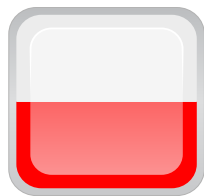

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING IN EUROPE

POLAND



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This VET in Europe report is part of a series prepared by Cedefop's ReferNet network. VET in Europe reports provide an overview of national vocational education and training (VET) systems of the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. The reports help to understand VET's main features and role within countries' overall education and training systems from a lifelong learning perspective, and VET's relevance to and interaction with the labour market.

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CHAPTER 1.

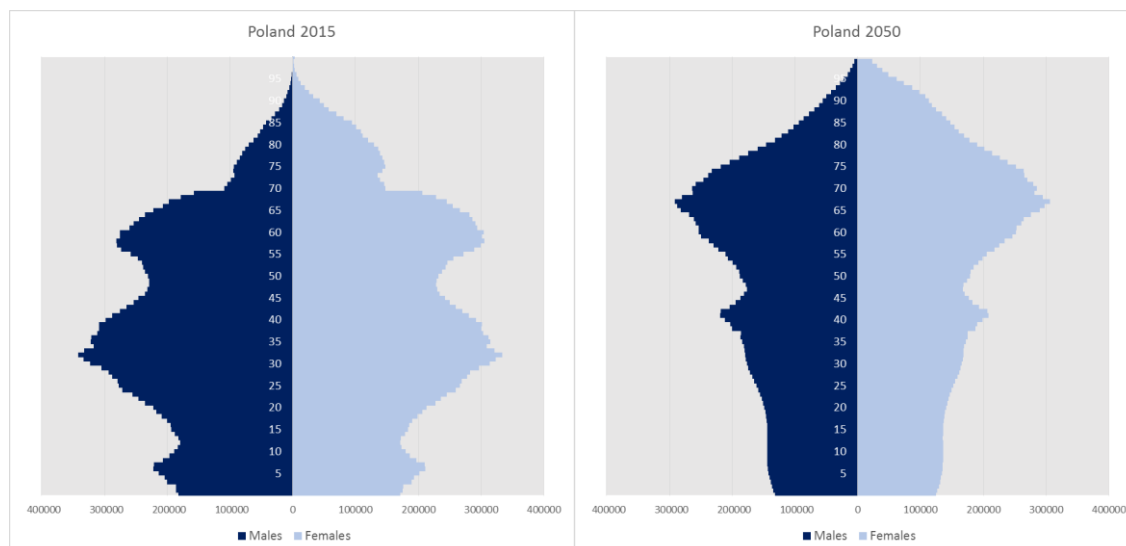
External factors influencing VET

1.1. Population and demographics

Poland has the sixth largest population in the EU with 38 437 000 inhabitants as of 1st January 2016. By 2050, it is forecasted to decrease by almost 12% (-4.4 million). With an area of 312 679 km² (GUS, 2014), the country is tenth in the EU by population density ⁽¹⁾.

Poland, as other countries in Europe, is characterised by low birth rates and a growing life expectancy, which impacts the age pyramid and results in an older population structure. The share of young people (aged 0-24) was 26% in 2015. However, as population projections show, it will decrease to 24% by 2025 and to 20% by 2050, which means a decrease by over one million and three million persons respectively.

Figure 1.1 Population age structure in 2015 and 2050



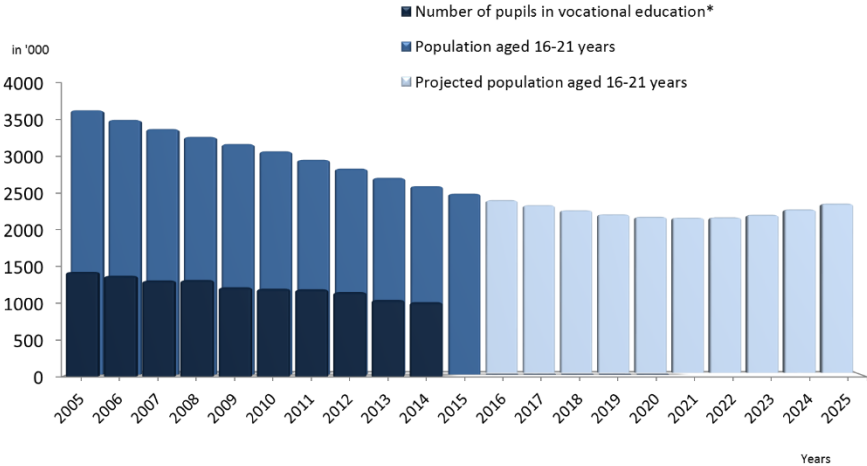
Source: own calculations based on data from the Local Data Bank, Central Statistical Office of Poland, <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start>. Accessed on August 30, 2016.

