
the **SYSTEM**

of **EDUCATION**

in **POLAND**

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the **SYSTEM**

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in **POLAND**

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

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INTRODUCTION: GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT

Poland is a parliamentary republic and a member of the European Union. The political system in Poland is defined by the Constitution of 2 April 1997. In accordance with the Constitution, the legislative power is exercised by a two-chamber Parliament which consists of the *Sejm* and the *Senat*, elected for a 4-year term.

- The *Sejm* is the lower chamber of the Parliament and consists of 460 deputies elected in the proportional elections. It exercises the legislative power and supervises the government.
- The *Senat*, the upper chamber of the Parliament re-established in 1989, comprises 100 senators elected by the majority vote. Its legislative power is limited to the right to initiate legislation. It may also accept, amend or reject bills passed by the *Sejm*.

The executive power is exercised by the President and the Council of Ministers. The President of Poland is the supreme representative of the State and safeguards its sovereignty and security, and the integrity of the territory. He also ensures observance of the Constitution. The president is elected by the Nation in universal, equal and direct elections for a 5-year term. The Council of Ministers is responsible for internal affairs and foreign policy and manages the government administration. The Council is responsible for all policies which are not reserved for other state or local government bodies.

The territorial organisation of the Polish state ensures the decentralisation of the public authorities. Since 1999 the area of Poland is divided into 16 provinces-voivodeships (*województwo*), 379 districts (*powiat*) and 2,479 communes (*gmina*). Voivodes (governors of province – *wojewoda*) represent the Council of Ministers in particular voivodeships and supervise institutions performing tasks entrusted to the state. Regional pedagogical authorities (*kuratorium oświaty*) are the part of regional administration and are responsible for pedagogical supervision over schools. Governance at regional level is the responsibility of local government bodies: the voivode and the local government assembly (*sejmik wojewódzki*). The local government takes part in exercising public authority. A major part of the local government's public tasks is performed in its own name and on its own responsibility.

As laid down in the Constitution, **the commune** is a basic local government body. Its responsibilities include all public matters of local importance which are not assigned to the organs of other public authorities. It is responsible for fulfilling the needs of the local community in the following areas: healthcare, welfare, culture and education. It is responsible for administering kindergartens, primary schools and lower secondary schools.

The district is the second level of local government. The district supports the commune in performing all functions which extend beyond the capacity and remit of the latter. It is responsible for administering upper secondary schools and hospitals, managing public roads, combating unemployment, as well as for the protection of consumers' rights.

The self-governing **voivodeship** is the third level of local government. Its responsibilities include regional economic and social development as well as the establishment and administration of public initial and in-service teachers' training institutions, educational resources centres, and schools and institutions operating at regional and supraregional levels. Its scope of activities does not interfere with the independence of the district and the commune.

DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION

In Poland, 38.2 million people inhabit an area of 312 685 square kilometres. The average density of population is 122 persons per square kilometre. The low birth rate in the 1990s and a high level of emigration, noted especially since 2004 (mostly among young people), will soon lead to increasing difficulties in the demographic development, on the labour market and in the social security system. According to the long-range population projections for up to 2035, the population of Poland will decrease steadily and the rate of this decrease will grow over time. The Polish society will also experience the process of ageing and consequently the proportion of post-working-age population will increase.

OFFICIAL AND MINORITY LANGUAGES

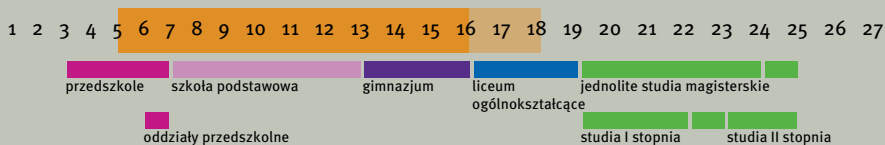
The Polish language is the official language in Poland – this is stated in the Constitution and in the Act on the Polish Language.

If compared to other European countries, Poland is very homogenous as regards nationality. It is estimated that no more than 3 % of the total population is constituted by national minorities. The minorities' right to protect, retain and develop their cultural identity is guaranteed by the Constitution and by the Act of 6 January 2005 on Ethnic and National Minorities and on the Regional Language. The Act includes as follows:

- nine national minorities: Byelorussian, Czech, Lithuanian, German, Armenian, Russian, Slovak, Ukrainian and Jewish
- four ethnic minorities: Karaim, Lemko, Romany and Tatar.
- one community using the regional language of Kashubian.

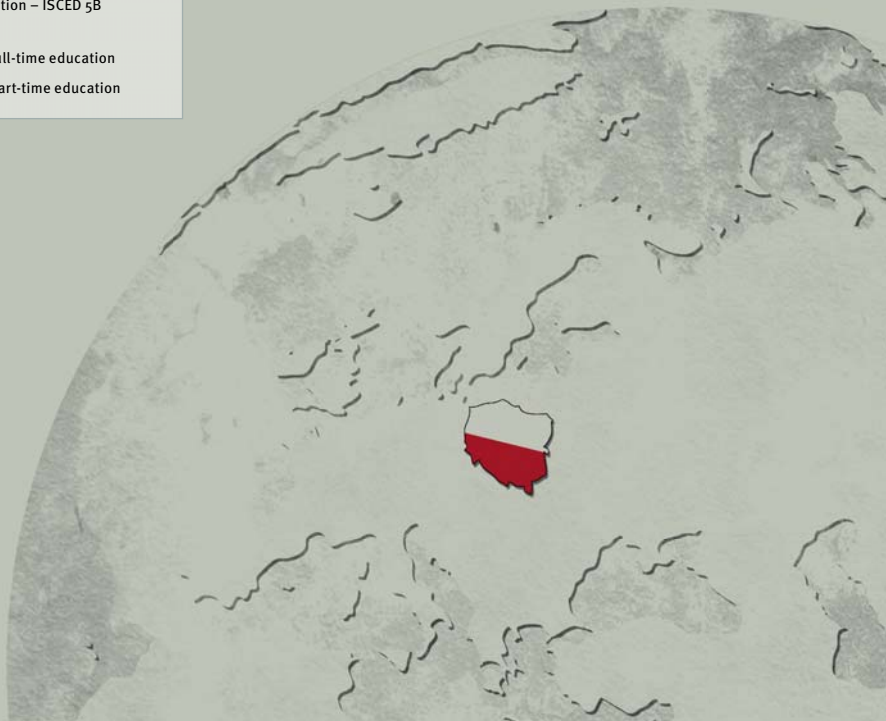
The rights of ethnic and national minorities with respect to learning the minority language or education in the minority language as well as the right to learn about the history and culture of the minority are exercised on the basis of the principles laid down in the School Education Act of 7 September 1991. According to the School Education Act, a public school supports pupils in preserving their national, ethnic, linguistic and religious identity, with particular emphasis on history and culture. At parents' request, the teaching may be organised in separate groups, classes and schools; groups, classes and schools with additional language, history and culture classes; interschool teaching units.

The system of Education in Poland.



- Pre-primary – ISCED 0
- Primary – ISCED 1
- Lower secondary general – ISCED 2
- Upper secondary general – ISCED 3
- Upper secondary vocational – ISCED 3
- Post-secondary non-tertiary – ISCED 4
- Tertiary education – ISCED 5A
- Tertiary education – ISCED 5B
- Compulsory full-time education
- Compulsory part-time education

przedszkole
 oddziały przedszkolne
 szkoła podstawowa
 gimnazjum
 liceum ogólnokształcące
 jednolite studia magisterskie
 studia I stopnia
 studia II stopnia
 KN / NKJO / KPSS
 szkoły policealne
 liceum profilowane
 technikum
 zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa
 liceum uzupełniające
 technikum uzupełniające



ORGANISATION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1

1.1 Organisation

The main legal basis for the school education and higher education systems is provided by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland. Its provisions referring to fundamental freedoms and citizens' rights state that:

- every person has the right to education. Education is compulsory until the age of 18. The manner in which compulsory education is received is regulated by an act of Parliament;
- education in public schools is free of charge. An act of Parliament may allow public higher education institutions (HEIs) to charge fees for providing educational services;
- parents are free to choose schools other than public for their children. Citizens and institutions have the right to establish primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and post-secondary schools and HEIs as well as childcare centres. An act of Parliament lays down the conditions for establishing and administering non-public schools, the contribution of public authorities in terms of funding and the principles of pedagogical supervision over schools and childcare centres;
- public authorities provide citizens with general and equal access to education. Towards this end, they establish and support individual financial and organisational support systems for pupils and students. The conditions for providing support are laid down by an act of Parliament;
- the autonomy of HEIs is ensured in accordance with the principles laid down in an act of Parliament;

In accordance with the School Education Act of 7 September 1991 the education system comprises pre-school institutions as well as primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and post-secondary schools. In the light of the existing law, institutions of higher education form a separate higher education system or sector.

The Polish school education system is based on the following legislation (parliamentary acts):

- The School Education Act of 7 September 1991 (with further amendments)

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

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

- The Act of 27 July 2005 'Law on Higher Education' (with further amendments)
- The Act of 14 March 2003 on Academic Degrees and Title and on Degrees and Title in Art
- The Act of 17 July 1998 on Loans and Credits for Students (with further amendments).

COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Compulsory education is divided into:

- A. one-year pre-school preparation;
- B. full-time education in school settings that lasts until the completion of lower secondary school (typically 16 years of age), but not beyond the age of 18;
- C. part-time education until the age of 18 in school or non-school settings.

The one-year compulsory **pre-school preparation** for 6-year olds was introduced in the school year 2004/05. As from the school year 2011/12, one preparatory year is compulsory for 5-year old children and may be completed in kindergartens (*przedszkole*), pre-school classes in primary schools (*oddziały przedszkolne*) or in alternative pre-school education settings. Optional pre-school education is offered to children at the age of 3 and above. In 2011 pre-school education became compulsory for 5-year-old children. 6-year-old children attend either a kindergarten or pre-school classes in primary schools. As from the school year 1999/2000, children between the ages of 7 and 13 attend a 6-year **primary school** (*szkoła podstawowa*) (the previous 8-year single structure at primary level ceased to exist in 2000). The amendment to the School Education Act of 1991 made primary school education compulsory also for 6-year-old children. This change, however, has been implemented gradually i.e. from 2009 to 2013 it is still optional, whereas in 2014 it will become compulsory for this age group. Primary education is divided into two stages: the **first stage** (grades 1 to 3) offering integrated early school education, and the **second stage** (grades 4 to 6) at which subject-based teaching is provided. At the end of the 6-year primary school, pupils take an external compulsory test (set by the Regional Examination Boards and assessed by examiners selected by these boards). The external test, which is designed to provide information (and is not an examination), was conducted for the first time in April 2002.

As from 1999/2000, all primary school leavers continue their education in the 3-year **general lower secondary school** (*gimnazjum*). At the end of lower secondary education, pupils take a compulsory external examination organised by Regional Examination Boards.

POST-COMPULSORY EDUCATION

UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

Lower secondary school graduates can continue their education in the following types of schools:

- 3-year general upper secondary school (*liceum ogólnokształcące*) leading to the receipt of the matriculation certificate (*świadectwo maturalne*) upon passing of the external matriculation exam (*Matura*);
- 3-year specialised upper secondary school (*liceum profilowane*) offering education in specializations of general vocational education that leads to the receipt of the matriculation certificate upon passing of the matriculation exam. This type of school is being phased out; no admission is possible as from 2012;
- 4-year technical upper secondary school (*technikum*) leading to the receipt of a diploma confirming vocational qualifications upon passing of an examination, and also offering a possibility of the receipt of the matriculation certificate upon passing of the matriculation exam;
- 3-year basic vocational school (*zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa*) that leads to the receipt of a diploma confirming vocational qualifications upon passing of an exam as well as further education in a 2-year supplementary general upper secondary school (*uzupełniająca liceum ogólnokształcące*) or a 3-year supplementary technical upper secondary school (*technikum uzupełniająca*) that also lead to the receipt of the matriculation certificate upon passing of the matriculation exam. However, as from 2012, these types of schools are being phased out and admission is not possible anymore. Basic vocational school leavers may continue their education in the adult education settings;
- 3-year special schools preparing pupils with disabilities (special educational needs) for employment leading to the receipt of a certificate confirming preparation for employment.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Graduates of general upper secondary schools can, upon an admission interview, continue their education in a post-secondary school of maximum 2.5 years duration that leads to the receipt of a diploma confirming vocational qualifications upon passing of an examination.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Graduates of upper secondary schools in Poland who hold the matriculation certificate have a wide variety of educational possibilities at the level of tertiary education:

- college programmes (ISCED 5B), provided by public and non-public teacher training colleges (*kolegium nauczycielskie*), foreign language teacher training colleges (*nauczycielskie kolegium języków obcych*) and colleges of social work (*kolegium pracowników służb społecznych*),
- degree programmes (ISCED 5A), provided by both public and non-public university-type and non-university higher education institutions which comply with relevant requirements, including:
 - first-cycle (Bachelor's degree) programmes;
 - second-cycle (Master's degree) programmes;
 - long-cycle (Master's degree) programmes.

Holders of a Master's degree or equivalent may apply to third-cycle programmes i.e. doctoral studies that provide advanced knowledge in a specific area or discipline of science, and prepare for independent and creative research and for the award of a doctoral degree. Holders of Bachelor's or Master's degrees may also follow non-degree post-graduate programmes that typically last one or two years. For more information see section 6.

1.2 Distribution of responsibilities

The Ministry of National Education is responsible for nearly the whole system of education, with the exception of higher education which is under the supervision of the Minister of Science and Higher Education (as from May 2006). Vocational schools, which in the past were supervised by other ministries, are now the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education. At present, only a few schools, namely artistic – only with respect to artistic subjects, as well as correctional institutions are under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Justice respectively.

The reform of the State administration system and the education reform assume that only the national educational policy will be developed and carried out centrally, while the administration of education and the running of schools, pre-school institutions and other educational establishments are decentralised. The responsibility for the administration of public pre-primary and primary schools as well as lower secondary schools has been delegated to local authorities (communes). It has become the statutory responsibility of districts to administer upper secondary schools, artistic and special schools. Voivodeships have a coordinating function, supervising the implementation of the Ministry's policy and being responsible for pedagogical supervision.

1.2.1 School education

CENTRAL LEVEL

The responsibility for the administration of the school education system rests with the **Minister of National Education** and the deputy ministers (the secretary of state and under-secretaries of state). The director general is responsible for the efficient functioning of the ministry as the institution supporting the minister. Deputy ministers are responsible for matters such as school education, economic aspects of the education system and international co-operation.

The Minister co-ordinates and pursues the national education policy, co-operates in this respect with regional authorities and other organisational units responsible for the school education system, organises national competitions for pupils, and may also award contracts for the organisation of such competitions to higher education institutions, research institutes, academic and professional associations or other institutions. By way of regulation, the Minister lays down:

- requirements and procedures for admission to schools, and for transfers between schools;
- rules for the provision of education to Polish citizens' children temporarily staying abroad, and for the support to teach history, geography and the Polish language to the Polish community abroad;
- the range of services and allowances provided to Polish teachers working abroad;
- outline timetables;
- core curricula for pre-school education, general education and general vocational education for specific occupations;
- rules for assessing and promoting pupils, and for conducting tests and examinations;
- record-keeping methods concerning the teaching process and educational activities, as well as the types of these records;
- rules and conditions for innovation and experimental activities in schools;
- organisational arrangements for the school year;
- organisational arrangements and procedures for contests and competitions in specific school subjects;
- requirement standards for the examination confirming vocational qualifications;
- arrangements for counselling and guidance in schools;
- rules and conditions for the organisation of tourist and sightseeing activities undertaken by schools;
- rules for the remuneration of examiners and teachers.

On the 6 of March 2008 the Minister of National Education established the **National Education Council** which has 9 members – former deputy ministers of education.

This council has an advisory capacity only and is the support body to the Minister of National Education.

REGIONAL LEVEL

The regional authorities in Poland are placed at the level of voivodeship.

Education superintendent

Education superintendents (*kurator oświaty*) are chief pedagogical supervision officers at the regional level. They are responsible for general administration of education in particular voivodeships. They are regional administration officials appointed and supervised by the voivode subordinate to the Prime Minister. The education superintendent implements the policy of the Minister of National Education.

On behalf of the voivode, the superintendent is responsible for the implementation of tasks defined in the School Education Act and in the regulations relevant to particular voivodeships. The most important task is pedagogical supervision over public and non-public schools, including central in-service teacher training institutions located in particular voivodeships.

At the motion of the regional education superintendent, the voivode can establish representations, or branches, of the superintendent's office (*delegatura*) for smaller areas of particular voivodeships. The head of such a branch receives relevant powers from the superintendent.

Local government bodies

Local government bodies at regional level are responsible for administering the following types of educational institutions:

- teacher training colleges, foreign language teacher training colleges, colleges of social work
- in-service teacher training institutions,
- educational resources centres,
- schools and other related educational institutions operating at regional and supra-regional levels.

DISTRICT LEVEL

The district (*powiat*) is an intermediate administrative unit between the voivodeship and the commune. District authorities are responsible for running the following types of public schools and other related educational institutions: special primary and special lower secondary schools, post-compulsory (i.e. upper secondary and post-secondary) schools, sports schools, and schools for sport champions, as well as residential special

schools (*ośrodki szkolno-wychowawcze*), reclamation centres (*młodzieżowe ośrodki wychowawcze*), sociotherapy centres (*młodzieżowe ośrodki socjoterapii*), counselling and guidance centres (*poradnie psychologiczno-pedagogiczne*), residential special upbringing centres (*specjalne ośrodki wychowawcze*), remedial centres for children and youth with profound mental retardation and multiple disabilities (*ośrodki rewalidacyjno-wychowawcze*). Pedagogical supervision is excluded from their control – it is the responsibility of the education superintendent (see: Regional level above).

LOCAL LEVEL

The commune (*gmina*) level in Poland is the lowest level in administrative division. It is responsible for establishing and administering: public kindergartens and special kindergartens, primary schools and lower secondary schools (except for special primary and lower secondary schools, art schools, and schools at prisons, youth detention centres and hostels for underage young people). Pedagogical supervision over these types of institutions is the responsibility of the education superintendent.

INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

School head

The head of a school or a kindergarten is appointed by the school managing body, through open competition, for a five-year term. In justified cases, in agreement with the education superintendent, the school head may be appointed for a shorter period, but the minimum duration of the term is one school year. Where the school statutes provide for the positions of deputy school head and other management positions, management staff are appointed by the school head after consultation with the school council, the teachers' council and the school managing body, e.g. the commune or the district. Responsibilities of the school head include in particular:

- managing the school and representing it externally;
- exercising pedagogical supervision over the school;
- taking care of pupils and creating conditions for their harmonious psychological and physical development through various health promoting activities;
- implementing the resolutions of the school council or the teachers' council (adopted within their remit);
- being in charge of funding and responsible for its proper use;
- organising practical teaching placements for higher education students in cooperation with higher education institutions and teacher training institutions;
- being responsible for the proper organisation and conduct of tests and exams in the school;

- creating conditions for activities to be undertaken by volunteers, associations and other organisations, in particular scouting organisations, whose statutory aims include providing educational activities or extending the range of educational and care activities at a given school.

Teachers' council

A teachers' council should be established in every school and another related educational institution employing at least 3 teachers. This council is a collegial body concerned with the implementation of statutory tasks related to education and care. The teachers' council includes the following members: teachers employed in the school, staff employed in outside institutions offering practical vocational training to pupils of the school, and staff responsible for education and care of pupils in boarding schools who are employed as teachers and care takers. The school head is the head of school's teachers' council. The decision-making powers of the teachers' council include in particular:

- approving school activity plans, following an opinion given by the school council;
- adopting resolutions on the results of pupils' assessment and promotion;
- adopting resolutions on teaching innovations and experiments in the school, following an opinion given by the school council;
- adopting organisational arrangements for in-service training of teachers in the school;
- adopting resolutions to strike pupils from the register of pupils.

The teachers' council drafts the school statutes or any amendments to such statutes and presents them to the school council. The teachers' council can apply for dismissal of a teacher from the post of a school head, or any other managerial position in that school.

School council

The school council can operate in schools and other related educational institutions. It participates in solving school internal problems and is involved in various school internal issues (e.g. approval of school statutes, giving opinions on the school financial plan and school activity plan). The school council includes (in equal numbers) elected teachers, parents and pupils.

School councils in primary schools do not include pupils and participation by pupils in lower secondary schools is not obligatory. The council should include a minimum of 6 members. The school council decides on its internal regulations and elects its chairman. The school head can participate in the council meetings in an advisory capacity.

Parents' council

Parents' council represents all the pupils' parents and can operate in schools and other related educational institutions. The parents' council establishes its own regulations

for activities and it can cooperate on the basis of jointly established procedures. Parents' council can issue motions related to all school matters to the school head and other school bodies, to the school running body or the body responsible for pedagogical supervision. It can also issue opinions on the programme and time table for improvement of efficiency in teaching or care at the school, and issue opinions on the financial plan proposed by the school head.

A national level council of parents was established on the 14th of March 2011. It includes the representatives of the most active parent groups and experts. In order to increase the parents' influence on school matters, the Parents' Council's role is to consult and issue opinions on problems arising in the cooperation between parents and schools.

Pupils' self-government

Pupils' self-government operates in schools and is established by all pupils in a given school. The rules concerning the election and functioning of self-government bodies are defined in the regulations established by all pupils in an equal, secret and popular vote. The self-government bodies are the only bodies representing all pupils.

The regulations concerning pupils' self-government cannot contradict to the school statutes. The self-government can propose motions to the school council, pedagogical council and school head which concern school matters, and in particular those related to the fulfilment of basic rights of pupils such as the right to open and justified assessment of learning and conduct, the right to publish a school newspaper, and organise cultural, educational, sports and entertainment events according to the pupils' needs and the organisational capacity of the school.

1.2.2 Higher education

CENTRAL LEVEL

The **Minister of Science and Higher Education** is responsible for higher education and scientific research, as well as for formulating educational policy with respect to higher education with the support from the General Council of Science and Higher Education. The following matters are under the supervision of the Minister of Science and Higher Education:

- development of research in Poland,
- studies for degree students and PhD students
- functioning of higher education institutions.

The Minister supervises the activities of higher education institutions (HEIs) in respect of their compliance with the law, their statutes and the permit granted for the establishment of a non-public HEI, as well as the propriety of expenditure of public

funds. The Minister may request information and clarification from the bodies of a HEI and the founder of a non-public HEI, and may conduct inspections of HEIs.

Consultation and support institutions

In addition to higher education institutions, the higher education system in Poland includes also a host of organisations performing consultation and advisory functions. The most prominent of these are:

- the **General Council of Science and Higher Education** (*Rada Główna Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego* – RGNSW) which volunteers its own opinions and proposals in all matters relating to higher education and science, and also presents its opinions on the draft state budget and proposed draft legislation;
- the **Polish Accreditation Committee** (*Polska Komisja Akredytacyjna* – PKA) which performs a crucial role in higher education quality assurance. The primary responsibilities of the PKA include: assessing the quality of education in fields of study, including compliance with the requirements for the provision of degree programmes; reviewing applications for the establishment of higher education institutions; and reviewing applications of higher education institutions for the authorisation to provide degree programmes in a given field and at a given level of study. The PKA's opinions and evaluations are submitted to the minister responsible for higher education. Degree programmes to be assessed in individual institutions are identified by the PKA on an annual basis. In justified cases, the minister responsible for higher education may also request the PKA to assess the quality of education in a specific institution.
- the **Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland** (*Konferencja Rektorów Akademickich Szkół Polskich* – KRASP) and the **Conference of Rectors of Vocational Schools in Poland** (*Konferencja Rektorów Zawodowych Szkół Polskich* – KRZaSP), both of which play a particularly significant role in shaping the entire higher education system in terms of the its constituent institutions comprising it and of the governance of higher education. The powers of both Conferences in the area of governance are especially important. They also have a say in developing the financing principles and the rules governing the operation of higher education institutions, specifically as regards executive regulations that accompany legal acts;
- the **Parliament of the Students of the Republic of Poland** which focuses on student issues;
- the **National Representation of Doctoral Students** which deals with issues relating to this category of students;
- trade unions operating in higher education institutions, represented by their national sections for higher education. Two unions enjoy a particularly powerful

position in the higher education system, namely the **Solidarity National Section for Science** (*Krajowa Sekcja Nauki NSZZ "Solidarność"*) and the **Polish Teachers' Union** (*Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego – ZNP*). The trade unions concentrate primarily on pay policy and remuneration rules applicable to employees;

- non-governmental organisations such as the **Polish Rectors Foundation** (*Fundacja Rektorów Polskich – FRP*) established by more than 100 rectors and former rectors, the **Institute of the Knowledge Society** (*Instytut Społeczeństwa Wiedzy – ISW*) – an independent research institution focusing on issues relating to higher education and science, research centres run by higher education institutions (e.g. the **Centre for Science Policy and Higher Education of Warsaw University**) and the **Institute of Modern Civilisation**.

All these bodies have a say in the development of the higher education system in Poland, making use of their right to come forward with recommendations and initiatives, and also to present opinions on draft regulations or legal acts significantly impacting higher education in this country.

INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

The collective bodies of a public higher education institution (HEI) include the senate and the boards of academic units. The statutes of a non-public HEI may provide for a collective body other than the senate. If provided for in the statutes, public HEIs may establish a council in addition to the senate. The collective bodies of a non-public HEI are specified in its statutes. The **rector** (*rektor*) and the heads of academic units are single-person authorities. The **dean** (*dziekan*) is the head of the faculty. The statutes of a non-public HEI may provide for another single-person authority in addition to the rector. The electoral bodies are electoral colleges.

Senate

The powers of the senate include, but are not limited to:

- adopting the statutes;
- adopting study regulations for first-, second-, long- and third-cycle programmes and non-degree postgraduate programmes, and the rules for admission to first-, second-, long- and third-cycle programmes;
- defining learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) to which particular study programmes are adopted;
- defining the main lines of the HEI's activities and laying down the principles of its activities;
- assessing the performance of the HEI, approving the rector's annual activity reports and assessing the performance of the rector;

- adopting resolutions on the establishment of a branch campus, an academic unit or teaching centre in another location, and on the establishment and abolishment of programmes in a given field of study;
- giving permission to the rector to conclude an agreement on cooperation with a foreign institution, unless stated otherwise in the statutes;
- giving permission for the establishment of an academic business incubator or a technology transfer centre;
- awarding the degree of *doctor honoris causa*;
- voicing opinion of the HEI academic community and giving opinion on the matters referred to it by the rector, the board of the academic unit or a certain number of the senate members as required by the statutes;
- adopting activity-and-finance plans for the HEI;
- approving financial reports of the HEI;
- laying down the rules for purchasing, selling and encumbering securities in so far as this is not regulated in the legislation on public finance and on securities trading;
- giving permission for purchasing, selling and encumbering assets of the value specified in the statutes, joining a partnership, cooperative or other business organisation, and for establishing a partnership or foundation.

The rector manages a HEI and represents it externally, and is the superior for the staff, students and doctoral students of the HEI. The rector of a public HEI takes decisions in all matters concerning the institution, except those reserved by the Law on Higher Education or the statutes for the remit of other bodies or the head of finance and administration.

Academic unit

The powers of the board of an academic unit specified in the statutes of particular HEIs include:

- defining the main lines of the unit's activities;
- adopting study programmes for first-, second-, long- and third-cycle programmes, following consultation with the competent student self-government body in the case of first-, second- and long-cycle programmes or the competent doctoral student self-government body in the case of third-cycle programmes, in accordance with the guidelines set by the senate of a public HEI or a collective body of a non-public HEI;
- adopting study programmes for non-degree post-graduate programmes and retraining courses in accordance with the guidelines set by the senate of a public HEI or a collective body of a non-public HEI.

1.3 **Funding**

1.3.1 School education

FUNDING

The school education part of the general subvention from the State budget is the main source of funding for the school education sector in Poland. The amount of the general subvention for all local government units is defined annually in the Budgetary Act, and then the Minister of National Education establishes the algorithm for the distribution of these funds among the relevant local government units. According to the Act on Revenues of Local Government Units, the authorities of these units decide on the use of funds received as part of the general subvention. This means that local government units decide on the amount of the total expenditure on school education and on their allocation, taking into consideration their own income. As school managing bodies, they are responsible, in particular, for the preparation of income and expenditure (financial) plans for all supervised educational institutions. Local government units also establish regulations for teacher remuneration and for the provision of financial support for welfare-related purposes, are responsible for educational investments and define the rules for obtaining and use of private funds by schools. The funds defined in the financial plan, which is presented to the school authorities for consultation, are disbursed by the school head who is responsible for their proper use. The school education legislation allows also non-public schools with the public school status to be co-financed from the budgets of local government units or from the State budget. Such schools receive funding depending on the number of pupils and type of school. The amount of funding per pupil is calculated as a fixed percentage of the current expenditure in individual types of public schools; it is at least equal to the amount of funding for one pupil in a given type of school as envisaged within the school education part of the general subvention for a given local government unit. In practice, it means such schools may receive a grant which equals up to 100% of the average current expenditure per pupil in a public school of the same type. Non-public schools which do not have the public school status can also be supported.

FEES

Public schools and kindergartens are free of charge, but some financial contribution from pupils and their families is most often required at each stage of education. In kindergartens, fees are charged for the care of children extending beyond 5 hours a day, additional classes and meals. The parents' council established at the school can collect funds from voluntary donations from pupils' parents and other sources

Non-public schools charge fees. The statutes of a non-public school (or other educational institutions) should define the rules for obtaining funds for school activities, including the rules for setting and changing the amount of fees collected from pupils. Many schools offer various types of fee waivers to outstandingly gifted pupils and those from underprivileged backgrounds.

1.3.2 Higher education

FUNDING

Like public schools, public higher education institutions (HEIs) receive funds from the State budget for tasks related to the education of students enrolled on full-time programmes, full-time doctoral students and research staff; the maintenance of HEIs, including renovation of premises; tasks related to financial support for students and doctoral students; co-financing and financing of investment projects, including those supported by EU funds; and tasks related to education and medical rehabilitation of disabled students. These funds are allocated from the part of the State budget managed by the Minister of Science and Higher Education. Public HEIs pursue their own financial policy based on activity-and-finance plans. The Minister also defines, on the basis of regulations, conditions and rules for non-public HEIs to apply for funds, as well as the methods of supervision and use of these funds. Non-public HEIs are granted a State-budget subsidy for the tasks related to non-reimbursable financial support for students. If complying with the requirements laid down in the relevant legislation, non-public HEIs may also be granted a subsidy to cover partly fees paid by full-time students and full-time doctoral students, and subsidies contributing towards the costs of various tasks (e.g. training of academic staff, maintenance, investment projects), specified in the 2005 Law on Higher Education, which are not related to the teaching of full-time students and full-time doctoral students.

FEES

In public teacher training colleges, foreign language teacher training colleges and colleges of social work no tuition fees are charged for full-time programmes. Tuition fees may be charged for part-time programmes. The amount of such fees is determined by the head of a given college, in consultation with the college council (managing body) and on the basis of expected teaching costs.

In public higher education institutions no tuition fees are charged for full-time first-, second- and long-cycle programmes and full-time doctoral programmes. There are also no registration fees in public HEIs, but they charge low administrative fees that are set centrally by a regulation. Moreover, fees are charged for the following educational arrangements:

- part-time degree programmes of all cycles and part-time doctoral programmes,

- a second and/or a subsequent degree programme followed concurrently with a full-time programme (except the few best students granted the rector's scholarship);
- non-degree postgraduate programmes and retraining or in-service training courses;
- courses taught in foreign language;
- courses repeated by students due to failure to pass them;
- courses which are not included in a study programme.

Public colleges and HEIs (namely their rectors) determine themselves the amount of the abovementioned fees, taking into account that this amount cannot exceed the costs incurred by a HEI in order to deliver programmes or courses. Non-public colleges and HEIs determine themselves the amount of tuition fees as well. In this case, all the students are charged tuition fees, regardless of the mode of their studies (full-time or part-time). Still, they may apply for financial support in accordance with the same rules as students in public colleges and HEIs.


1.3.3 Adult education

FUNDING

The funding system for adult education is very dispersed and thus it is difficult to give a total amount of funds spent for this purpose. Adult education in school settings (primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools for adults) is a part of the education system and is included as one of many school education tasks of the local government units. Funds for the financing of continuing education in non-school settings can come from the State budget, including the Labour Fund and the National Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled, European funds, other aid programmes and budgets of central administration units dedicated to the training of specific professional groups (e.g. clerks, medical doctors, teachers, soldiers, etc), employers, and learners' own funds.

FEES

Learning in public adult education institutions, enrolment on programmes supporting human resources development offered by labour offices, and some courses and training programmes supported by the EU funds are free of charge. Fees are charged for examinations leading to qualifications and non-degree postgraduate programmes. Continuing education centres, practical training centres and further and in-service training centres can charge fees for continuing education in non-school settings, unless learning is part of part-time compulsory education.



JANUSZ KORCZAK (1878 – 1942) – ONE OF THE GREATEST AND MOST IMPRESSIVE FIGURES IN CONTEMPORARY PEDAGOGY. A DOCTOR BY EDUCATION AND AN EDUCATOR BY PREDILECTION. HIS INNOVATIVE IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION, HIS VISIONARY CONCEPT OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS PERMANENTLY ENTERED THE CANON OF POLISH AND WORLD CULTURE.

nie ma dzieci
– są ludzie

*Janusz
Korczak*

*There are no children,
only people*

Janusz Korczak

PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

2

According to the School Education Act of 1991, pre-school education is treated as the first level of the education system in Poland. Pre-school education includes support to a child's development and education from age 3 to the commencement of schooling. Pre-school education for children aged 3–5/6 years is organised in kindergartens (*przedszkole*), pre-school classes in primary schools (*oddziały przedszkolne*) and other pre-school settings, including pre-school units and pre-school centres.

The main aims of pre-school education have been defined by the core curriculum for pre-school education in the Regulation by the Minister of National Education of the 23 of December 2008 and they include:

- supporting children in the development of their talents and shaping of intellectual skills necessary for coping with everyday life and further education,
- building a system of values, including directing children towards recognition of good and evil,
- shaping emotional resistance,
- improving social skills, creating conditions for playing and learning of children with different physical and intellectual abilities in one group,
- caring for children's health and their physical development,
- shaping children's knowledge about the world, development of ability to present their own reflections in an understandable way,
- introducing children into the world of aesthetic values and development of self expression through music, drama and visual art,
- shaping a sense of belonging in a community, in a family, peer group, national community,
- providing better educational chances to children through supporting their curiosity, activity and independence and the skills and knowledge relevant to undertaking school education.

A child aged 3 to 4 may receive pre-primary education, which is not compulsory, but all the five year-old children attend pre-school institutions as the Ministry of National Education has introduced one year of obligatory pre-school education starting with

the school year 2011/2012 and therefore the age of commencement of compulsory education has been lowered from 6 to 5. This is due to the new legislation (amendment to the School Education Act) aiming at the gradual lowering of the age of commencement of compulsory education in primary school from the age of 7 to 6, starting from 2014. Public pre-school institutions are administered and financed by the communes. Parents' payments cover children's meals, extra lessons, and a so-called extra fee if a child attends the kindergarten for more than 5 hours a day. The fee is set by the commune. Every commune can organise support to financially disadvantaged families with young children in various forms, e.g. full or partial kindergarten fee waivers, or financial and material support.

In 2010/2011 the attendance rate for children aged 3 amounted to 49.8% and those aged 4 to 64.1%. Pre-school education is obligatory for 5 and 6-year olds. At present, the increase in the participation of children in pre-school education is one of the government's priorities.

2.1 Admission

The enrolment in public pre-schools is provided on the free access basis. The parents decide on the choice of a kindergarten, in most cases taking into consideration local institutions within the area of their own commune. The age of a child is the main criterion – children must have reached 3 years of age. In particular cases it has been made possible to admit children of 2.5 years of age upon the school head's approval. In some pre-schools an additional limitation appears when the number of places is not sufficient for the children aged 3 to 4 years.

If a kindergarten is particularly attractive to local parents and the number of applications is higher than the number of places, the five-year-olds and children of single parents should be considered as having a priority for admission. The detailed admission rules for a particular pre-school are defined in its statutes.

2.2 Organisation

The minimum working time for kindergartens and pre-school classes in schools is 5 hours a day. Most kindergartens work around 9 hours a day and are open 5 days a week. During the day children participate in activities organised or suggested

by the teacher and they play spontaneously in the classroom or in the garden. The duration of activities depends on the age of children: for the 5 to 6-year olds it is around 30 minutes. For younger children (3 to 4 years of age) the duration of activities is around 15 minutes. As a rule, two teachers working in shifts take care of one section (group of children).

A kindergarten is open throughout the school year with the exception of breaks established by the running body upon the school head's request, which takes into consideration the parent's needs. Pre-school classes in primary schools function throughout the school year, apart from breaks established by the body running the school.

The number of children in one section cannot exceed 25, with the exception of integration and special pre-school classes, where the limits are lower. In integration classes the number of children is 15–20, among which there are 3–5 children with disability. The main criterion used for grouping children is age. Most kindergartens are divided into 4 sections (three, four, five and six- year-olds). The application of other criteria is also possible (children's interests, talents or disabilities).

The new core curriculum recommends the following time table for pre-school education and care in kindergartens: one fifth of the total time should be devoted to play, one fifth – to outdoor activities, one fifth – to educational activities, and the remaining two fifths teachers ought to devote to care and organisational matters.

Other forms of pre-school education, apart from kindergartens and pre-school classes in schools, are as follows: pre-school centre, where classes take place on particular days of the week, and a pre-school unit where classes are offered every day. The minimum opening time for both forms of pre-school education is 3 hours a day and 12 hours a week. Classes are offered in groups enrolling 3 to 25 children. According to the regulation the school running body in charge of these settings decides on the organisational matters.

2.3

Curriculum

The Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 23 December 2008 on the core curricula for pre-school education and general education in individual types of schools has introduced the current core curriculum for pre-school education. This document provides the basis for the development of curricula for pre-school institutions by teachers and other persons and for the organisation of classes for children.

The curriculum covers all activities undertaken by teachers to encourage children to interact with adults and peers. Thus it should define detailed aims, contents corresponding with the core curriculum, and methods to achieve the aims set, taking into consideration opportunities for individualised work to reflect children's needs and abilities, and methods used to assess the child's readiness for school education. There are no official recommendations or guidelines with respect to teaching methods. Kindergartens, pre-school classes and institutions offering pre-school education in other settings are required to follow a curriculum based on the core curriculum and adjusted to the needs and abilities of the children concerned. The curriculum is approved for use in kindergartens or pre-school classes of a primary school by the head of the kindergarten/school. In the case of other pre-school education settings, the curriculum is approved for use by the head of the kindergarten or primary school acting as the employer for teachers teaching classes in such alternative settings.

Pre-school education does not introduce subjects as these are understood in the school system. Education is considered globally and is based mainly on play activities for children. One of the major tasks of pre-school institutions is to create suitable conditions for the child's individual development and preparation for school education. Pre-school pupils learn occasionally and spontaneously while playing. Pre-school teachers enable children to undertake various forms of activity, to 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 to arouse their interest in reading.

Teaching and upbringing within the framework of the core curriculum in pre-schools is free of charge, and the time devoted to implementation of this curriculum cannot be shorter than 5 hours a day. Upon their parents' consent the children can attend additional activities such as foreign language classes for which fees are paid. In some kindergartens, especially in cities, all children aged 5–6 are enrolled in additional English language classes and the commune pays for it. Such solutions are implemented on the local government initiative and not very common.

2.4

Assessment

According to the Regulation by the Minister of National Education introducing the outline statutes of public kindergartens the pre-school teacher is responsible for continuous observation of the child and keeping up-to date records which aim at the recognition and fulfillment of children's developmental needs and provide basis for

cooperation with specialists offering psychological, educational and medical support. The information collected during this observation helps the teacher with his/her daily work and cooperation with the child's parents in the support of his/her development. Moreover, the core curriculum for pre-school education defines the obligation of teachers of 5-year olds (and up to 2014 of 6-year olds) enrolled in pre-school education to carry out an assessment of a child's readiness for undertaking school education (pre-school diagnosis). This assessment takes place at the beginning of the school year preceding the child's enrollment in grade 1 of primary school. The results of initial assessment are passed to the child's parents. On the basis of the initial assessment the teacher prepares an individual support and correction plan related to the child's development. He/she undertakes, in cooperation with parents and specialists, efforts aiming at the preparation of the child for school education. The parents of child completing his/her pre-school education receive a written report on their child's readiness for undertaking school education. It is up to their discretion if they wish to pass this information to the school or not. For more information on pupil assessment see also section 3.5.

CAŁA POLSKA CZYTA DZIECIOM



ALL OF POLAND READS TO KIDS

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN PROVIDES EXAMPLES OF DOABLE AND SUCCESSFUL ACTIVITIES PROMOTING READING ALOUD TO CHILDREN FROM THEIR BIRTH TILL MID ADOLESCENCE.



IN 2011, CONDUCTING THE READING CAMPAIGN FOR TEN YEARS, THE “ABCXXI – ALL OF POLAND READS TO KIDS” FOUNDATION LAUNCHED THE “ALL OF EUROPE READS TO KIDS”

ALL OF EUROPE READS TO KIDS

PROGRAMME TO PROMOTE DAILY READING TO CHILDREN, FACILITATE AN EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES AND GOOD PRACTICES BETWEEN DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONS IN EUROPE.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

3

The eight-year single structure primary school was the basic element of the Polish education system in the years 1961–1999. Since 1999/2000 children between the ages of 6/7 and 13 attend primary schools for a period of 6 years. Primary education is accessible to, and obligatory for all pupils. Children are required to enter primary education when they have reached or will reach the age of 7 in a given school year. Primary education is based on one year compulsory pre-school preparation for children who will enrol in grade 1 of primary school in the following school year. The amendment to the School Education Act of 1991 made primary school education compulsory also for 6-year-old children. This change, however, has been implemented gradually i.e. from 2009 to 2013 it is still optional, whereas in 2014 it will become compulsory for this age group.

The basic legislation for primary education is the School Education Act of 7 September 1991 (with further amendments). The detailed legislative framework can be found in the regulations issued by the minister of education. These concern, among other things, regulations on the core curricula, outline timetables, organisation of the school year, rules of organisation and assessment of final tests upon the completion of primary education.

General education in primary school is divided into two stages:

- 1) first stage of education including grade 1 to 3 of primary school – early school education
- 2) second stage of education including grades 4 to 6 of primary school.

Starting from September 2009 in the first grades of primary school a new core curriculum has been implemented based on the Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 23 December 2008 on Core Curricula for Pre-school and General Education in particular types of schools. The main aims of general education in primary school according to the new core curriculum are as follows:

- pupils are to acquire a basic set of information/knowledge on facts, theories and practice related in particular to topics and phenomena close to their experience,
- pupils are to acquire skills related to the use of knowledge and information in carrying out tasks and solving problems,

- pupils are to develop attitudes related to efficient and responsible functioning in the contemporary world.

Most primary schools in Poland are coeducational.

Public primary schools are free of charge. The parent council established in a given school can collect funds from voluntary donations by parents or from other sources. Such funds can be also spent on statutory school activities (education and care). All non-public primary schools have to obtain the rights of public schools.

Pupils from families with a low monthly income are entitled to various types of support (e.g. financial contribution for purchase of textbooks, financial grant for extra-curricular activities, school grant for pupils in a particularly difficult situation).

3.1 **Admission**

Children are admitted to primary schools at the age of seven (they must reach 7 years of age during the calendar year in which they start compulsory education). Before 2009, at the parents' request, a child who reached the age of 6 before September 1 (the beginning of a school year) could also start education if he/she was mature enough from the psychological and physical points of view. In particularly cases school attendance may be delayed but not longer than one year (with the exception of children with disabilities – see section 8). The decision on admission or adjournment is taken by the school head after consultation with a counselling and guidance centre. Communes are divided into school catchment areas in order to provide an even access to schools. All changes of school catchment areas require the approval of the Education Superintendent. Children are admitted easily to a school in their catchment area. If there are places in a relevant class, children from another catchment area may be admitted to a school on their parents' request.

3.2 **Organisation**

The organisation of the school year is defined by the Ministry of National Education in a separate regulation. The Ministry of National Education issues the calendar for the school year on an annual basis, specifying the dates of the start and the end of the school year and school holidays. The school year (for primary and secondary schools) is divided into two semesters, the first semester lasting from the first day of

classes (the first working day of September) till the last Saturday preceding the winter holidays; and the second one from the Monday directly after the winter holidays till the last day of classes (the last Friday in June). The dates of the winter break vary among the provinces in Poland. The winter holidays should, in principle, be scheduled between mid-January and the end of February and last for two weeks. The exact timing of the winter break is determined by the head of the regional education authorities (education superintendent) in agreement with the governor of the province (voivode). Primary and secondary schools in Poland also have Christmas and Easter breaks. In most public schools lessons start at 8 a.m. and finish at 2 or 3 p.m. if a school works in one shift. Each lesson usually lasts 45 minutes. Breaks are considered sufficient if they last at least 5–10 minutes, but no longer than 25 minutes. Pupils usually attend school five days a week, from Monday to Friday. Specific organisation of classes in a given school is defined in the school's statutes. Schools usually are used for one set of pupils per day or sometimes for two working in shifts. The length of the school day is determined by legislation (outline timetables are prescribed for each age group). Classes are organised by age which is the first level of division. PE classes can be conducted in separate groups for boys and girls. In grades 4 to 6 of the primary school, grouping of pupils is obligatory in the following cases:

- for compulsory Computer classes, if groups have more than 24 pupils; the number of pupils in a group cannot exceed the number of computers in the computer lab;
- for compulsory foreign language classes, with pupils to be grouped according to the level of their language skills; classes are taught in cross-grade groups up to 24 pupils;
- for a maximum of 50% of compulsory general education which, in line with curricular contents, should comprise practical classes (including lab classes), in groups of more than 30 pupils.

3.3

Curriculum

Education in primary school is based on the core curriculum which defines the learning outcomes and some general requirements for the organisation of teaching at this level of education.

Core curricula have to be respected by each school, but school curricula are determined at the school level. Teachers are free to follow curricula chosen or developed by them independently and approved by the school head. The curriculum proposed by the teacher should be adjusted to the needs and abilities of the pupils concerned. Teachers may also

use textbooks selected from the list approved by the Minister of National Education. Starting with the school year 2009/10 the new core curriculum (based on the Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 23 December 2008 on Core Curricula for Pre-school and General Education in particular types of schools) has been introduced for grade 1 of primary school. Currently the new curriculum is being gradually introduced in the subsequent grades of primary school.

The new core curriculum has been defined in terms of general and detailed learning outcomes regarding knowledge and skills to be acquired by each pupil by the end of a given educational stage. This way the core curriculum determines the scope of knowledge and skills tested by external examination bodies. Pupils at the end of grade 6 sit an external test during the last year of their primary school education. For information on curricula implemented in special schools see section 8.

STAGE I (GRADES 1 TO 3 – EARLY SCHOOL EDUCATION)

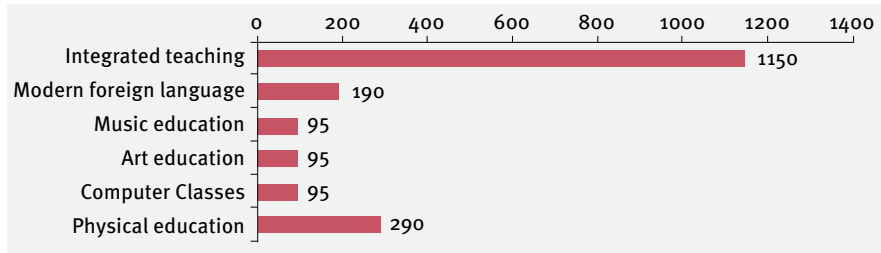
The teaching at Stage I is meant to provide a smooth transition from pre-primary to school education. Educational activities are conducted according to a flexible timetable prepared by the teacher, in which the duration of lessons and breaks is influenced by the pupils' activity.

Education in grades 1–3 of primary school is implemented in a form of integrated teaching provided by a generalist teacher. Music education, Art education, Physical education, Computer classes and modern foreign language classes can be taught by a specialist teacher with relevant qualifications.

Early school education aims to support children in their intellectual, emotional, social, ethical, physical and aesthetic development. The new curriculum defines the scope of knowledge and skills to be acquired, separately for pupils completing education in grade 1 and for pupils completing education in grade 3. The scope of knowledge and skills for pupils completing education in grade 3 is defined in the form of requirements. A separate curriculum for grade 1 has been designed in order to underline the continuity of the education process which begins in the kindergarten and continues in the primary school. Early school education is a process spread over three years of school education. This means that the knowledge and skills acquired by the pupil in grade 1 will be repeated and developed in grades 2 and 3. The scope of knowledge and skills which pupils should have gained by the end of education in grades 1 and 3 is defined in such a way as to enable teachers to work with children of average-level abilities.

According to the Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 7 February 2012 on Outline timetables in public schools in grades 1–3 of primary school in the period of three years the minimum number of compulsory classes (where 1 teaching hour equals 45 minutes) has been defined.

FIGURE 1. Stage I (grades 1–3, primary school) – minimum number of teaching hours by subject in the period of 3 years

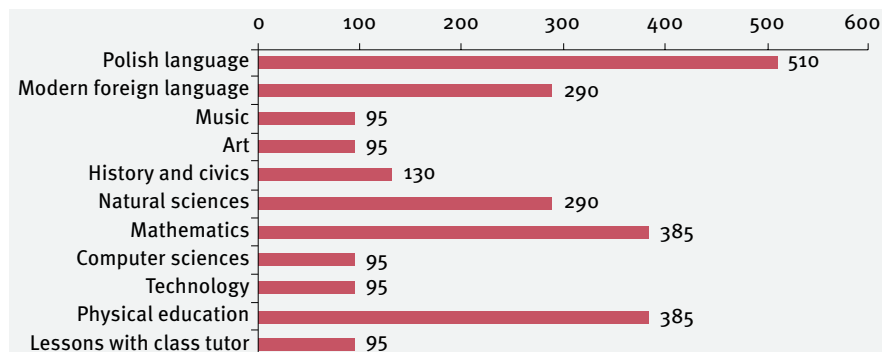


Non-compulsory Religion/Ethics classes are also envisaged. The number of teaching hours per week of compulsory classes for pupils in particular grades at the I educational stage has been defined as: grade 1 – 20 teaching hours, grade 2 – 21 teaching hours, grade 3 – 21 teaching hours.

