students enrolled earlier in basic vocational schools. A stage I sectoral vocational school will lead to vocational qualifications and provide access to a stage II sectoral vocational school, and to grade II of the general secondary school for adults. A stage II sectoral vocational school will provide training for occupations corresponding to those for which students are trained in a stage I sectoral vocational school. It will enable students to obtain vocational qualifications at the level of Technician and take the maturity exam.



5.3.2. Admission

Admission requirements are the same as in general upper secondary schools; see Section 5.2.2.

5.3.3. Student Grouping for Learning

Arrangements for student grouping are the same as for general upper secondary schools; see Section 5.2.3.

5.3.4. Organisation of Time

See Section 5.2.4 on general upper secondary education.

5.3.5. Curriculum

As in general upper secondary education, vocational school curricula should be based on the national core curricula and outline timetables. Students in technical upper secondary schools continue to follow the pre-reform outline timetable until the end of the school year 2018/2019. Students enrolled in stage I sectoral vocational schools from 2017/2018, after finishing the pre-reform lower secondary school, follow a new outline timetable. The pre-reform outline timetable is still in place for students enrolled in previously existing basic vocational schools, now integrated into stage I sectoral vocational schools, until they complete the education cycle.

The pre-reform and new outline timetables which are in place in the school year 2017/2018 are presented below.

Outline timetable for technical upper secondary schools (in place until the end of the school year 2018/2019)

Like for general upper secondary schools, the core curriculum for general education and outline timetable for technical upper secondary schools divide subjects into those taught at the basic level and extended levels and additional subjects, with the number of hours to be allocated to them in the 4-year cycle.

- » **Subjects taught at the basic level:** Polish Language, Modern Foreign Languages, Culture Studies, History, Civic Education, Introduction to Entrepreneurship, Geography, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Information Technology, Physical Education, Safety Education, and Theoretical Vocational Training and Practical Vocational Training. For the number of class hours allocated to each in the 4-year cycle, see the figure below. Some of these subjects are also taught at the extended level.
- » **Subjects taught at the extended level** (with a total of **540 class hours** allocated to them in the 4-year cycle, in addition to the hours at the basic level; see the outline timetable below):
 - Polish Language, History, Geography, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History of Music, History of Art, Latin and Ancient Culture and Philosophy: **240 class hours each** in the 4-year cycle;
 - Modern Foreign Language, Civic Education, Mathematics and Information Technology: **180 class hours each** in the 4-year cycle.

The school head identifies the subjects to be taught at the extended level, and students choose 2 subjects from the list.

» **Additional subjects:**

- History and Society, Natural Science: **120 class hours** each;
 - Artistic Classes, Economics in Practice: **30 class hours** each;
 - an additional subject which is not covered by the core curriculum but included in the set of the school curricula: **30 class hours**.
-

Students who do not take History at the extended level should choose History and Society as the additional subject. Those who do not take Geography, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics or Information Technology at the extended level should take Natural Sciences as the additional subject.

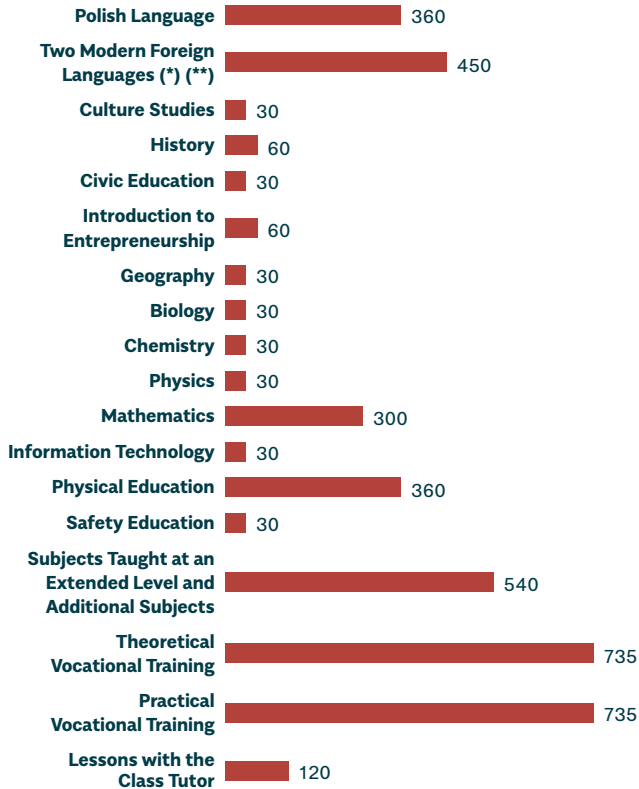
Theoretical and practical vocational training is completed until the end of February of the final year of school. While the duration of a practical placement as part of vocational training is pre-defined by law for individual occupations, the school head decides in which year / grade students should undertake it. If the placement lasts more than 4 weeks, additional weeks are converted into hours by the school head and counted as vocational training hours, with 60 minutes of practical placement corresponding to 1 class hour. The school head may split placements which extend beyond 4 weeks.

The minimum number of class hours for rehabilitation and compensatory classes / activities for students with disabilities in the 4-year cycle is 900 per class in special classes, and 240 per pupil in mainstream and integration classes.

Other classes / activities in the technical upper secondary school include: Religion / Ethics classes; Family Education; national or ethnic minority or regional language classes, and national or ethnic minority or regional history and culture; and sports classes in sport schools and schools for sport championship. The number of hours for these classes / activities is laid down in **separate regulations**. A number of **additional hours** is allocated by the **school head** in each school year, in accordance with relevant regulations.

Technical upper secondary school. Outline timetable:

minimum number of class hours in the 4-year cycle by subject



* A modern foreign language which is the second language of tuition in bilingual schools / classes; additional 240 class hours.

** The hours are distributed between the two languages by the school head.

The number of class hours to be allocated to compulsory classes and lessons with the class tutor in individual grades per week is as follows:

- » **Grade I: 33 hours** (35 in bilingual classes);
- » **Grade II: 35 hours** (36 in bilingual classes);
- » **Grade III: 34 hours** (35 in bilingual classes);
- » **Grade IV: 31 hours** (33 in bilingual classes).

The minimum weekly number of class hours for rehabilitation and compensatory classes / activities for students with disabilities in each school year is 8 per class in special classes, and 2 per student in mainstream and integration classes.

Outline timetable for stage I sectoral vocational school (for students who have finished the pre-reform lower secondary school and are enrolled starting from the school year 2017/2018)					
Stage I sectoral vocational school. Outline timetable: minimum number of class hours per week					
No.	Compulsory classes	Weekly number of hours in grades			Total in the 3-year cycle
		I	II	III	
1	Polish Language	2	2	1	5
2	Modern Foreign Language	1	2	1	4
3	History	1	1	-	2
4	Civic Education	-	-	1	1
5	Introduction to Entrepreneurship	-	2	-	2
6	Geography	1	-	-	1
7	Biology	1	-	-	1
8	Chemistry	1	-	-	1
9	Physics	1	-	-	1
10	Mathematics	2	1	1	4
11	Computer Science	1	-	-	1
12	Physical Education	3	3	3	9
13	Safety Education	1	-	-	1
14	Theoretical and Practical Vocational Training	12	18	20	50
15	Lessons with the Class Tutor	1	1	1	3
Total for compulsory classes and lessons with the class tutor		28	30	28	86
Hours to be allocated by the school head		3			3
Total		89			

Other classes / activities:

- » The number of hours for the following classes specified in separate regulations: Religion or Ethics; Family Education; national or ethnic minority language or regional language, and history and culture of a national / ethnic minority or the regional language community; geography of the country which a national minority identifies with; sports activities; and

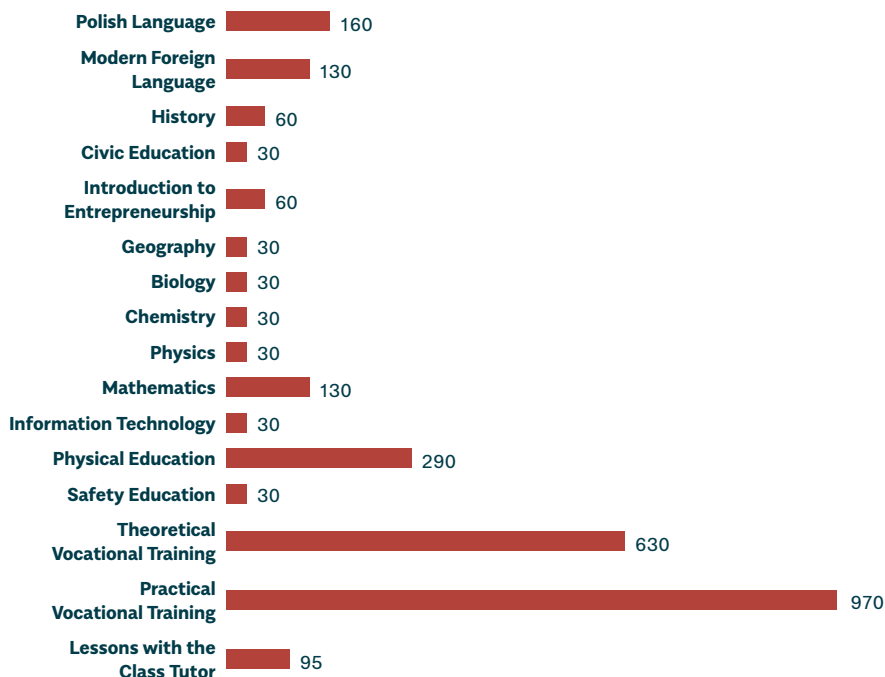
classes / activities as part of psychological and educational support. A number of hours for additional classes / educational activities and sign language classes may be allocated by the body administering a given school.

- » Career guidance: min. 10 class hours in the 3-year cycle.
- » Rehabilitation classes / activities for students with disabilities: 10 class hours per class and per week in each year for a special class; 2 hours per student and per week in each year for mainstream and integration classes.
- » Hours left to the school head's discretion: to be allocated on an annual basis to classes / activities developing students' interests, abilities and aptitudes, and, in particular, activeness and creativity, and for classes / activities developing vocational competences.

Outline timetable for basic vocational schools (already integrated into stage I sectoral vocational schools)
(in place for students enrolled earlier until the end of the school year 2019/2020)

Basic vocational schools (already integrated into stage I sectoral vocational schools)
Outline timetable:

minimum number of class hours in the 3-year cycle by subject



The minimum number of class hours for rehabilitation and compensatory classes / activities for students with disabilities in the 3-year cycle is 960 per class in special classes, and 190 per student in mainstream and integration classes.

Other classes / activities in the general upper secondary school include: Religion / Ethics classes; Family Education; national or ethnic minority or regional language classes, and national or ethnic minority or regional history and culture; and sports classes in sport schools and schools for sport championship. The number of hours for these classes / activities is laid down in **separate regulations**. A number of **additional hours** is allocated by the **school head** in each school year, in accordance with relevant regulations.

Basic vocational school students who are **juvenile workers** may be instructed by the school to undertake an additional theoretical training period at an in-service and continuing education centre. In such cases, they follow the training for 4 weeks in each grade, with 34 hours of classes per week. The school head determines, for each grade, the number of days per week allocated to practical vocational training provided at an employer's organisation.

The number of class hours to be allocated to compulsory classes and lessons with the class tutor in individual grades **per week** is as follows:

-
- » **Grade I: 27 hours**
 - » **Grade II: 29 hours**
 - » **Grade III: 30 hours**
-

The minimum weekly number of class hours for rehabilitation and compensatory classes / activities for students with disabilities in each school year is 10 per class in special classes, and 2 per student in mainstream and integration classes.

5.3.6. Assessment and Certification

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Internal assessment and promotion to the next grade are based on the same rules as in grades IV to VIII of the primary school; see Section 4.6.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Maturity exam

Currently, only students finishing the 4-year **technical upper secondary school** may take the maturity exam. In the post-reform school education system, this option will be available to both students finishing 5-year **technical secondary schools**, and students finishing 2-year stage II sectoral **vocational schools** where those who have finished 3-year stage I sectoral vocational schools may continue education.

The arrangements for the maturity exam for students now following programmes in technical upper secondary schools are the same as for general upper secondary schools; see Section 5.2.6.

Exams confirming vocational qualifications

Examinations assess the extent to which a student or learner has acquired the knowledge and skills required for a given qualification, as defined in the national core curriculum for vocational education. Exams confirming vocational qualifications as designed now were conducted for the first time in 2013.

Currently, they may be taken by students of both 4-year **technical upper secondary schools** and 3-year **basic vocational schools** (the latter transformed into stage I sectoral vocational schools) and those who have finished the two types of schools (as well as by post-secondary school students and leavers, and other adult learners who meet requirements laid down in the national legislation). In the post-reform school education system, they may be taken by 5-year **technical secondary school** students and leavers, and **stage I and II sectoral vocational school** students and leavers (as well as post-secondary school students and other adult learners who meet requirements set out by law).

An exam is conducted **for each qualification separately**. Thus, the number of exams which an individual should pass to be qualified to practise a given occupation depends on the number of qualifications identified within the occupation in the Classification of Occupations. In practice, there may be one, two or three qualification and corresponding exams for a given occupation.

An exam confirming vocational qualifications consists of:

-
- » a written part, and
 - » a practical part.

The **written part** (45 to 90 minutes) is a test with exercises assessing knowledge and skills required for a qualification in a given occupation. In the **practical part** (120 to 240 minutes), which aims to assess practical skills required for a qualification, students perform an examination task. The exact duration of the written and practical parts is set separately for each occupation. Both the written and practical parts of an exam can take place either at a school or vocational education centre, or at an employer's organisation.