The forecasted changes in the age structure indicate a growing dependency ratio of the non-working to working age population, mainly due to the growing numbers of the pension age population. The non-working population currently is equal to 60% of the working age population and it is forecasted to grow to 63% and 78% by 2025 and 2050 respectively. In anticipation of an increase in the demand for training and upgrading of employee qualifications, in 2012, the Ministry of National Education introduced vocational qualification courses, a fast-track for obtaining vocational qualifications.

⁽¹⁾ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015). World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, custom data acquired via website.

While the pension age population is forecasted to grow significantly, the lower part of the population pyramid indicates a decreasing young population. This demographic trend has a direct impact on educational enrolment. Over the last decade (2005-14), the overall number of enrolled in upper secondary and post-secondary education decreased by 25%, which represents over half a million students. The decrease was the highest (37% or more than 300 000) in vocational upper secondary education.

Figure 1.2 Population aged 16-21, including vocational education students

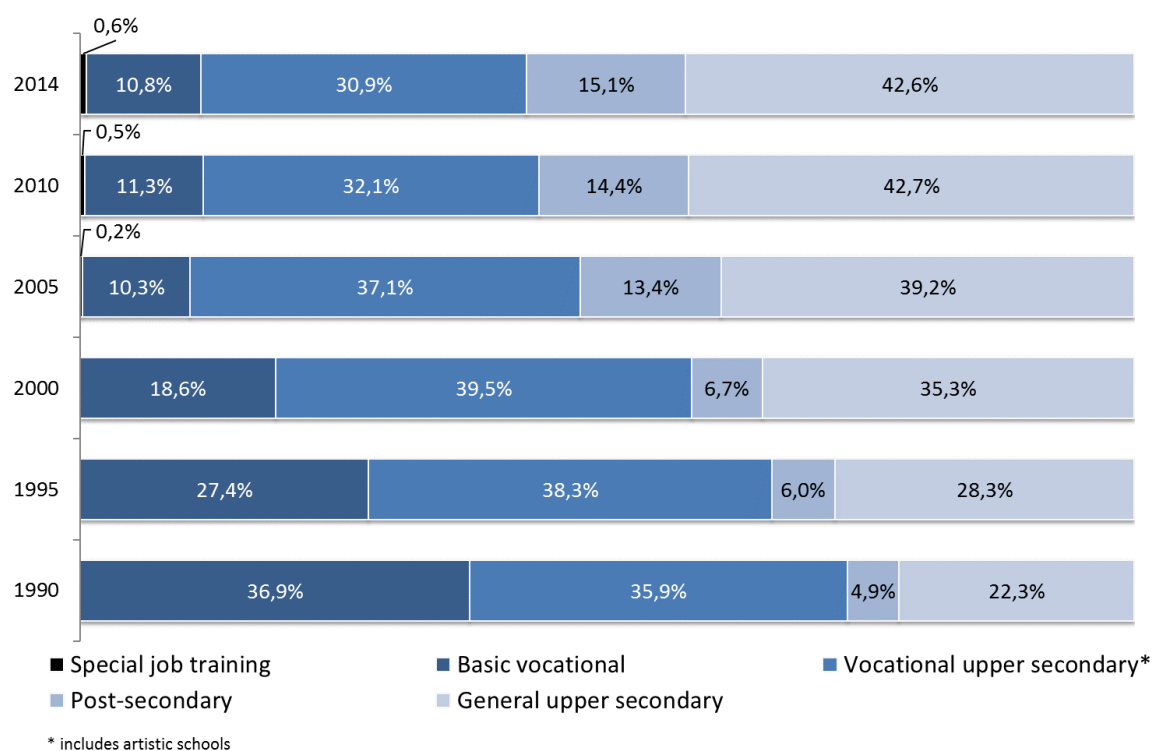


* includes all types of vocational education; basic, secondary and post secondary for youngsters and adults.