STAGE II (GRADES 4 TO 6)

Stage II of the 6-year primary school covers grades 4, 5 and 6. Teaching at this stage is arranged by subjects. According to the new Core Curriculum of 2008 the following subjects are obligatory at the Stage II of primary education: Polish language, History and civics, Modern foreign language, Mathematics, Natural science, Music, Art, Technology, Computer classes, Physical education, Religion/Ethics is not compulsory. According to the Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 7 February 2012 on Outline timetables in public schools, in grades 4–6 of primary school in the period of three years, the minimum number of compulsory classes includes (where 1 teaching hour equals 45 minutes) has been defined.

FIGURE 2. Stage II (grades 4–6, primary school) – minimum number of teaching hours by subject in the period of 3 years



Non-compulsory Religion/Ethics classes are also envisaged. The number of hours per week of compulsory classes for pupils in particular grades at the II educational stage has been defined as: grade 4 – 25 teaching hours; grade 5 – 26 teaching hours; grade 6 – 28 teaching hours.

For both stages of primary school the school running body can allocate, upon the school head's request, up to 3 hours per week for every class in the given school year for the implementation of the following classes:

- 1) increase (for one semester or one year) in the number of hours of compulsory educational classes;
- 2) implementation of additional classes aiming at the development of pupils' talents and interests:
 - a) modern foreign language classes devoted to a language different than the compulsory language taught at school,
 - b) other educational classes included in the school curriculum.

The above mentioned classes, once approved by the school head, become obligatory in the given school.

3.4

Assessment, progression and evaluation

Internal assessment is carried out by school teachers against the requirements which are defined by them on the basis of curricula. This type of assessment covers pupils' learning achievements and aims to support their development. External assessment is carried out by institutions which are external to the school, including the Central Examination Board and Regional Examination Boards.

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Internal assessment of pupils' learning achievements involves assessing the level of pupils' knowledge and skills as well as the progress made in relation to the requirements based on the curricula. Internal assessment covers the pupil's learning achievements and his/her behaviour.

Internal assessment aims at:

- informing pupils on the level of their learning achievements and behaviour, and their progress in this respect;
- supporting pupils in the individual planning of their development;
- motivating pupils to make further progress in learning and behaviour;

- providing parents (legal guardians) and teachers with the information on pupils' progress or learning difficulties, behaviour and special talents;
- enabling teachers to improve organisational approaches and methods used in their educational activities.

Pupils are assessed separately in each subject. Results of the assessment carried out during a school year are taken into account in the end-of-year assessment. Assessment is based on single, mid-year (semester) and annual marks. End of the year assessment (annual mark) is compulsory. Pupil's knowledge and achievements are assessed by the teacher of a given subject. The school defines its own internal assessment system which is included in the school statutes.

At the end of the school year pupils in grades 1 to 3 of the primary school are given descriptive assessment for educational activities and for behaviour. Starting in grade 4, the teacher can use the following marking scale to assess pupils' learning achievements: 6 – excellent, 5 – very good, 4 – good, 3 – satisfactory, 2 – acceptable, 1 – unsatisfactory. This marking scale is required during the end of the year assessment. When giving marks in Physical education, Technology, Music classes and Art classes, teachers should take into account, in particular, the efforts made by the pupil to fulfil the specific requirements of a given subject. School marks and the criteria for giving them should be available to pupils and their parents.

A pupil is promoted to a higher grade if she/he has received "acceptable" (2) marks or above for all compulsory subjects at the end of the school year. If she/he receives "an unsatisfactory" mark in one subject, she/he can take a resit examination in this subject. A pupil who has failed the resit is not promoted and remains in the same grade. In some cases of failed resit examination the teaching council can decide upon pupil's promotion to the following grade under the condition that this subject will be continued by the pupil in the coming school year.

Pupils also receive marks for their behaviour (conduct) according to the following scale: excellent, very good, good, acceptable, unacceptable, inadmissible. The mark for behaviour should not influence subject marks, the promotion to the higher grade or graduation. However, in specific cases, the teaching council of the school may decide that the pupil cannot be promoted to the higher grade or complete education in the primary school due to his/her inadmissible behaviour.

At the end of each school year pupils receive certificates in a standardized form. A graduate who graduated with distinction, receives a school leaving certificate with distinction.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

An external standardized test is carried out upon the completion of primary school (at the end of grade 6). It was conducted for the first time in 2002 by the Regional

Examination Boards. The test is obligatory for all pupils, and taking the test is one of the conditions for completion of primary education, however some pupils may be exempt from the test (see section 8). The test is designed to assess the level of skills defined in the national examination standards (the test has not yet been adjusted to the new 2008 core curriculum based on learning outcomes which will take place in 2015). The skills are divided into 5 areas: reading, writing, reasoning, using information and applying knowledge in practice. The test results have no bearing on the completion of education in primary school. The head of the local lower secondary school is obliged to admit a primary school graduate residing in his/her school's catchment area regardless the results obtained during the test or marked on the school leaving certificate.

EXTERNAL SCHOOL AND TEACHER EVALUATION

The legislation has introduced identical quality assurance approaches in early childhood and school education. These include the following three main elements which are subject to separate detailed regulations and which aim to achieve slightly different objectives, although their overall common objective is to improve the quality of education:

- system of pedagogical supervision, including:
 - evaluating the quality and conditions of educational and care-related activities undertaken by kindergartens, schools, other educational institutions and teachers;
 - analyzing and evaluating outcomes of educational, care-related and other statutory activities undertaken by kindergartens, schools and other educational institutions;
 - supporting kindergartens, schools and other educational institutions as well as teachers in the performance of their educational and care-related tasks;
 - inspiring teachers to introduce educational, methodological and organisational innovations;
- internal teacher appraisal, including two types of assessment:
 - assessment of the teacher's performance, carried out by the school head as part of internal pedagogical supervision; it serves directly the purpose of quality improvement and is one of the mechanisms of internal quality assurance;
 - assessment of the teacher's professional achievements carried out by the school head in case a teacher applies for the promotion to a higher professional grade;
- external pupil assessment described above.

3.5

Guidance and counselling

Tasks related to the psychological and pedagogical support are within the statutory responsibility of every school as well as other educational institutions. The Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 17 November 2010 has introduced new rules for the provision of psychological and educational support in public kindergartens, schools and other public educational institutions. The responsibility for such support services rests with the school head. Psychological and educational support is targeted at all children who require it due to their recognised individual developmental and educational needs as well as their special talents. Schools often employ specialist teachers, psychologists, or speech therapists who organise special classes and contribute to the solving of individual or internal school problems.

Moreover, public **counselling and guidance centres** (CGCs) (*poradnie psychologiczno-pedagogiczne*) operate across the country. They provide support for children, youth, parents and teachers in tackling developmental, learning difficulties and educational problems, involving also those related to drugs and alcohol, organise therapy for children, youth and their families, as well as addiction prevention activities. Their second area of activity concerns educational guidance, i.e. support for pupils in choosing direction of further education. CGCs are responsible for issuing a written opinion on special educational needs of a pupil e.g. regarding dyslexia or disability that requires special education or individual learning.

Individual needs are first identified by teachers or specialists working with the child. Once it is established that the child requires psychological and educational support, the teacher should report it to the head of the kindergarten/school. The child's parents should also be informed, and adequate support should be provided in the kindergarten or school.

Teachers and specialists in classes involving a child with special educational needs work together in a team formula. The school head of the school determines types and methods of support, the period during which support will be provided and the duration (number of hours) for individual types of activities. The head also informs the child's parents in writing about the arrangements adopted. The arrangements are aimed at strengthening teamwork between schools and CGCs that support teachers in developing individual support programmes. For more information see section 8.

MIKOŁAJ KOPERNIK (NICOLAUS COPERNICUS,
1473 – 1543) – POLISH ASTRONOMER,
MATHEMATICIAN, PHYSICIAN, LAWYER, ECONOMIST
AND TRANSLATOR OF ITALIAN POETRY.

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SECONDARY EDUCATION

4

INSTITUTIONS

In Poland secondary education includes two ISCED levels – lower secondary school (*gimnazjum*) ISCED 2 and several types of upper secondary schools at ISCED 3.

Before 1999 there was no distinction in the Polish education system between lower and upper secondary schools. The lower secondary level was included in the 8-year single structure school. The lower secondary school as it is now (i.e. as *gimnazjum* – ISCED 2) was established in the school year 1999/2000.

Introduction of the lower secondary level resulted in the reform of the upper secondary school system (ISCED 3). As a result the following post-lower secondary school schools are open to candidates who have successfully graduated from lower secondary schools:

- a) 3-year general secondary school (*liceum ogólnokształcące*)
- b) 4-year technical secondary school (*technikum*)
- c) 3-year basic vocational school (*zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa*).

AIMS

According to the **new core curriculum** established by the Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 23 December 2008 on the core curricula for pre-school education and general education in individual types of schools, the educational aims are formulated for the two stages of secondary education together: stage III (lower secondary) and stage IV (upper secondary). This curriculum was introduced as from 1 September 2009 in grade 1 of the lower secondary school and since then has been gradually implemented.

General education at the III (lower secondary) and IV (upper secondary) educational stages aims to enable pupils 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;
- develop attitudes which determine efficient and responsible functioning in the modern world.

The most important skills to be acquired by pupils at stages III and IV of education include:

1. reading: the ability to understand, use and process reflectively texts, including culture texts, leading to the attainment of one's own goals, individual development and active participation in social life;
2. mathematical thinking: the ability to use mathematical tools in everyday life and to formulate conclusions based on mathematical thinking;
3. scientific thinking: the ability to use scientific knowledge in order to identify and solve problems, and the ability to formulate conclusions based on empirical observation related to nature and society;
4. communication skills in the mother tongue and foreign languages, including both speaking and writing skills;
5. the ability to use ICT in an efficient way;
6. the ability to search for, select and analyze information in a critical way;
7. the ability to identify one's own educational needs;
8. teamwork skills.

4.1

Lower secondary education

The lower secondary school is a school introduced in the school year 1999/2000 that offers 3-years of full-time general education for pupils who have completed the 6-year primary school. It is compulsory for all pupils. Study covers grades 1 to 3 (pupils aged 13 to 16) and it is not divided into stages. The lower secondary education is concluded with an external exam giving access to the upper secondary education.

The Minister of National Education has overall responsibility for these state and municipally funded institutions (communes are responsible for running these schools). They can be public or private establishments. Lower secondary schools are in most cases co-educational. No tuition fees are payable in public establishments. Non-public lower secondary schools are run by associations, foundations, religious organisations and individual persons. Lower secondary schools can be run as separate institutions or in clusters of schools (together with another school of a different level e.g. with a primary school or general upper secondary school).

Financial support can be offered to pupils (e.g. school social benefit, school support benefit, school grant for good school or sports results, the Minister's of Education's Scholarship granted to a particularly gifted secondary school pupil).

For information on pupils with special educational needs see section 8.

4.1.1 Admission

The only admission requirement is successful completion of the 6-year primary school and the attainment of the primary school leaving certificate. Starting from the year 2003, the primary school leaving certificate has been issued together with the certificate by the Regional Examination Commission of the external standardized test's results. The test is obligatory for all pupils.

4.1.2 Organisation

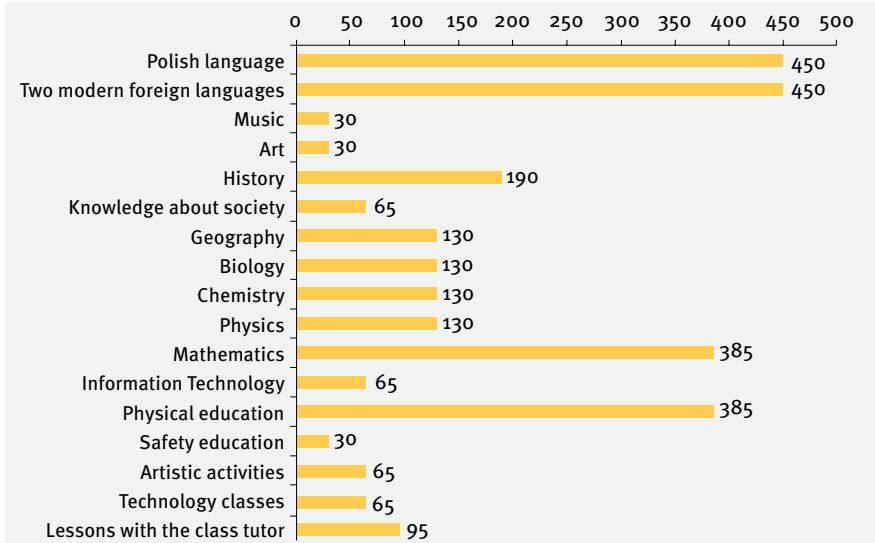
For details on organisation see section 3.2.

4.1.3 Curriculum

As of 1 September 2009 a new core curriculum has been introduced in grade 1 of the lower secondary school (based on the Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 23 December 2008 on Core Curricula for Pre-School Education and General Education in particular types of schools). At present the all three grades of lower secondary school are following the new core curriculum.

According to the Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 7 February 2012 on outline timetables in public schools in lower secondary school (III educational stage) in a period of three years the minimum number of hours of compulsory educational classes (where 1 teaching hour equals 45 minutes) has been defined, including Polish language, two modern foreign languages, Music, Art, History, Knowledge about society, Geography, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Information technology, Physical education, Safety education, Artistic activities, Technology classes and lessons with the class tutor.

FIGURE 3. Stage III (grades 1–3, lower secondary education) – minimum number of teaching hours by subject in the period of 3 years



Non-compulsory Religion/Ethics classes are also envisaged. The distribution of hours between the two foreign modern languages is left to the school head's discretion. Weekly number of hours of compulsory educational classes and lessons with the class tutor in particular grades is as follows: grade 1 – 29 hours, grade 2 – 30 hours, grade 3 – 31 hours.

For curricula, forms and methods of teaching – see section 3.3.

4.1.4 Assessment

INTERNAL PUPIL ASSESSMENT

For details on internal pupil assessment see section 3.4.

EXTERNAL PUPIL ASSESSMENT

At the end of the 3rd year of the lower secondary school, an external standardised examination has been introduced. For the first time it was conducted in 2002 by Regional Examination Commissions that are responsible for its organisation. This exam tests abilities, skills and knowledge in the field of humanities, science and, starting from 2009, foreign language proficiency. It is compulsory for all pupils. As of 2012, due to the implementation of the new (2008) core curricula, the exam takes a new form. It consists of three parts:

1. Humanities, including two subsections: a. History and Civic education and b. the Polish language,
2. Mathematics and Natural sciences, including two subsections: a. Natural sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Geography) and b. Mathematics,
3. Modern foreign language (basic or extended level).

The results are indicated on the lower secondary school leaving certificate. They are comparable on the national scale and have strong bearing on admission to upper secondary schools.

EXTERNAL SCHOOL AND TEACHER EVALUATION

For details on external school and teacher evaluation see section 3.4.

4.1.5 Guidance and counselling

The general lower secondary school is compulsory. It provides education by subjects, the widest possible variety, but at the basic level. One of the aims of this stage is to identify abilities and interests of pupils and to help them make a rational choice of route in further education.

Since 2003, School Career Centres (*Szkolne Ośrodki Kariery – SZOK*) have been created in schools at lower and upper secondary level. Currently, over 300 centres are operational. Their role is to provide pupils with information on possible educational pathways, the local labour market, labour laws, etc., and to help them acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to make their future career choices. They offer counselling to pupils and parents, individually or in groups.

The new core curriculum (based on the Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 23 December 2008) includes elements of career guidance in the compulsory subject “Knowledge about Society” (entrepreneurship, economic activity, choice of future school and profession).

For more information see section 3.5 and 8.

4.2

General upper secondary education

Candidates who have successfully graduated from lower secondary schools are free to continue education in several types of schools, one of them being general upper secondary schools (*liceum ogólnokształcące*) that offers 3 years of full-time general upper secondary education for youth aged 16 to 19. It offers the matriculation exam

that leads to the receipt of the matriculation certificate required for admission to higher education. General upper secondary schools are non-compulsory, mostly coeducational and not divided into cycles.

The main objective of general upper secondary education is to prepare young people for admission to higher education establishments of various types. For general aims of secondary education according to the 2008 Core Curriculum see section 4.

Education in public secondary schools is free of charge. In the case of non-public schools the bodies running the schools define the tuition fee. Many schools allow for fee waivers or reductions for the most talented pupils or for those from underprivileged families. Apart from the financial support offered to pupils in lower secondary schools (see also section 4.1) some additional support is open to pupils in upper secondary schools. The latter includes the Prime Minister's Scholarship for pupils with outstanding results and EU Grants for Pupils awarded to pupils from rural areas or small towns.

For information on pupils with special educational needs see section 8.

4.2.1 Admission

The number of points indicated on the lower secondary school leaving certificate (based on results achieved in chosen areas of study and other achievements) including the points received at the lower secondary school examination give the basis for pupils' admission to an upper secondary school. The detailed admission rules are defined by each upper secondary school which opens admissions to new pupils. The winners of regional competitions (subject competitions which encompass the curriculum of at least one subject) are admitted to the upper secondary school of their choice regardless of the criteria applied to other candidates.

4.2.2 Organisation

The use of school buildings and the organisation of school time are arranged according to the same rules as those established for primary and lower secondary schools. For details see section 3.2. and 4.1.2.

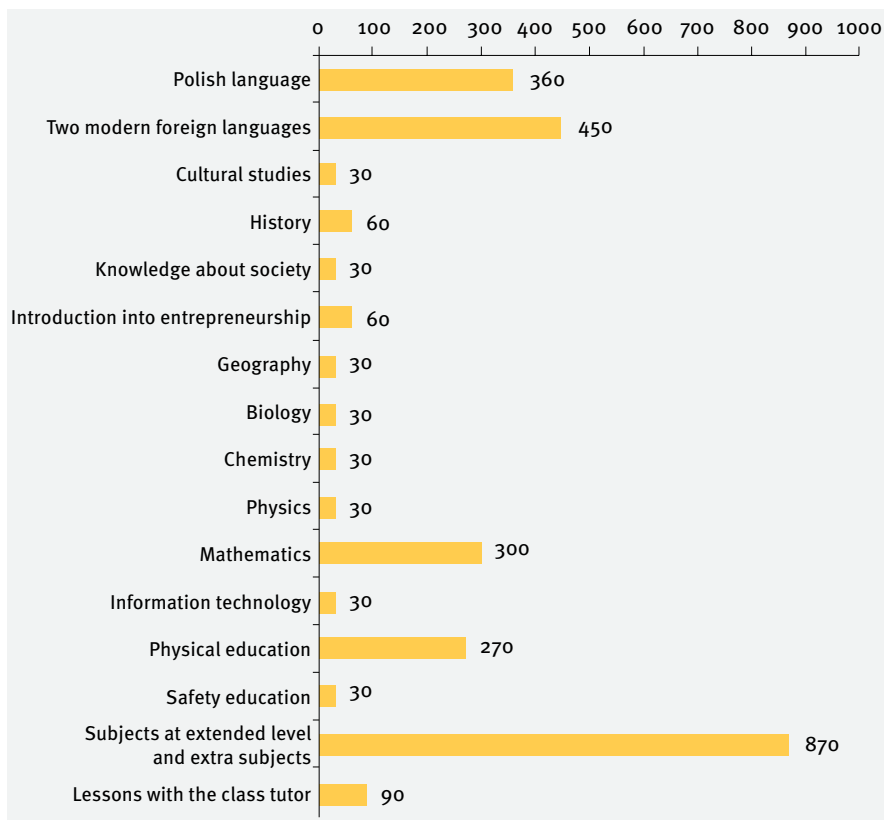
4.2.3 Curriculum

The core curriculum (2008) includes the following subjects to be taught in general secondary schools: Polish language, two modern foreign languages, Latin and ancient culture, Mathematics, History, Knowledge about society, Geography, Biology, Physics,

Chemistry, Technology classes, Information technology, Safety education, Physical education, Education for family life, Cultural studies, Introduction to entrepreneurship, minority language, and, only at the extended level, History of music, History of art, Latin and ancient culture and Philosophy. Four extra subjects are also envisaged: History and society, Natural science, Artistic classes and Economics in practice.

Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 7 February 2012 on outline timetables in public schools specifies the minimum number of hours of compulsory classes (where 1 teaching hour equals 45 minutes) in a period of 3 years in general upper secondary school (IV educational stage). Particular subjects taught at the basic level (names and number of hours) and the total number of hours for subjects taught at the extended level and extra subjects are as follows:

FIGURE 4. Stage IV (grades 1–3, general upper secondary education) – minimum number of teaching hours by subject in the period of 3 years



The distribution of hours between the two foreign modern languages is left to the school head's discretion. Non-compulsory Religion/Ethics classes are also envisaged.

Subjects taught at the extended level (total number of teaching hours: 870, added to the number of hours defined for the basic level): Polish language, History, Geography, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History of music, History of art, Latin and ancient culture and Philosophy – 240 teaching hours each; modern foreign language, Knowledge about society, Mathematics and IT – 180 teaching hours each. Additional subjects: History and society and Natural science – 120 teaching hours each; Artistic classes and Economics in practice – 30 teaching hours. The school head decides upon the list of subjects to be taught at the extended level of which a pupil chooses from 2 to 4 subjects under the condition that one from the following four subjects is chosen: History, Geography, Biology, Chemistry or Physics. A pupil who does not follow History at the extended level has to follow the curriculum of the additional subject History and society. A pupil who does not follow Geography, Biology, Chemistry or Physics at the extended level has to follow the curriculum of the additional subject Natural science. Weekly number of hours of compulsory educational classes and lessons with the class tutor in particular grades is as follows: grade 1 – 30 teaching hours, grade 2 – 32 teaching hours, grade 3 – 29 teaching hours.

For more information on curricula, forms and methods of teaching see section 3.3.

4.2.4 Assessment

For details on internal pupil assessment see section 3.4.

For details on progression see section 4.1.4.

On the completion of the 3-year general upper secondary school pupils are awarded a school leaving certificate on the basis of school results, without a final examination. It mentions the subjects and the marks obtained at the end of the final year. It gives access to the matriculation exam or to post-secondary education.

At the end of upper secondary education (except at basic vocational schools) pupils may sit a matriculation exam, an external national examination, which is compulsory only for receipt of the matriculation certificate and to gain access to higher education. The matriculation exam is held at the end of the general and technical upper secondary schools. It consists of a written part, prepared and assessed by Regional Examination Commissions, and oral examinations, prepared and assessed by school teachers. The Central Examination Commission and eight Regional Examination Commissions are wholly responsible for the matriculation exam, as well as for all external evaluation in Poland.

All public upper secondary schools, and those non-public schools that possess the rights of public schools, issue certificates in a standardized form (the format of these documents and rules for their completion are defined in respective regulations). A pupil who graduated with distinction, receives a school leaving certificate with distinction. A graduate of a general upper secondary school, who passed the matriculation exam receives a matriculation certificate. The certificate includes the results of the written and oral parts of the matriculation exam. The certificate and its annexes are issued by the regional examination commissions. It is a document allowing the holder to apply for admission to higher education institutions.

4.2.5 Guidance and counselling

Apart from the counselling and guidance centres supervised by the Ministry of National Education, the Centres of Information and Career Planning (*ośrodki kariery*) operate at the district level (under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour) offering job counselling services to the unemployed, job seekers and also school graduates and school pupils. Centres of Information and Career Planning are specialised institutions operating within the regional labour offices. They provide information about the labour market and opportunities for acquiring qualifications. They also support their clients in making decisions about their professional careers. Currently 51 such centres are operational in Poland, they employ vocational counsellors, educational counsellors and psychologists.

At the level of ISCED 3 the subject that is most related to career guidance is Introduction to entrepreneurship (compulsory subject), and the additional subject Economics in practice.

For more information see section 3.5, 4.1.5. and 8.

4.3

Vocational education

4.3.1 Reform of vocational education system

With the passing of the amendment to the School Education Act of 19 August 2011 and the Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 23 December 2011 on the classification of occupations for vocational education, a number of significant changes were introduced in the system of vocational education and training in Poland.

The most important reason behind the introduction of the reform was the need to improve the effectiveness and relevance of VET system and adjust it to better meet the current needs of employers and the labour market. To achieve this goal the following measures have been implemented:

- classification of occupations was modified – occupations are now described in terms of qualifications, pupils can acquire qualifications one by one throughout the whole education process (not only upon completion of school);
- new core curriculum for training for particular occupations was designed and introduced;
- the system of exams confirming qualifications was restructured, more flexible and opened to validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes, including the introduction of external examinations;
- a number of changes was introduced to the organisation of vocational education and training:
 - all basic vocational schools now offer a three year training programme,
 - vocational schools and continuing education centres can be consolidated in order to make their offer more diverse and increase opportunities for cooperation with employers,
 - new out-of-school forms of vocational training were introduced: vocational courses for adults that make possible taking of exams confirming qualifications.