To **pass an exam**, students or learners should score at least 50% of the total number of points in the written part, and at least 75% of the total number of points in the practical part.

CERTIFICATION

Students in all types of vocational schools receive and will continue to receive a school certificate at the end of each school year and a school leaving certificate upon completion of the final year of education in a given school.

Students who have passed the maturity exam (in existing and new technical schools and new stage II sectoral vocational schools) (will) receive a **maturity certificate**, in addition to a school leaving certificate. The maturity certificate, issued by a Regional Examination Board, includes results of the written and oral parts of the exam.

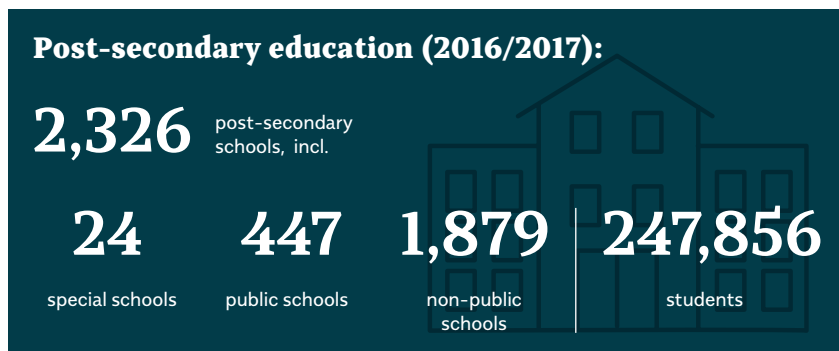
On passing an exam confirming a single qualification, students receive a **certificate for the qualification** concerned, issued by the Regional Examination Board. Once they have received certificates for all the qualifications required to practise a given occupation and completed the required level of education, they obtain a **diploma confirming all vocational qualifications** required for the occupation, issued by a Regional Examination Board.

Upon request, a diploma is issued together with a **Europass Certificate Supplement**, which follows the structure adopted by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES. The Supplement provides more details about the qualifications, as well as about the knowledge, skills and competences of a diploma holder.

6. Post-Secondary Education

6.1. Organisation

Post-secondary education is considered part of secondary education in the Polish classification of education. Post-secondary schools provide and will continue to provide programmes of up to 2.5 years leading to vocational qualifications. They are intended mainly for students or learners **aged 19 to 20/21** years who have finished a general upper secondary school (in the pre-reform school education system), or a general secondary school or a stage I sectoral vocational school (in the new system).



Training programmes in post-secondary schools are based on the recently revised classification of occupations (see Section 5.3). Schools offer programmes in more than 20 groups of subject areas, including, for example, fine arts, economics and administration, medical areas, engineering and technology, agriculture, forestry and fishery, transport and communication, and services. The most popular ones are economics and administration, medical areas, services and computing. Since the school year 2017/2018, post-secondary schools have been in the process of reorganisation to fit into the new school education system.

6.2. Admission

Currently, post-secondary schools mainly take students who have finished a general upper secondary school. Most of them require only an upper secondary school leaving certificate rather than a maturity certificate.

Post-secondary schools in the new school education system will be open to those who have finished a general secondary school or a stage I sectoral vocational school.

6.3. Student Grouping for Learning

As in upper secondary education, students in post-secondary schools are grouped into grades / classes. The national legislation does not pre-define the size of a class. For subjects such as a foreign language and for vocational training classes, students may be split into groups or other organisational arrangements may be in place in individual schools.

6.4. Organisation of Time

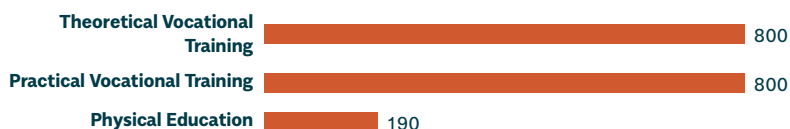
Post-secondary schools follow the same school year calendar as schools at lower levels; see Section 4.4.

6.5. Curriculum

Like at lower education levels, curricula adopted by post-secondary schools should be based on the national core curricula and outline timetables. A new outline timetable has been in place for the first semester since the school year 2017/2018 and will be introduced for subsequent semesters in the coming years. Curricula for students enrolled before the school year 2017/2018 are based on the pre-reform timetable. The outline timetables in place in the school year 2017/2018 are presented below.

Outline timetable for post-secondary schools (for students enrolled before the school year 2017/2018)

Post-secondary schools. Outline timetable:
minimum number of class hours for compulsory courses / classes in the 2-year cycle



The duration of programmes varies in individual schools, reflecting the flexibility of curricula which are very often modularised. For programmes of 1, 1.5 or 2.5 years' duration, the outline timetable is adjusted accordingly.

The duration of **practical placements** is specified for individual occupations in the core curricula for vocational education.

A number of additional **hours** are allocated by the **school head** in each school year, in accordance with relevant regulations.

The **weekly number of class hours** for compulsory courses / classes in each semester is 28.

Outline timetables for post-secondary schools for young people (for students enrolled starting from the school year 2017/2018; introduced in semester I of 2017/2018)				
Post-secondary schools for young people. Outline timetable: minimum number of class hours for compulsory courses / classes per week				
No.	Compulsory classes	Weekly number of hours by grade		Total in the 2-year cycle
		I	II	
1	Theoretical and Practical Vocational Training	25	25	50
2	Physical Education	3	3	6
Total		28	28	56

A number of hours for additional classes / educational activities and sign language classes may be allocated by the body administering a given school. The number of hours for classes / activities as part of psychological and educational support is specified in separate regulations.

The hours allocated to theoretical and practical vocational training are divided by the school head. However, at least 50% of the hours should be allocated to practical training. Practical training includes a compulsory practical placement. The duration of practical placements is specified for individual occupations in the core curricula for vocational education.

6.6. Assessment and Certification

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Each post-secondary school adopts its own detailed assessment system based on the national legislation. Pursuant to the national legislation, only

learning achievements are subject to assessment; conduct is not assessed. Assessment criteria and marks should be made available to students.

Learning achievements are assessed by teachers of individual courses. Students receive single, end-of-semester and end-of-year marks. Marks given during the year are taken into consideration in end-of-semester and end-of-year assessment. To be eligible for end-of-semester and end-of-year assessment, students should have passed internal **exams** as part of individual compulsory courses.

Teachers use the same **marking scale** of 1 to 6 as at the lower levels of education where 6: excellent, 5: very good, 4: good, 3: satisfactory, 2: acceptable, and 1: unsatisfactory.

Promotion is semester-based. Student are promoted to the next semester if they have received end-of semester marks higher than unsatisfactory for all courses / subjects. Students who have been given the 'unsatisfactory' mark can take a resit exam. Those who have failed the resit are not promoted and should repeat a semester. However, the school's teaching council may decide to conditionally promote a student who has received the 'unsatisfactory' mark in one subject only. A student can be conditionally promoted only once during the entire education cycle in a post-secondary school. Students finish the school if they have received marks higher than 'unsatisfactory' as a result of the final assessment which includes end-of-semester marks for all compulsory courses / classes.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

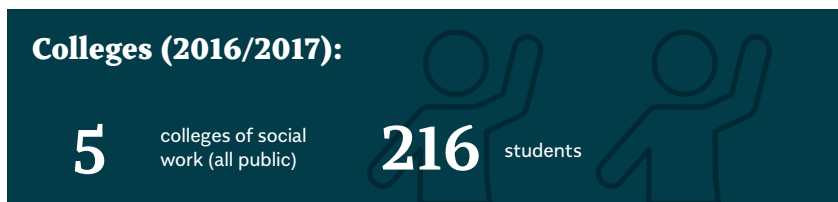
Like those in secondary vocational schools, students in post-secondary schools may take **examinations confirming vocational qualifications**; for details, see Section 5.3.6.

CERTIFICATION

Upon completion of the education cycle, post-secondary school students receive a school leaving certificate. Those who have passed all exams for vocational qualifications required to practise a given occupation are awarded a **diploma confirming vocational qualifications** and may receive a **Certificate Supplement** upon request; see Section 5.3.6.

7. Colleges

The education system also includes **colleges of social work** which are classified as part of the school education system in the national legislation and as part of tertiary education for international comparisons. There are very few colleges with a very small number of students.



ORGANISATION

Colleges offer 3-year programmes to students usually **aged 19 to 21 years** who hold a maturity certificate. In academic terms, each college is supervised by an HEI, based on an individual agreement. College graduates may enter the labour market as fully qualified social workers. As part of an agreement between a college and a supervising higher education institution, they may also take the final / diploma exam at the supervising institution and be awarded a Bachelor's degree (*licencjat*). Though part of the school education system, colleges are not affected by the school education reform.

ADMISSION

A maturity certificate is required for admission to colleges. Applicants should also obtain a positive result in the admission process. Detailed admission procedures are adopted by individual colleges.

STUDENT GROUPING FOR LEARNING

Pursuant to the national legislation, college students are divided into learner groups. The maximum number of students in a group is 20; groups may be combined for lectures.

ORGANISATION OF TIME

The academic year starts on 1 October and ends on 30 September of the following year. It is divided into two semesters which end with winter and summer examination periods and are separated by winter and summer breaks.

CURRICULUM

Curricula should be based on the national standards established by the minister responsible for labour and social policy. The standards specify the courses to be included in a programme and the number of hours to be allocated to courses and practical placements, curricular contents, and the knowledge and skills that students should acquire by the end of the training cycle.

ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION

Colleges adopt their own internal regulations for assessment and progression to the next year. They use a **marking scale** of 1 to 6 (as in school education). Marks are given by teachers teaching individual courses / classes. Students receive marks for **coursework** and / or **examinations** taken as part of individual courses / subjects. Upon completion of the 3-year cycle, they take a **final / diploma examination**. To take the exam, students are required to have completed all courses and practical placements included in the curriculum, and to submit their diploma thesis which should then receive a positive assessment. The final exam is conducted by a board appointed by the director of a given college.

Upon passing the final exam, graduates receive a **diploma** which confirms the qualifications required of social workers.

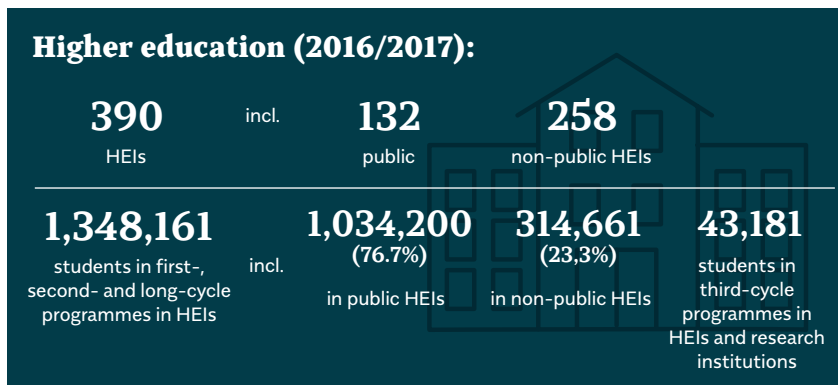
As mentioned above, college students may also follow additional courses and take an exam for a Bachelor's degree (*licencjat*). It is taken before an examination board established by the Rector of the higher education institution responsible for academic supervision over a given college. A Bachelor's degree is awarded by the supervising higher education institution.

8. Higher Education

8.1. Organisation

Higher education institutions (HEIs) provide the following types of programmes:

- » **first-cycle programmes, 3 to 4 years (180 to 240 ECTS¹)**, leading to a Bachelor's degree (*licencjat* or *inżynier*, depending on the field of study); 3 to 4 years for *licencjat*, and 3.5 to 4 years for *inżynier*;
- » **second-cycle programmes, 1.5 to 2 years (90 to 120 ECTS)**, leading to a Master's degree (*magister* or an equivalent degree, depending on the field of study);
- » **long-cycle programmes, 5 to 6 years (300 to 360 ECTS)**, leading, like second-cycle programmes, to a Master's degree (*magister*) or equivalent degree;
- » **third-cycle or doctoral programmes, 2 to 4 years**, leading to a doctoral degree (*doktor*).



First-cycle programmes aim to provide knowledge and skills in a specific field of study, preparing students for work in a specific profession. First-cycle graduates have access to second- and long-cycle programmes. **Second-cycle and long-cycle programmes** aim to provide specialist knowledge in a specific field of study, preparing students for creative work in a specific profession. Second- and long-cycle graduates may move on to third-cycle programmes. Only **long-cycle programmes** are offered in the fields of medicine, dentistry, medical analysis, pharmacy, physiotherapy, veterinary medicine, and law and

¹ Based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System.

canon law. Long-cycle programmes may also be offered in fields related to psychology, theology, acting, moving image production and photography, directing, stage design, graphic design, painting and sculpture. First-, second- and long-cycle programmes may be offered as **joint programmes** together with other Polish and international institutions.

Higher education (2016/2017):

Participation in higher education:

47.4%

gross enrolment rate

36.8%

net enrolment rate

as compared to 12.9% and 9.8%, respectively, in 1990/1991

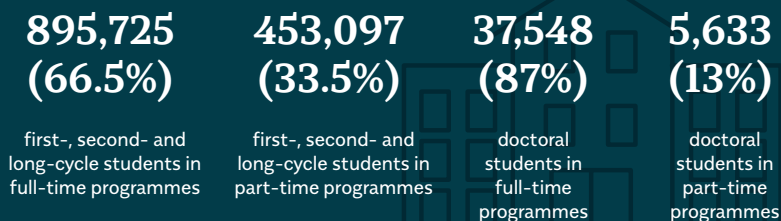
Polish HEIs offer, in total, around **930 programmes** delivered in **foreign languages**, mainly in English. These include over 640 programmes in fields other than language studies or philology. Most of them are first- and second-cycle programmes, and few are long-cycle programmes.