Source: own calculations based on data from the Local Data Bank, Central Statistical Office of Poland, <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start>. Accessed on August 30, 2016.

Over the last three decades the share of students in vocational education has decreased from 78% to almost 58%. Data for the last five years seem to confirm that the share of learners in general upper secondary vs. vocational upper secondary and vocational post-secondary education has become constant approximately at 43% to 57%.

Figure 1.3 Enrolment shares by type of education



Source: own calculations based on data from the Local Data Bank, Central Statistical Office of Poland, <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start>. Accessed on August 30, 2016.

In 2014, there were over 741 000 young students in vocational education, of which 68.7% were enrolled in vocational upper secondary school and 23.9% in basic vocational schools. The adult student population of nearly 242 000 was enrolled predominantly (95.7%) in post-secondary schools that are dedicated to adults in the education system.

1.2. Economy and labour market indicators

1.2.1. Economy

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

Table 1.1 Real GDP growth rate, percentage change from previous year.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
EU (28)	2.1	1.8	-0.5	0.2	1.4	2.0
Poland	3.6	5.0	1.6	1.3	3.3	3.6

Source: Eurostat <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>. Accessed August 30, 2016

1.2.2. Economic activity rate

The economic activity rates in Poland have been increasing over the last five years. Still, in 2015, the average economic activity rate for the population aged 15-64 years in Poland was 68.1%, over four percentage points lower than the EU average. Almost 75% of men in this age group and 61% of women were active economically; yet again both rates were significantly lower than the EU average. However, data show that the activity rates in Poland are increasing slightly faster than in the EU.

Table 1.2 Economic activity rates by gender, population aged 15-64

(%)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
EU (28)	71.0	71.1	71.7	72.0	72.3	72.5
<i>Males</i>	77.6	77.5	77.8	77.9	78.1	78.3
<i>Females</i>	64.4	64.8	65.5	66.0	66.5	66.8
Poland	65.3	65.7	66.5	67.0	67.9	68.1
<i>Males</i>	72.1	72.6	73.3	73.9	74.6	74.8
<i>Females</i>	58.5	58.9	59.7	60.1	61.1	61.4

Source: Eurostat <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>. Accessed on August 30, 2016.

The activity rates differ substantially by educational attainment. Activity in the labour market grows with the attainment of higher levels of education, therefore, the highest activity rates are noted for people with tertiary education. Since 2014, Poland is characterised by a slightly higher activity rate of this group than the EU average. The activity rates for the lower levels of educational attainment in Poland are far below the EU average.

Table 1.3 Activity rates by educational attainment level, population aged 15-64.

(%)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
EU (28)						
<i>Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)</i>	53.7	54.2	54.6	54.4	53.4	53.1
<i>Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)</i>	75.1	75.0	75.3	75.3	75.6	75.7
<i>Tertiary education (levels 5-8)</i>	87.0	86.9	87.1	87.4	87.4	87.6
Poland						
<i>Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)</i>	28.9	28.9	29.3	28.5	28.2	28.2

<i>Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)</i>	69.1	69.3	69.4	69.6	70.1	69.9
<i>Tertiary education (levels 5-8)</i>	86.8	86.8	87.0	87.3	88.1	88.6

NB: level of education – ISCED 2011

Source: Eurostat <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>. Accessed on August 30, 2016.

The least economically active group is with the lowest educational attainment, i.e. with less than primary, primary or lower secondary education. This group's activity rate in Poland is only 28.2%, while the EU average is 53.1%. Over the past years, Poland has introduced different means of attempting to increase activity rates, such as offering vocational qualification courses, which enable the attainment of vocational qualifications in a short period of time. Furthermore, the public employment service offers a variety of vocational training programmes for unemployed persons with low qualifications. More on the vocational qualifications courses in Chapter 2 and on the employment service offer in Chapter 4.