The changes will simplify the acquisition of vocational education, enable completion of chosen qualifications and make attainment of a new occupation much easier. The new law introduces the possibility to obtain separate qualifications required in specific occupations, which was not possible before. Exams confirming qualifications will be held not only upon completion of education at school but also at different stages of education or after completion of each qualification. A pupil will receive a certificate on passing an exam for a single qualification, and after passing exams for all the qualifications required for a given occupation (and having required level of general education), he/she will receive a diploma for the full occupation.

Curriculum (for general subjects) in technical upper secondary schools (alike in general upper secondary schools) has been linked to the curriculum for the lower secondary school i.e. pupils will continue to implement the curriculum in the first year of vocational upper secondary education and consequently, will have the possibility to continue education in general upper secondary schools for adults from the second year. The amendment introduces the possibility to combine basic vocational schools and create centres of vocational and continuing training. Some institutions i.e. specialised upper secondary schools and supplementary general and technical upper secondary

schools for adults will gradually cease to exist (admission to these schools is no longer possible).

The new concept of vocational education is based on the idea of defining particular qualifications in the framework of every occupation. Vocational schools provide vocational education in particular occupations on the basis of defined qualifications. The new classification of occupations in vocational education includes 200 occupations which encompass 251 qualifications. The classification of occupations includes:

- 23 occupations – with 3 qualifications per occupation,
- 72 occupations – with 2 qualifications per occupation,
- 98 occupations – 1 qualification per occupation,
- 7 occupations in artistic education without separate qualifications.

The new measures came into force on 1 September 2012.

4.3.2 Institutions

The main objective of vocational upper secondary education is to prepare young people for entering the labour market. The following upper secondary technical and vocational schools are open to candidates who have successfully graduated from the lower secondary school:

- 4-year technical upper secondary school (*technikum*) – a type of school that offers 4 years of full-time technical and vocational upper secondary education for pupils aged 16 to 20. It offers the matriculation exam necessary for admission to higher education and an external vocational examination leading to vocational qualifications.
- 3-year basic vocational school (*zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa*) – a type of school that offers 3 years of full-time upper secondary vocational education for pupils aged 16 to 19. Upon passing the external vocational examination or (according to the modernised system) a set of examinations each enabling gaining separate qualifications, leavers have access to a trade or occupation or can continue their education in settings for adults.

In the new structure of the upper secondary education (introduced in September 2012) the graduates of basic vocational schools will be able to continue their education in general upper secondary schools for adults starting with grade 2 and/or acquire further qualifications in the chosen occupation in a form of qualifying vocational courses, which prepare for passing an exam confirming a qualification in an occupation.

For details on funding and financial support to pupils see section 4.2.

For details on pupils with special educational needs see section 8.

4.3.3 Admission

See section 4.2.1. (Admission to general upper secondary education).

4.3.4 Organisation

In the field of general and theoretical vocational education the use of school buildings and the organisation of school time are arranged according to the same rules as those established for and lower secondary schools (see section 4.1.2).

PRACTICAL TRAINING

In vocational education practical vocational training is organised in the form of practical training classes at school or vocational placements or at the employers (in case of apprenticeships). Practical vocational training is organised in school workshops, school labs, continuing education centres, practical training centres, with employers, and on individual farms; it applies to pupils of public upper secondary schools offering vocational education as well as young workers/apprentices undergoing practical training as part of their job preparation course.

Practical training is organised by the school. Training for apprentices is organised by their employers.

4.3.5 Curriculum

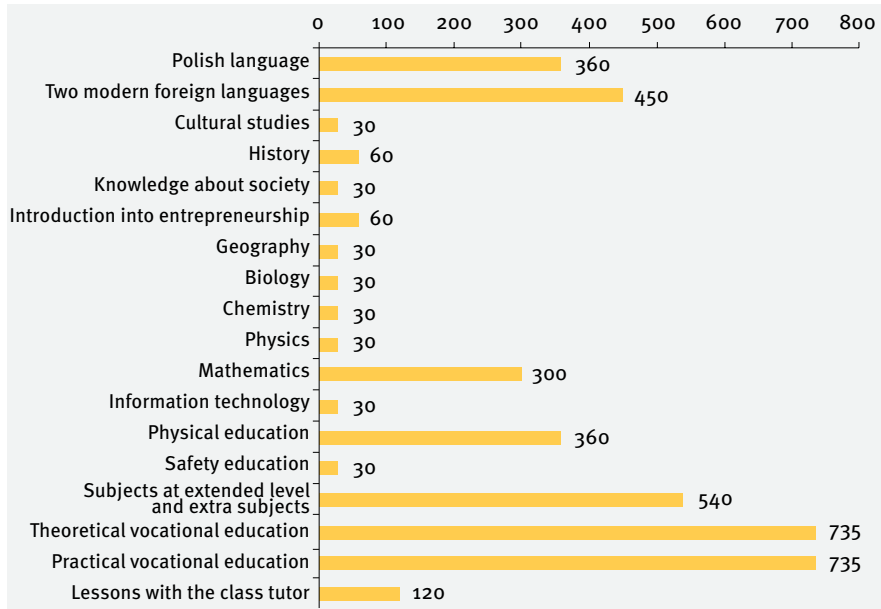
For general information on the core curriculum and subjects see section 4.2.3.

Vocational training in particular occupations listed in the classification of occupations for vocational education is implemented on the basis of the updated core curriculum for training for particular occupations.

TECHNICAL UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 7 February 2012 on Outline Timetables in public schools specifies the minimum number of hours of compulsory classes (where 1 teaching hour equals 45 minutes) in a period of 3 years in technical upper secondary school (IV educational stage). Particular subjects taught at the basic level (names and number) and the total number of subjects taught at the extended level and extra subjects are presented in the figure below:

FIGURE 5. Stage IV grades 1–4, technical upper secondary school – minimum number of teaching hours by subject in the period of 4 years



Weekly number of teaching hours of compulsory classes in particular grades is as follows: grade 1 – 33 teaching hours, grade 2 – 35 teaching hours, grade 3 – 34 teaching hours, grade 4 – 31 teaching hours. The distribution of hours between the two foreign modern languages is left to the school head's discretion. Non-compulsory Religion/Ethics classes are also envisaged.

Subjects taught at the extended level (total number of teaching hours: 540, added to the number of hours defined for the basic level): Polish language, History, Geography, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History of music, History of art, Latin and ancient culture and Philosophy – 240 teaching hours each; modern foreign language, Knowledge about society, Mathematics and Information technology – 180 teaching hours each. Additional subjects: History and society and Natural science – 120 teaching hours each; Economics in practice and Artistic classes – 30 teaching hours.

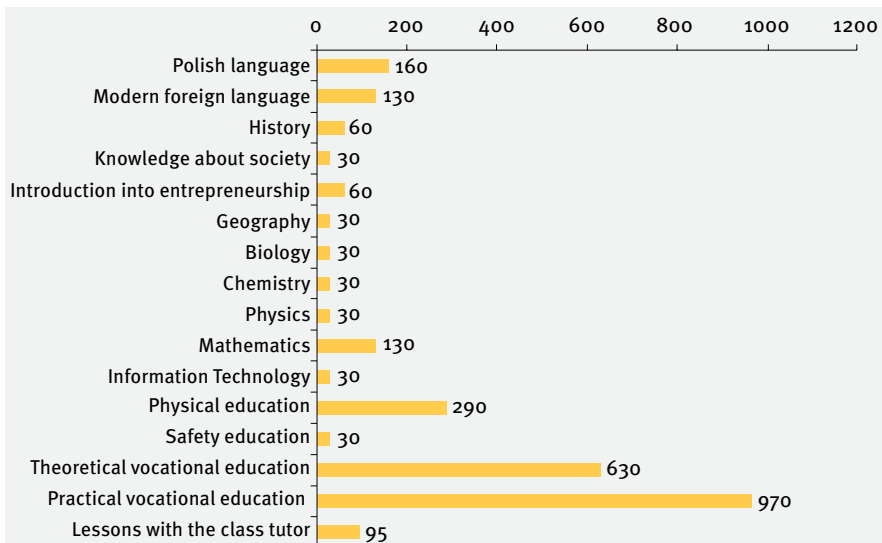
Practical placements are implemented according to the time scope provided in core curriculum for training for particular occupations. The school head decides upon the list of subjects to be taught at the extended level of which a pupil chooses 2 subjects under the condition that one from the following four subjects is chosen: Mathematics, Geography, Biology, Chemistry or Physics. A pupil has to follow the curriculum of the additional subject History and society. A pupil who has chosen History and one

of the following subjects – Geography, Biology, Chemistry or Physics at the extended level has to follow the curriculum of the additional subject Economics in Practice. A pupil who has chosen History and Mathematics at the extended level has to follow the curriculum of the additional subject Natural Science.

BASIC VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

According to the Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 7 February 2012 on Outline Timetables in public schools, in basic vocational school (IV educational stage) in a period of 3 years the minimum number of hours of compulsory classes (where 1 teaching hour equals 45 minutes) is as follows:

FIGURE 6. Stage IV, grades 1–3, basic vocational school – minimum number of teaching hours by subject in the period of 3 years



Non-compulsory Religion/Ethics classes are also envisaged. Weekly number of teaching hours of compulsory classes in particular grades is as follows: grade 1 – 27 teaching hours, grade 2 – 29 teaching hours, grade 3 – 30 teaching hours. Practical training classes are aimed at the acquisition of vocational skills necessary for a particular professional career. Practical vocational training has two forms: traineeships and practical training classes. Subject teachers have the right to choose methods of teaching, depending on the number of pupils per class and on school equipment (e.g. the number of computers, DVDs, specialist equipment, workshops). Teachers are free to choose textbooks from the list approved by the Ministry.

4.3.6 Assessment

Like in other types of upper secondary schools, vocational upper secondary school leavers receive a school leaving certificate. At the end of technical upper secondary school pupils may sit the matriculation exam, an external national examination introduced as so in 2006. For detailed information on the matriculation exam see section 4.2.4.

In all types of vocational upper secondary schools pupils may take an examination confirming vocational qualifications called the vocational examination which is an examination assessing the level of knowledge and skills in the given qualification defined in the examination standards. The examination is not obligatory. The vocational examination is held in two forms: written and practical. The examination is organised by the relevant Regional Examination Commission and aims at the assessment of pupils' knowledge and practical skills related to a given occupation. The scope of the examination is defined in the vocational qualifications examination standards.

A graduate of a vocational upper secondary school i.e. technical upper secondary school or basic vocational school who passes the vocational examinations for all qualifications in an occupation, receives a diploma confirming vocational qualifications. The diploma includes the name of the occupation for which the qualifications have been confirmed and the results of the vocational examination (both written and practical parts). Diplomas confirming vocational qualifications are issued by regional examination commissions. The diploma confirming vocational qualifications can be accompanied, at the graduate's request, by a supplement describing the graduate's qualifications or by a description of the occupation based on the core curriculum.

At the holder's request, the vocational qualification diploma can be issued together with an Europass document: a supplement based on a description of the holder's qualifications or description of the occupation as given in the core curriculum for training for particular occupations. The supplement can be issued in Polish or English. The new concept of vocational education introduced in September 2012 allows for obtaining certificates confirming each of the qualifications included in a definition of the given occupation, or certificates confirming single qualifications. For more information on internal pupil assessment see section 3.4 and on progression and certification of pupils see section 4.1.4.

4.3.7 Guidance and counselling

For details on guidance and counselling see section 3.5, 4.1.5, 4.2. and 8.

POST-SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY EDUCATION

5

Post-secondary non-tertiary schools (*szkoły policealne*), due to the type of qualifications they offer, are included as part of secondary education in the Polish classification, and assigned to the level 4 in the ISCED. Post-secondary schools offer programmes lasting up to 2.5 years which are a follow-up to upper secondary education. They enable pupils who have completed general upper secondary education to acquire a diploma confirming vocational qualifications upon passing a vocational exam. Post-secondary school leavers who hold a matriculation certificate may apply for admission to higher education institutions according to the general rules.

Post-secondary schools are administered by central administration units, local government units, non-governmental and religious organisations and associations. There are post-secondary schools for young people, adults and these providing special education. This type of school prepares general and specialised upper secondary school leavers for employment in the following groups of occupations: middle-level technical staff, middle-level technical staff in biological sciences and health protection, office staff, personal services and security workers and workers in other specialization areas. Education in public post-secondary schools is free of charge. In the case of non-public schools, the bodies running the school define the tuition fee.

There were more than 2.9 thousand public and non-public post-secondary schools, with almost 300 thousand students enrolled (school year 2010/2011). Non public post-secondary schools report the greatest share of enrolment. In 2010/2011, 75% of post-secondary schools were run by non-public bodies.

5.1

Admission

Post-secondary schools admit mainly graduates of general upper secondary schools. Most of them require only a secondary school leaving certificate, not the matriculation certificate. Students usually start their education in post-secondary schools aged

19 years. The detailed admission rules are defined by each post-secondary school which opens admissions to new students.

5.2

Organisation

The School Education Act of 7 September 1991 does not prescribe the duration of courses in individual types of public post-secondary schools. Their duration varies, reflecting the flexibility of curricula – differences in curricula for particular occupations – and the relevant outline timetables. Very often modular curricula are used giving more flexibility.

The school year in post-secondary schools is divided into two semesters: the first semester lasting from the first day of classes (the first working day of September) till the last Saturday preceding the winter holidays; and the second one from the Monday directly after the winter holidays till the last day of classes (the last Friday in June). The dates of the winter break vary among the provinces in Poland. The winter holidays should, in principle, be scheduled between mid-January and the end of February and last for two weeks. The exact timing of the winter break is determined by the head of the regional education authorities in agreement with the governor of the province. Post-secondary schools in Poland also have Christmas and Easter breaks.

5.3

Curriculum

Post-secondary schools provide courses within more than 20 groups of specialization: arts, economics and administration, medical studies, technology, agriculture, forestry and fishery, transport and communication, services and others. The most popular specializations include: economics and administration, medical services, services to the population and computing.

According to the Regulation by the Minister for National Education of 7 February 2012 on outline timetables in public schools in 2-year post-secondary schools of the minimum number of compulsory lessons is as follows: theoretical vocational training – 800 teaching hours, practical vocational training – 800 teaching hours and PE – 190 teaching hours. In the case of 1 and 1.5 or 2.5 year schools the number of hours defined for the 2-year cycle is proportionally adjusted (reduced or increased). The weekly number of compulsory classes for students in particular semesters is defined at 28 hours each.

Practical placements are implemented in the scope defined in the core curriculum for particular occupations. As of 1 September 2012 the new core curriculum for training for particular occupations is effective. It introduces modified classification of occupations – they are now described in terms of qualifications, pupils can acquire qualifications one by one throughout the whole education process (not only upon completion of school).

5.4

Assessment

Students are assessed separately in each subject. Marks are given by teachers teaching individual subjects. The results of the assessment carried out during the year are taken into account in the end-of-year assessment. Assessment includes single, end-of-semester and end-of-year marks. The teacher uses the following scale of marks to assess students' learning achievements: 6 – excellent, 5 – very good, 4 – good, 3 – satisfactory, 2 – acceptable, 1 – unsatisfactory. When giving marks in PE, the teacher should take into account, in particular, the efforts made by the student to fulfil the specific requirements of the subject. Marks and the marking criteria should be available to the student. Behaviour (conduct) is not assessed in post-secondary schools. For progression see section 4.3. Graduates of post-secondary schools can take an external examination confirming their vocational qualifications referred to as a vocational examination, introduced in post-secondary schools in the years 2006–2008, that is aimed at the assessment of knowledge and skills related to a given vocation which are defined in the examination standards. The exam is conducted twice a year. For detailed information see section 4.3. A post-secondary school graduate is awarded a school leaving certificate. A graduate who passed the vocational examination receives a diploma confirming vocational qualifications. For detailed information on the diploma see section 4.3.

5.5

Guidance and counselling

Students of post-secondary vocational schools have access to available free assistance services as well as educational and career guidance. Post-secondary school graduates who are entering the labour market have access to employment services and career guidance offered by the state employment services. They may also use services provided by private employment agencies.

For more information see section 3.5, 4.1.5, 4.2. and 8.



JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY IN KRAKOW

UNIwersytet Jagielloński

In 1364, after many years of endeavour, King Casimir the Great established an academy in Krakow, then the capital of the Kingdom of Poland. The institution, since 1817 known as the Jagiellonian University, followed the pattern adopted at the universities of Bologna and Padua, and was the second university to be founded in Central Europe.



The University
of Padua
(1222)



The University
of Bologna
(1088)



TERTIARY EDUCATION

6

Tertiary education currently includes the following types of programmes:

- **college programmes** (ISCED 5B) classified as tertiary education for international comparisons, but not recognised as such in the national legislation;
- **degree programmes** (ISCED 5A) provided by both public and non-public university-type and non-university higher education institutions, including:
 - first-cycle (Bachelor's degree) programmes;
 - second-cycle (Master's degree) programmes;
 - long-cycle (Master's degree) programmes.
- **third-cycle or doctoral programmes** (ISCED 6).

6.1

College programmes

College programmes (ISCED 5B) offered in all three types of colleges prepare students for employment. **Teacher training colleges** (*kolegium nauczycielskie*) prepare teachers for kindergartens, primary schools and education-and-care establishments. **Foreign language teacher training colleges** (*nauczycielskie kolegium języków obcych*) train teachers of foreign languages for all levels of school education – from pre-primary to post-secondary schools and other establishments providing education or training below the higher education level. Both types of colleges may also be authorised to provide courses leading to a pedagogical qualification, required to practice the teaching profession, and in-service teacher training courses. **Colleges of social work** (*kolegium pracowników służb społecznych*) train prospective social workers, and may also offer in-service training courses in the areas of welfare and social work.

All three types of colleges provide 3-year programmes leading to a college diploma. Teacher training colleges and foreign language teacher training colleges specialise in teacher training, and thus are also referred to in the legislation as 'initial teacher training institutions'. Colleges of social work specialise in the training of social workers.

All three types of public colleges are established and administered by the local government body at the regional level. Each teacher training college, foreign language teacher training college and college of social work is supervised academically by a HEI which offers Master's degree programmes in the field of study corresponding to the field of specialization in a given college. Detailed arrangements concerning such academic supervision are laid down in an agreement obligatorily concluded between the body administering a given college and a given HEI.

6.1.1 Admission

College programmes provided in all three types of colleges, including teacher training colleges, foreign language teacher training colleges and colleges of social work, are open to holders of an upper secondary school leaving certificate (matriculation certificate). Applicants are also required to obtain a positive result in the admission procedure. Admission rules and procedures are adopted by the Programme Council, a collective body established in each college. Moreover, those applying for admission to a teacher training college or a foreign language teacher training college must have a medical certificate confirming that they fulfil health requirements for the teaching profession.

6.1.2 Fees

No tuition fees are charged by public colleges for courses taught as part of full-time programmes, except when courses are repeated by college students as a result of their unsatisfactory learning achievements. Tuition fees may be charged for part-time programmes. The level of such fees is determined by the director of a given college, in consultation with the body administering a given college, on the basis of expected teaching costs. For details see section 1.3.2.

6.1.3 Organisation of the academic year

The duration of the academic year in teacher training colleges, foreign language colleges and colleges of social work is specified in the statutes of individual colleges. The school year in teacher training colleges usually lasts between 1 October and 30 September in the following year, and includes 2 semesters of classes, winter and summer examination sessions, public holiday breaks and winter and summer holidays.

6.1.4 Assessment

Each course is completed on the basis of an oral or written examination or the assessment of the work of a student during a course; the coursework is assessed by various methods, including papers/essays or projects. The grading scale is as follows: excellent – 6, very good – 5, good – 4, sufficient – 3, insufficient – 2. These marks, except the highest mark, “excellent”, may be upgraded by 0.5 (+). Student performance during a course is assessed by the teacher responsible for a given course. Examinations are also conducted by the teacher responsible for a given course. The performance of students during practical training (a practical placement) is assessed by the teacher responsible for practical training in a given college and the supervisor in the institution where the placement takes place. Student learning achievements are recorded in their students’ record books.

Detailed rules for taking examinations, progression to the next semester and year, repetition of a year and admission to the final (diploma) examination are laid down in the study regulations adopted by individual colleges. However, all college students are allowed to retake an examination, including the final examination, and an examination following a failed repeat, conducted by an examination review board after an appeal made by a student to such a board. In order to be admitted to the final examination, students are required to complete all courses and practical placements as provided for in the curriculum, and to submit a diploma thesis which must then receive a positive assessment.

College programmes end with a final (diploma) examination taken before an examination board established by the director of a given college. College graduates are awarded a college diploma (*dyplom ukończenia kolegium*). College students may also supplement their study programme and take a Bachelor’s degree examination before an examination board established by the rector of the HEI responsible for academic supervision over a given specialty field in their college. Upon passing such an examination, students are awarded a Bachelor’s degree by the supervising HEI.

6.1.5 Guidance and counselling

Practical placements are organised as an integral part of training programmes in all three types of colleges. Teacher training colleges and foreign language teacher training colleges organise practical placements for their students in schools and other educational establishments. Colleges of social work organise practical placements for their students in welfare services, non-governmental organisations, associations and other institutions and organisations involved in social work. Practical placements

are organised on the basis of agreements concluded between a given college and the institution/organisation where placements will take place.

There are no special arrangements concerning career guidance in colleges. However, college students and graduates may obtain information and assistance from career advisors working in public employment services and private employment agencies. For more information see section 3.5, 4.1.5, 4.2. and 8.

6.2

Degree programmes

The Law on Higher Education of 27 July 2005 (LoHE) introduces two types of HEIs: university-type HEIs and non-university-type HEIs. University-type HEIs are those in which at least one academic unit (e.g. faculty) is authorised to provide degree programmes (ISCED 5A), including first-cycle programmes leading to a Bachelor's degree and/or second-cycle or long-cycle programmes leading to a Master's degree (*magister* or an equivalent degree), and doctoral programmes (ISCED 6). Non-university HEIs provide the same types of degree programmes as university-type HEIs, i.e. first-cycle, second-cycle and/or long-cycle programmes, but are not authorised to award the doctoral degree or provide doctoral programmes.

Degree programmes (ISCED 5A), which are provided by both university-type and non-university-type HEIs, include first-cycle programmes, second-cycle programmes and/or long-cycle programmes. First-cycle programmes aim to provide knowledge and skills in a specific area of study, preparing students for work in a specific profession. Graduates of first-cycle programmes have access to second-cycle programmes. Second-cycle and long-cycle programmes aim to provide specialist knowledge in a specific area of study, preparing students for creative work in a specific profession. The completion of both second-cycle and long-cycle programmes provides access to third-cycle (doctoral) programmes.

The duration of degree programmes in both university-type and non-university-type HEIs is as follows:

- first-cycle (Bachelor's degree) programmes which last 6 semesters at a minimum and lead to a degree of *licencjat* or 7 semesters at a minimum and lead to a degree of *inżynier*, depending on the field of study;
- second-cycle (Master's degree) programmes which last 3 or 4 semesters and lead to a degree of *magister* or equivalent, depending on the field of study;
- long-cycle (Master's degree) programmes which last 9 to 12 semesters and lead to a degree of *magister* or equivalent. They are however provided in selected fields

of study such as medicine, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, dentistry, psychology, law and some art and design areas.

In the academic year 2010/11, Poland had a total number of 460 HEIs, including 132 public institutions. The following types of HEIs may be currently distinguished (according to the Central Statistical Office):

- universities (*uniwersytety*) (19),
- technical HEIs (*wyższe szkoły techniczne*) (23),
- agricultural HEIs (*wyższe szkoły rolnicze*) (7),
- HEIs for economics (*wyższe szkoły ekonomiczne*) (79),
- pedagogical HEIs (*wyższe szkoły pedagogiczne*) (18),
- medical universities/academies (*akademie medyczne*) (9),
- schools/universities of maritime studies (*wyższe szkoły morskie*) (2),
- universities/academies of PE (*akademie wychowania fizycznego*) (6),
- schools/academies of art studies (*wyższe szkoły artystyczne*) (22),
- theological HEIs (14)
- military higher education institutions (*uczelnie wojskowe*) (5),
- government service higher education institutions (*uczelnie służb państwowych*) (2),
- others (254)

The Law on Higher Education of 2005 (LoHE 2005) takes full account of the recommendations of the Bologna Process.

6.2.1 Admission

General requirements for admission to degree programmes, which are provided by higher education institutions (HEIs), are the same for both university-type and non-university-type HEIs.

Access to first-cycle programmes and long-cycle programmes is open to holders of an upper secondary school leaving certificate (matriculation certificate). After the introduction of a matriculation exam at the end of upper secondary school in 2005, admission to first-cycle and long-cycle degree programmes is based on the results of this examination. Thus, HEIs may not organise entrance examinations in the subjects taken by student applicants at the upper secondary-school leaving examination. However, each HEI may specify which results of the matriculation exam provide the basis for admission to first-cycle and long-cycle programmes. Additional entrance exams may be organised by HEIs, upon the consent of the minister responsible for higher education, but only:

- when it is necessary to assess the applicant's artistic skills, physical aptitude or specific knowledge and skills required to follow a particular programme not assessed during the matriculation exam,

- when the applicant holds an upper secondary school leaving certificate obtained abroad.