Third-cycle / doctoral programmes (offered not only by HEIs but also by research institutions other than HEIs) aim to provide advanced knowledge in a specific area or discipline of science or fine arts, preparing students for independent research and creative activity and for the award of a doctoral degree. Thus, they help applicants to prepare for the process leading to the award of a doctoral degree, yet the completion of such a programme is not a precondition for the award of this degree. Doctoral degree holders may continue their research career to first obtain a postdoctoral degree (*doktor habilitowany*) and subsequently a professorial title (*profesor*).

Programmes at all levels are offered as **full-time and part-time programmes**. A full-time programme is defined as one where at least half of the curriculum is delivered through on-campus classes which require student and teacher attendance. Any other type of programme, as defined by an HEI, is considered a part-time programme.

Moreover, both HEIs and research institutions offer non-degree postgraduate programmes, open to holders of a Bachelor's or Master's degree, which last 1 to 2 years. However, these programmes are considered part of continuing or adult education (see Chapter 8).

Higher education (2016/2017):



Aside from a distinction between public and non-public ones (see Chapter 2), HEIs are divided in the national legislation into university-type ('academic') and non-university institutions ('professional' or 'professionally-oriented'). **University-type HEIs** are those which conduct scientific research and where at least one organisational unit is authorised to award doctoral degrees (as fulfilling the requirements laid down by law, including the quality of research and a specific number of academic staff holding a professorial title or a postdoctoral or equivalent degree). They provide first-, second-, long- and third-cycle programmes. Around 70% of public HEIs are university-type HEIs. **Non-university HEIs** are not authorised to award doctoral degrees and may provide only first, second- and long-cycle programmes.

For statistical purposes, HEIs are divided into the following **types**:

- » Universities (19)
- » Technical HEIs (23)
- » Agricultural HEIs (7)
- » HEIs of economics (58)
- » Pedagogical HEIs (13)
- » Medical universities / academies (9)
- » HEIs of maritime studies (2)
- » Academies of physical education (6)
- » HEIs of art studies (22)
- » Theological HEIs (15)
- » HEIs supervised by the ministers responsible for defence and internal affairs (7)
- » Other HEIs (209)

Universities, technical HEIs and HEIs specialising in economics and related fields attract the largest number of students (30%, 21% and 13% of all

students, respectively, in the academic year 2016/2017). The biggest HEIs have 30,000 to 45,000 students. These include the University of Warsaw, the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, the Wrocław University of Science and Technology, the University of Łódź and the Warsaw University of Technology.

8.2. Admission

General admission requirements are laid down in the national legislation and are the same for all types of HEIs.

First-cycle and long-cycle programmes are open to student applicants who hold a maturity certificate, and the admission process is based on results achieved in the maturity exam (see Section 5.2.6). HEIs are not allowed to conduct entrance exams in the subjects taken by applicants in the maturity exam. However, each HEI may specify which results of the maturity exam provide the basis for admission. Entrance exams may be conducted by HEIs, with the consent of the Minister of Science and Higher Education, only when it is necessary to assess knowledge and / or skills which are not assessed by the maturity exam (e.g. specific aptitudes or physical fitness required in some fields of study) or when an applicant holds an upper secondary school leaving certificate / maturity certificate obtained abroad.

In order to be enrolled in a **second-cycle programme**, applicants should hold a Bachelor's (*licencjat* or *inżynier*) degree or a Master's (*magister*) degree, or an equivalent degree. HEIs may lay down additional requirements regarding, for example, the correspondence between the degree held and the field of study chosen for a second-cycle programme.

W

Each HEI may define its own additional admission conditions and procedures, including the number of places available to students, except in the fields of **medicine and dentistry** (*numerus clausus*). The maximum number of students to be enrolled in the two fields is specified for each HEI concerned in a regulation by the Minister of Health, in consultation with the Minister of Science and Higher Education.

Access to **third-cycle programmes** is open to applicants who hold a Master's (*magister*) degree or an equivalent degree and fulfil any additional entry requirements which may be set by individual HEIs.

8.3. Organisation of Time

The academic year usually runs from 1 October till the end of June of the following year. It is divided into two semesters, each ending with an examination period. Semesters are separated by a winter break (1 to 2 weeks in the first half of February) and a summer break. There are also two shorter, Christmas and Easter, breaks. Detailed arrangements are laid down by individual HEIs.

8.4. Curriculum

FIRST-, SECOND- AND LONG-CYCLE PROGRAMMES

First-, second- and long-cycle programmes are provided in **fields of study**, within academic areas and domains of science or fine arts which are pre-defined in the national legislation. Currently, the most popular fields are business and administration, and various fields within engineering and technology and social sciences.

National regulations also specify general **requirements** to be fulfilled by a curriculum (for example, that the mode of study, learning outcomes, the number of ECTS credits in total and per course / module, and the duration of practical placements should be defined), and requirements for HEIs to provide programmes. The latter include, in particular, so-called minimum staff requirements; this is a minimum number of academic staff holding qualifications at a given level (a doctoral and / or postdoctoral degree and / or a professorial title), by level / cycle of study and programme orientation / profile and for some specific (groups of) fields of study.

Programmes are divided into two types in terms of orientation or '**profile**':

- » **academically-oriented programmes** which consist of modules relating to research conducted by a given HEI, and where more than half of the curriculum, as defined in ECTS credits, covers courses / classes that enable students to gain more in-depth knowledge;
- » **practically-oriented programmes** which consist of modules designed to develop students' practical skills and social competences, and where more than half of the curriculum, as defined in ECTS credits, covers practical courses / classes developing such skills and competences, including skills acquired as part of workshop-type training / classes conducted by staff with professional experience gained outside higher education.

As regards **curricular autonomy**, the legislation makes a distinction between basic organisational units (which are usually faculties) of HEIs authorised to award postdoctoral degrees (as fulfilling certain requirements laid down by law, including the quality of research and the number of academic staff holding a professorial title or a postdoctoral or equivalent degree) and those which are not authorised to do so. The former may establish and provide academically- and practically-oriented programmes at any level and in any field within academic areas and domains of science or fine arts which correspond to those where a given HEI awards postdoctoral degrees. They define learning outcomes for each programme and develop curricula on this basis. The latter may establish and provide programmes, with curricula based on learning outcomes defined by them, when granted an authorisation by the Minister of Science and Higher Education in a process which involves the Polish Accreditation Committee (for PAC, see Section 2.2 and Chapter 11).

For some fields of study, there are **national standards** which specify, among other things, individual courses and other programme components, the number of hours and ECTS credits to be allocated to them and curricular contents. Such detailed requirements are established by the Minister of Science and Higher Education, in consultation with other competent ministers, for:

-
- » programmes in seven fields covered by the relevant EU Directives concerning **regulated professions**: medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing, midwifery, veterinary medicine and architecture;
 - » programmes in medical analysis / laboratory medicine; and
 - » **initial teacher training** programmes (for prospective school education teachers).
-

THIRD-CYCLE PROGRAMMES

Third-cycle or doctoral programmes are provided in academic areas, domains of science or fine arts and scientific and artistic disciplines which are pre-defined in the national legislation.

Curricula are developed by organisational units providing programmes (in both HEIs and research institutions other than HEIs) and are approved by the authorities of a given organisational unit / institution. Pursuant to the national legislation, curricula should specify the number of hours for compulsory course classes to be attended, coursework to be submitted and examinations to be taken in each year of study. Additionally, doctoral students in HEIs are required to teach courses, for a maximum of 90 hours, as part of practical training.

8.5. Assessment and Certification

FIRST-, SECOND- AND LONG-CYCLE PROGRAMMES

National regulations specify only the minimum number of ECTS credits for each degree and aspects which should be addressed in internal regulations adopted by HEIs. Detailed arrangements concerning student assessment, progression and graduation are laid down by individual HEIs.

Student performance in courses is assessed by teachers responsible for individual courses. Learning outcomes achieved by students are assessed in **coursework** and written and oral **examinations**. Coursework assessment methods include, for example, a paper, midterm essay, research or laboratory class report, presentation, individual and group project, portfolio, test, and peer and self-assessment. Students failing in an exam may take a resit exam, and an exam conducted by an examination review board if they fail the resit. HEIs usually use a **marking scale** of 2 to 5! (2: unsatisfactory, 3: satisfactory, 3.5: satisfactory+, 4: good, 4.5: good+, 5: very good, 5!: excellent). Where practical training / a **practical placement** is part of a programme, assessment is descriptive and covers not only knowledge but also skills and social competences.

In order to take the **final exam** leading to the award of a degree, students in most programmes are required to complete all courses and practical placements included in the curriculum, earn the relevant number of ECTS credits (at least 180, 90, and 300 or 360 for first-, second- and long-cycle programmes, respectively) and receive at least a 'satisfactory' mark for their final thesis. The final exam is conducted by an examination board composed of academic teachers of the faculty / department which offers a given programme. Students who have failed in the final exam may take a resit exam and, if they fail again, an exam conducted by an examination review board. Where a programme does not provide for the **final thesis** (for example, in medical areas) and / or the final exam, students are required only to complete all courses and practical placements included in the curriculum.

Upon passing the final exam, students are awarded a higher education **diploma** which confirms the completion of a given programme and the award of a degree. In the case of a joint programme, a diploma is awarded by the institution identified in an interinstitutional agreement. In addition to a diploma, all students receive a **Diploma Supplement**, based on the format adopted by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES, which provides more detailed information about the qualification awarded, programme contents and results achieved.

THIRD-CYCLE PROGRAMMES

Detailed regulations on assessment and progression are laid down by individual HEIs (or research institutions other than HEIs) providing third-cycle programmes. Doctoral students are required to attend courses and take examinations as specified in internal regulations, conduct research and submit progress reports, and prepare a doctoral dissertation. Doctoral students in HEIs are also required to teach classes. Examinations are conducted by the academic teacher (or researcher in other institutions) responsible for a given course or type of classes. Doctoral students teaching classes in HEIs are assessed by the supervising academic teacher. Progress in research and in writing a dissertation is assessed by the supervisor of a doctoral student or another authorised person or body.

Students who have not completed a doctoral programme receive a certificate indicating courses taken and completed, and results achieved. A successfully completed programme ends with the award of a degree.

A doctoral **degree** is awarded in a process laid down in separate national regulations. Enrolment in, and completion of, a doctoral programme is not a pre-condition for the award of a degree. It may be awarded to candidates (doctoral students as part of a third-cycle programme, and other individuals) who fulfil the following **requirements**:

-
- » hold a Master's degree or an equivalent degree;
 - » have passed doctoral examinations (in core and additional disciplines and in a modern foreign language);
 - » have submitted and successfully defended a doctoral dissertation (public defence).
-

The decision to award a doctoral degree is taken by an examination board, composed of the supervisor of a doctoral student / candidate and dissertation reviewers. The degree holder receives a doctoral **diploma**.

9. Adult Education

9.1. Providers and Programmes

Adult education is a highly diversified sector in terms of both target groups and providers. It is provided by various public and non-public institutions both within and outside the formal education system and does not form an integrated sector.

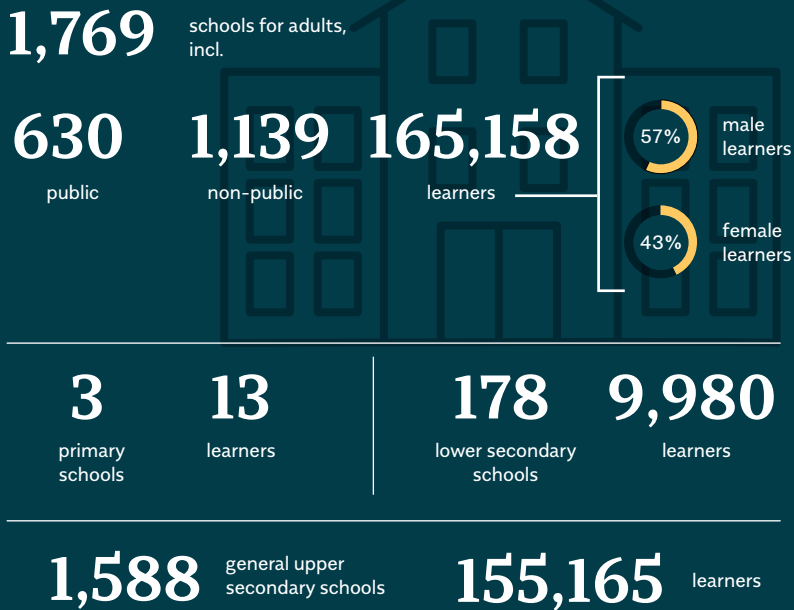
MAIN PROVIDERS	MAIN TYPES OF PROGRAMMES / COURSES
<p>Schools for adults, incl. primary schools, lower secondary schools (being phased out), general upper secondary and post-secondary schools Vocational schools for young people</p>	<p>The same education cycles as in schools for children and young people</p> <p>Vocational qualification courses</p>
<p>Continuing education centres (CEC) which may incorporate schools; practical training centres (PTC); further and in-service training centres (FITC); and vocational and continuing education centres (VCEC), combining vocational schools and continuing education centres. All part of the school education system</p>	<p>Vocational qualification courses (CEC, PTC, FITC), vocational skills courses (CEC, PTC, FITC), general competences courses (CEC, FITC); training for juvenile workers (PTC, FITC). VCEC: all services as for institutions integrated within an VCEC</p>
<p>Higher education institutions and research institutions</p>	<p>Non-degree postgraduate programmes and other courses</p>

Various forms of informal education provided by HEIs, cultural institutions, NGOs (e.g. open universities, third-age universities)	Courses and other learning opportunities for seniors
Skills centres: training institutions included in the Register of Training Institutions kept by Regional Labour Offices	Vocational qualification courses; various training courses for the unemployed and job seekers
Labour market institutions (e.g. labour offices)	Training courses and practical placements for the unemployed and job seekers
Other institutions providing adult education as part of their economic activity	Vocational qualification courses; various general and area-specific courses (e.g. foreign language or ICT courses) offered to the general public
Employers and employers' organisations	Courses and on-the-job training for employees

Various aspects of provision are regulated by the national legislation solely for **adult education in school settings**, non-degree postgraduate programmes, and vocational qualification courses, vocational skills courses, general competences courses, and supplementary theoretical training for juvenile workers.