1.2.3. Employment

In 2015, almost 16 million people were employed, which is almost 63% of the total population aged 15-64. Age and education level attainment impacts employment rates. In 2015, the employment rate for the prime age population (aged 25-49 years) was slightly higher than the EU average for that group. Young (15-24) and older (50-64) groups are characterised by a much lower employment rate than the EU average. Similarly as the prime-age group the population with tertiary education had 85% of employed persons, two percentage points higher than the EU average. In contrast, the share of employed persons with primary or lower secondary education is relatively low, only 23.3% and much lower than the EU average of 43.7%. In 2015, the share of employed persons with post-secondary and vocational upper secondary education was 64%, five percentage points lower than the EU average. As data show, the higher the attained education level, the better chances for employment.

Table 1.4 Employment rates ⁽²⁾ by gender, age group and highest level of education attained

(%)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
EU (28)	64.1	64.2	64.1	64.1	64.8	65.6
<i>Males</i>	70.1	70.0	69.6	69.4	70.1	70.8
<i>Females</i>	58.2	58.4	58.6	58.8	59.5	60.4
<i>15 - 24</i>	33.8	33.3	32.5	32.1	32.4	33.0

⁽²⁾ Labour force survey (LFS) data. Employed as per cent of total population aged 15-64 years.

25 - 49	78.2	78.1	77.6	77.1	77.6	78.2
50 - 64	56.6	57.3	58.4	59.2	60.6	61.8
<i>Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)</i>	45.1	45.2	44.4	43.7	43.3	43.7
<i>Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)</i>	68.3	68.2	68.0	67.7	68.4	69.0
<i>Tertiary education (levels 5-8)</i>	82.3	82.0	81.8	81.7	82.0	82.7
Poland	58.9	59.3	59.7	60.0	61.7	62.9
<i>Males</i>	65.3	66.0	66.3	66.6	68.2	69.2
<i>Females</i>	52.6	52.7	53.1	53.4	55.2	56.6
15 - 24	26.4	24.9	24.7	24.2	25.8	26.0
25 - 49	78.9	78.9	78.5	78.2	79.4	80.6
50 - 64	47.0	48.4	49.4	50.3	51.8	53.2
<i>Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)</i>	23.6	23.4	23.4	22.4	22.7	23.3
<i>Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)</i>	61.8	62.0	61.7	61.6	62.9	64.0
<i>Tertiary education (levels 5-8)</i>	82.5	82.2	82.1	82.3	83.9	85.0

NB: level of education – ISCED 2011

Source: Eurostat <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>. Accessed on August 30, 2016.

1.2.4. Employment structure

The employment structure in Poland has not undergone any significant changes over the last five years. The share of services in total employment increased slightly and amounted to 57.9% in 2015, which is still far below EU28 average of around 73%. The employment share in industry is constant in Poland at around 30% and the share in agriculture decreased from 13.1% in 2010 to 11.5% in 2015.

Table 1.5 Employment share by economic sector in Poland

(%)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Industry	30.3	30.7	30.4	30.5	30.5	30.5
Females	16.1	16.5	16.1	16.1	16.5	16.5
Males	41.7	42.0	41.9	42.1	41.9	42.0
Agriculture	13.1	12.9	12.6	12.0	11.5	11.5
Females	12.7	12.2	11.7	10.9	10.3	10.4
Males	13.4	13.5	13.3	12.9	12.5	12.5
Services	56.6	56.4	57.0	57.5	58.0	57.9
Females	71.2	71.3	72.2	73.0	73.3	73.2
Males	44.9	44.5	44.8	45.0	45.6	45.5

Source: The Local Data Bank, Central Statistical Office of Poland, <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start>. Accessed on August 30, 2016.

Most employed women are in services (73.2%), while the share of employment in services and industry of men is almost the same, 45.5 and 42% respectively.

1.2.5. Unemployment

In 2015, unemployment in Poland was lower than the EU average, except for the youngest age group (15-24 years). In the past three years, there was an overall decrease of unemployment in all age groups and by all types of education levels. Similarly as employment, the unemployment rates vary by age and level of educational attainment. The highest unemployment rates are experienced by young people and those with the lowest educational level. The higher the attained educational level, the lower is the chance of being unemployed.