Access to second-cycle programmes is open to holders of a Bachelor's degree, a Master's degree or an equivalent degree. While respecting these general admission requirements, each HEI may define its own additional admission conditions and procedures, including the number of places available to students, except in medical fields of study (*numerus clausus*). Admission conditions and procedures may be similar across an HEI or may vary according to the field of study. Different conditions and procedures may be applied by different HEIs for the same fields of study. Admission conditions and procedures must be published by each HEI not later than by 31 May of the year preceding the academic year to which they refer.

6.2.2 Fees

For details see section 1.3.2.

6.2.3 Organisation of the academic year

The academic year in higher education institutions begins on 1 October and lasts until the end of September. It is divided into two semesters. There are two examination periods – in winter and in summer. Apart from the summer holidays, there are also the following breaks: two weeks of winter holidays (first half of February) and two shorter breaks at Christmas and Easter. Detailed arrangements concerning the academic year are laid down by individual HEIs.

6.2.4 Assessment

Courses end with an oral or written examination or a pass based on the work of a student during a course, including papers/essays or projects. A pass is always given together with a mark (except for information classes and practical training/placements). Passes are obtained on the basis of the assessment carried out by the academic teacher responsible for a given course. An examination is also carried out by the academic teacher responsible for a given course. The performance of students during practical training (a practical placement) is assessed by the academic teacher responsible for practical training in a given HEI and the supervisor in the institution where the placement takes place. Students' learning achievements are recorded in their student record books. Detailed arrangements concerning student assessment, including the grading scale applied, the frequency of assessment and the requirements for obtaining passes and

taking examinations, are laid down in the study regulations of individual institutions. Detailed rules for taking examinations, progression to the next semester and year, repeating a year and admission to the final (diploma) examination are laid down in the study regulations adopted by individual HEIs. However, all students are allowed to take a resit examination, including the final examination, and an examination following a failed resit examination, conducted by an examination review board after an appeal made by a student to such a board. In order to be admitted to the final examination, students are required to complete all courses and practical placements provided for in the curriculum, and to submit their final thesis (except in medical fields) which must then receive a positive assessment. If the study programme does not provide for the preparation of a thesis and sitting a final examination, students are only required to complete the courses and practical placements foreseen in the curriculum.

In accordance with the Regulation by the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 14 September 2011, students are required to obtain a minimum number of ECTS credits, specified on the basis of the study regulations, in order to progress to the next semester or academic year and to complete a degree programme.

All three types of degree programmes offered in university-type and non-university-type HEIs, including first-cycle, second-cycle and long-cycle programmes, end with the diploma examination, except in medical fields. The examination is conducted by an examination board composed of academic teachers of the academic unit of a HEI (e.g. faculty or department) which provides a given programme.

Students who have passed the final examination are awarded a higher education diploma (*dyplom ukończenia studiów wyższych*) which confirms the completion of a given type of degree programme and the award of a relevant degree in a given field of study. If the study programme does not provide for the final examination, students are only required to have completed all courses and practical placements in order to obtain a diploma confirming the award of a relevant degree (the overall mark equals to the average mark for all the courses). Diplomas and degrees are awarded by university-type and non-university-type HEIs. As of 2012, diplomas are prepared and issued in accordance with the amended Law on Higher Education (see section 6.4) and are officially recognised documents. Every graduate, upon his/her request, receives a Diploma Supplement in the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format issued by the HEI in English and free of charge.

A Bachelor's degree entitles its holder to practice a given profession and provides access to second-cycle programmes. A Master's degree entitles its holder to practice a given profession and provides access to doctoral programmes.

6.2.5 Guidance and counselling

Practical placements for students are organised as an integral part of degree programmes in some fields of study. A large number of HEIs have already established careers services/offices, drawing on the experience of their partner HEIs in other EU countries or more experienced HEIs in Poland, and/or in co-operation with the Labour Offices. Careers services provide information about jobs available for professionals in a given area, guidance in the choice of career paths and training for students or graduates as prospective job applicants. Moreover, students and graduates may obtain information and guidance from careers advisors working in public employment services and private employment agencies. Partnerships between the higher education sector and the labour market are also supported by job fairs organised in many HEIs.

6.3 Doctoral programmes

Doctoral (third-cycle) programmes (ISCED 6) are provided by:

- units of university-type higher education institutions authorised to confer either the post-doctoral academic degree of *doktor habilitowany* or the academic degree of *doktor* in at least two different disciplines of a given area of science;
- research institutions other than higher education institutions (units of the Polish Academy of Sciences and research and development institutions) authorised to confer the post-doctoral academic degree of *doktor habilitowany*.

Doctoral programmes aim to provide advanced knowledge in a specific area or discipline of science, preparing students for independent research and creative activity and for the award of the academic degree of PhD (*doctor*). Holders of *doktor* degree may continue their research career to obtain first the academic degree of *doktor habilitowany* and subsequently the academic title of *profesor*.

Authorisation to award this academic degree by HEIs is granted by the State Commission for Academic Degrees on the basis of the quality of research and the number of staff (12) employed holding the academic title of *profesor* or the academic degree of *doktor habilitowany*.

Doctoral programmes in both HEIs and research institutions other than HEIs last between 2 and 4 years, the predominant model being a four-year programme. The exact duration of a doctoral programme is determined in regulations establishing such a programme in a given unit of a HEI or other research institution.

6.3.1 Admission

Access to doctoral programmes, which are provided by university-type higher education institutions (HEIs) and research institutions other than HEIs, is open to applicants who hold a Master's degree and fulfil admission conditions laid down by a given institution. Detailed admission conditions are defined by the board of the academic unit authorised to provide doctoral programmes in a given institution, and must be published not later than by 31 May of the year preceding the academic year to which they refer.

6.3.2 Fees

No tuition fees are charged by public HEIs for full-time doctoral programmes. However, public HEIs may charge fees for:

- specific courses provided as part of full-time doctoral programmes which are repeated by students as a result of their unsatisfactory learning achievements;
- programmes or courses taught in a foreign language;
- courses which are not included in a study programme;
- part-time doctoral programmes.

The level of tuition fees is determined on the same basis as in the case of degree programmes. Doctoral students may be awarded a doctoral scholarship if they teach classes as part of their practical training or carry out research which is of major importance to the development of the institution or to the accomplishment of its mission.

6.3.3 Organisation of the academic year

See section 6.2.3.

6.3.4 Assessment

Doctoral students are required to attend courses and take examinations provided for in the doctoral study regulations, to conduct research and submit reports on the progress in research, to prepare their doctoral dissertation and to teach classes in the domestic academic unit. Examinations are conducted by the academic teacher (in HEIs) or research staff member (in other research institutions) responsible for a given course/type of classes. Progress in research and the preparation of a doctoral

dissertation is assessed by the doctoral student's tutor (an academic teacher/researcher holding *doktor habilitowany* or *professor*). The teaching of classes by doctoral students in HEIs is assessed by the supervising academic teacher. Detailed rules for progression and taking of examinations are laid down in the doctoral study regulations by the units of HEIs and research institutions other than HEIs which provide doctoral programmes.

Enrolment on a doctoral programme is not a sufficient precondition for the award of the academic degree of *doktor*. It is awarded to a person who fulfils the following conditions:

- holds a Master's degree (*magister* or an equivalent degree);
- has successfully passed doctoral examinations, the precise scope of which is determined by the board of a given academic unit; such examinations cover the core discipline corresponding to the topic of the doctoral dissertation, an additional discipline and a modern foreign language;
- has submitted and successfully defended a doctoral dissertation (public defense).

The academic degree of *doktor* (or the equivalent degree of *doktor sztuki* for artistic areas) is awarded in a given area and discipline. All proceedings leading to the award of the degree are conducted, and the degree is awarded, by the faculty board in an HEI or academic boards in research institutions.

6.4 Recent reforms in higher education

The Law on Higher Education amended on 18 March 2011 (together with other acts related to higher education) has come into force on 1 October 2011. One of the main reasons for the introduction of changes to the legislation is – as stated in the justification – the harmonisation of the Polish system of higher education with the solutions implemented in the European Higher Education Area, particularly in terms of the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

Major changes related to harmonisation of the Polish system of higher education with the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education Area are as follows:

- redefinition of terms related to the introduction of the National Qualifications Framework. Students graduate with particular qualifications rather than professional titles, which allows for the implementation of the NQF,

- redefinition of terms related to the fields of study – newly drafted definitions of a macro-field of study, an interdisciplinary degree programme, a field of study and a programme of study formulated in terms of learning outcomes have been introduced. The central list of detailed fields of study has been abandoned. This allows students to undertake programmes in more than one field of study and to benefit from a more flexible educational offer,
- the national list of teaching standards has been limited, only some standards (e.g. teacher training standards and those regulated by the EU legislation) remain in place.

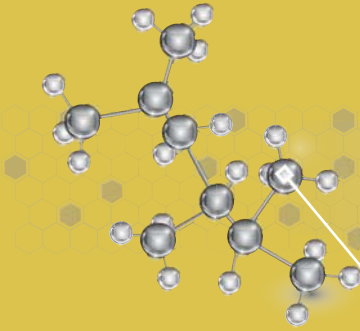
Some other important changes introduced by the amended Act are as follows:

- carrying out student internships, submitting a diploma thesis and passing a diploma exam (“defence of the thesis”) are now – due to radical limitation of teaching standards – necessary conditions for the completion of the study programme and obtaining a diploma,
- new format of diplomas of degree and post-graduate programmes applies – diplomas take the form approved by particular HEI senates instead of the statutory format universal for the whole country,
- participation of employers in drafting programmes of study and their involvement in the educational process have been envisaged in order to strengthen the relationship between a HEI and its local community which include adapting educational offer to the needs of the labour market. HEIs may offer practically oriented studies based on learning outcomes organised with the participation of employers/enterprises on the basis of agreements (teaching courses, outlining teaching programmes, co-financing of studies, organisation of practical placements and internships),
- modifications in terms of access to the second field of study free of charge – this option is open only to students of full-time programmes at public HEIs who have the best study results,
- no fees, inter alia, for examinations including re-sit exams, committee exams, diploma exams and for the issue of diploma supplement,
- in order to assure more rights for students – obligatory agreements to be concluded between students and their HEIs, the agreement stipulates rights and obligations of both parts,
- in order to provide students with better access to academic staff, the HEIs are required to reorganise the teachers’ timetables and limit additional employment of academic staff outside their home institution,
- obligatory regular evaluation of teaching staff by students has been introduced,

- the obligation of the HEI to undertake the monitoring of professional careers of its graduates has been introduced in order to adapt the educational offer to the needs of the labour market, particularly after 3 and 5 years from graduation. A post of the Graduates' Spokesman has also been established,
- records of study progress are digitalised which allows for improved access and transfer of data,
- introduction of measures encouraging persons with low income to undertake studies is envisaged – among others a catalogue of guaranteed and free of charge administrative services has been established. The pool of social scholarships and the threshold of income per family member which entitles students to financial support have been increased and access to student loans is open to applicants with low income,
- HEIs are to create conditions for the disabled to gain full access and participation in the education process and scientific research,
- particular support has been offered to outstanding students and PhD students (including new types of scholarships),
- changes have been introduced to the career path, access to employment and terms of promotion for academic staff – all with a view to increasing the quality of teaching and research,
- visible increase in the funds disbursed for research and higher education has been secured for the years 2012–2015 including a significant pay raise for academic staff. This is supported by encouraging HEIs to search for additional sources of funding, as well as to put research results to the commercial use,
- introduction of the system of pro-quality financing. An additional grant for entities has been activated in order to finance pro-quality measures. The pro-quality grant is addressed, *inter alia*, to the best academic units of public and non-public institutions which receive the status of National Leading Scientific Centres (*Krajowe Naukowe Ośrodki Wiodące – KNOW*) awarded for 5 years in the contest procedure,
- the grants for entities for co-financing pro-quality measures can also be assigned for:
 - financing PhD scholarships for 30% of the best PhD students, both in public and non-public schools, in order to create the best conditions for scientific work
 - public and non-public university departments offering the best degree programmes as determined by the Polish Accreditation Committee (outstanding rate)
 - implementing HEI's internal quality assurance systems and the National Qualification Framework,

- financing full-time PhD studies at non-public universities.

A Forum of Experts established by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education is currently working on the governmental strategy for the development of higher education until 2020.



Po

[Polonium is a radioactive chemical element which Skłodowska-Curie named

after her motherland of Poland which at the time was under Russian, Austrian and Prussian partition and did not exist on the map of Europe. It is probably the first chemical element named to draw attention to a political controversy.

MARIA SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE (1867 – 1934)

– A PHYSICIST AND A CHEMIST FAMOUS FOR HER PIONEERING RESEARCH ON RADIOACTIVITY AND THE CO-DISCOVERY OF POLONIUM AND RADIUM. SHE WAS THE FIRST WOMAN EVER TO RECEIVE THE DEGREE OF A DOCTOR OF SCIENCE AND THE FIRST FEMALE PROFESSOR AT THE SORBONNE. TO THIS DAY, SHE REMAINS THE ONLY WOMAN WHO RECEIVED TWO NOBEL PRIZES, AND THE ONLY SCIENTIST IN HISTORY TO BE AWARDED IN TWO DIFFERENT FIELDS OF STUDY – PHYSICS IN 1903 AND CHEMISTRY IN 1911.

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

7

Adult education is provided in two broadly understood settings, school and non-school settings as well as in the form of non-degree postgraduate programmes offered by higher education institutions and research institutions.

In 2010/11, 290 thousand learners were enrolled in all types of schools for adults (excluding post-secondary schools), which means an increase by 15 thousand in comparison with the previous year. In the academic year 2010/11, over 185 thousand adults with higher education qualifications were enrolled in non-degree postgraduate programmes.

Adult participation in continuing education in non-school settings is relatively low, especially when compared to most EU member states. The survey Social Diagnosis (2011) shows that in the years 2009–2011 only 10.7% of respondents aged 25 and above participated in adult education (any kind of training or in-service training).

7.1

Policy and legislative framework

Adult education, also referred to as continuing education, aims to enable adults to acquire and broaden general knowledge, and to acquire vocational qualifications and skills which are necessary to work in a given occupation or hold a given post. In-service training aims at adjusting knowledge and skills to changing technologies and work organisation patterns and preparing adults for a change of job.

Training of the unemployed, including practical placements for unemployed graduates, aims to respond quickly to current needs of the local labour market and adjust the skills or qualifications of the unemployed to such needs.

The basic aims of continuing education are defined in the following documents: the School Education Act of 7 September 1991, the Act on the Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions of 20 April 2004, and the Act of 27 July 2005 Law on Higher Education. Adult education can be also provided, under certain conditions, on the basis of the legislation on economic activity.

7.2

Distribution of responsibilities and funding

The Minister for National Education works in the field of adult education at national level with other ministers: the ministers responsible for labour, science and higher education, economy, regional development, culture and health. All public schools for adults are organised and run by territorial self-government units. Non-public schools for adults are organised and run by individual persons or by bodies such as associations, social and religious organisations, etc.

According to the School Education Act of 7 September 1991 with subsequent amendments, education in public schools for adults is free of charge. However, due to the insufficient financial resources in public schools, it is possible for students' self-government (on a voluntary basis) to cover some of the expenses (except for teachers' salaries) from its funds. The amount to be paid is defined by the self-government. Non-public schools charge tuition fees. Non-public schools with the rights of public schools receive a refund from the state budget. Fees are also charged in non-school settings. Resources for continuing education in non-school settings can come from State budget, employers, internal contribution of students and structural funds.

Training and re-training leading to an increase in chances of finding employment, improvement of vocational qualifications or to an increase in professional activity can be financed from the Labour Fund.

7.3

Programmes and providers

SCHOOL AND NON-SCHOOL SETTINGS FOR ADULTS

Adults may acquire or change their vocational/professional and specialist qualifications and skills and continue general education in school and non-school settings. In short the main providers and programmes are as follows :

TABLE 1. Main institutions and forms of adult education

School settings	Non-school settings
<p>Public and non-public schools for adults including: primary schools, lower secondary schools, general upper secondary schools, vocational upper secondary schools, supplementary upper secondary schools, basic vocational schools and non-tertiary post-secondary schools</p> <p>Public and non-public higher education institutions (HEIs): first- and second-cycle programmes, third-cycle (doctoral) programmes, non-degree postgraduate programmes, open university courses, third-age university courses, incl. those based on distance learning, conferences, workshops and seminars</p> <p>Public continuing education centres (CECs), practical training centres (PTCs) and further and in-service training centres: courses, vocational courses, seminars, practical placements, on-the-job practical training, theoretical in-service training of young employees</p>	<p>Non-public institutions for continuing education and practical training administered by associations and individuals</p> <p>People's universities</p> <p>Employers: courses, on-the job training, job shadowing, rotation, replacement, learning clubs, supervised individual learning, fairs, conferences, coaching, mentoring, cooperation with equipment and software suppliers</p> <p>Employers' organisations and trade unions</p> <p>Training institutions, including those registered in the Register of Training Institutions</p> <p>Public employment services: support tools, including training, practical placements, vocational training for adults</p> <p>Research institutions, research foundations and the Polish Academy of Science units: non-degree postgraduate programmes and doctoral programmes, courses, conferences, seminars, workshops</p> <p>Institutions specialised in specific areas of study</p>

Adult education in school settings is provided for the level of primary (grade 6), lower secondary, basic vocational and upper secondary schools. In 2010/11 there were 3.7 thousand schools for adults of this type, with almost 290 thousand learners enrolled. In comparison with the beginning of the decade, the number of general upper secondary schools for adults increased visibly. The number of lower secondary schools has also increased slightly, while the number of vocational secondary and primary schools for adults has decreased. Adult education is also provided by post-secondary schools. In 2010/11 there were 2.8 thousand post-secondary schools in Poland, with 280 thousand learners enrolled. This sector is dominated by non-public schools. Adults may also gain and develop general knowledge and acquire vocational or professional qualifications and skills in non-school settings created by various public and non-public institutions. The network of institutions providing education in non-school settings is very dispersed. They offer continuing education as day, evening and distance learning courses. The responsibility for the establishment and administration of such institutions rests with local government bodies at the level of district or, in

the case of institutions operating at regional or supraregional level, with local government bodies at regional level.

Non-public schools and educational institutions administered by natural persons and legal entities can undertake education and training activities once they are included in the register kept by the local government body which is responsible for administering a given type of school or educational institution.

The organisation of training courses is also one of the main services offered by the labour market, mainly by public employment services and employment agencies. Pursuant to the Act on Employment and Labour Market Institutions of 20 April 2004, authorities at the district level initiate and organise training courses for the unemployed or other people and finance such courses from the Labour Fund in order to upgrade participants' vocational or professional qualifications or skills and other qualifications or skills which help them to find or secure employment. Such training courses are organised by training institutions which are public or non-public institutions offering education in non-school settings.

The regulations also envisage other forms of upgrading and changing qualifications or skills and broadening knowledge which are offered by district-level labour offices. These include, in particular, practical placements and vocational training for adults, which are also intended to stimulate employment.

NON-DEGREE POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

Higher education institutions offer non-degree postgraduate programmes which are considered another form of adult education in school settings.

Non-degree postgraduate programmes are provided by public and non-public higher education institutions (HEIs), research institutions and the Polish Academy of Science. HEIs also offer opportunities for acquiring knowledge and skills as part of open universities and third-age universities. So-called popular or folk universities are also considered institutions providing education in non-school settings.

7.3.1 Admission requirements

Schools for adults are open to people who have reached the age of 18. In specific cases, such schools may also take young people aged 16 and above, as well as young people aged 15 if they work in the so-called Voluntary Labour Corps or are in jail or police custody. An 18-year old person can also take an extramural exam in all subjects included in curricula of all types of schools for adults.

Admission requirements for non-school settings are defined by education providers. They usually depend on the aims of training, and there are no uniform rules in this

respect. The exception are vocational courses that can be taken by people holding at least a lower secondary leaving school certificate or a leaving certificate from the previously existing 8-year primary school.

In the case of courses commissioned by employers for their staff the level of education completed, psychological and physical dispositions, work experience and some additional skills are, among others, taken into account as main admission requirements. While directing staff to training the rule of equal opportunity should be respected – this applies to the employee's gender, age, disability, political views and religion. The unemployed are directed to courses by labour offices on the basis of criteria agreed by the training institution and the prospective employer. Training can also take place on the unemployed person's request.

Non-degree postgraduate programmes are open only to applicants who have completed a first-cycle programme (leading to a Bachelor's degree) or a second-cycle programme (leading to a Master's degree). If it is required by the curriculum, the institution offering a non-degree postgraduate programme can define additional admission requirements.

7.3.2 Modes of delivery

Teachers in schools for adults may choose curricula and textbooks from among the curricula and textbooks approved for the use in schools. Teachers may also develop their own curricula, provided that they cover contents included in the core curriculum for a given subject. Teachers may choose teaching methods adjusted to the age and abilities of learners and the specificity of the subject taught. Due to the large number of learners in schools for adults who follow part-time programmes, the choice of teaching methods takes into consideration that a substantial amount of work should be done independently by the learner.

Teachers or trainers who provide various types of training in non-school settings may choose teaching methods depending on the level of education, the training programme followed, the number of learners, their age and work experience, and teaching aids available at the institution.

Workshops are considered to be the most effective method of course-type training, in particular in large companies with long in-service training traditions. In the case of contracted courses, the contractor may suggest teaching methods to be applied. Computer software is often used to support education and training.

Modular programmes deserve special attention in continuing education. The completion of every module can be certified by a separate document. A vocational training programme requires all listed modules to be taken by the learner. Modular

programmes encourage greater flexibility in education and independent learning, which is very relevant in continuing education.

Teaching methods used in non-degree postgraduate programmes depend on the field of study and the aim of the programme. They include lectures, as well as active learning methods such as workshops, practical placements and projects. Non-degree postgraduate programmes are often taught in a form of extramural or evening courses.

7.3.3 Assessment, qualifications, certificates

SCHOOL SETTINGS

Like in schools for young people, two assessment systems, internal and external, are in place in schools for adults. The internal assessment system is based on a grading scale of 1 to 6 (1 – insufficient and 6 – excellent). Learners in schools for adults are promoted to a higher level after each semester. An adult learner finishes (primary, lower or upper secondary) school if he/she has received marks higher than insufficient for all compulsory subjects at the end of the final semester. Moreover, learners are required to take the final test and the final exam at the end of primary and lower secondary education respectively. Results of the test and examination have no influence on completion of primary or lower secondary education. Both the test and the examination are external and obligatory, and are based on uniform national examination standards for a given level of education and standardised tools. Results of the test/examination are comparable at the national level.

Assessment and promotion in the extramural type of school is based on end-of-semester exams in compulsory classes/courses which are included in the school timetable. Learners in basic vocational and upper secondary vocational schools are also obliged to take vocational exams. Arrangements for end-of-semester exams in extramural schools are laid down in the school statutes.

Public schools for adults award a certificate or an official diploma. Learners in general and vocational upper secondary schools may obtain a matriculation certificate and continue education at a higher education institution. School leaving certificates from the six-year primary school, and a lower and upper secondary school as well as basic vocational school can also be obtained on the basis of extramural examinations. At all levels of education, extramural exams are taken only in the written form. Extramural exams are included in the external examination system. The Regional Examination Boards are responsible for setting and conducting these examinations. The vocational education reform effective from 1 Sept 2012 (see section 4.3) allowed adults to take extramural exams in vocational fields, and consequently, to obtain a certificate or

a diploma confirming vocational qualifications with no need to follow any school-based programme.

Higher education institutions (HEIs), as well as research and research-and-development institutions, providing non-degree postgraduate programmes choose methods for assessing students and define the conditions to be fulfilled for students to complete the programme and receive a diploma. Research institutions providing non-degree postgraduate programmes often assess students on the basis of their coursework.

Upon completion of non-degree postgraduate programmes and in-service training courses offered by HEIs, as well as research institutions and research-and-development institutions offering non-degree postgraduate programmes, graduates receive, respectively, a diploma confirming the completion of a non-degree postgraduate programme or a certificate issued in accordance with a specimen provided by the minister responsible for higher education in the relevant regulation.

NON-SCHOOL SETTINGS

In non-school settings, educational and training providers define methods for assessing learning outcomes in their curricula or training programmes. Courses and practical placements can (but do not have to) end with an examination which assesses the level of selected vocational skills for occupations included in the classification of occupations for vocational education and training or the classification of occupations and specialisations for the labour market. Vocational courses lead to examinations which assess the level of knowledge and skills to be acquired as part of individual classes/subjects in the curriculum/training programme for a given course. The assessment is based on the scale of 1 to 6 (1 – insufficient, 6 – excellent).

A qualifying exam for the vocational title and the title of Master Craftsman is one of the methods validating vocational qualifications regulated by the school education legislation. The regulations lay down detailed requirements (e.g. work experience) for individuals planning to take such exams. The exam includes two parts, theoretical and practical. Both parts are assessed according to the criteria prepared by an examination board and approved by the head of the regional education authorities while the standard scale is used for marking.

The rules for vocational training for adults are, to a large extent, regulated in an agreement concluded between the district-level authorities, the employer and the training institution. The agreement specifies the type of examination, the institution in charge of it, and an acceptable non-attendance rate (class hours which a learner can be absent from as a proportion of all class hours envisaged in the training programme)

which allows the learner to complete the course. The vocational training programme also defines the methods for assessing learning outcomes.