Like school education for children and young people, **adult education in school settings** is in the process of being restructured as part of the school education reform; see Section 2.1 and Chapters 4 to 6. Since the school year 2015/2016, general upper secondary schools have been the main type of upper secondary schools for adults. Currently, there are no vocational (upper) secondary schools for adults.

Adult education, schools for adults (2016/2017– post-secondary schools not included):



A **vocational qualification course** is based on the relevant national core curriculum for vocational education and covers one qualification. Upon completion, learners may take a vocational qualification exam confirming a given qualification (see Section 5.3 for the revised Classification of Occupations based on qualifications). A **vocational skills course**, based on the relevant national core curriculum for vocational education, focuses on one section of learning outcomes defined for a given qualification; learning outcomes common to all occupations within one area of education / training; or learning outcomes common to all occupations relating to the organisation of work in small teams. **General competences courses** may cover any part of the national core curriculum for general education. **Juvenile workers** may be instructed to follow **supplementary theoretical training** by their employers or the school which they attend. The types of classes to be taken and the duration of training are agreed between employers or schools and providers on an individual basis.

Adult education (2016/2017):

203

public continuing education centres

161

public practical training centres

358

public further and in-service training centres

90

public vocational and continuing education centres

2,097

non-public continuing education and practical training centres

Non-degree postgraduate programmes are offered by higher education institutions (HEIs) in areas corresponding to the fields in which they provide degree programmes. These include, for example, teacher training programmes for those who have completed a degree programme in a given field and wish to acquire a teaching qualification (required to work as a teacher in the school education system) or a qualification to teach another school subject. The minimum duration of a non-degree postgraduate programme is 2 semesters, and learners should be able to earn at least 30 ECTS credits upon completion.

Adult education, non-degree postgraduate programmes (2016/2017):

15,984

students

73%

female students

27%

male students

Arrangements for other types of adult education courses, provided as part of non-formal education in non-school settings, are adopted by individual institutions.

Adult education (2016):

10,652

training institutions in the Register of Training Institutions offering 134,046 courses

5,640,286

participants in training

9.2. Admission

Primary schools for adults take learners **aged 18 and above** or those who reach the age of 18 in the year in which they start primary education. **Lower secondary schools** for adults (being phased out as part of the school education reform) are intended for learners **aged 18 and above** or those who reach the age of 18 in the year in which they start lower secondary education and who have finished the 6-year **primary school** (being transformed into 8-year school) or either grade VI or grade VII of the 8-year primary school existing before 1999. Before the ongoing reform, primary and lower secondary schools could take, on an exceptional basis, learners under 18 years but aged at least 15 if they had serious learning difficulties or there were other obstacles to completion of education in a school for children.

To enter a **general upper secondary school** for adults, learners should be **aged 18 years or above** and have completed lower secondary education. **Post-secondary schools** take learners aged 18 and above who hold an upper secondary school leaving certificate (a secondary school leaving certificate in the new school education system). A maturity certificate, awarded upon passing the maturity exam at the end of a general or technical (upper) secondary school, is not required.

Learners wishing to attend a **vocational qualification course** should be aged **at least 18 years** and have a medical certificate confirming fitness for practical vocational training. There are no national regulations or recommendations concerning admission requirements for various types of vocational and other courses offered in non-school settings.

To be enrolled in a **non-degree postgraduate programme**, applicants should hold at least a Bachelor's degree (*licencjat* or *inżynier*), awarded upon completion of a first-cycle programme. Individual HEIs and research institutions may lay down additional admission criteria.

9.3. Curriculum

Like in schools for children and young people, curricula adopted by schools for adults should be based on the national core curricula and outline timetables. As part of the ongoing school education reform, new outline timetables have been established for grades VII and VIII of the new 8-year primary schools for adults, new general secondary schools for adults, and post-secondary schools for adults. The new outline timetable for post-secondary schools for

adults, implemented starting from the school 2017/2018, is given below as an example.

Post-secondary schools for adults. Outline timetable: minimum weekly number of class hours for compulsory courses / classes per week						
No.	Compulsory classes	Number of hours per week in semesters				Total for the 2 year cycle
		I	II	III	IV	
1	Theoretical and Practical Vocational Training	18	19			37
2	Introduction to Entrepreneurship	1		-		1
Total		19	19			38

A number of hours for additional classes / educational activities may be allocated by the body administering a given school.

The hours for vocational training are distributed between **theoretical and practical training** by the head of a school, with at least 50% to be allocated to practical training. The duration of compulsory practical placements is specified for individual occupations in the core curricula for vocational education.

Vocational qualification courses and **vocational skills courses** are based on the national core curricula for vocational education (for each occupation identified within the Classification of Occupations). **General competences courses** follow the national core curricula for general education at primary to post-secondary levels.

Curricula for **non-degree postgraduate programmes** (at least 30 ECTS credits) are developed by individual HEIs and research institutions. However, there are national standards, established by the Minister of Science and Higher Education, for initial teacher training programmes. The standards specify, for example, the modules to be included in a non-degree postgraduate programme, their duration and number of ECTS credits to be allocated, and the aims and general arrangements for practical placements or internships. See also Section Section 11.1.1 on initial teacher training.

Curricula for other types of courses are developed by individual providers.

9.4. Assessment and Certification

ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION FOR PROGRAMMES / COURSES OFFERED WITHIN THE FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

Assessment and certification arrangements for **schools for adults** are the same as for schools for children and young people, except that assessment does not cover conduct. For details, see Sections 4.6 (Primary Education), 5.1.6 (Lower Secondary Education), 5.2.6 (General Upper Secondary Education), and 6.6 (Post-Secondary Education).

Vocational qualification courses, vocational skills courses and **general competences courses** end with an assessment in the form defined by the provider. Successful learners receive a certificate of course completion. Those who have completed a vocational qualification course may take an exam confirming a given vocational qualification; for details about vocational qualification exams, see Section 5.3.6.

Assessment methods for learners taking **non-degree postgraduate programmes** are defined by individual HEIs. They usually combine coursework and examinations. Successful learners receive a certificate of completion of a non-degree postgraduate programme. Such a certificate is considered a partial qualification within the Integrated Qualifications System; for the IQS, see Section 2.1.

VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND FORMAL LEARNING

A fully-fledged and coherent system for the validation of non-formal and informal learning is not yet in place. The procedures applied vary, depending on the sector or individual institutions. An approach based on Cedefop's European Guidelines for Validating Non-Formal and Informal Learning (with a validation process including identification, documentation, assessment and certification of learning outcomes) is expected to be adopted by the end of 2018.

Currently, a distinction can be made between procedures and practices which are **nationally regulated**, and those which are not regulated and are adopted by individual institutions (for example, internationally recognised procedures). The State-regulated procedures include so-called extramural exams (taken by learners as externals rather than upon completion of a programme or course) and exams for specific professional certificates (for example, in construction or medical areas). Extramural exams may be taken by individuals aged at least 18 years. Upon passing the relevant exams, adults may receive a primary school leaving certificate and a general upper secondary school leaving

certificate, and certificates confirming individual vocational qualifications and a diploma confirming all qualifications required to practise a given occupation (for vocational qualification exams, see Section 5.3.6). Extramural exams are administered by the Central and Regional Examination Boards and are based on the national core curricula for general or vocational education, as appropriate.

INTEGRATED QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEM

The legislation on the **Integrated Qualifications System** (IQS) recently out in place provides for the accumulation and transfer of learning outcomes achieved. The IQS also introduces regulated and market qualifications, in addition to full and partial qualifications awarded within the school education and higher education systems (see Section 2.1), all based on learning outcomes and awarded upon a positive validation of learning outcomes. Regulated and market qualifications are entered in the Integrated Qualifications Register by the minister responsible for a given sector. All ministers are now required to review all qualifications awarded in their sectors to identify those to be included in the IQS. A qualification included in the IQS may be awarded only by an institution which is authorised to certify it. Such an authorisation is granted either by law or by the competent minister. There will be institutions or entities authorised to certify a given market qualification. An entity engaged in economic activity may apply for such an authorisation if it meets certain requirements laid down in the national legislation. A certifying institution conducts the validation process in accordance with the legislation.

10. Education for Students with Special Needs

The national legislation does not define **special educational needs**. The term is, however, understood broadly as depending on individual needs of a pupil or student. The need to offer support may result from, for example, a disability, specific learning difficulties, social maladjustment, behavioural or emotional disorders, long-lasting illness, traumatic situations or special talents.

Psychological and educational support is offered to all pupils and students with special educational needs, as well as to their parents, both within nursery schools and schools and by other institutions in the school education system, including counselling and guidance centres. Aside from specific arrangements as part of special education (see below), support may include, for example, activities such as classes developing aptitudes, learning skills or emotional and social competences, corrective and compensatory or remedial classes, speech therapy classes, an individualised learning path or programme, and home-based learning.

Education for students with special needs is an integral part of the school education system. It is provided to the following groups of children and young people on the basis of a certificate recommending special education, issued by a counselling and guidance centre:

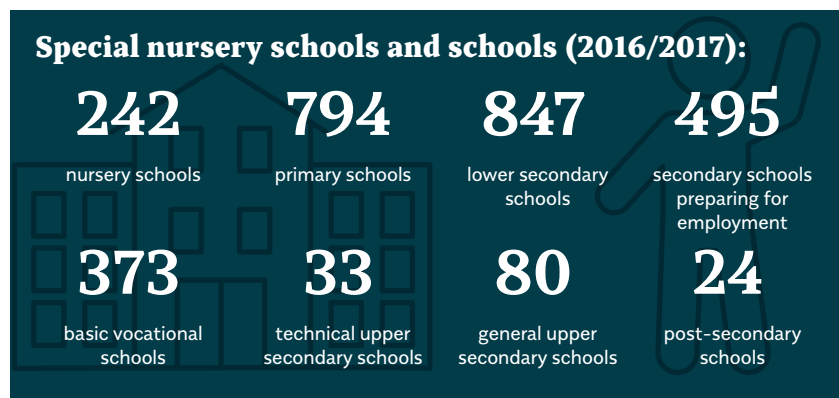
- » **students with disabilities:** with mild, moderate and severe intellectual disabilities; deaf and with hearing impairment; blind and with visual impairment; with a motor disability, including aphasia; with autism, including Asperger's syndrome; and with multiple disabilities;
- » **students who are socially maladjusted;** and
- » **students at risk of social maladjustment.**

At each stage of education and in any type of school, **particularly gifted pupils** may follow:

- » an **individualised study programme** for one or more subjects / types of classes included in the school curriculum for a given year;
- » an **individualised learning path** leading to completion of education in any school within a shorter period.

10.1. Organisation

The school education system offers **early development support** to the youngest children from the time when a disability is diagnosed till enrolment in primary school. It aims to stimulate the psychological, motor and social development of children.



Education for students with special needs is provided in:

- » **special nursery schools;**
- » **mainstream nursery schools** and other settings with:
 - **special classes** only for children with an education for students with special needs certificate; and
 - **integration classes** for children with an education for students with special needs certificate and peers without disabilities;
- » **special schools:** primary schools, including primary schools for pupils with a moderate or severe intellectual disability; lower secondary schools (until abolished as part of the ongoing reform); 3 year schools preparing for employment (secondary schools for students with moderate or severe intellectual disability, or multiple disabilities); general and vocational upper secondary schools (until transformed into general and technical secondary schools), and post-secondary schools;
- » **mainstream schools** at all levels where pupils or students may attend:
 - a **special class** only for pupils or students with an education for students with special needs certificate;
 - an **integration class** composed of pupils or students with an education for students with special needs certificate and their peers without disabilities; or
 - a **mainstream class**.

Some mainstream nursery schools and schools, referred to as integration nursery schools or schools, have only integration classes.

Other institutions providing education for students with special needs include, for example, youth social therapy centres, special education-and-care centres and special educational centres.

Parents are free to choose an education for students with special needs setting for their children.

Where necessary, **entry into the primary school** may be deferred for children with disabilities until they reach the age of 9. The **duration** of education may be **extended** for them by one year in grades I to III and by 2 years in grades IV to VIII of the primary school, and by 1 year in a post-primary school. Pupils or students with disabilities and those at risk of social maladjustment may attend **mainstream** schools until the end of the school year in the calendar year when they reach the age of 20 in the case of primary schools or 24 in the case of post-primary schools.