Table 1.6 Unemployment rates⁽³⁾ by gender, age group and highest level of education attained

(%)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
EU (28)	9.7	9.7	10.6	11.0	10.4	9.6
<i>Males</i>	9.7	9.7	10.6	11.0	10.3	9.5
<i>Females</i>	9.6	9.8	10.6	11.0	10.5	9.6
<i>Age group of 15 - 24</i>	21.0	21.7	23.2	23.6	22.2	20.4
<i>Age group of 25 - 49</i>	8.9	9.0	9.9	10.4	9.8	9.0
<i>Age group of 50 - 64</i>	6.8	6.8	7.4	7.8	7.5	7.1
<i>Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)</i>	16.0	16.7	18.6	19.7	19.0	17.9
<i>Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)</i>	9.0	9.0	9.7	10.1	9.5	8.8
<i>Tertiary education (levels 5-8)</i>	5.4	5.6	6.1	6.5	6.2	5.7
Poland	9.7	9.8	10.2	10.5	9.1	7.6
<i>Males</i>	9.5	9.1	9.5	9.8	8.6	7.4
<i>Females</i>	10.1	10.5	11.0	11.2	9.7	7.8
<i>Age group of 15 - 24</i>	23.7	25.8	26.5	27.3	23.9	20.8
<i>Age group of 25 - 49</i>	8.3	8.3	8.9	9.2	8.1	6.7
<i>Age group of 50 - 64</i>	7.6	7.4	7.7	7.8	6.9	5.8
<i>Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)</i>	18.3	19.1	20.3	21.3	19.7	17.3
<i>Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)</i>	10.6	10.5	11.0	11.5	10.2	8.4
<i>Tertiary education (levels 5-8)</i>	5.0	5.3	5.7	5.7	4.7	4.0

NB: level of education – ISCED 2011

Source: Eurostat <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>. Accessed on August 30, 2016.

⁽³⁾ Labour force survey (LFS) data. Unemployed as a per cent of the total population aged 15-64 years.

1.3. Educational attainment

In Poland, the largest share of the population aged 15-64 has an upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education, although over the last five years, this share has been decreasing in favour of the share of the population with tertiary education. The share of the population with an upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary level of education, for both men and women, is much higher than the EU average and amounts to 64.3 and 56.3% respectively. There is a large difference in educational level attainment by gender. The share of women with tertiary education in 2015 was over 29%, while only 19.8% of men had attained this level of education.

Table 1.7 Population (15-64) by educational attainment level and gender

(%)

		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
EU (28)							
<i>Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)</i>	Total	30.8	29.7	28.8	27.9	27.5	26.9
	Males	30.4	29.5	28.9	28.0	27.7	27.3
	Females	31.1	29.9	28.8	27.8	27.3	26.6
<i>Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)</i>	Total	46.5	46.6	46.6	46.7	46.6	46.4
	Males	47.8	47.9	47.9	48.2	47.9	47.8
	Females	45.1	45.2	45.2	45.2	45.2	45.0
<i>Tertiary education (levels 5-8)</i>	Total	22.8	23.7	24.6	25.4	26.0	26.7
	Males	21.8	22.5	23.2	23.8	24.4	24.9
	Females	23.8	24.8	26.0	27.0	27.5	28.4
Poland							
<i>Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)</i>	Total	18.0	17.5	16.7	16.1	15.5	15.2
	Males	18.4	18.0	17.3	16.8	16.2	15.9
	Females	17.6	17.1	16.1	15.4	14.9	14.6
<i>Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)</i>	Total	62.6	62.2	61.8	61.3	60.7	60.3
	Males	65.5	65.4	65.1	64.7	64.4	64.3
	Females	59.6	59.0	58.5	57.9	57.0	56.3
<i>Tertiary education (levels 5-8)</i>	Total	19.4	20.3	21.5	22.6	23.8	24.4
	Males	16.0	16.6	17.5	18.5	19.5	19.8
	Females	22.8	23.9	25.4	26.7	28.1	29.1

NB: level of education – ISCED 2011

Source: Eurostat <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>. Accessed on August 30, 2016.

The share of early leavers from education and training in Poland has been much lower than the EU average and has been decreasing over the last three years. In 2015, only 5.3% of the population aged 18-24 were in this group. The national target of early school leaving, expressed in relation to this indicator specified in Europe 2020 strategy, is to further decrease the share of leavers from education and training to 4.5% by 2020 ⁽⁴⁾.