Assessment arrangements for individuals undertaking practical placements cover both attendance and the performance of tasks specified in the practical placement programme. The knowledge and skills acquired are not subject to assessment. In the case of training courses co-organised by the labour offices, methods used to assess learning outcomes are determined by training providers.

An individual who has completed training in a non-school setting receives a certificate. Those who have passed an examination upon completion of a course or practical placement are awarded a certificate confirming vocational qualifications. Those who have passed an examination upon completion of a vocational course are awarded a certificate of completion of such a course and, if applicable, a certificate confirming vocational qualifications. Results achieved at the end of a vocational course are recognised by vocational schools for adults.

An individual who has passed a qualifying exam for a vocational title or the title of Master Craftsman obtains a certificate confirming a given vocational title or a Master Craftsman diploma issued by the examination board. An individual who has passed an exam taken upon completion of vocational training for adults receives a certificate confirming the skills acquired. Adults may also follow qualifying vocational courses, courses on vocational skills and courses on general skills (see section 4.3. and Regulation by the Minister for National Education of 11 Jan 2012 on continuing education in out-of-school forms)

7.4

Guidance and counselling

Public employment services are in charge of co-ordination of activities in the field of continuing education and training of the unemployed and job-seeking persons, diagnosing the needs of the labour market with respect to the continuing education and training of the unemployed and job-seeking persons, defining and implementation of tools leading to coherence between the needs of the labour market and areas of training and vocational training, and initiating the social dialogue on the employment policy and continuing education of the unemployed and job seeking persons.

Advisory and professional guidance activities can be organised by public educational institutions (centres for psychological-pedagogical support, career guidance officers in schools) and in the labour sector. These activities aim at the provision of suitable

employees for the labour market and at the upgrading of employees' skills in the light of changes observed in enterprises.

The training-employment relationship can be based on the following examples: training of employers and employees, co-operation between employers and training units, organisation of practical placements in enterprises for students in school and out-of-school education programmes, employment service and advice for professionally active persons, job seekers and the unemployed.

The Operational Programme Human Capital is designed to support social groups disadvantaged on the labour market.

*There is no
such thing
as
a cripple – there is a man.*

Maria Grzegorzewska



MARIA GRZEGORZEWSKA (1888 – 1967)
– EDUCATED IN KRAKOW, BRUSSELS
AND PARIS, PIONEERED THE SYSTEMATIC
RESEARCH ON SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS
PEDAGOGY AND ESTABLISHED ITS GROUNDS.
BELIEVING A HUMAN BEING TO BE A PSYCHO-
PHYSICAL UNITY, SHE PUT FORWARD A CLAIM
FOR A GLOBAL APPROACH TOWARDS
ANY ABERRATION FROM THE NORM. SHE
DEVELOPED THE ASPECT OF COMPENSATION
IN THE REVALIDATION OF THE DISABLED
(THE DYNAMIC STRUCTURAL SYSTEM
THEORY). THE RESULTS OF HER ACTIVITY
ENCOURAGED SOME OF THE FIRST ATTEMPTS
AT CREATING A COMPLETE OUTLINE OF THE
THEORY AND PRACTICE OF WORK WITH
DISABLED PEOPLE.

Nie ma kaleki, jest człowiek.

Maria Grzegorzewska

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

8

The support for children with special educational needs in Poland comprises psychological and educational support, services provided in outpatient settings, care and support in the school, and education and care in kindergartens and schools. Counselling services are free-of-charge and are provided on voluntary basis by counselling and guidance centres.

The support aims at stimulating pupils' psychological and physical development and enhancing the effectiveness of learning. It is anticipated to correct disorders, reduce gaps in the knowledge or skills to be acquired within the framework of a curriculum, and to eliminate causes and symptoms of disorders, including behavioural disorders. It is crucial to prepare children and youth for life as full members of society (within family, local community and labour market) by ensuring, through special methods, the most comprehensive development of pupils within their potential. While pursuing these aims, the school should provide pupils with knowledge and skills as well as develop socially valuable attitudes.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of psychological and educational support, it is necessary first to identify properly the pupil's needs and then to provide the most suitable types and methods of support which will indeed bring expected effects. Thus, special education and special psychological and educational support is designed and directed to various groups of pupils with special educational needs, including children:

- with specific learning difficulties
- with mild, moderate and severe mental disabilities
- with the Asperger's syndrome and autistic
- with physical disabilities (including aphasia)
- with multiple disabilities
- blind, deaf and with hearing and vision impairment
- exceptionally talented
- socially maladjusted and at risk of addiction
- with speech disorders
- chronically ill
- in vulnerable and traumatic situations
- experiencing repetitive educational failures
- experiencing community negligence relating to pupil's family welfare, quality of spare time activities and community socializing
- dealing with adaptation issues relating to cultural differences or a different educational background

All pupils who require assistance due to individually identified developmental and educational needs are eligible to receive support. Pupils should also receive psychological and educational support according to their psychological and physical abilities as identified by teacher or specialists working with them. Individual needs and abilities assessed may cover both learning difficulties and special talents. Pupils' needs are most often identified by teachers, class tutors and specialists during their work with pupils, in particular during classes. At the same time, kindergartens, schools or other educational institutions should also observe pupils with a view to identifying any other individual needs which can emerge due to the specificity of their background.

In view of changing socio-economic conditions, a new type of need should be taken into consideration with regard to psychological and educational support: the pupil's adaptation difficulties resulting from cultural differences or change of the educational environment, including cases where pupils have received education abroad.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

As from 1 September 2011, different arrangements are in place for providing psychological and educational support to children and young people with special educational needs in kindergartens and schools. It establishes a new approach to the tasks carried out by teachers until now, which involves bringing psychological and educational support closer to the pupil and providing support as soon as possible.

Pursuant to the School Education Act of 7 September 1991, special education is an integral part of the Polish education system. Subsequent amendments to the Act introduced new definitions and organisational arrangements for special education. Pursuant to the Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 17 November 2010 on the rules for providing psychological and educational support in public kindergartens and schools, counselling and support is provided to pupils, their parents and teachers for addressing developmental, educational and behaviour-related problems.

8.1 Organisation

The organisation of the school year is the same for all schools nationwide. Special education school attendance may be adjourned up to the end of the calendar year

when pupils have reached the age of 10 and starting from 2014, when they have reached the age of 8. Special education is intended for children and youth with developmental disorders and disabilities who require special organisation of teaching and learning processes and working methods. It may be provided in special schools, integration schools, mainstream schools or as individualized teaching. For socially maladjusted children, children at risk of addiction and children with behavioural disorders, education and care institutions and therapy centres are established.

To get involved into special education, all pupils concerned need to get a written opinion confirming their special educational needs, that is issued by a local counselling and guidance centre (*poradnia psychologiczno-pedagogiczna*) or other specialist centre. It is done not earlier than after grade 3 of the primary school and not later than upon completion of primary education. The opinion provides a basis for applying special external and internal assessment approaches for the pupil concerned. Special education type pupils attend is the choice of their parents.

In the school year 20010/11, more than 61 thousand pupils with special educational needs attended primary schools both within and outside mainstream education, which corresponded to 2.8 % of total primary school pupil population. In the case of lower secondary schools there were 54 thousand pupils with special educational needs, which corresponded to 4.3% of all pupils.

SPECIAL EDUCATION WITHIN MAINSTREAM EDUCATION – INTEGRATED PROVISION

In general, pupils with special educational needs learn together with other pupils either in integration schools/kindergartens (where all classes are integration ones) or in integration classes in mainstream schools/kindergartens (where classes are either integration or mainstream ones).

In the school year 20010/11, 60% (i.e. ca. 36.5 thousand) and 45 % (i.e. ca. 24 thousand) of all pupils with special educational needs attended primary and lower secondary schools respectively in school settings within mainstream education.

SPECIAL EDUCATION OUTSIDE MAINSTREAM EDUCATION – SEPARATE PROVISION

Special schools and special sections are established for pupils who have a written opinion recommending special education or education in a healthcare institution, sanatorium or welfare institution.

Depending on the special educational needs, type and level of disability, pupils attend kindergartens, primary schools, lower secondary schools, basic vocational schools and schools preparing for employment, general and technical upper secondary schools, special boarding-schools, and special education and care centres (with

boarding facilities and extended rehabilitation programmes). Kindergartens provide such support in the form of specialist therapy-type activities. Schools and education and care institutions may, in turn, provide therapy and support classes or specialist activities (social therapy or other therapeutic activities).

In the school year 20010/11, 40% (i.e. ca. 24.5 thousand) and 55 % (i.e. ca. 30 thousand) of all pupils with special educational needs attended primary and lower secondary schools respectively in school settings outside mainstream education.

SPECIFIC ARRANGEMENTS

Within special education within mainstream education, the number of pupils in an integration class should be between 15 and 20, including 3 to 5 disabled pupils. A school with integration classes can additionally employ teachers with special pedagogical qualifications (referred to as “supporting teachers”). A supporting teacher can (depending on the needs of the disabled pupil) be involved in all activities of the class or only in selected ones. Specialist teachers can also work individually with disabled pupils, teaching them various educational techniques, e.g. the Braille alphabet, sign language, and techniques supporting the pupil’s development such as independent movement techniques or vision techniques.

Within special education outside mainstream education, the number of pupils in a class differ: 10 and 16 in special classes for children with mild mental disabilities, for chronically ill children, for socially maladjusted children, children at risk of addiction and children with behavioural disorders; 6 to 8 in special classes for children with moderate and severe mental disabilities, for deaf and hearing impaired children and for children with psychological disorders; 2 to 4 in special classes for autistic children and children with multiple disabilities; 8 to 12 in special classes for physically disabled children; 8 to 10 in special classes for blind and visually impaired children.

The school governing body is required to provide transport and care for pupils attending primary and lower secondary schools (compulsory education) within its jurisdiction. Children may take a bus rented by the school or the child’s family car which are specially adjusted to the needs of disabled children.

COURSE OF EDUCATION

Having completed primary and lower secondary school, pupils with no mental disabilities, may continue education in upper secondary schools. There, having passed the matriculation exam, they are awarded a matriculation certificate that gives access to higher education. They may also choose a basic vocational school which leads to a diploma confirming vocational qualifications. Pupils with moderate and

severe disabilities as well as multiple disabilities can follow programmes in a 3-year special vocational schools that lead to a certificate confirming their preparation for employment.

Pupils with mild mental disabilities complete primary, lower secondary and basic vocational schools, they can also acquire qualifications to practice an occupation. In addition to these type of schools, blind, deaf, chronically ill and physically disabled pupils complete also upper secondary schools i.e. technical upper secondary school (leading to the title of a technician) or general upper secondary school.

TEACHING METHODS

Special education applies the same teaching methods as mainstream education, although more emphasis is placed on personalized work with each pupil. While teachers are free to choose specific methods and forms of work as well as teaching resources, they are required to apply a few crucial principles of special education. Thus, they are required to:

- understand their pupils profoundly and provide them with specialist support;
- adjust teaching activities to abilities and needs of pupils and to existing circumstances, taking into account:
 - the need to individualize the requirements, methods, teaching resources as well as the organisation and pace of work;
 - the need to make curricular contents accessible;
 - the need to increase the level of difficulty gradually.
- strive for active and conscious participation of pupils in the teaching-learning process;
- use demonstration and example in the teaching process;
- aim at integrated impact (coherence, correlation within subjects and between subjects, teamwork among specialists involved);
- ensure the sustainability of achievements, and develop the ability to use and improve them by:
 - systematic approach (pre-planned and logical structure of teaching material),
 - sustainability of knowledge (continuous reinforcement of acquired knowledge and skills),
 - combining theory and practice (every-day applications).

Crucial here is teamwork among teachers, class tutors and psychological and educational specialists. This approach, based on good practice, is already referred to in the legislation on teaching in special schools and in practice takes the form of a so-called PES (psychological and educational support) team established by a school head in schools concerned. The team's task is to plan and coordinate

provision of support as well as to examine particular pupils' performance in terms of social functioning and knowledge and skills acquired, and to identify difficulties encountered while working with them. Moreover, the PES members plan individual educational paths or educational and therapeutic paths for pupils concerned, taking into consideration both pupils' needs identified in the kindergarten or school and those indicated in the opinion issued by a counselling and guidance centre. What is more, the PES team evaluates the effects of assistance and plans ways of supporting pupils' parents as well as working with other institutions that can support assistance if pupils with special educational needs (e.g. counselling and guidance centres, social assistance centres, district family support centres, NGOs, etc.).

As far as specific methods are concerned, teaching in the first three grades of a special school is organised according to the method of emphasis points. These include topics or issues which, when taught, require the child to observe, identify important features, distinguish cause-and-effect relationships, absorb information related to a given issue, and express the knowledge in specific and abstract terms. Moreover, four major methods i.e. oral, dactylographic, sign-language and combined are used in teaching children with impaired hearing, whereas library therapy is a new method applied in rehabilitation. It is described as "a programme of activity based on interactive processes which involve the use of printed and non-printed materials, both imaginative and informative; with the support of a librarian or other specialist, this programme provides an insight into normal development or the possibility of introducing changes to emotionally disturbed education".

8.2

Curriculum

Curricula followed within special education (except schools for children with moderate and severe mental disabilities) are based on the common core curriculum for particular education stages (see sections 3.3, 4.1.3, 4.2.3, 4.3.3). A general education curriculum, a curriculum for training in a specific occupation and a curriculum for general vocational training can either be developed by a teacher or chosen from among those approved by the Minister for National Education available (e.g. on the market) and relevantly modified (or not) by the teacher. The curriculum should be adjusted to the needs and abilities of the pupils concerned and approved by the school head. The outline timetables for special schools are very similar to those in mainstream schools. Yet they provide for additional 30 teaching hours for

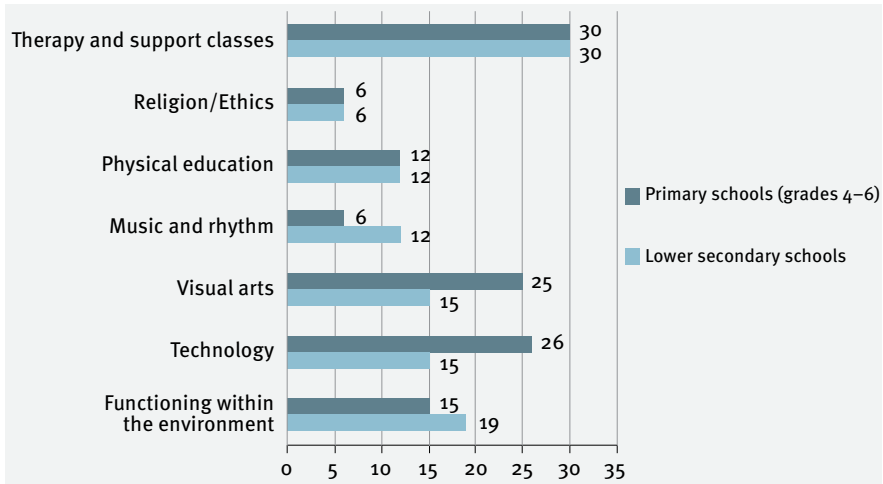
therapy and support classes per week in a period of three years at each education stage, and, for pupils with multiple disabilities and autistic pupils, 6 additional hours for classes in alternative communication methods. The minimum number of therapy and support classes differs from one type of school to another as seen in the table below:

TABLE 2. The minimum number of therapy and support classes in different types schools

	Special classes	Mainstream or integration classes
Primary schools	1150 hours per class/ 12 hours per class weekly	190 hours per pupil/ 2 hours per pupil weekly
Lower secondary schools	1150 hours per class/ 12 hours per class weekly	190 hours per pupil/ 2 hours per pupil weekly
General upper secondary schools	900 hours per class/ 10 hours per class weekly	180 hours per pupil/ 2 hours per pupil weekly
Technical upper secondary schools	900 hours per class/ 8 hours per class weekly	240 hours per pupil/ 2 hours per pupil weekly
Basic vocational schools	960 hours per class/ 10 hours per class weekly	190 hours per pupil/ 2 hours per pupil weekly

In the case of children and youth with moderate and severe mental disabilities, outline timetables are considerably different. In the first stage of primary school (grades 1 to 3) there are 50 teaching hours of integrated teaching, 6 teaching hours of Religion/Ethics and 30 teaching hours of therapy and support classes. In the second stage of primary schools (grades 4 to 6) and in lower secondary schools outline timetables comprise a few subjects oriented mainly towards improving pupils' social, auditory, visual and kinaesthetic skills, as showed in the figure:

FIGURE 7. The outline timetables for the primary and lower secondary schools for pupils with moderate and severe mental disabilities



8.3 Assessment

ASSESSMENT

Pupils in special education are assessed throughout the school year according to the same rules that apply in mainstream schools (see section 3.4 and Chapter 4) that covers both descriptive assessment and marks. The exception are pupils with moderate and severe disabilities in the case of whom descriptive assessment is used at all levels of education. Basic arrangements are laid down in the Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 7 Sept 2004 on the conditions and rules for pupil assessment, eligibility for assessment and promotion, and examinations and tests in public schools.

The form of the final primary school test and the final lower secondary school exam as well as the matriculation exam that pupils take is adapted to their speaking, writing and physical abilities. If necessary, the examination takes place in a separate classroom or at pupil's house. Pupils with multiple disabilities can qualify for exemption from the final test and examinations, whereas pupils with moderate and severe mental disabilities are entirely exempt from taking them.

PROGRESSION AND CERTIFICATION

Pupils are promoted to the higher grade if they received periodical and annual marks according to the school grading scale and to the specific criteria in all subjects and compulsory classes. Every single pupil's performance is considered by a school teachers' council that makes the decision about the promotion accordingly.

All special education leavers, except those with moderate and severe mental disabilities, receive the same school certificates as mainstream pupils. Pupils with mild mental disabilities are awarded end-of-year and final school leaving certificates annotated with information that a pupil followed a curriculum adjusted to individual abilities and needs on the basis of an opinion of the public counselling and guidance centre or other specialist support centre. End-of-year and final school leaving certificates for pupils with moderate and severe disabilities are issued on a special form and include descriptive assessment/marks. Graduates of schools preparing for employment are awarded certificates annotated with information that a pupil has followed a preparation-for-work curriculum based on the core curriculum for a particular occupation.

Not only to *uplift minds*
through *knowledge & abilities*
is the purpose of school education.
It extends
further –
it is to edify hearts and souls.

Stanisław Konarski

STANISŁAW KONARSKI (1700 – 1773)

– A GREAT REFORMER OF POLISH SCHOOLS,
PEDAGOGUE, POLITICAL WRITER, POET, DRAMATIST,
PIARIST MONK AND PRECURSOR OF THE
ENLIGHTENMENT IN POLAND.

*Celem wszystkich szkół jest
(...) nie tylko rozwijanie
umysłów za pomocą nauki
i umiejętności, lecz przede
wszystkim uszlachetnienie
serc i dusz.*

Stanisław Konarski

TEACHERS

9

The national legislation distinguishes between teachers working in the school education system, which comprises not only early childhood and school education but also adult education provided in schools for adults and specific types of educational institutions, and academic teachers, i.e. teachers working in the higher education system. School education teachers and academic teachers are subject to different regulations.

9.1

School education teachers

The legislation concerning school education teachers does not make a formal distinction between various categories of teachers, except for four grades based on professional promotion levels. However, the legislation and official documents refer to various groups of teachers, depending on the type of classes taught (for example, general subject and theoretical vocational subject teachers, practical vocational training teachers) or positions. The legislation regulates initial teacher training for school education teachers, thus defining training models or paths which lead to qualifications required to practice the teaching profession.

9.1.1 Initial education and qualifications

Initial training of early childhood and school education teachers (hereafter referred to as 'school education teachers') is provided within two sectors of the education system:

- within the higher education sector:
 - degree programmes, including first-, second- and long-cycle programmes
 - non-degree postgraduate programmes
- within the school education sector:

- college programmes, including teacher training colleges and foreign language teacher training colleges, classified at the ISCED 5B level for the purpose of international comparisons.

For details on the organisation of tertiary education see section 6.

Teacher education and training standards are formulated in the new Regulation by the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 17 January 2012 on training standards for the teaching profession. Teacher education and training consists of preparation in a particular subject area (biology, mathematics, etc.) and pedagogical training (teaching methods, psychology, pedagogy).

Under the abovementioned regulation, teachers employed in pre-primary and primary schools ought to have, at a minimum, qualifications of a Bachelor's degree, whereas teachers employed in the lower secondary and upper secondary schools as well as basic vocational schools ought to hold, at a minimum, a Master's degree or equivalent. Master's degree studies seem to be the most popular route of training for teachers in school education of all levels. At present, teachers who hold a higher education diploma (a Bachelor's or Master's degree) represent 97% of all teachers working in the school education sector, with most of them, i.e. 92%, holding a Master's degree and only 5,7% holding a Bachelor's degree.

9.1.2 Conditions of service

Pursuant to the Act of 26 January 1982, The Teachers' Charter (as subsequently amended), the position of teacher may be taken by a person who:

- 1) has a higher education diploma (degree) and has completed teacher training or has a diploma from an initial teacher training institution (teacher training college or foreign language teacher training college);
- 2) respects fundamental moral principles; and
- 3) fulfils health requirements for practicing the profession (confirmed by a medical certificate).

A HEI graduate who has completed teacher training (i.e. holds a teaching qualification) or a college graduate is recognised as a qualified teacher in the specialization area of the programme completed. Entrants to the profession begin with the grade of a trainee teacher (the first of the four grades in the professional promotion system) and undertake a probationary period (*staż*) lasting one school year in order to be promoted to the grade of a contract teacher. Teachers are employed by the head of the school or of other educational institution (further on referred to as the school head) through an open recruitment procedure.

As mentioned above, pursuant to the Teachers' Charter, teachers in the two lower professional promotion grades (trainee teachers and contract teachers) are employed on the basis of an employment contract. Teachers in the two upper grades (appointed teachers and chartered teachers) may be employed on the basis of appointment.

The school head is the employer for all teachers working in a given school. Teachers employed on the basis of appointment are not subject to the civil service legislation. However, in performing their duties, teachers are entitled to protection provided for civil servants. The body managing the school is obliged by law to defend the teacher when the rights which he/she has been granted are infringed.

In terms of implementing the curriculum, teachers are free to apply any methods chosen from those recognised in the contemporary pedagogy which they consider most appropriate. They are also free to choose teaching aids as well as textbooks from those approved by Ministry of Education for use in school. While teachers are not formally required by law to undertake continuing professional development (CPD) activities, it is stated in the Teachers' Charter that they should improve their knowledge, using their priority right to participate in all forms of CPD.

9.1.3 Working time

The working time of teachers may not exceed 40 clock hours per week. Within this working time, teachers teach classes and conduct care-related activities for pupils/students, and undertake other activities provided for in the school statutes, as well as other activities related to preparing for classes, self-education and CPD.

The compulsory weekly load, including teaching, educational or care-related activities undertaken directly with pupils, varies according to the type of school or institution and activities. For example, the compulsory weekly load is 25 teaching hours for pre-primary school teachers; 18 teaching hours for teachers in special pre-primary schools, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools; and 15 teaching hours for teachers in teacher training colleges. 1 teaching hour equals 45 minutes.

Teachers with 18 teaching hours per week can have their weekly teaching load increased to a maximum of 27 teaching hours. The weekly teaching load of 18 teaching hours provides the basis for a full-time teacher's salary. Teachers receive an overtime pay for teaching hours extending beyond the 18-hour weekly teaching load. Besides teaching time and overall working time, teachers are obliged, according to the legislation, to be available at school 2 extra teaching hours in primary and lower secondary schools and one extra teaching hour in upper secondary schools.

9.1.4 Assessment and promotion

Teacher performance assessment covers all teachers, except trainee teachers as they apply for promotion to the second professional grade at the end of their first school year, and thus are subject to the assessment of professional achievements. Teacher performance assessment at all levels of the school education system is carried out by the school head.

Pursuant to the Teachers' Charter, teachers can obtain the following professional promotion grades:

- A. a trainee teacher,
- B. a contract teacher,
- C. an appointed teacher,
- D. a chartered teacher.

Chartered teachers who have outstanding professional achievements may be awarded an honorary title of education professor.

In order to be promoted to the higher grade, the teacher should:

- hold the required qualifications;
- complete a 'probationary period' and receive a positive assessment of his/her professional achievements during this period;
- have his/her application for promotion approved by a so-called qualifying board or, in the case of a contract teacher, pass an exam before an examination board.

9.2 Academic teachers

In accordance with the legislation concerning higher education, academic teachers include four categories:

- 1) research-and-teaching staff;
- 2) research staff;
- 3) teaching staff and
- 4) qualified librarians and qualified scientific documentation and information staff.

Among the four categories, only research-and-teaching staff and teaching staff are statutorily required to train and educate students.

While the legislation makes no reference to initial training of academic teachers, qualification requirements are laid down by law for individual positions which can be held by academic teachers. Qualification requirements, professional development and

conditions of service are regulated in the higher education legislation for academic teachers.