In total, children or young people in education for students with special needs represent **1.5% of the preschool population** and **3% of the school population**. The proportion of pupils or students enrolled in special schools, as opposed to mainstream schools, varies depending on the level of education and type of school.

Number of pupils / students in education for children and youth with special needs provided in mainstream and special schools, 2016/2017			
Education level	Total	Mainstream schools	Special schools
Primary schools	73,311	49,013 (67%)	24,298 (33%)
Lower secondary schools	47,440	24,250 (51%)	23,190 (49%)
Special schools preparing for employment	10,707	-----	10,707 (100%)
Basic vocational schools	14,507	3,582 (25%)	10,925 (75%)
Technical upper secondary schools	3,912	3,060 (78%)	852 (22%)
General upper secondary schools	5,329	4,147 (78%)	1,182 (22%)
Post-secondary schools	377	30 (8%)	347 (92%)
Total	155,583	84,082 (54%)	71,501 (46%)

The **maximum number of pupils** or students **per class** is 20, including up to 5 pupils or students with disabilities, in an integration nursery school or school and an integration class of a mainstream nursery school or school. There are also upper limits for the size of a class in a special school and a special class in a mainstream school, depending on the type of disability – for example, up to 4 pupils or students with autism, including Asperger’s syndrome, up to, respectively, 8 and 16 pupils or students with a moderate or severe intellectual disability and a mild intellectual disability, and up to 16 socially maladjusted pupils or students or those at risk of social maladjustment.

10.2. Curriculum

MAINSTREAM NURSERY SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLS

Regardless of the education for students with special needs setting, pupils and students with disabilities – except those with a moderate or severe intellectual disability, and socially maladjusted pupils and students and those at risk of social maladjustment – follow the same **national core curricula** as their peers without disabilities for general education in preschool institutions, and for general and, where appropriate, vocational education, in schools at all levels; see Sections 3.5, 4.5, 5.1.5, 5.2.5, 5.3.5 and 6.5. Pupils or students with a moderate or severe intellectual disability follow a separate core curriculum in primary schools and special schools preparing for employment. For those with a severe intellectual disability, mainstream nursery schools and schools may organise compulsory education in the form of group or individual rehabilitation-and-education classes. Pupils or students who are unable to attend a nursery school or school due to their health may follow an **individualised programme**.

Each pupil or student in education for children and youth with special needs has an **individual education and therapy programme**. It is based on recommendations made in the education for children and youth with special needs certificate for the pupil or student, and developed by a team of teachers and specialists, where necessary, in collaboration with a counselling and guidance centre. The programme specifies, among other things, special classes or activities, including, in particular, rehabilitation classes / activities for a pupil or student with disabilities, social rehabilitation classes / activities for a socially maladjusted pupil or student, or social therapy classes / activities for one at risk of social maladjustment. The classes / activities are designed so as to improve the functioning of pupils or students and enhance their participation in the life of their nursery school or school and / or in the family and social

environment. The programme is revised and adjusted, where necessary, on the basis of a periodic multi-faceted specialist **assessment** of the pupil's or student's functioning.

Rehabilitation classes for pupils or students with disabilities include therapy and rehabilitation activities. They may be conducted for a group or on an individual basis, depending on the pupils' or students' needs. The duration of such classes / activities in preschool institutions should be adjusted to individual needs. Where the new national outline timetables have been put in place as part of the school reform, the **minimum duration** of rehabilitation classes / activities in mainstream and integration classes of mainstream schools is **2 clock hours a week per pupil / student** at all education levels. Based on the pre-reform outline timetables which are still in place in some schools or grades, the minimum number of class hours to be allocated to rehabilitation classes is:

-
- » 190 hours per student in the 3-year education cycle in lower secondary schools and basic vocational schools;
 - » 180 hours per student in the 3-year education cycle in general upper secondary schools;
 - » 240 hours per student in the 4-year education cycle in technical upper secondary schools.
-

SPECIAL NURSERY SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLS

Education provided to all three groups of pupils and students with an education for children and youth with special needs certificate, except for those with a moderate or severe intellectual disability, in special nursery schools and special schools is based on **the same national core curricula as in mainstream settings**. Thus, in general, they attend the same compulsory classes as their peers without disabilities. There are, however, some **exceptions**: for example, students with a mild intellectual disability in lower secondary schools are not required to – but may – learn a second modern foreign language; and pupils or students do not take physical education or IT classes where such a decision is made by the head of the school based on a medical certificate of unfitness. Like in mainstream schools, pupils or students with a moderate or severe intellectual disability follow **separate core curricula and outline timetables**, and those who are unable to attend a nursery school or school follow an **individualised home schooling programme**.

As in mainstream schools, each pupil or student in a special nursery school or school has an **individual education and therapy programme** which specifies,

among other things, any special classes to be taken, including rehabilitation classes / activities.

The number of hours for rehabilitation classes in special nursery schools should be determined by children’s individual needs. The **minimum number of rehabilitation class hours for pupils or students with disabilities, except those with a moderate or severe intellectual disability**, in special schools is as follows:

Number of class hours for rehabilitation classes a week per class in a special school	
Based on the pre-reform outline timetables for schools to be abolished or transformed	Based on new outline timetables for new types of schools
12 hours in the 6-year primary school and 3-year lower secondary school	12 hours in the primary school
10 hours in the 3-year general upper secondary school	12 hours in the 4-year general secondary school
8 hours in the 4-year technical upper secondary school	8 hours in the 5-year technical secondary school
10 hours in the 3-year basic vocational school	10 hours in the stage I sectoral vocational school
	8 hours in the stage II sectoral vocational school

See the outline timetables below for the minimum duration of rehabilitation classes in special primary schools for pupils with a moderate or severe intellectual disability and special schools preparing for employment for students with a moderate or severe intellectual disability and with multiple disabilities.

Based on the separate core curricula, new outline timetables have been established for **special primary schools** for pupils with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities and **special schools preparing for employment** for students with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities or multiple disabilities.

Special primary school for pupils with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities. Outline timetable: number of class hours per week (implemented from the school year 2017/2018)

No.	Compulsory classes	Number of class hours per week by grade								Total in the 8-year cycle
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	
1	Personal care and functioning	4	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	46
2	Classes developing communication skills	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	18
3	Classes developing creativity	10	10	10	12	13	13	14	14	96
4	Physical Education	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	29
Total		19	20	20	24	25	25	27	27	187

5 class hours per week to be allocated by the school head; min. 10 hours for rehabilitation classes per class in each grade. The number of hours for Religion / Ethics and classes as part of psychological and educational support is specified in separate regulations. A number of hours may be available for additional education activities and sign language classes if allocated by the body administering the school.

Special school preparing for employment for pupils with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities and multiple disabilities. Outline timetable: number of class hours per week (implemented from the school year 2017/2018)

No.	Compulsory classes	Number of class hours per week by grade			Total in the 3-year cycle
		I	II	III	
1	Personal and social functioning classes	6	6	5	17
2	Classes developing communication skills	2	2	2	6
3	Classes developing creativity	4	4	4	12
4	Training for employment	18	19	20	57
5	Physical Education	3	3	3	9
Total		33	34	34	101

3 class hours per week to be allocated by the school head; min. 10 class hours for rehabilitation classes per class in each grade. The number of hours for Religion / Ethics and classes as part of psychological and educational support is specified in separate regulations. A number of hours

may be available for additional education activities and sign language classes if allocated by the body administering the school.

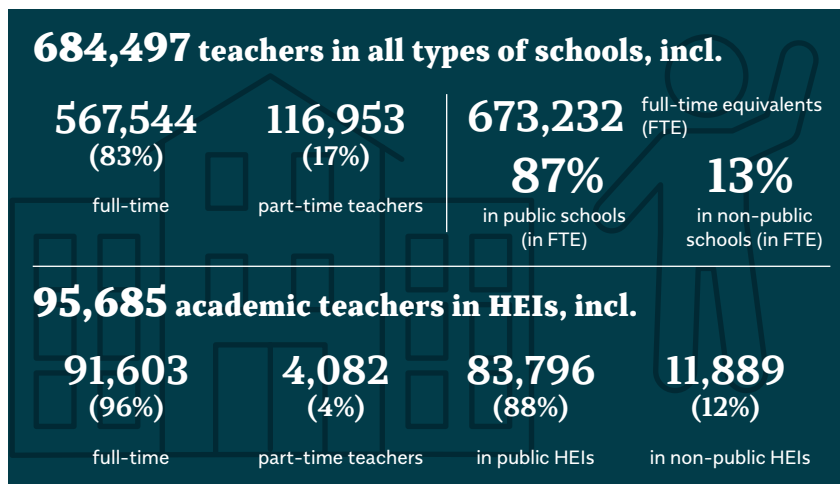
10.3. Assessment and Certification

Overall, the rules for **internal and external assessment** of pupils and students in education for children and youth with special needs are the same as for their peers without disabilities (see Sections 3.6, 4.6, 5.1.6, 5.2.6, 5.3.6 and 6.6). However, assessment is descriptive for pupils and students with a moderate or severe intellectual disability, and for students with multiple disabilities in special schools preparing for employment. Pupils and students with multiple disabilities may be exempt, and those with a moderate or severe intellectual disability are exempt, from taking compulsory external exams. For other pupils and students, where necessary, special arrangements may be put in place for external exams: for example, separate examination sheets suitable for a given type of disability, extended duration of an exam, specialised equipment and aids, assistance from a teacher during the exam, or rules for assessing exercises amended according to the abilities of the exam taker.

Regardless of the setting, all pupils and students in education for children and youth with special needs, except those with a moderate or severe intellectual disability, receive the same types of **school certificates** and **external exam documents** as in mainstream education. Regardless of the type of school, end-of-year and school leaving certificates for pupils and students with a moderate or severe disability are issued in a special format and include descriptive assessment. Students finishing a special school preparing for employment receive a certificate confirming preparation for work.

11. Teachers

The national legislation makes a distinction between teachers working in the school education system, which comprises early childhood and school education and adult education provided in school settings and other educational institutions, and academic teachers, i.e. those working in the higher education system. Separate regulations and different arrangements are in place for school education teachers and academic teachers.



11.1. School Education Teachers

11.1.1. Initial Training, Required Qualifications and In-Service Training

INITIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Currently, initial teacher training is provided only by higher education institutions (HEIs). Until 2016, prospective early childhood and school education teachers were also trained in teacher training colleges and foreign language teacher training colleges, referred to as initial teacher training institutions and classified as post-secondary non-tertiary institutions in the national legislation.

Initial teacher training comprises compulsory subject-specific training and training in psychology, pedagogy and teaching methodology. Two models of initial training exist side by side:

- » the **concurrent model**, which is the predominating one: students following a degree programme in a given field of study may choose a teacher specialisation track; in this way, they complete professional teacher training, and acquire a teaching qualification, as part of their degree programme, parallel to their subject-specific training;
- » the **consecutive model**, available to those who have not taken a teacher specialisation track as part of a degree programme in a given field of study and choose the teaching profession later; they may obtain a teaching qualification upon completion of a non-degree postgraduate programme or a qualification course.

HEIs provide the following types of programmes:

- » **degree programmes**, including first-cycle programmes leading to a Bachelor's degree (*licencjat* or *inżynier*) or an equivalent degree, and second- and long-cycle programmes, both leading to a Master's (*magister*) or equivalent degree;
- » **non-degree postgraduate programmes** leading to a certificate of completion of a non-degree postgraduate programme.

For information about the types of higher education programmes and related admission criteria, see Section 8 **Non-degree postgraduate programmes** may be taken by those who hold at least a Bachelor's degree and intend to:

- » acquire a teaching qualification by completing initial teacher training, while already holding a degree in a given subject area; or
- » acquire a qualification to teach another subject, while already being qualified teachers; or
- » complete training in education for students with special needs, while already being fully qualified teachers.

Qualification courses, as an alternative to non-degree postgraduate programmes in the consecutive model, are offered by accredited in-service teacher training institutions.

National standards are in place for initial teacher training as part of both degree programmes and non-degree postgraduate programmes. They specify learning outcomes, the duration of modules together, where appropriate, with the number of ECTS credits, and the aims of and general arrangements for internships. The modules cover subject-specific courses for the teaching of a first subject or type of classes, psychology and pedagogy courses, teaching courses, training for the teaching of an additional subject or type of classes, and an education for students with special needs course. Internships should be undertaken mainly in parallel with regular classes and comprise the following activities: visits to educational institutions, class observation, assisting in conducting and teaching classes, and planning and discussing classes taught by other teachers and students. There are also similar national outline programmes for qualification courses offered by in-service teacher training institutions.

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR ENTRY TO THE PROFESSION

Teachers are required to hold a **qualification** (degree) **at a relevant level**, and a **teaching qualification** confirming completion of initial teacher training (a diploma or certificate awarded by an HEI, a diploma from an initial teacher training institution, or a certificate of completion of a qualification course awarded by an in-service teacher training institution). Teachers working in special nursery schools and schools and integration schools are required to hold a qualification at a relevant level and a qualification corresponding to a given type of disability.

The level of the qualification required depends on the level of education at which teachers intend to teach. Starting from the school year 2017/2018, teachers in **preschool institutions and primary schools** are required to hold at least a **Bachelor's degree** or a diploma from an initial teacher training institution. A **Master's degree** is required at all higher levels of education. At present, teachers who hold a Bachelor's or Master's degree represent 98% of all teachers working in the school education system.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

In-service teacher training or continuing professional development (CPD) is not obligatory. However, pursuant to the legislation, teachers should continuously expand their knowledge and skills, and the professional promotion procedure (see below) includes an assessment of the teacher's professional achievements, based on the implementation of an agreed professional development plan.