Table 1.8 Early leavers from education and training ⁽⁵⁾ (%)

		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
EU (28)	Total	13.9	13.4	12.7	11.9	11.2	11.0
	Males	15.8	15.3	14.5	13.6	12.8	12.4
	Females	11.9	11.5	10.9	10.2	9.6	9.5
Poland	Total	5.4	5.6	5.7	5.6	5.4	5.3
	Males	7.2	7.4	7.8	7.9	7.3	7.2
	Females	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.2	3.3	3.2

Source: Eurostat <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>. Accessed on August 30, 2016.

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

⁽⁴⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/annexii_en.pdf

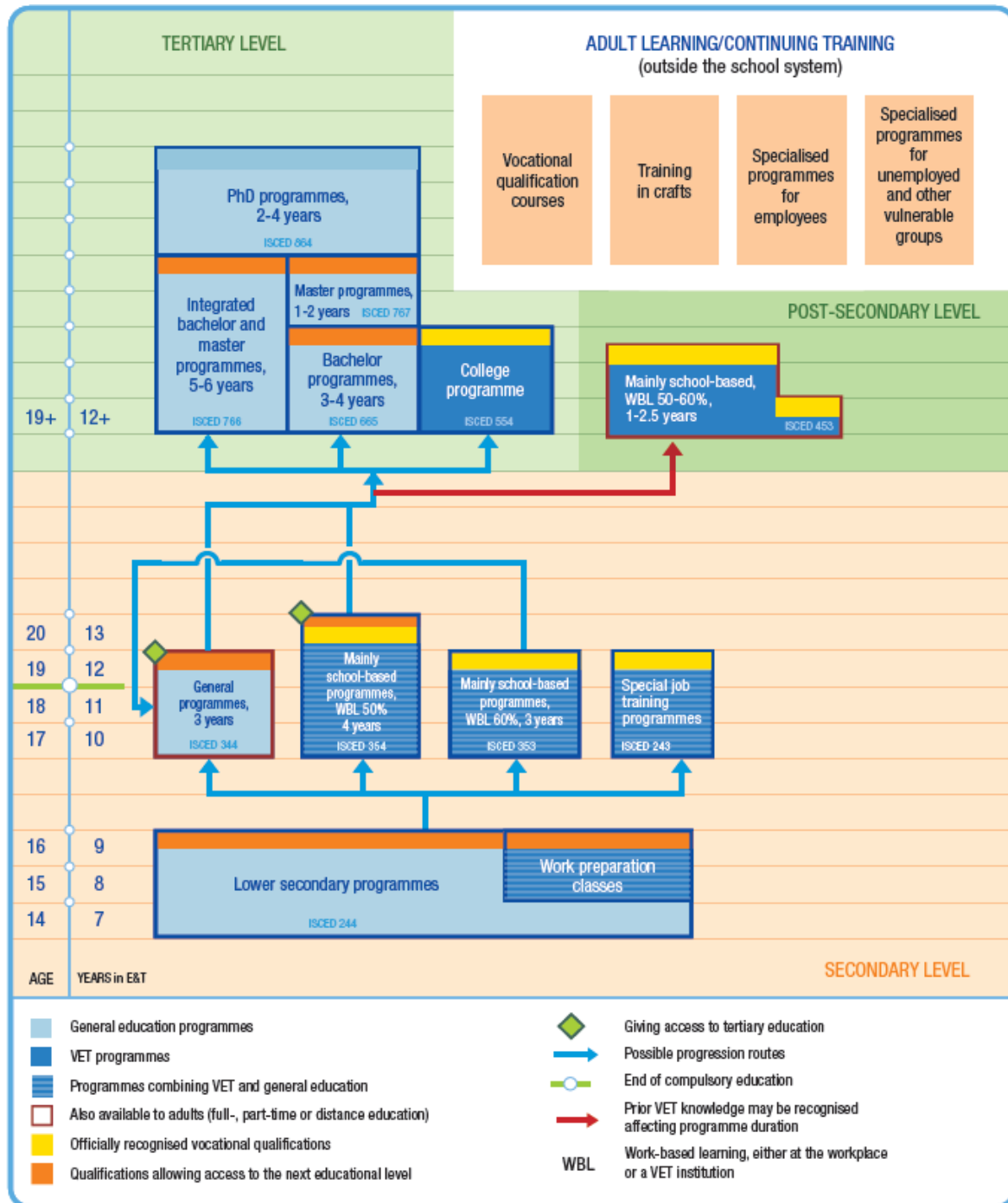
⁽⁵⁾ Early leavers from education and training refers to persons aged 18 to 24 fulfilling the following two conditions: first, the highest level of education or training attained is ISCED 0, 1, 2 or 3c short; second, respondents declared not having received any education or training in the four weeks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

CHAPTER 2.