9.2.1 Entry to the profession

Pursuant to the Law on Higher Education (LoHE), academic teachers may be persons who:

1. have the qualifications specified in LoHE;
2. have full legal capacity;
3. have not been convicted of an intentional offence by a valid court judgment;
4. have not been punished by a disciplinary penalty specified in LoHE; and
5. enjoy full civic rights.

The requirements concerning the level of formal qualifications and the academic degree or title (*doktor*, *doktor habilitowany* or *profesor*, respectively) to be held by research-and-teaching staff, research staff and teaching staff are defined by LoHE. The statutes of a HEI may also define additional requirements and professional qualifications for research-and-teaching, research and/or teaching staff. The lowest position (assistant) within the categories of research-and-teaching and research staff and all positions available to teaching staff may be taken by those who hold at least a Master's degree or an equivalent degree. However, in accordance with the rules laid down in the statutes of a HEI, students in one of the two final years of study may also prepare for this position. In accordance with the latest amendments to LoHE, academic teachers in public HEIs are employed, for both a definite and indefinite period of time, on the basis of an open recruitment procedure in case the working time exceeds 50% of the statutory working hours. Recruitment procedures and conditions are laid down in the statutes of HEIs, but HEIs are required by LoHE to publish job announcements on their websites and the websites of the Ministry.

9.2.2 Professional status

Academic teachers are employed on the basis of appointment (providing more legal protection) or an employment contract. They may be employed on the basis of appointment only when they hold a professorial title and work on a full-time basis in a given HEI as the place of their primary employment.

Academic teachers enjoy the freedom to conduct scientific research, freedom of artistic creation and freedom of teaching. They benefit from the entitlements granted to creators in respect of copyright protection. Statutory duties of research-and-teaching staff and research staff include conducting scientific research and development work, developing

research and artistic activities and participating in the performance of organisational tasks in their home institutions. Research-and-teaching staff are also obliged to train and educate students. Statutory duties of teaching staff include training and educating students, upgrading professional qualifications and skills, and participating in the performance of organisational tasks in their home institutions.

All academic teachers are subject to periodic assessment which concerns, in particular, the performance of their statutory duties, and observance of intellectual property, related rights and industrial property rights.

9.2.3 Working time

The working time of academic teachers is determined by the scope of their teaching and research and organisational duties. The rules for determining the scope of duties, the types of teaching activities included in the scope of duties, including the teaching load for individual positions, and the rules for calculating teaching hours are defined by the senate of a HEI. The detailed scope of duties and the corresponding load for a teacher is determined by the head of the academic unit and specified in the statutes. The annual teaching load defined in the Law on Higher Education is as follows (where teaching hours are defined as 45-minutes periods):

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

9.2.4 Promotion and assessment

The positions for research-and-teaching staff and research staff in an HEI include assistant, reader, visiting professor, associate professor and professor, and those for teaching staff include instructor, foreign language teacher, lecturer and senior lecturer. The Law on Higher Education specifies only academic qualifications (degrees and titles) required for holding individual positions, but additional requirements may be laid down in the statutes of a HEI. The following qualifications are required for individual research-and-teaching and research staff positions:

- assistants: a Master's degree (*magister*);
- readers: a doctoral degree (*doktor*);
- visiting professors (a position for persons employed on a regular basis in other HEIs): a post-doctoral degree (*doktor habilitowany*) or a professorial title (*profesor*),

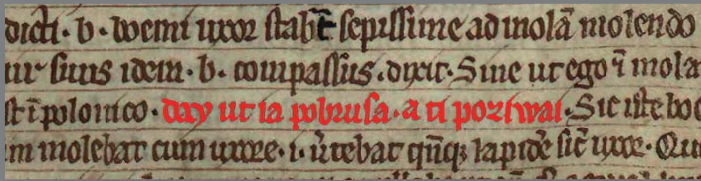
or a doctoral degree (*doktor*) and significant research, professional or artistic achievements;

- associate professors: a post-doctoral degree (*doktor habilitowany*) or a professorial title (*profesor*);
- professors: a professorial title (*profesor*).

Academic teachers may also be promoted to management positions within the authorities of a HEI, these including rector and vice-rector, head and deputy head of the academic unit (dean and vice-dean of a faculty where faculties are academic units). Teaching staff only are explicitly required by LoHE to upgrade their professional skills. Detailed arrangements concerning professional development of academic staff are laid down in internal regulations of HEIs. Obligatory periodic teacher performance assessment normally takes into account research and teaching achievements of academic teachers.

The earliest known writings in Polish include the following sentence: “*Day ut ia pobrusa, a ti poczuiwai*” which may be translated as: “*Let me work now and you have some rest*”.

These words date back to around the year 1200 and are known to have been uttered by a man named Boguchwal to his wife tired after
▼ long hours of working with a quern.



POLISH LANGUAGE BELONGS TO WEST-SLAVIC GROUP OF THE INDO-EUROPEAN FAMILY OF LANGUAGES. IT IS CLASSIFIED AS AN INFLECTED AND SYNTHETIC SYSTEM. AS AN INDIVIDUAL LANGUAGE, POLISH EVOLVED IN THE 10TH CENTURY AND PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE POLISH STATE.

THEMATIC OVERVIEW: FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

The organisation, process and expected outcomes of teaching foreign languages in Poland have been undergoing considerable changes since the beginning of the third millennium, reflecting the political, economic and social developments which the country has experienced. Joining the European Union, increased social and labour mobility, the popularisation of IT technologies, most notably the Internet, have, amongst many others, triggered a number of reforms, including those within the educational system. Significantly, those reforms have also been informed by critical and disciplined reflection on the goals of education in Poland in the light of the changing demographics and students' increasing educational aspirations. The number of university students has grown more than five times in the last two decades or so, and higher education is perceived by many as an indispensable asset for the future labour market. Considering the above, the significance which has recently been given to learning and teaching foreign languages should hardly be seen as surprising. Equipping students with the ability to communicate, both orally and in writing, in at least two foreign languages, has become one of the goals of the Polish educational system, as it bears the potential of providing students with a firmer foothold on both educational and labour markets. In order to achieve this goal, a number of measures had to be taken, both legislative and organisational in nature.

ORGANISATION

There are no legal regulations listing the languages which may be taught at either level of education in Poland. However, while some schools decide to introduce less commonly taught languages such as Chinese, Japanese or Hungarian, the vast majority include in their offer two or more languages from the list of six languages constituting examinations subjects, i.e. English, French, Spanish, German, Russian and Italian (Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 30 April 2007 on Conditions and Rules for Pupil Evaluation, Eligibility for Assessment, Promotion and Examinations and Tests in Public Schools, with further amendments). Of the six languages, the three most commonly taught ones are – in order of commonness – English, German and Russian.

Foreign languages may be taught as either compulsory or optional (additional) subjects. The principles regulating the organisation of both types of education (compulsory and optional), including the number of teaching hours available for either, are regulated by the following ministerial regulations (the former becoming operative as of 1 September 2012 and consecutively replacing the latter):

- Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 22 February 2012 on Outline Timetables in Public Schools – for grades 1 and 4 of primary school (ISCED 1), grade 1 of lower secondary school (ISCED 2) and grade 1 of upper primary school (ISCED 3)
- Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 12 February 2002 on Outline Timetables in Public Schools – for all other grades at the three levels of education (ISCED 1–3).

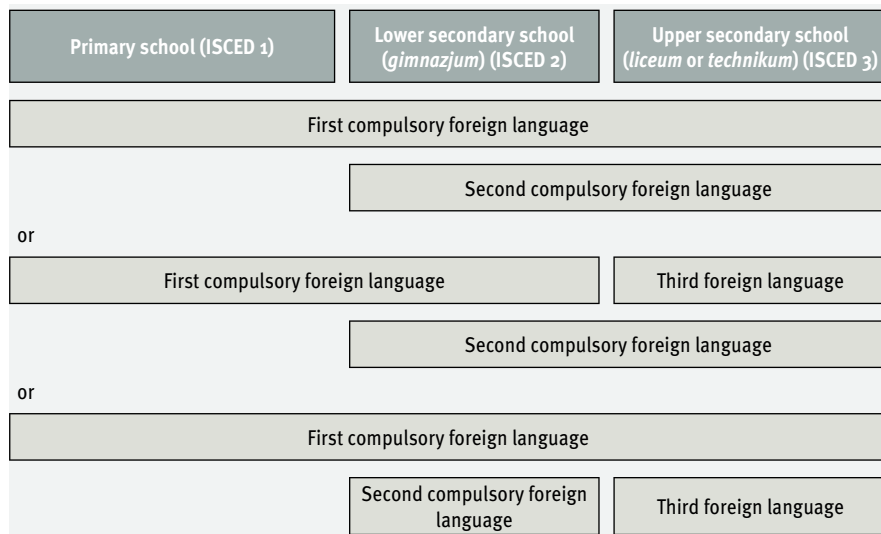
By the time they graduate from upper secondary school at the age of approximately 18 (ISCED 3), all students in Poland will have received compulsory tuition in two foreign languages:

- the first foreign language taught compulsorily from grade 1 of primary school (ISCED 1, students aged 7)
- the second foreign language taught compulsorily from grade 1 of lower secondary school (ISCED 2, students aged 13).

Students typically continue learning the language started at an earlier educational level at consecutive levels, i.e. most students learn the first compulsory foreign language for 12 years (ISCED 1–3), and the second compulsory foreign language – for six years (ISCED 2–3). This tendency, however, is a reflection of a broadly drawn ministerial guideline rather than a prescribed legal regulation. Likewise, it is expected – although by no means imposed upon school authorities – that English should be one of the compulsory foreign languages. The expectation seems to rest with school authorities, parents and students alike. It is hardly surprising, then, that almost 90% of students learn English as a compulsory subject at either of the educational levels.

The situation described above is not, however, the only possibility. Apart from the requirement that in lower secondary school students should continue learning the language they started to learn at primary school, there is considerable leeway with regard to the languages taught at upper secondary school. Depending on, amongst others, school resources and personnel availability, students may start learning a third language instead of either the first or second compulsory language they have learnt previously. The possible ways of organizing foreign language education are presented diagrammatically in the figure below.

FIGURE 8. Possible ways of organizing foreign language education in Poland



It is recommended that school authorities strive to make it possible for students to continue learning the language they began learning at earlier levels of education. It is also recommended that students should learn the language in a group whose level of proficiency is similar to theirs, hence the suggestion – put forward in commentaries to the Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 23 December 2008 on Core Curricula for Pre-School Education and General Education in Particular Types of Schools – to place students in language groups formed on the basis of placement test results, irrespective of the students' administrative assignment to a given group. Furthermore, the Regulation on Outline Timetables in Public Schools specifies that no language learning group should consist of more than 24 students. Such regulations create largely optimal conditions for language education by minimizing the risks involved in teaching highly mixed-level classes and allowing for the organisation of inter-class language learning groups consisting of students – potentially from different grades within the same educational level – at a similar level of language proficiency. Only in such conditions can the teaching time devoted to a foreign language be exploited fully. The number of teaching hours devoted to foreign languages has increased in the latest Ministry of Education regulation concerning the outline timetables in public schools (February 2012). The increase has been mainly owing to the introduction of a compulsory course in one foreign language at the extended level in grades 1–3 of general upper secondary school or 1–4 of technical upper secondary school (ISCED 3; the table below).

TABLE 3. Comparison of the number of teaching hours (per level of education) devoted to FLT in new and previous regulations on outline timetables in public schools

Level of education	Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 22 February 2012 on Outline Timetables in Public Schools	Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 12 February 2002 on Outline Timetables in Public Schools
primary school (ISCED 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 190 hours (grades 1–3) • 290 hours (grades 4–6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 190 hours (grades 1–3)* • 240 hours (grades 4–6)
lower secondary school (ISCED 2)	450 hours (division of hours between two languages is at school head's discretion) <i>(+ 190 hours for bilingual classes / groups)</i>	450 hours (division of hours between two languages is at school head's discretion)* <i>(+ 180 hours for bilingual classes / groups)</i>
general upper secondary school (ISCED 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 450 hours (division of hours between two languages is at school head's discretion) • 180 hours (for the language taught at the extended level) <i>(+ 270 hours for bilingual classes / groups)</i> <i>(+ 640 hours for bilingual classes / groups – introductory grade, only until 2014/2015)</i>	450 hours (division of hours between two languages is at school head's discretion) <i>(+ 270 hours for bilingual classes / groups)</i> <i>(+ 540 hours for bilingual classes / groups – introductory grade)</i>
technical upper secondary school (ISCED 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 450 hours (division of hours between two languages is at school head's discretion) • 180 hours (for the language taught at the extended level) <i>(+ 240 hours for bilingual classes / groups)</i>	450 hours (division of hours between two languages is at school head's discretion)
Altogether	1 560 hours (for two languages, ISCED 1–3) <i>(+ 1 100 hours for bilingual classes / groups)</i>	1 330 hours (for two languages, ISCED 1–3) <i>(+ 990 hours for bilingual classes / groups)</i>

* introduced by the Amendment of 23 March 2009 to the Regulation, following the introduction of the new Core Curriculum

At both lower and upper secondary levels, where two languages are taught compulsorily, the division of teaching hours between the two languages rests with the school head. Typically, two-thirds of the allotted hours are devoted to the leading language, most likely one continued from the previous level of education, with the remaining one-third devoted to the second compulsory foreign language.

Additional teaching hours are also available for bilingual schools/classes, including extra 640 teaching hours which bilingual schools may use during an introductory grade, i.e. an extra year devoted mainly to teaching students a foreign language so that they may take an advanced language course in the remaining three (general upper secondary school) or four (technical upper secondary school) years, as well as take selected content subject courses in a foreign language (this regulation, however, becomes inoperative as of 1 September 2015). The school head also has at his disposal a number of additional teaching hours, some of which he/she may allot to foreign languages, either one of the compulsory ones, or a third, non-compulsory one.

Outline timetables are also available for pupils with disabilities (special educational needs). The number of teaching hours for some groups of pupils with special educational needs, e.g. hard of hearing, blind, is the same as for other students. Some exceptions include students with mild mental retardation, who – at the lower secondary level (ISCED 2) – learn only one foreign language and should have 290 teaching hours distributed over the period of three years. Students with moderate to profound mental retardation are exempted from learning a foreign language altogether. Furthermore, in accordance with the Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 30 April 2007 on Conditions and Rules for Pupil Evaluation, Eligibility for Assessment, Promotion and Examinations and Tests in Public Schools, with further amendments, students with a severe hearing impairment, severe developmental dyslexia, aphasia, multiple disabilities, and autism, including Asperger's syndrome, may be exempted from learning a second foreign language at either the third or fourth educational stage (ISCED 2 and 3, respectively). In addition to outline timetables for general upper secondary education, the organisation of foreign language teaching in basic vocational schools is also regulated by ministerial documents with regard to the number of languages learnt (1) as well as the number of teaching hours (130) per the three-year-period. It is important to stress that these 130 hours are meant to be devoted to the development of general language competencies. Additional teaching hours constitute a proportion of vocation-specific education (cf. 'Curriculum'). The particular number of extra hours available for foreign language education depends on both the type of school (technical or basic vocational) and the occupation itself. For example, a pupil in technical upper secondary school earning his qualifications to become a technician of nutrition and catering services will have – as part of and in strict correlation with vocational education – approximately 100 extra teaching hours devoted to occupation-specific language in addition to the 630 hours allowed for general language education (cf. Table 3). The number of extra hours is considerably greater for qualifications in which the ability to speak a foreign language – indeed, in some cases even two foreign languages – is considered a necessity. For instance, a technical upper secondary school pupil earning his qualifications to become a logistics technician may have as many as 300 extra hours of language instruction as part of his vocational training. The head of the school may decide on the exact number of additional foreign language teaching hours, the only constraint being the number of hours available for subjects within theoretical vocational education, i.e. 750 in the three- or four-year period. The choice of the language to be taught is not, however, entirely within the head's discretion as some qualifications expect English to be the language the students learn. As the discussed change becomes operative as of 1 September 2012, preliminary reconnaissance shows that – besides English – German and Russian will be the most commonly selected languages.

CURRICULUM

Different organisational solutions concerning various possible paths of foreign language education in Poland (cf. Fig. 8) had to be factored into the Core Curriculum, introduced in a Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 23 December 2008 on Core Curricula for Pre-School Education and General Education in Particular Types of Schools. The document regulates both the teaching/learning process, as well as testing and assessment, both in-school, administered by teachers and local school authorities, and external, organised and administered by the Central Examination Board and regional examination boards.

The Core Curriculum consists of sets of content- and skills-related standards, for all school subjects including foreign languages, couched in the language of student-centred curricular objectives (called “requirements”), specifying what a student is expected to know and be able to do at the end of each of the four stages of education, after 3, 6, 9 and 12 years, respectively. The first two stages encompass ISCED level 1, the next stage corresponds to ISCED level 2, while the last one – to ISCED level 3. The table below outlines the relationship between the ISCED levels, educational stages, Core Curriculum levels, and tentative links to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR, also referred to as CEF or CEFR) levels. The reader is advised to use it as reference material throughout the chapter.

TABLE 4. Correspondence between levels in various documents

ISCED level	Educational stage in Poland (grades)	Core Curriculum level	Language exam at the end of the stage	Tentative link to s level
1	1 (grades 1–3)	I	none	below A1*
	2 (grades 4–6)	II	none**	A1*
2	3 (grades 1–3)	III.0	end-of-lower secondary school language exam, basic level	A2*
		III.1	end-of- lower secondary school language exam, extended level	A2+*
3	4 (grades 1–3 or 1–4)	IV.0	none, although students may decide to take other level IV exams	A2
		IV.1.P	matriculation exam, basic level***	B1–B1+
		IV.1.R	matriculation exam, extended level***	B2–B2+
		IV.2	matriculation exam, bilingual level***	C1–C2

* Considering the learners’ age, the link must be considered a very weak one; more appropriately, linking should be made to the age-relevant *Language Portfolio*, as suggested in the Core Curriculum.

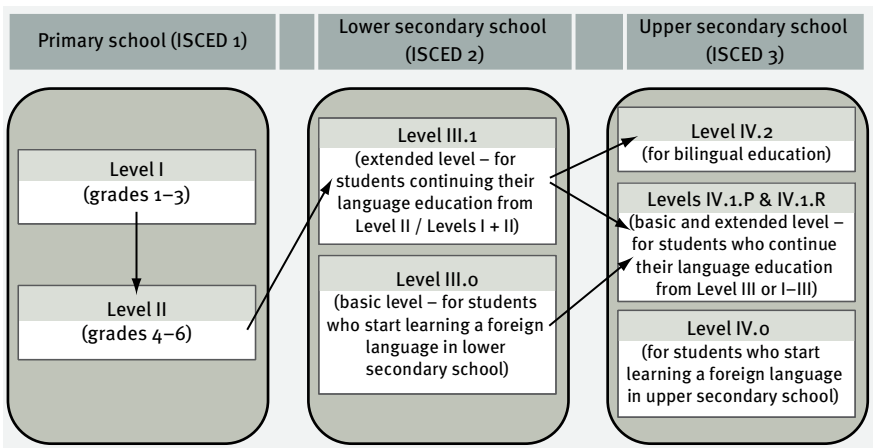
** An exam based on the Core Curriculum will be available for stage II in 2015

*** Until 2014 the matriculation exam will be based on the so-called examination standards; the exam will be based on the Core Curriculum requirement from 2015. However, since the examinations standards and the Core Curriculum are, by and large, congruent documents, the link can be made today.

The Core Curriculum for foreign languages is inter-lingual in nature, i.e. the objectives are rather general in nature and demarcate the expected academic outcomes for any foreign language. Language-specific details such as a list of grammatical and functional exponents for every level are set out in a series of exam-related documents called ‘examination syllabi’ (*informator*).

In order to make it possible for students to either continue learning a foreign language started at an earlier stage or begin learning a new one, depending on the school’s financial, organisational and personnel resources, as well as students’ own interests and needs, there are altogether eight different levels of standards (requirements) for foreign languages set out in the Core Curriculum, represented graphically in the figure below.

FIGURE 10. Different levels of foreign language standards in the Core Curriculum



As can be seen in the figure above, students who start learning a foreign language in grade 1 of primary school (Level I), continue their education in Level II, then III.1 and – depending on whether they wish to follow a basic or extended programme – IV.1.P (‘P’ standing for *podstawowy*, ‘basic’) or IV.1.R (‘R’ standing for *rozszerzony*, ‘extended’). Students may also start learning a foreign language at lower secondary school (Level III.o) or upper secondary school (Level IV.o). What is characteristic for the Core Curriculum is the cumulative nature of the requirements specified therein – the requirements specified for the lower levels are binding for the higher levels as well. For each educational stage, the Core Curriculum divides the requirements into two categories: general and specific. The general requirements outline the major educational goals and largely mirror the components of communicative competence

as delineated in the *CEFR*, with the proviso that for Levels I and II (primary school; ISCED 1) the relationship between the documents is rather weak, the *CEFR* pertaining mostly to adult learners. Furthermore, at no level has the Core Curriculum been linked to the *CEFR* in a principled way; rather it adheres to the philosophy of language and language education inherent in the Council of Europe document.

Specific requirements provided in the Core Curriculum consist of a series of increasingly finer grained objectives – both knowledge and skills – all being an elaboration of the general requirements. The figure below outlines both the general and specific requirements contained in the Core Curriculum for all but the first level (Level I) of foreign language education in Poland, as well as the tentative link to the *CEFR*.

TABLE 5. General and specific requirements contained in the Core Curriculum and their link to the *CEFR*

Core Curriculum	<i>CEFR</i>				
	Knowledge	Reception	Production	Interaction	Mediation
General requirement	Knowledge of linguistic exponents	Understanding utterances	Producing utterances	Reacting to utterances	Mediating utterances
Specific requirements	Knowledge of linguistic exponents (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation etc.)	Understanding spoken utterances	Producing written utterances	Reacting to spoken utterances	Mediating utterances orally and in written form
		Understanding written utterances	Producing spoken utterances	Reacting to written utterances	

By tentatively linking the objectives of language learning and teaching to the *CEFR*, the Core Curriculum for foreign languages prioritizes the ability to communicate successfully in a foreign language, both in writing and speech, thus making it the main goal of language education. Achieving various communicational goals is emphasized over linguistic accuracy which – while still significant – is not in itself a goal of language learning/teaching. This constitutes an important qualitative change in foreign language education in Poland as achieving high levels of language accuracy, sometimes viewed as tantamount to achieving the level of mastery typical of an educated ‘native speaker’, used to be seen as a desirable teaching objective by many teachers at all levels of education. With the ability to communicate as the main goal of language education, the level descriptors in the Core Curriculum provide a general outline of the expected growth in language ability across educational stages (ISCED 1–3). Considering the largely non-linear nature of the development of language ability as well as the inter-lingual nature of the Core

Curriculum as such, the descriptors signal certain developmental tendencies rather than provide lists of very specific grammatical, lexical or pragmatic exponents which should be taught at a particular level. These tendencies are signalled through, among others:

- using verbal qualifiers, e.g. *sporadic/a few/many*, to signpost the vital differences between consecutive levels with regard to a particular ability, i.e. to signal various levels of a particular substantive attribute or behaviours
- specifying examples of texts types which students at consecutive levels should be able to both comprehend and produce
- outlining the characteristics of texts, e.g. length, form, level of cognitive and linguistic complexity, which students at consecutive levels should be able to both comprehend and produce
- expanding the scope of topics which students should be able to deal with (linguistically and cognitively) both receptively and productively.

The table below provides an illustration of the approach described above. The key differences across levels have been underlined (text characteristics), bolded (quality of delivery) and italicized (examples of text types). The approach exemplified in the table below is adopted for the eight specific requirements provided in the table above.

TABLE 6. The development of language ability as depicted in the Core Curriculum descriptors

Core Curriculum level	Tentative link to the CEFR level	Descriptor for understanding spoken utterances
III.0	A2*	The student understands <u>very simple, short</u> utterances, e.g. <i>instructions, announcements, conversations</i> , articulated slowly and clearly in a standard variety of language.
III.1	A2+*	The student understands <u>simple, short, typical</u> utterances, e.g. <i>instructions, announcements, advertisements, conversations</i> , articulated clearly, in a standard variety of language.
IV.0	A2	The student understands <u>very simple, short, typical</u> utterances, e.g. <i>instructions, announcements, conversations</i> , articulated slowly and clearly in a standard variety of language.
IV.1.P	B1	The student understands <u>simple, short, typical</u> utterances, e.g. <i>instructions, announcements, advertisements, conversations</i> , articulated clearly, in a standard variety of language.
IV.1.R	B2	The student understands <u>texts of varying forms and lengths</u> , e.g. <i>conversations, debates, interviews, lectures, announcements, instructions, news, radio and TV broadcasts</i> , in different conditions of reception.
IV.2	C1	The student understands <u>texts of varying forms and lengths, on various topics</u> , e.g. <i>conversations, debates, interviews, lectures, announcements, instructions, news, radio and TV broadcasts, films</i> , in different conditions of reception.

* The proviso made earlier regarding the unsuitability of the CEFR for the target learner group holds here; the Core Curriculum advises teachers refer to the age-relevant *Language Portfolio*.

In addition to the eight specific requirements provided in Table 5, which are all language-specific, each level of the Core Curriculum for foreign languages provides a further five requirements which relate to language learning, yet are not language-specific. They are:

- self-assessment
- cooperating with peers
- using various sources of information
- developing communication strategies
- developing language awareness in both L1 and FL.