There are **two strands** of CPD activities:

-
- » further training: programmes and courses where teachers may gain higher-level or additional formal qualifications;
 - » in-service training: various activities which improve teachers' working methods (for example, a teaching methodology or ICT course) as part of the formal qualifications already held.
-

Further training is provided by HEIs as part-time degree programmes and as non-degree postgraduate programmes. Teachers choose the field of study or specialism depending on the level of qualifications already held and their individual needs. **In-service training** opportunities are offered mainly by in-service teacher training institutions, though teachers may also choose a non-degree postgraduate programme or another course in an HEI.

11.1.2. Conditions of Service

EMPLOYMENT

Graduates who hold a degree and a teaching qualification are recognised as fully qualified teachers within the field or specialism of the degree programme completed. Teachers are employed by the head of a nursery school or school through an **open recruitment procedure**. Entrants to the teaching profession are awarded the position of trainee teacher on the date of entering into an employment relationship with a nursery school or school.

There are **four professional promotion steps** for teachers:

-
- » trainee teacher,
 - » contract teacher,
 - » appointed teacher,
 - » chartered teacher,
-

and the honorary title of school education professor awarded to outstanding chartered teachers.

Teachers are employed on the basis of an **employment contract** or so-called **appointment** which is a kind of tenure ensuring greater legal protection. The employment relationship with trainee and contract teachers may be based only on an employment contract. Trainee teachers have a contract for 21 months

which requires the completion of a probation period before the promotion to the contract teacher position. A contract with a contract teacher is signed for an indefinite period. Appointed and chartered teachers employed on the basis of appointment are not covered by the legislation on civil service. All teachers, in performing their duties, are entitled to legal protection provided for police officers and civil servants; the body managing a nursery school or school is obliged to defend the teacher when their rights are infringed.

Teachers may **retire** in accordance with the general legislation on retirement, i.e. at the age of 60 for women and 65 for men. However, they can remain in service after reaching legal retirement age. Teachers with a period of service of 30 years, including 20 years in a special-status position (a teacher, educator, tutor or inspector), are entitled to a retirement pension or a pension for the disabled after the termination of their employment relationship at their request.

WORKING TIME

Teachers' working time comprises the total working time, i.e. the teaching time or teaching load, which are regulated by the national legislation, and the time for availability at school. The total working time may not exceed **40 clock hours per week**, spread over 5 working days. The compulsory **teaching load** includes the time for teaching classes and other educational and / or care-related activities in direct contact with pupils or students. It varies from **18 to 30 contact or class hours** (45 minutes each) **per week**, depending on the education level, the type of institution and the type of classes or activities. For example, it is 18 hours for teachers in special nursery schools, and in primary and general upper secondary schools and corresponding special schools, as well as for teachers of theoretical subjects in vocational upper secondary schools; 22 hours for nursery school teachers working with 6-year-olds, and for practical vocational training teachers in all types of schools; and 25 hours for nursery school teachers (except those working with 6-year-olds).

Teachers with 18 contact hours per week may have their weekly teaching load increased to 27 contact hours. The weekly teaching load of **18 hours** provides the basis for a **full-time teacher's salary**. Teachers receive **overtime pay** for hours extending beyond the 18-hour weekly teaching load.

Teachers are entitled to **paid holiday leave** during school holidays and public holidays. **Other types of leave** available include: paid health leave of up to 1 year for teachers who have a medical certificate and worked in school for at least 7 years, paid maternity leave of 20 weeks, paid parental leave of 32

weeks, and paid training leave (together with other related benefits) for full-time teachers. Training leave and related benefits are granted to teachers to attend compulsory classes and prepare for exams (normally 21 days) and write a Master's thesis (normally 21 days). Additionally, teachers may be granted paid or unpaid leave for research, artistic or educational activities, and unpaid leave for other important reasons.

SALARIES

The salary of a teacher consists of the **basic pay**, a number of **allowances**, including length-of-service, motivation, function-related and conditions-of-service allowances, and the pay for overtime hours and ad-hoc replacement hours, as well as awards and other benefits as provided for in the employment relationship. Additionally, the legislation has recently introduced an **allowance for outstanding work**, available to **chartered teachers** who have at least 5 years of work experience and whose performance has been assessed as outstanding. This allowance is equal to 16% of the reference amount set for such teachers' basic pay. The level of the **basic salary** depends on the teacher's professional promotion position, qualifications and teaching load. The level of allowances depends on the length of service, the quality of teaching, additional tasks, position held and difficult or hazardous working conditions.

The average salary of teachers should be equal to the following percentages of the reference amount set annually for public sector employees: 100% for a trainee teacher; 111% for a contract teacher; 144% for an appointed teacher; and 184% for a chartered teacher.

AUTONOMY IN TEACHING

Within the overall framework set by the national core curricula, teachers are free to develop **curricula** and **syllabuses**, individually or in collaboration with colleagues, or choose one from among those developed by other authors (for example, those available on the market) and adapt it where necessary. A curriculum should be approved by the head of a (nursery) school upon consultation with the teaching council (for governing and other bodies at an institutional level, see Section 2.2).

In implementing curricula, teachers may choose **textbooks** from a list approved by the Minister of National Education or choose to use other educational resources or exercise materials instead of textbooks (for example, contents downloaded from the Internet, copied or created by the teacher such as slide shows, presentations, notes, excerpts from literature, etc.). Teachers also have the statutory right to choose **teaching and learning methods**, though,

in practice, these are predetermined by the size of the class, and available facilities and resources (for example, the number of computers).

11.1.3. Assessment and Promotion

The legislation which is still in force **until the end of the school year 2017/2018** makes a distinction between teacher performance **assessment**, which is an element of internal quality assurance, and assessment of the teacher's professional achievements, which is related to professional promotion. In both cases, assessment is conducted by the head of a (nursery) school who consults other internal bodies on a mandatory or optional basis as stipulated by the law. Teachers dissatisfied with the outcome of an assessment may lodge an appeal to the head of the regional education authorities. The period between two assessments may not be shorter than one year.

-
- » **Teacher performance assessment** is mandatory for all teachers, except trainee teachers as they apply for promotion to the second professional position at the end of their first school year and, thus, undergo an assessment of professional achievements. It focuses on the extent to which teachers have fulfilled their education- and care-related and other statutory tasks. It ends with one of three descriptive marks or grades: outstanding, positive or negative.
 - » The **assessment of professional achievements** is carried out only when the teacher applies for promotion to a higher professional position and takes place at the end of a so-called probation period, i.e. the period of work preceding the promotion process. The process assesses the extent to which the teacher has implemented an agreed professional development plan and leads to a positive or negative outcome. If a 'negative' grade is given after an appeal, where lodged, the employment relationship with the teacher concerned is terminated.

The **new legislation**, which will be in force **from the school year 2018/2019**, integrates the two types of assessment into **performance appraisal**. It will be obligatorily conducted:

-
- » at the end of the probation period leading to promotion to the contract, appointed or chartered teacher position;
 - » at the end of an additional probation period (for teachers who failed in the previous promotion process and are required to complete another probation period);

- » every 3 years of work in the (nursery) school, counted from the date of award of the contract, appointed or chartered teacher position (or after the end of a probation period where appraisal would otherwise be scheduled during the probation period).

Performance appraisal will be carried out by the (nursery) school head who consults other (nursery) school bodies on a mandatory or optional basis, as stipulated in the legislation. It may end with one of four descriptive outcomes: outstanding, very good, good or negative. Teachers may appeal against a negative outcome to the head of the regional education authorities; where the final outcome is negative, the employment relationship with the teacher will be terminated.

Teachers holding the required qualifications are **promoted to the next professional position** when they have fulfilled the following conditions:

	Until the end of 2017/2018	Starting from 2018/2019
Promotion	For all: completion of a probation period and a positive assessment of professional achievements during the probation period	For all: completion of a probation period and the grade of at least 'good' received in teacher appraisal
Trainee teacher to contract teacher	Application for promotion approved by a qualifying board after an interview	Passing an exam conducted by an examination board
Contract teacher to appointed teacher	Passing an exam conducted by an examination board	Passing an exam conducted by an examination board
Appointed teacher to chartered teacher	Application approved by a qualifying board after an assessment of professional achievements and an interview	Application approved by a qualifying board after an assessment of professional achievements and an interview

11.2. Academic Teachers

Academic staff are divided in the national legislation into research-and-teaching staff, research staff, teaching staff, and qualified librarians and qualified scientific documentation and information staff. Only **research-and-teaching staff** and **teaching staff** are statutorily required to teach students.

11.2.1. Initial Training, Required Qualifications and In-Service Training

Unlike for school education teachers, **no initial training requirements** or paths are specified in the legislation for academic staff and **no teaching qualification** is required to become an academic teacher. Initial training paths for prospective academic teachers are determined by **qualification requirements** laid down by law for **individual positions** within the categories of academic staff mentioned above.

Position	Qualification required
RESEARCH-AND-TEACHING STAFF	
» Full Professor	» Title of professor
» Associate Professor	» Title of professor or a postdoctoral degree
» Visiting Professor	» Title of professor or a postdoctoral degree
» Assistant Professor	» At least a doctoral degree
» Assistant	» At least a Master's degree or equivalent
TEACHING STAFF	
» Senior Lecturer] A Master's degree or an equivalent degree
» Lecturer	
» Foreign Language Teacher and	
Instructor	

Pursuant to the legislation, the position of Associate Professor or Visiting Professor may also be taken by an academic with a doctoral degree obtained in Poland or abroad who has led research teams in another country for at least five years and has significant research achievements. The statutes of an HEI may set additional criteria for research-and-teaching and / or teaching staff.

Only **teaching staff** are explicitly required by law to upgrade their professional skills. HEIs lay down detailed arrangements for **continuing professional development** of staff in their internal regulations.

11.2.2. Conditions of Service

Academic teachers in public HEIs are recruited through an **open competition procedure** in case their working time exceeds 50% of the statutory working

time. Competition procedures are set out in internal regulations of an HEI. Recruitment arrangements in non-public HEIs are laid down in their internal regulations.

Like school education teachers, academic teachers are employed on the basis of either an **employment contract**, concluded for a definite or indefinite period, or an **appointment**. The latter is a kind of tenure providing greater legal protection, available only to academic teachers who hold the title of professor and are employed in a given HEI on a full-time basis.

The **working time** of academic teachers in a public HEI is determined by their teaching, research and organisational duties. The types of teaching activities counted towards the teaching load are specified by the Senate of an HEI, and detailed job descriptions and the corresponding load for a teacher is determined by the head of a basic organisational unit. Pursuant to the national legislation, the **annual teaching load** ranges:

- » between 120 and 240 hours for research-and-teaching staff;
- » between 240 and 360 hours for teaching staff, except for language teachers and instructors;
- » between 300 and 540 hours for language teachers, instructors and equivalent positions.

A non-public HEI may define a different teaching load for its academic staff.

Academic teachers are entitled to **holiday leave** of 36 working days per year. The holiday entitlement of a part-time teacher is reduced proportionally to the mode of employment. A teacher preparing a doctoral dissertation is entitled to paid **sabbatical leave** of up to 3 months. With the Rector's consent, teachers may take unpaid sabbatical leave. Those who hold at least a doctoral degree may be granted, every 7 years, a paid sabbatical leave of up to 1 year for conducting research outside their home HEI. Full-time teachers who have worked for at least 5 years and have a medical certificate are entitled to paid health leave (for up to 1 year in total during the entire employment period).

Aside from special **retirement** arrangements for academic staff born before 31 December 1948, teachers may retire in accordance with the general rules laid down in legislation, i.e. at the age of 60 for women and at the age of 65 for men, but they normally work longer. A teacher who is entitled to retire may be re-employed to take the same position in a given HEI without a competition procedure.

The **salary** of an academic teacher in a **public HEI** consists of the basic pay, determined by the position held, and **allowances**, including a function-related allowance, a length-of-service allowance, and special allowances (for an extended range of responsibilities, additional tasks, conditions of work, etc.). Teachers receive **additional payment** for assignments such as participation in a student admissions board, supervision of student practical placements, supervision and reviews in the process leading to the award of a doctoral or postdoctoral degree or a professorial title, etc. The **minimum monthly rates** of the basic pay, allowances, overtime pay and bonuses are laid down in the national legislation.

Remuneration arrangements for academic teachers in **non-public HEIs** are laid down in their internal regulations. The level of the salary is normally negotiated between individual teachers and the founder of an HEI or a body specified in its internal regulations.

11.2.3. Assessment and Promotion

Pursuant to the legislation, **performance appraisal** should be carried out by a body specified in the statutes of an HEI at least every four years and, where appropriate, at the request of the head of the unit where the teacher works. It covers, in particular, the performance of statutory duties, including teaching duties, and the observance of intellectual and industrial property rights by the teacher. It should take into consideration student course evaluation. The Rector may terminate the employment relationship with an appointed teacher after one assessment ending with a negative outcome and terminates the employment relationship with a teacher who has received two consecutive negative assessments. Detailed assessment procedures and criteria are laid down in the statutes of an HEI.

A distinction is made in an **academic career** between degrees / titles (a Master's degree, doctoral and postdoctoral degrees and the title of professor) and positions (see above). Teachers holding or acquiring the required degree or title may be promoted to a higher position. The national legislation lays down the requirements for the award of degrees / titles and, as explained above, the minimum level of qualifications required for each position. Detailed criteria for promotion to individual positions are set by individual HEIs in their internal regulations.