Providing VET in a lifelong learning perspective

2.1. VET in Poland's education and training system

Figure 2.1. VET in Poland's education and training system in 2016



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Poland

Education is compulsory up to 18 years of age. Full-time education requires attending school and is compulsory up to 15 years of age. Part-time education can take place both in and out of school between 15 and 18 years of age.

Vocational education can be attained in school and out-of-school. The VET school system includes:

- three-year basic vocational programmes (*zasadnicze szkoły zawodowe*) enable pupils to attain a vocational qualifications diploma after passing a State vocational examination and also to continue their education on a higher level in the second year of general upper secondary programmes for adults.
- four-year vocational upper secondary programmes (*technika*); graduates can attain a vocational qualifications diploma after passing a State vocational examination and also the upper secondary programmes completion examination certificate (*matura*).
- three-year special job-training programmes (*szkoły specjalne przysposabiające do pracy*) for students with mental disabilities allow to attain a certificate of job training.
- up to 2.5-year post-secondary programmes (*szkoły policealne*) for students who have completed upper secondary education allow graduates attain a vocational qualifications diploma after passing a State vocational examination.

The VET out-of-school system includes continuing education centres, practical training centres and further training and professional development centres, which can provide the following types of courses:

- vocational qualifications courses based on the curricula for a qualification in a given occupation. This provides access to the State vocational examination and vocational qualification certificate in an occupation.
- vocational skills courses based on the core curriculum for vocational education, covering: a set of learning outcomes for one qualification, or the learning outcomes common to all occupations, as well as those related to the fundamentals of vocational education or of a group of occupations, or the learning outcomes common to all occupations related to organising the work of small teams.
- general skills courses based on a selected part of the curriculum for general education. The minimal number of hours of this type of course is 30.
- a theoretical education for juvenile employees.

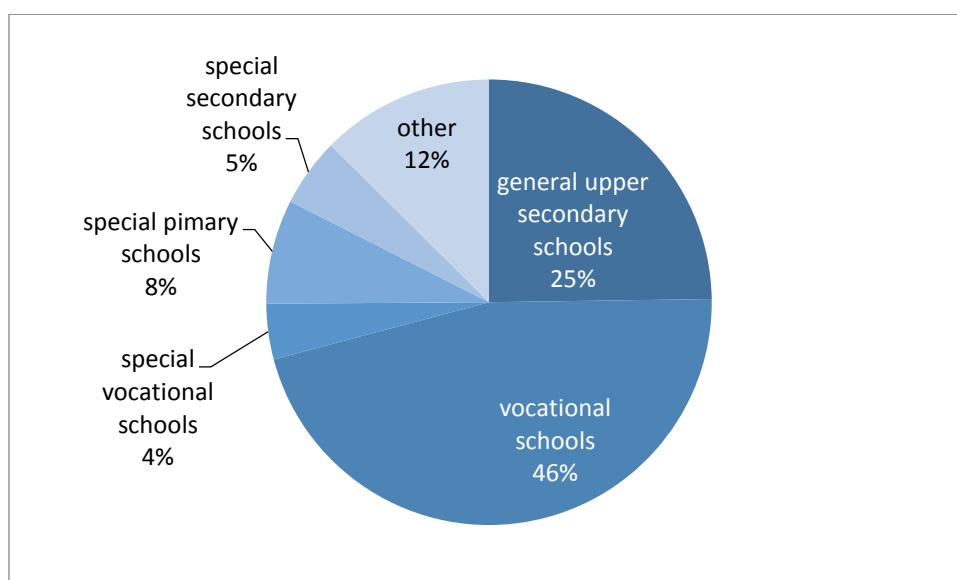
Since 2012/13, specialised upper secondary programmes (*licea profilowane*), supplementary technical and general upper secondary programmes, vocational upper secondary and basic vocational programmes for adults are gradually being closed. The only upper secondary programme available for adults is now the general upper secondary programme (*liceum ogólnokształcące dla dorosłych*).