Developing these skills must be seen as facilitating the process of language learning and should become part and parcel of any language teaching course.

While the Core Curriculum provides a systematic presentation of the knowledge and skills to be mastered by students, and thus influences the overall content of language learning materials, it leaves the methodological application of the objectives to coursebook writers and teachers. This allows for an overwhelming variety of language learning materials, many of which are produced especially for the Polish market, while some are only adapted from international markets. Language teachers may also decide to create their own materials, however, the vast majority opt for one of the commercially produced language courses chosen from a list of courses approved by the Ministry of National Education (Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 21 June 2012 on authorizing kindergarten educational curricula and curricula for school use and authorizing coursebooks for school use). At the time of writing (August 2012), there are altogether 588 Ministry-approved coursebooks for six major foreign languages (cf. the table below).

TABLE 7. The number of Ministry-approved coursebooks for the Core Curriculum

ISCED level	Educational stage	English	French	Spanish	German	Russian	Italian
1	1 (grades 1–3)	93	1		17		
1	2 (grades 4–6)	56	3		12	3	
2	3 (grades 1–3)	109	15	10	92	10	4
3	4 (grades 1–3 or 1–4)	71	14	9	52	9	8
Altogether		329	33	19	173	22	12

Many of these coursebooks constitute multi-level publications consisting of a number of components, including – but not limited to – a students' book, workbook, teacher's book, CDs, DVDs, photocopiable materials, ready-made tests, posters, flashcards etc. The array of educational materials is especially impressive

for English, much less so for either Spanish or Italian, for which no Ministry-approved coursebooks are available for either stage 1 or 2 (ISCED 1). This situation is, on the one hand, a reflection of the number of students learning a particular language; on the other hand, however, it is also an indication of the commercial nature of language learning.

Quite importantly, the Core Curriculum supports other ministerial regulations in their efforts to lay legal and organisational foundations allowing for creating conditions most conducive to learning a foreign language by emphasizing the need for appropriately equipped language classrooms. The document advises that steps should be taken to provide students with access to dictionaries, visual aids, CDs and CD players, easy Internet access. Language learning, it is believed, is inasmuch about developing linguistic and communicative competence, as it is about fostering openness to other cultures, tolerance, curiosity and tolerance of ambiguity.

The Core Curriculum which has been referred to thus far concerns general language education. Another Core Curriculum – introduced in a Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 7 February 2012 on the Core Curriculum of Education in Professions – is available for vocational education in two types of schools, i.e. technical upper secondary school and basic vocational school (cf. end of ‘Organisation’). The latter Core Curriculum specifies a number of learning outcomes following the idea of the European Qualifications Framework. They are divided into three groups, two of which – the first and the third – contain outcomes related to foreign language teaching and learning. The three groups are the following:

1. learning outcomes common to all professions
2. learning outcomes common to related professions within a particular domain of activity, e.g. administration and services, electrics and electronics, medicine and social sphere
3. learning outcomes specific to qualifications within particular professions.

As far as foreign language teaching and learning is concerned, the first group of learning outcomes comprises five fairly general descriptors concerning:

- the knowledge of profession-related linguistic exponents
- proficiency in using the four macro-skills in profession-related language activities
- the use of foreign sources of information.

The third group of learning outcomes concerns profession-specific language activities, some of which require a relatively high level of specialization, both in terms of language exponents (most notably, lexis) and language skills. For instance, the three qualifications required of a potential logistics technician include – in addition to 53 profession-specific outcomes – the following foreign-language profession-specific outcomes:

- the student creates documents concerning distribution channel flow in both Polish and a foreign language
- the student creates transport documentation in both Polish and a foreign language
- the students creates and collects specification sheets in both Polish and a foreign language
- the student creates logistics process documentation of an enterprise, in both Polish and a foreign language.

The outcomes specify complex, profession-specific skills which condition the proper preparation of a student for the current labour market with mobility as one of the main characteristics required of a prospective employee.

ASSESSMENT

The assessment of students' mastery of foreign languages is carried out

- on a continuous basis by school teachers in the form of – predominantly – formative assessment which is diagnostic in nature
- at the end of the 3rd and 4th educational stage, ISCED 2 and 3 respectively, in the form of standardized examinations (summative assessment with fairly limited diagnostic feedback).

The assessment conducted at school by language teachers is geared at gauging the degree of mastery of learning objectives defined in relation to the curriculum implemented in the given group of students, this curriculum being in turn linked to the general and specific requirements specified in the Core Curriculum. Most schools expect language teachers to grade students on the four macro-skills, i.e. reading, listening, speaking and writing, as well as the enabling skills, i.e. grammar and vocabulary, other areas of students' activity, e.g. presentations, participation in classes, knowledge of culture are also frequently evaluated.

Teachers' assessment may be both formal and informal in nature, and its precise form may be decided on by the teacher himself/herself as long as it does not contradict the school's statutory regulations. The assessment includes, but is not limited to, the following forms:

- pen-and-paper tests, with grammar, vocabulary and receptive skills being tested most frequently and to the detriment of productive skills, i.e. speaking and writing, which – according to many teachers – pose insurmountable practical problems
- quizzes – short grammar and/or vocabulary tests, both announced and unannounced
- oral presentations.

Despite the professed prioritization of “communicative skills” in foreign language teaching/learning, some language teachers tend to view skills assessment as

inferior to the assessment of grammar and – to a lesser extent – vocabulary. This incompatibility of the professed theoretical approach and classroom practice may be due to a number of reasons, e.g. language teaching traditions, teacher’s mentality, practical considerations. Quite importantly, however, the number of teachers going beyond the traditional forms of assessment is constantly growing, and alternative forms of formative assessment, e.g. diaries, teacher-student conferences, language learning portfolios are becoming more popular. It is also important to note that teachers’ awareness of the goals of continuous assessment is slowly increasing. More and more teachers are cognizant of the predominantly diagnostic and motivational nature of internal assessment for the student and teacher alike, and use assessment results as guidance in the process of day-to-day planning of teaching. This heightened awareness results partly from the fact that teachers are required by law to provide both students and their parents with information regarding teachers’ requirements and assessment criteria. Partly, however, the increased awareness may be considered a welcome by-product of the coherent system of standardized examinations introduced into the Polish educational system in 2002 (at the end of primary and lower secondary level) and 2005 (at the end of upper secondary level).

With regard to foreign languages, the degree of mastery of curricular objectives is measured after 9 and 12 years of education, at the end of lower secondary and upper secondary education, respectively, by means of standardized nation-wide assessments developed and administered by the Central Examination Board (*Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna*) in cooperation with eight regional examination boards (*okręgowa komisja egzaminacyjna*). The end-of-lower secondary education language exam was introduced in 2009 and modified in 2012 to follow the Core Curriculum, while the matriculation exam at the end of upper secondary education continues to be based on the so-called “examination standards” until 2014, and will be modified to follow the Core Curriculum starting in 2015. It is also planned that a Core Curriculum-based foreign language test will be introduced at the end of primary education in 2015. What follows is a short description of the exams as they are in 2012.

The end-of-lower secondary education language exam is available in two levels: basic and extended. The basic level covers the learning objectives specified for Level III.0 of the Core Curriculum (tentatively set at *CEFR* level A2), while the extended level covers the objectives specified for Level III.1 (tentatively set at *CEFR* level A2+; cf. Fig. 2 and Tables 2 and 3). The Core Curriculum has had a profound effect on assessment at lower secondary level as the general and specific requirements defined therein have become the *de facto* examination construct. The table below provides the key characteristics regarding both levels of the exam.

TABLE 8. Characteristics of the end-of-lower secondary school language exam (ISCED 2)

Level	Form	Duration	Components	Weight	Number of tasks	Types of tasks
Basic (III.0)	written only	60 min.*	Listening comprehension	30%	3-4	closed only; multiple choice, T/F, matching
			Reading comprehension	30%	3-4	
			Knowledge of linguistic exponents	15%	2-3	
			Knowledge of functional exponents	25%	3-4	
Extended (III.1)	written only	60 min.*	Listening comprehension	25%	2-3	closed only; multiple choice, T/F, matching
			Reading comprehension	25%	3-4	
			Knowledge of linguistic exponents	25%	2-3	open-ended tasks
			Writing (e.g. e-mail, note, short informal letter)	25%	1	open-ended; assessed on content, logic and coherence, scope and accuracy of grammar and vocabulary

* Pupils with special educational needs are entitled to have more time to take the exams.

With the exception of one group of pupils with special educational needs, all lower secondary pupils are required to take the language exam at the basic level in one of the languages they learn as compulsory subjects at school. The choice of the language rests with the pupil and his parents (legal guardians), however, if he/she decides to take the exam in a language he/she also learnt in primary school, he/she has to take the exam at the extended level as well. Students who decide to sit the exam at the basic level in the language they started learning in a lower secondary school may also choose to take the extended level if they wish to check their language skills. The table below shows the number of students taking the end-of-lower secondary school foreign language exam in 2012.

TABLE 9. Number of pupils taking the end-of-lower secondary school exam in 2012

Level	Number of pupils	Including pupils taking the exam in the standard version	plus pupils taking the exam in one of the versions for pupils with special educational needs
Basic	403 179	393 635 English – 327 774 (approx. 83%) German – 55 731 (approx. 14 %) Russian – 8 402 French – 1 428 Spanish – 232 Italian – 68 } (approx. 3%)	9 544
Extended	339 457	337 344 English – 294 825 (approx. 87%) German – 37 660 (approx. 11 %) Russian – 4 082 French – 693 Spanish – 71 Italian – 13 } (approx. 2%)	2 113

The average score at the basic level varied from 57% (for German) to 71% (for Spanish), while the average score at the extended level varied from 33% (for German) to 69% (for Spanish). For the most popular language – English – the average scores were 63% and 45% for the basic and extended level respectively. Besides a percentage score, pupils are also provided with a percentile rank. While there is no fail/pass threshold set for the exam at either level, the percentage score for the basic level constitutes a component of the criteria in the procedure of admission to upper secondary schools. Unsurprisingly, with regard to the exam components, pupils achieved the highest scores for listening and reading comprehension tasks, and the lowest scores for knowledge of linguistics exponents and writing tasks, which were introduced in the 2012 exam for the first time since the end-of-lower secondary school exam was introduced in 2009. Very generally speaking, girls achieved better results than boys at any language, and – with the exception of Russian – pupils living in cities achieved higher scores than students living in rural areas.

As far as the matriculation exam at the end of upper secondary school is concerned, all students who choose to sit the exam, have to take an obligatory exam in one of six foreign languages: English, French, Spanish, German, Russian or Italian, regardless of whether the language was one of the subjects learnt at school or not. The obligatory matriculation language exam consists of two parts:

- written – taken at the basic level, and
- oral – this part is available at one level only, its tasks spanning *CEFR* levels A2–B1+.

The scores for the two parts are reported separately and pupils need to obtain a minimum score of 30% in both in order to pass the foreign language exam.

Pupils may also decide to take an optional exam in a foreign language, either the one they also sat at the basic level as a compulsory exam, or any other language from the list of six. In the former case, pupils take an additional written exam at the extended level, while in the latter – they may choose to take either the written part or the spoken part, or both, with the written part at either the basic level or the extended level. As stated previously, the oral part is available at one level only. Additionally, bilingual school graduates may choose to take an exam at the bilingual level, either written or spoken, or both. Bilingual school graduates may also sit exams in the following subjects: biology, chemistry, physics, history, geography, and mathematics, offered in all six foreign languages from the list provided above. Separate language exams – both written and spoken, at all levels, i.e. basic, extended, and bilingual – are also available for the following groups of pupils with special educational needs: hard of hearing, deaf, blind, with severe visual impairment. The table below provides the key characteristics regarding the *matriculation* language exams in 2012. Note that from 2015 the exam levels will be directly linked to the Core Curriculum levels, similarly to the end-of-lower secondary school exam.

TABLE 10. Characteristics of the matriculation language exams (ISCED 3)

Level	Form	Duration	Components	Weight	Number of tasks	Types of tasks
Basic (≈CEFR B1–B1+)	written	120 minutes*	Listening comprehension	30%	3	closed only; multiple choice, T/F, matching
			Reading comprehension	40%	3	
			Writing (e.g. a note, an announcement, a postcard plus a formal or informal letter)	30%	2	open-ended; assessed on content, form, language scope and accuracy
Extended (≈CEFR B2–B2+)	written	190 minutes*	Listening comprehension	30%	3	closed only; multiple choice, T/F, matching
			Reading comprehension	18%	2	
			Recognition and use of linguistic exponents	16%	3	closed (as above) and open-ended
			Writing	36%	1	
A no-level- prescribed exam (≈CEFR A2–B1+)	oral	approx. 15 minutes*		60% – content; 40% – language scope and accuracy	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a role-play • picture description + picture-based questions • prompts + questions
Bilingual (≈CEFR C1–C2)	written	180 minutes*	Listening comprehension	25%	3–4	closed (multiple choice, T/F, matching) and open-ended
			Reading comprehension	25%	3–4	
			Use of the language (linguistic exponents)	25%	3–4	closed (multiple choice) and open- ended
			Writing (essay, formal letter, article)	25%	1	
Bilingual (≈CEFR C1–C2)	oral	approx. 15 minutes*		70% – content; 30% – language scope and accuracy	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text presentation • text-based interview

* Pupils with special educational needs are entitled to have more time to take the exams.

The distribution of pupil language choices for the matriculation exam largely mirrors that of the lower secondary school exam. Table 8 shows the number of pupils taking the matriculation foreign language written exams in 2012, together with the pass rates, i.e. pupils who obtained the score of 30% or more, for the basic level (there is no pass/fail threshold for the extended and bilingual levels).

TABLE 11. Number of pupils taking written matriculation language exams in 2012, including pass rates for the basic level

Level	Number of pupils' taking the test in the standard version		Pass rate****	
Basic	360 531	English – 298 035 (approx. 83%)	91%	
		German – 44 977 (approx. 12.5 %)	96%	
		Russian – 13 439 (approx. 3.5 %)	89%	
		French – 2 490	} (approx. 1%)	95%
		Spanish – 1 030		99%
		Italian – 560		96%
Extended	83 098	English – 74 781 (approx. 90%)		
		German – 5 616 (approx. 7 %)		
		Russian – 1 143	} (approx. 3%)	
		French – 879		
		Spanish – 460		
		Italian – 219		
Bilingual	1 095	English – 421 (approx. 38%)		
		German – 149 (approx. 14 %)		
		Russian** – 5 (approx. 0.4%)		
		French – 252 (approx. 23%)		
		Spanish – 268 (approx. 25%)		
		Italian*** – 0		

* 2012 graduates only. The exam may be re-sat as many times as the pupil sees fit; pupils re-sitting the exam are not included in the numbers presented in the table.

** offered for the first time in 2012

*** will be offered for the first time in 2014

**** percent of pupils who took the exam as a compulsory subject at the basic level

As regards pupils' performance at particular exam components (cf. Table 10), the picture is similar to that for the end-of-lower secondary school exam, with pupils obtaining the best scores for reading and listening comprehension tasks, and the lowest scores – for the grammar and vocabulary tasks, as well as the language scope and accuracy criterion in the writing section. The score distribution relative to gender and place of residence also largely mirrors that for the end-of-lower secondary school exam.

As the Core Curriculum has been incrementally introduced into the consecutive grades within the Polish educational system, changes in the exam system – including the language exams – are underway. The end-of-lower secondary school exam was

modified to follow the Core Curriculum in 2012, the matriculation exam will follow in 2015. Also, as stated above, a new end-of-primary school language exam will be introduced the same year. The work on the new exam is highly advanced; the exam will largely follow the end-of-lower secondary school basic level format, it will, however, assign more weight to listening (considered to be an age-specific skill), be more picture-based, and its knowledge of linguistic components tasks will mostly focus on the knowledge of lexis.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS

There are approximately 70 000 foreign language teachers in Poland working in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools. The largest within this group is the cohort of teachers of English (approx. 60%), with teachers of German constituting the second largest group (approx. 25%), and teachers of Russian – third (approx. 6%). The vast majority of language teachers are female (approx. 85%), with Russian and French being the most feminized groups. The average age of Polish teachers of foreign languages reflects the changing trends in foreign language popularity. By far the youngest group are teachers of English (approx. 32 years old on average), the oldest group, on the other hand, are teachers of Russian (approx. 45 years old on average). Most foreign language teachers in Poland are fully qualified professionals. Depending on the language, the proportions of such individuals in the job range from approximately 94% for English to 99.5% for Russian. A few paths may be followed in order to become a fully qualified teacher of a foreign language in Poland and all are specified in Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 12 March 2009 on Particular Qualifications Expected of Teachers and Specifying Schools and Situations in which Employment of Teachers without Higher Education or a Completed Teaching Course is Possible, with further amendments. These paths are enumerated below.

1. a Master's or Bachelor's degree in a foreign language or applied linguistics department, with pedagogical preparation, i.e. courses that pre-service teachers take in such areas as instructional methods, learning theories, pedagogy and psychology, including teaching practice
2. a Master's degree in any department in the country where the language is spoken, with pedagogical preparation
3. a foreign language teacher training college graduate (Bachelor's degree equivalent)
4. a Master's degree in any department, holding one of the internationally recognised foreign language certificates specified in the annex to the Regulation, at an appropriate level or a national language exam certificate at level II

There are additional possibilities for individuals wishing to work as language teachers in kindergartens and primary schools:

5. a teaching college graduate holding one of the internationally recognised foreign language certificates specified in the annex to the Regulation, at an appropriate level or a national language exam certificate at level II
 6. a secondary school graduate holding a national language exam certificate at level II.
- The additional paths (numbers 5 and 6) were retained in the Regulation, some objections notwithstanding, in order to meet the increased demand for foreign language teachers following the reform of 2009 which made teaching a foreign language in grade 1 of primary school compulsory. English was the language of choice for the overwhelming majority of primary schools, hence the relatively high proportion (approx. 6%) of unqualified teachers of this language working mostly in primary education.

Upon employment, language teachers – like all other teachers in Poland – enter a career track of continuing professional development consisting of four successive teaching posts (see section 9.1.4)

In the first lower posts fully qualified teachers have a fixed-term contract and receive compulsory support from their mentors assigned by the school head. Upon becoming an appointed teacher, the working contract becomes permanent, and this post is considered to be the first fully autonomous one. This career track has been, in essence, devised as a motivational mechanism, and is described in great detail in two documents: the Teachers' Charter of 26 January 1982, with further amendments (Chapter 3a) and Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 1 December 2004 on Teachers' Professional Development.

The vast majority of language teachers are either appointed teachers or chartered teachers, with proportions for the two posts together ranging from approx. 50% for English to approx. 85% for Russian.

In addition to the official professional development career track described above, language teachers may take part in a variety of in-service teacher training programs offered by both public and private institutions. Among many others, these programs are devoted to:

- developing the teachers' repertoire of teaching techniques, with special focus on using IT and other media in language teaching
- instructing teachers on creating their own teaching materials
- training language teachers to become certified examiners for the end-of-lower secondary school and matriculation exams (this activity is carried out by the Central Examination Board and regional examination boards)
- expanding teachers' knowledge of the culture of the countries in which the language they teach is spoken
- extending teachers' knowledge of and skills in language assessment.

STATISTICAL ANNEX

Reference year: 2010/11

Source: Central Statistical Office (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, GUS)

TABLE 1. Pre-school enrolment rate by age

Age of children	Population	Children in pre-school institutions	% of total
3	386 872	192 588	49,78%
4	372 689	238 982	64,12%
5	362 139	293 486	81,04%
6	353 438	306 402	86,69%*

* There were 33 190 6-year old pupils in primary schools (9,39% of the population)

TABLE 2. Public and non-public schools for children and young people, including special schools

Type of school	Number of Schools	Pupils (in thousands)
Primary schools	13922	2191,6
Lower secondary schools	7278	1261,4
General upper secondary school	2447	634,5
Basic vocational schools	4520	820,6
Technical upper secondary schools		
Specialised upper secondary schools		
Post-secondary schools and colleges*	2941	298,8

*Post-secondary schools for young people and adults, including colleges – day, evening and extramural courses.

TABLE 3. HEIs and students (not including colleges)

Type of HEI	Number of HEIs	Number of students (in thousands)
Public HEIs	132	1261,2
Non-public HEIs	328	580,1
Total	460	1841,3

TABLE 4. Number of schools for adults and students in these schools

Type of school	Number of schools	Number of students
Primary school	5	237
Lower secondary school	164	16092
General upper secondary school	2599	218316
Basic vocational school	112	5552
Technical upper secondary school/specialised upper secondary school	863	48974
Total	3743	289171

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<http://www.sejm.gov.pl/prawo/konst/angielski/kon1.htm>

Central Examination Commission (*Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna*)

<http://www.cke.edu.pl/>

Central Statistical Office (*Główny Urząd Statystyczny*) <http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus>

Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (*Konferencja Rektorów Akademickich Szkół Polskich – KRASP*) <http://www.krasp.org.pl/index.php>

Conference of Rectors of Vocational Schools in Poland (*Konferencja Rektorów Zawodowych Szkół Polskich – KRZaSP*) <http://www.krzasp.pl/pl/index.php>

Institute of the Knowledge Society (*Instytut Społeczeństwa Wiedzy – ISW*)

<http://www.frp.org.pl/>

General Council of Science and Higher Education (*Rada Główna Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego – RGNiSW*); <http://www.rgnisw.nauka.edu.pl/>

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<http://www.men.gov.pl>

Ministry of Science and Higher Education (*Ministerstwo Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego*)

<http://www.nauka.gov.pl>

Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (*Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego*) <http://www.mkidn.gov.pl/>

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (*Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej*)
<http://www.mpips.gov.pl>

National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education (*Krajowy Ośrodek Wsparcia Edukacji Zawodowej i Ustawicznej – KOWEŻiU*)
<http://www.koweziu.edu.pl/>

Polish Rectors Foundation (*Fundacja Rektorów Polskich – FRP*) <http://www.frp.org.pl/>

Polish Accreditation Committee (*Polska Komisja Akredytacyjna – PKA*)
<http://www.pka.edu.pl/>

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<http://www.sio.edu.pl/>

Legislation

KEY LEGISLATION ON SCHOOL AND ADULT EDUCATION

The Polish school and adult education system is based on the following legislation (parliamentary acts):

- The Act of 26 January 1982 Teachers' Charter (with further amendments)
- The School Education Act of 7 September 1991 (with further amendments)
- The Act of 8 January 1999 on the Implementation of the Education System Reform (with further amendments)
- The Act on the Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions of 20 April 2004.

Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 20 February 2004 on the rules and procedures for admission to public schools and transfers between schools

Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 3 February 2006 on the acquisition and development of general education, skills and qualifications by adults in non-school settings

Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 30 April 2007 on the conditions and rules for pupil assessment, eligibility for assessment and promotion, and examinations and tests in public schools, with further amendments

The Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 23 December 2008 on the core curricula for pre-school education and general education in individual types of school

Regulation by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy 7 April 2009 on vocational training of adults

Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 8 June 2009 on the approval of pre-school education curricula, school curricula and textbooks for the use in school

Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 7 October 2009 on pedagogical supervision

Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 17 November 2010 on the rules for providing psychological and educational support in public kindergartens and schools

Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 21 May 2011 on the outline statutes of public kindergartens and public schools

Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 23 December 2011 on the classification of occupations for vocational education

Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 7 February 2012 on outline timetables in public schools

KEY LEGISLATION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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

- The Act of 27 July 2005 'Law on Higher Education' (with further amendments)
- The Act of 14 March 2003 on Academic Degrees and Title and on Degrees and Title in Art
- The Act of 17 July 1998 on Loans and Credits for Students (with further amendments)

Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 5 October 2011 on the conditions of providing degree programmes in a given field and a given level of study. Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 14 September 2011 on the requirements and procedures for the transfer of student achievements

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Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 1 September 2011 on the types of degrees for graduates, conditions of issue and necessary elements of diplomas of completion of study programmes and certificates of completion of non-degree postgraduate study programmes as well as the specimen of the Diploma Supplement

Regulation by the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 17 January 2012 on training standards for the teaching profession

The following materials have been used in this publication:

- *a poster by Tomasz Czyżkowski, a finalist of a poster competition „There are no children, only people”, organised by the Spokesman for Children’s Rights in the framework of the Year of Janusz Korczak, www.2012korczak.pl (page 24);*
- *a photo of the Copernicus Science Centre, www.kopernik.org.pl (page 40);*
- *the logo of The Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education, www.aps.edu.pl (page 84);*
- *the logo of The Jagiellonian University, www.uj.edu.pl (page 60)*
- *and the logo of the campaign All of Poland Reads to Kids and All of Europe Reads to Kids initiated and run by the ABCXXI – All of Poland Reads to Kids Foundation, www.allofpolandreadstokids.org (page 35).*

The remaining photographs have been provided by the Fotolia Photo Agency.

Eurypedia

The European Encyclopedia on National Education Systems



<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurypedia>

DETAILED AND UP TO DATE INFORMATION
ON THE POLISH EDUCATION SYSTEM IS AVAILABLE
FROM THE EUROPEAN ENCYCLOPEDIA
ON NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS AT
WWW.EURYDICE.ORG.PL/EURYPEDIA



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about other education systems in Europe
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