12. Quality Assurance

12.1. School Education

Uniform quality assurance arrangements are in place for the entire school education system. External and internal quality assurance is primarily part of the **pedagogical supervision system**, which covers both public and non-public institutions, including nursery schools and alternative preschool settings, schools and other educational institutions. The system consists of four elements: evaluation, legal compliance auditing, support and monitoring. **Evaluation** of institutions, geared towards quality improvement, is the main quality assurance mechanism. Legal compliance audits or inspections aim to check whether the activities of institutions comply with legislation. Support covers various activities, for example staff training, aimed at improving institutional performance. As part of monitoring, information is collected and analysed to ensure that institutions carry out their tasks properly.

External pedagogical supervision is the responsibility of the **Minister of National Education** and other competent ministers, and of the **Heads of the Regional Education Authorities** (REA) (see also Section 2.2.), with external evaluations of institutions conducted by REA inspectors. **Internal pedagogical supervision** is exercised by the **head of the institution** (nursery school, school or another institution) in cooperation with other management staff, and with teachers also involved in internal evaluations.

The other two elements which can be considered part of quality assurance are teacher performance appraisal and external examinations taken by pupils and students. For further details, see Sections 11.1.3 (Teachers) and 4.6, 5.1.6, 5.2.6 and 5.3.6 (External Exams in School Education).

EVALUATION

External evaluation

External evaluations are conducted according to the national education policy priorities and a **pedagogical supervision plan** established annually by the Minister of National Education, and detailed plans prepared on this basis by the Heads of REAs. While the legislation does not specify the frequency of external evaluations, they are obligatorily carried out every school year, but their scope and the proportion of schools concerned vary between years.

Evaluations are conducted against **requirements** set in the legislation (see the table below), each with a more detailed description of issues to be addressed. In terms of scope, a distinction is made between overall evaluation, which covers all of those requirements, and **problem-specific** evaluation, which focuses on selected ones. Annual pedagogical supervision plans adopted by the Minister and Heads of REAs address both overall and problem-specific evaluations.

As a result of an evaluation, underperforming institutions are required to put in place a **programme improving the effectiveness of education**. Where the programme does not take into consideration evaluation findings or is not implemented within the set timeframe, the Head of the REA submits a motion to dismiss the head of the institution to its managing body which motion is binding for the latter. This may provide the basis for striking a non-public institution from the register of non-public institutions.

Internal evaluation

Internal evaluation is conducted in accordance with an annual pedagogical supervision plan, developed by the head of the institution and presented to its teaching council. It is undertaken every year on a mandatory basis, but its scope may vary depending on the needs of a given institution.

The legislation does not predefine the scope or procedure of internal evaluations. Evaluations should focus on **issues** which are **considered relevant** to the activities of a given institution. The only **tool** referred to in the legislation is observation. In practice, observation may cover both classes and other activities such as teachers' meetings with parents.

Results of internal evaluation are taken into consideration in external evaluation.

External evaluation in the school education system		
Requirements (criteria) for institutions		
No.	Nursery schools	Schools and other institutions
1	Processes supporting the development and education of children are organised so as to enhance learning.	Educational processes are organised so as to enhance learning.
2	Children acquire knowledge and skills defined in the national core curriculum.	Pupils / students acquire knowledge and skills defined in the national core curriculum.

3	Children are active.	Pupils / students are active.
4	The nursery school shapes social attitudes and respects social norms.	The school / institution shapes social attitudes and respects social norms.
5	The nursery school supports pupils' development, taking into consideration their individual circumstances.	The school / institution supports pupils' / students' development, taking into consideration their individual circumstances.
6	Parents are partners of the nursery school.	Parents are partners of the school / institution.
7	The nursery school collaborates with the local community for mutual development.	The school / institution collaborates with the local community for mutual development.
8	In planning its work, the nursery school takes into consideration findings from analyses of external and internal evaluations.	In organising its educational processes, the school / institution takes into consideration findings from analyses of results achieved in external exams and from other external and internal evaluations.
9	The management of the nursery school is geared towards its development.	The management of the school / institution is geared towards its development.

12.2. Higher Education

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

External quality assurance comprises the following processes:

- » **initial institutional accreditation:** assessment of applications for, and the granting of, permits or licences to establish **non-public higher education institutions**;
- » **initial programme accreditation:** assessment of applications for, and the granting of, authorisations to establish and provide programmes in any field of study, as well as additional accreditation of new programmes in the fields of nursing and midwifery;
- » **periodic programme accreditation:** accreditation of programmes in all fields of study and, additionally, of programmes in the fields of nursing and midwifery.

Initial institutional accreditation is **mandatory** for non-public higher education institutions (HEIs) to operate. Initial programme accreditation is required for both public and non-public HEIs to provide a programme in any field in cases extending beyond their **curricular autonomy** (see Section 8.4, Higher Education, Curriculum), and for all new programmes in the fields of **nursing and midwifery**. Periodic programme accreditation is mandatory for **all programmes** in all public and non-public HEIs and additional field-specific accreditation for programmes in nursing and midwifery. Initial and periodic programme accreditation covers only **first-, second- and long-cycle programmes**. There are no national arrangements for accreditation of third-cycle programmes.

The responsibility for initial institutional accreditation and initial and periodic accreditation of programmes in all fields of study is shared between the **Minister of Science and Higher Education** and the **Polish Accreditation Committee (PAC)**. The Minister grants and withdraws operating permits for non-public HEIs as well as grants, suspends, re-grants and withdraws authorisations for HEIs to provide programmes as part of initial accreditation. PAC conducts evaluations as part of initial institutional and programme accreditation which provide the basis for the Minister's decisions, and conducts periodic programme evaluations and takes related accreditation decisions. Initial and periodic accreditation of nursing and midwifery programmes involves the **Minister of Health**, who grants and withdraws accreditation, and the **National Accreditation Council for Schools of Nursing and Midwifery (NACSN&M)**, which conducts evaluations as part of the accreditation process.

PAC is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and is included in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

Initial institutional and programme accreditation

Evaluations as part of initial institutional and programme accreditation are usually **combined** as non-public HEIs to be established also apply for an authorisation to provide (a) programme(s). Thus, the criteria used by PAC cover programmes, organisational arrangements and facilities. The Minister of Science and Higher Education grants or refuses an operating permit and / or an authorisation to provide a programme. For programmes in the fields of medicine, dentistry and pharmacy, the Minister also obligatorily consults the Minister of Health as these are programmes for regulated professions (see also Section 7.4, Higher Education, Curriculum). An operating permit is granted for an **indefinite period**. All newly accredited programmes are **subject to periodic accreditation** as scheduled by PAC.

The NACSN&M assesses the extent to which new programmes in the fields of **nursing and midwifery** and the organisational units of HEIs which intend to establish them comply with the national standards laid down by legislation (see also Section 8.4). Evaluation is based on the same criteria as for periodic programme accreditation (see below). Where granted by the Minister of Health, accreditation is valid for 3 or 5 years, depending on evaluation findings.

Periodic programme accreditation

All programmes

Programmes are evaluated by PAC against eight **criteria**, reflecting, where appropriate, the specificity of academically- and practically-oriented programmes.

Periodic programme evaluation criteria	
Academically-oriented programmes	Practically-oriented programmes
<p>1. Concept of education and its coherence with the mission and strategy of the HEI (concept of education; research related to the programme concerned; learning outcomes)</p>	<p>1. Concept of education and its coherence with the mission and strategy of the HEI (concept of education; development work in relevant areas; learning outcomes)</p>
<p>2. Curriculum and potential for achieving intended learning outcomes (contents; teaching and learning methods; effectiveness in achieving intended learning outcomes; student admission, progression and graduation; recognition and validation of learning outcomes)</p>	<p>2. Curriculum and potential for achieving intended learning outcomes (contents; teaching and learning methods; effectiveness in achieving intended learning outcomes; student admission, progression and graduation; recognition and validation of learning outcomes)</p>
<p>3. Effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system (programme design, approval, monitoring and review; public access to information)</p>	<p>3. Effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system (programme design, approval, monitoring and review; public access to information)</p>
<p>4. Staff involved in teaching (number, research achievements and teaching competence; course assignment; staff development)</p>	<p>4. Staff involved in teaching (number, research achievements, professional experience gained outside higher education and teaching competence; course assignment; staff development)</p>
<p>5. Collaboration with the socio-economic environment in the education process</p>	<p>5. Collaboration with the socio-economic environment in the education process</p>

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>6. Internationalisation of the education process</p> | <p>6. Internationalisation of the education process</p> |
| <p>7. Infrastructure used in the education process (teaching / learning and research facilities; library, information and teaching / learning resources; infrastructure development)</p> | <p>7. Infrastructure used in the education process (teaching / learning facilities and practical training facilities; library, information and teaching / learning resources; infrastructure development)</p> |
| <p>8. Student services and support in the process of learning and achieving learning outcomes (effectiveness of services and support; incentives for students to achieve learning outcomes; development and improvement of the support and incentive system)</p> | <p>8. Student services and support in the process of learning and achieving learning outcomes (effectiveness of services and support; incentives for students to achieve learning outcomes; development and improvement of the support and incentive system)</p> |

The **frequency** of evaluations depends on the outcome of the previous evaluation. PAC gives four **quality ratings**: outstanding, positive, conditional and negative. Unless there are circumstances justifying an earlier evaluation, a programme is re-evaluated after **8 years** in the case of a previous outstanding rating and after **6 years** in the case of a previous positive rating. Where a programme has received a conditional rating, PAC defines the timeframe for a follow-up evaluation on an individual basis (usually one year). Programmes which have received one of these ratings are automatically considered accredited. Where an evaluation ends with a **negative outcome**, the Minister of Science and Higher Education may **suspend** or **withdraw** the authorisation to provide a given programme.

Programmes in the fields of nursing and midwifery

Evaluations are conducted every **3 or 5 years**, depending on the validity period of the previous accreditation decision. They are based on four blocks of **criteria**, integrating the national standards, which concern curricula, teaching staff, learning and teaching facilities, and internal quality assurance. Accreditation for a period longer than 3 years is awarded to units which comply with several additional criteria in each of the four blocks (e.g. a modular structure of the programme and provisions for international cooperation).

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

The legislation requires that HEIs have in place a quality assurance system and regularly evaluate and improve the quality of education, with special regard to the needs of the socio-economic environment and the monitoring of graduate careers. It also lays down general rules for teacher appraisal (see Section 11.2.3, Academic Teachers, Assessment and Promotion). Detailed arrangements are

adopted by individual HEIs in their internal regulations. Internal quality assurance is one of the elements addressed in external evaluation / accreditation.

12.3. Adult Education

Adult education is provided, as explained earlier, both by schools for adults and institutions training adults in non-school settings which are part of the school education system and are subject to the school education legislation, and by entities operating outside the school education system on the basis of the legislation concerning economic activity. The arrangements in place are different for the two 'sub-sectors'.

INSTITUTIONS WITHIN THE SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM

External and internal quality assurance arrangements for schools for adults and other institutions within the school education system are the same as those for **school education for young people** (see above).

Additionally, institutions providing adult education in **non-school settings** (for example, continuing education or practical training centres) may **voluntarily** apply for **accreditation** granted by the Head of the REA. Accreditation may be granted to an institution which meets predefined requirements or criteria concerning qualified staff, methodological and teaching or training materials, and adequate facilities. Evaluation is carried out by a panel appointed by the Head of the REA which includes REA inspectors and representatives of relevant external institutions or organisations. A decision granting or refusing accreditation is made by the Head of the REA, who takes into consideration the evaluation report and findings from pedagogical supervision (see the information on school education above). Accreditation may be withdrawn where a provider no longer fulfils the requirements and does not eliminate shortcomings when instructed to do so by the Head of the REA.

INSTITUTIONS OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM

There are no quality assurance requirements for institutions providing adult education in non-school settings outside the school education system as part of economic activity. However, like institutions within the school education system, they may apply on a **voluntary** basis for **accreditation** granted by the Head of the REA. All the arrangements are the same except that in making an accreditation decision, the Head of the REA does not take into consideration findings from pedagogical supervision as no such supervision is exercised over institutions outside the school education system.

13. Practical Information for International Learners and Education Staff

13.1. Access to Education

Conditions of access for non-Polish nationals vary depending on the level of education, the country of origin and specific status granted to individuals. Pursuant to the national legislation, foreign national children and young people, regardless of their nationality, have access to **preschool education** and **compulsory education** in public institutions under the same conditions as Polish nationals, except for the age limit for those in part-time compulsory education (see below).

Preschool education and school education

for all foreign nationals under the same conditions as for Polish nationals:

- » preschool education in public preschool institutions and primary schools, and non-public preschool institutions and primary schools which have been granted a State-budget subsidy
- » education in public primary schools for children of full-time compulsory education age
- » education in public post-primary schools for young people of part-time compulsory age until they reach the age of 18 or finish the school.

For **higher education** and **adult education** provided within the school education system, the legislation specifies groups who have the same rights as Polish nationals. In both sectors, they include, in particular, nationals of EU Member States, member states of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) which are signatories to the European Economic Area (EEA) agreement (Iceland,

Liechtenstein and Norway) and of the Swiss Confederation; individuals who have been granted a permanent residence permit or long-term EU-resident permit, or specific status or rights, for example, refugee status or temporary or subsidiary protection. Additionally, where an international agreement stipulates so, foreign nationals may attend public schools for adults, post-secondary schools, colleges of social work and other public institutions and take vocational qualification courses under the same conditions as Polish nationals.

Other foreign nationals may follow **higher education** programmes on the basis of international agreements or agreements between Polish higher education institutions (HEIs) and international institutions, a decision of the Minister of Science and Higher Education or another competent minister, or a decision of the Rector of an HEI. They may do so:

-
- » as holders of a Polish Government **scholarship**; a scholarship from the sending institution, with no tuition fees charged by a Polish HEI; or a scholarship from a Polish HEI;
 - » on a **fee-free basis** but with no entitlement to financial support available to Polish students;
 - » on a **fee-paying basis**.
-

Where **adult learners** do not have the same rights as Polish nationals, they may attend the types of public schools and institutions for adults mentioned above and take vocational qualification courses:

-
- » as holders of a **scholarship** awarded by the Minister of National Education, the body managing a school or educational institution, or by the head of a school or institution;
 - » on a **fee-paying basis**.
-

Where tuition and / or other fees are charged, the level of fees is determined, and fees may be fully or partially waived, by the body managing a given school or educational institution, or by a given HEI.

13.2. Learning Support and Other Services

All pupils and students in preschool and school education are entitled to learning support when they need it. In addition to what is available to all, the

school education system offers some specific support and services to foreign national children and young people of compulsory education age (and to Polish national children who attended a school abroad). Depending on their needs, they may:

- » attend a preparatory class;
- » take an additional Polish language course;
- » take additional or remedial classes covering the subjects taught;
- » take external exams in a form adapted to their specific needs and abilities;
- » follow a course in the language and culture of their country of origin.

A school may establish a **preparatory class** for pupils or students in compulsory education who have no knowledge or insufficient knowledge of the Polish language to follow a mainstream education programme; have language communication problems resulting, in particular, from crisis or traumatic situations (for example, armed conflicts or disasters); and / or have adaptation difficulties resulting from cultural differences or a change of the learning environment. Teaching is based on the curricula implemented in a given school and grade, but methods are adjusted to individual needs to enhance the effectiveness of the learning process. Teachers may be supported by an assistant speaking the language of the learner's country of origin. Legislation specifies the minimum number of hours to be allocated per week to compulsory classes in each grade (from 20 class hours in grades I to III of the primary school to 26 hours in schools above the lower secondary level in the pre-reform system or post-primary schools in the new system); this includes 3 hours per week for the Polish language.

Where they have no or insufficient knowledge of the Polish language to follow a mainstream programme, pupils and students in compulsory education are entitled to take a fee-free **Polish language course**. Classes are conducted on an individual basis or in a group. The number of hours should be adjusted to the needs of learners, but it may not be lower than 2 class hours per week.

Additional or remedial classes for subjects included in the curriculum may be taken by pupils or students who need to fill in gaps in knowledge resulting from curricular differences. Classes are conducted as additional lessons in a given school subject, on an individual basis or in a group, with 1 class hour per week, for a period of up to 12 months.

Like Polish nationals, foreign national pupils and students take **external exams**. Where their knowledge of the Polish language, culture and traditions is

insufficient, and they have attended a Polish school for a short time, they may use adapted examination sheets and aids such as bilingual dictionaries, and may have the duration of the exam extended.

A diplomatic mission or consulate of the country of origin located in Poland or a cultural or educational association for a given nationality may offer courses in the **language and culture of the country of origin** to foreign nationals in full-time compulsory education. A hosting school provides premises and educational resources free of charge. The number of class hours may not be higher than 5 per week.

The national legislation does not refer to any specific types of support that should be available to foreign nationals following programmes in **higher education**. However, Polish HEIs offer a range of support services to international students on a regular basis. These include, for example, Polish language courses; orientation programmes or cultural preparation courses, and integration weeks and events; support in practical matters (visa- and stay-related formalities, accommodation, etc.); academic tutors supervising a group of international students, and student mentors or buddies assisting individual international students.

13.3. Recognition of Qualifications

Recognition of qualifications, including certificates, diplomas and degrees, is regulated by national legislation in accordance with EU legislation and international conventions.

QUALIFICATIONS AWARDED IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

Pursuant to the national legislation, the following documents do not need to be validated by other institutions and are recognised **automatically**, by virtue of law:

- » **Maturity / upper secondary school leaving certificates** awarded in EU Member States and EEA and OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) member states which provide access to higher education in the awarding country;
- » **International Baccalaureate diplomas** awarded by the International Baccalaureate Organisation in Geneva, Switzerland;
- » **European Baccalaureate diplomas** awarded by European Schools in accordance with the Convention laying down the statutes of European Schools, adopted in Luxembourg in 1994;
- » **Certificates** covered by international agreements signed by Poland.

In other cases, certificates and other documents are recognised through an **administrative process** conducted by the head of the regional education authorities in a given province. However, where incoming pupils or students intend to **continue** education in a primary, lower or upper secondary school (in the pre-reform school education system) or a primary or secondary school (in the new system), recognition of foreign end-of-year certificates or school leaving certificates is not required. Applicants should contact the head of the school they wish to attend directly.

More details on the relevant national regulations and procedures are available on the website of the Ministry of National Education; see 'Useful Links' in the final section.

QUALIFICATIONS AWARDED IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education qualifications are, likewise, recognised on the basis of international agreements or through an official recognition procedure laid down in national legislation. Like in other countries, a distinction is made between:

- » academic recognition: for individuals wishing to continue or begin studying, or use an academic degree; and
- » professional recognition: for individuals wishing to practise a profession.

In the absence of a relevant international agreement, the competent bodies for **academic recognition** are organisational units of HEIs and research institutions. The recognition process is conducted by organisational units of HEIs authorised to award a doctoral degree in the relevant area in the case of **first-, second- and long-cycle degrees** / diplomas, and by organisational units of higher education or research institutions in the case of **doctoral and postdoctoral degrees**.

There are different **professional recognition** procedures for non-regulated and regulated professions. If a profession is **not regulated** in Poland, the decision to recognise a foreign qualification is taken by the employer. The employer may require confirmation of the equivalence of a foreign qualification (which takes place on the basis of an international agreement or through an official recognition procedure).

Regulated professions in Poland include, for example, nurses, midwives, doctors, dental practitioners, pharmacists, veterinary surgeons and architects

(so-called sectoral professions regulated across the EU), lawyers and school **teachers**. Within the EU, recognition of professional qualifications is governed by Directive No. 2005/36/EC and national legislation based on it. As degree programmes for the sectoral professions are based on the EU legislation (see also Section 8.4, Higher Education, Curriculum), a qualification may be recognised automatically if its holder provides proof of qualification to the relevant authority in the host country. Qualifications such as those awarded to teachers are covered by the so-called general system of recognition. A qualification is recognised when its level is at least equivalent to the level immediately below the level required in the host country; otherwise, the host country may require that the applicant undertakes an adaptation period of up to three years or takes an aptitude test. The recognition of qualifications for professions such as lawyer is governed by specific legislation.

Foreign nationals may seek detailed information and advice on both academic and professional recognition from **ENIC-NARIC Poland**, operating within the European ENIC-NARIC Network and located within Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (see 'Useful Links').

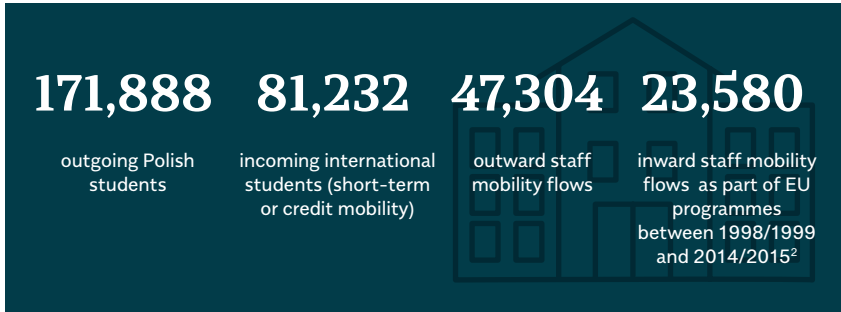
13.4. Programmes and Other Initiatives

Supporting International Learning Mobility

Learning mobility from and to Poland takes place mainly within the **EU Erasmus+ programme**. All actions of the programme are open to EU Member States and several non-EU countries, including the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey. Some actions also involve other countries from regions across the world. The programme offers mobility opportunities to pupils, students and learners, school and academic teachers, trainers and other education staff. Higher education students have a choice between a study period and a practical placement in another country (both as part of short-term or credit mobility, as opposed to long-term or degree mobility where students follow a full programme to obtain a degree). The programme is administered by the **Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency** at the EU level and by the **Foundation for the Development of the Education System** as the National Erasmus+ Agency in Poland.

There are also multilateral, bilateral and national programmes (co-)funded by the Polish Government and / or other countries or international organisations, targeted specifically at higher education students and academic staff. The main

multilateral programmes are the **Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies (CEEPUS)** and the **International Visegrad Fund**. The former awards scholarships for study visits, study periods and practical placements to higher education students and academic teachers from Central Europe and the Western Balkans. The latter offers project grants and scholarships to foster cooperation between the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary and, in particular, the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership regions.



Poland has signed **bilateral agreements** on cooperation, including scholarship-based exchanges, and / or recognition of qualifications with 35 countries, including EU Member States, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Macedonia, Turkey, China, Mongolia, Japan, Vietnam, Israel and Egypt. As part of some of the agreements, the government of Poland and / or the partner country offer(s) a number of scholarships to academic staff and students. A full list of agreements is available on the website of the National Agency for Academic Exchange (see 'Useful Links').

65,793

international students taking full degree programmes in Poland (long-term or degree mobility) (2016/2017)

Bilateral programmes include, in particular, the **Fulbright Programme**, funded by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education and the US State Department and offering scholarships to US and Polish students and graduates for studies and research stays in the US or Poland; and the **Lane Kirkland Scholarship Programme**, funded by the Polish-American Freedom Foundation and awarding scholarships for study at Polish HEIs to students coming mainly from former Soviet Union countries.

² More recent data on EU programme mobility is not available as projects are underway.

The main two **national scholarship programmes** are the Stefan Banach Scholarship Programme for students from Eastern Partnership countries and the Ignacy Lukaszewicz Scholarship Programme for students from African and Asian countries. As part of Development Assistance for Sub-Saharan Africa, students may follow a degree programme in Poland on a fee-free basis. Details about the programmes are available in the 'Go! Poland. Study in Poland' portal (see 'Useful Links').

To encourage internationalisation of HEIs, the Polish Parliament has recently passed a law establishing the **National Agency for Academic Exchange**, modelled after the DAAD in Germany, the Dutch NUFFIC and Campus France in France. It is tasked with developing and putting in place arrangements and financial mechanisms to support higher education student and staff mobility; launching projects to support HEIs in improving the quality of programmes offered; running programmes facilitating the return of Polish researchers to the country; conducting information and promotion campaigns on Polish higher education; and promoting learning and knowledge of the Polish language abroad.

International students interested in studying in Poland may wish to access the **multilingual 'Go Poland'** portal (see 'Useful Links'). It was established as part of the 'Ready, Study, Go! Poland' campaign, run jointly by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the Foundation for the Development of the Education System and the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland, and is now managed by the National Agency for Academic Exchange. It provides information on the higher education system, including tuition fees and scholarships, practical information on entering, and living in, Poland, publications and promotional materials, etc. It also has a search engine for programmes by field and level of study and by language of instruction.

Useful Links

Institutions

Ministry of National Education: en.men.gov.pl

Ministry of Science and Higher Education: www.nauka.gov.pl/en

General Council for Science and Higher Education:

www.rgnisw.nauka.gov.pl (in Polish only)

Polish Accreditation Committee: www.pka.edu.pl/en

Foundation for the Development of the Education System:

www.frse.org.pl/en

Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange: nawa.gov.pl/en

Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland:

www.krasp.org.pl/en

Conference of Rectors of Professional Higher Education Schools:

www.krzasp.pl/pl/index.php (in Polish only)

Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland: psrp.org.pl

National Representation of Doctoral Students:

krd.edu.pl (in Polish only)

Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency:

eacea.ec.europa.eu/homepage_en

Degrees and Titles Committee: www.ck.gov.pl (in Polish only)

Recognition of qualifications

School education qualifications:

en.men.gov.pl/2015/10/30/recognition-of-foreign-school-certificates-and-diplomas-in-poland

Higher education qualifications, ENIC-NARIC Poland:

www.nauka.gov.pl/en/recognition-of-foreign-qualifications

Funding programmes and other initiatives supporting international mobility

'Go Poland. Study in Poland' Portal for international students:

www.go-poland.pl/pl

EU Erasmus+ Programme: eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus_en;

www.frse.org.pl/en

Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies (CEEPUS): www.ceepus.info/default.aspx#nbb

International Visegrad Fund: www.visegradfund.org

Fulbright Programme: en.fulbright.edu.pl

Lane Kirkland Scholarship Programme: www.kirkland.edu.pl/en

National scholarship programmes: nawa.gov.pl/en/students/foreign-students

For more detailed information on the Polish education system please consult:

Eurydice National Education Systems/ Poland:

eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/poland_en

Eurydice is a network of 42 national units based in 38 countries of the Erasmus+ programme. Its task is to explain how education systems are organised in Europe and how they work. Eurydice publishes descriptions of national education systems, comparative reports devoted to specific topics, indicators and statistics. Eurydice reports show how countries tackle challenges at all education levels: early childhood education and care, primary and secondary education, higher education and adult learning.

**Polish Eurydice Unit
Foundation for the Development
of the Education System (FRSE)**

Al. Jerozolimskie 142a, 02-305 Warszawa
eurydice@frse.org.pl
www.eurydice.org.pl