2.2 Government-regulated VET provision

2.2.1 VET governance and structure

Since 1999/00, major school system reform has been gradually introduced to decentralise management of the education system. Currently, the majority of public education institutions are managed by local government units: municipalities (*gminy*) are responsible for establishing and managing kindergartens, primary and lower secondary schools (excluding schools for pupils with special needs); counties (*powiaty*) - for upper secondary schools and schools for pupils with special needs; and regions (*województwa*) - for schools of regional and trans-regional significance (e.g. groups of schools or vocational schools important for the regional economy). Figure 2.2 illustrates the structure of educational expenditures of counties in 2015.

Figure 2.2 The structure of educational expenditures of counties in 2015.

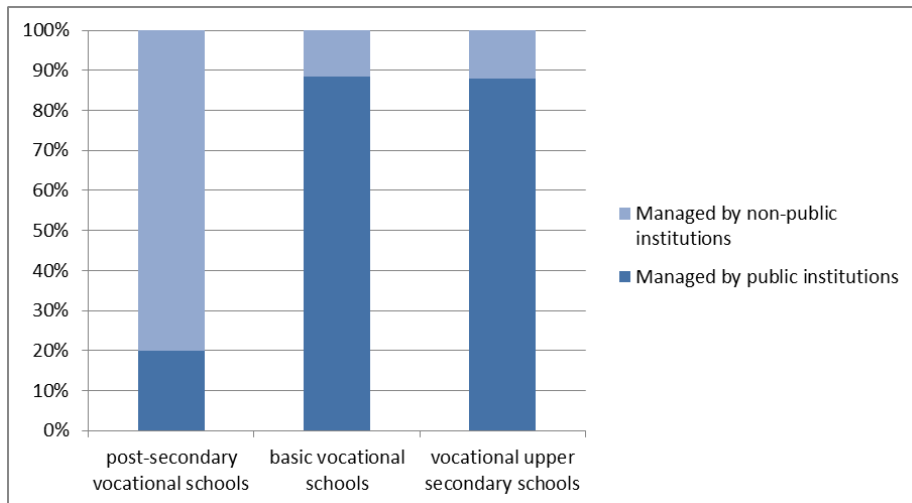


Source: own calculation based on Local Data Bank, Central Statistical Office of Poland <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start>. Accessed on August 30, 2016.

Central government (usually ministers) also manages schools, typically vocational and artistic schools but also schools for prisoners ⁽⁶⁾. All types of schools can also be established and managed by non-public institutions such as religious and social associations, etc. Figure 2.3 presents the structure of vocational schools by type and management institution in 2015. Generally, the higher the education level, the higher the share of non-public institutions and their pupils (IBE, 2014).

⁽⁶⁾ In 2015, there were around 140 schools managed by central government.

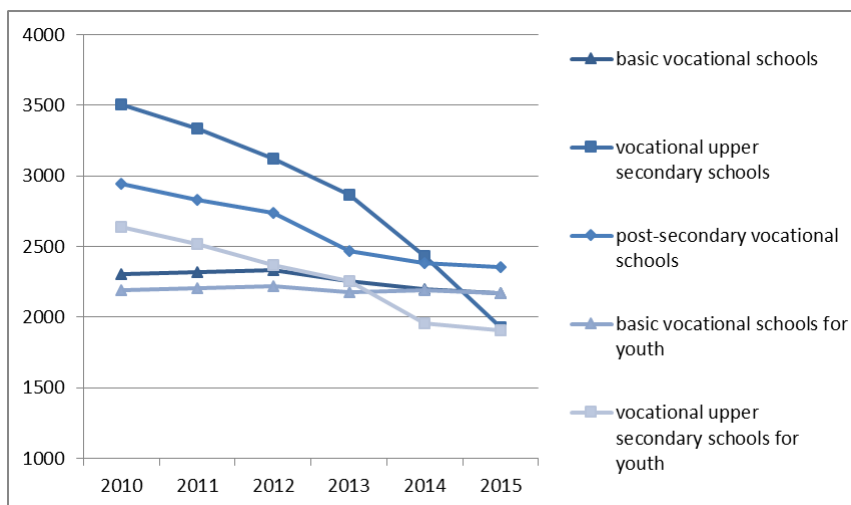
Figure 2.3 The structure of VET schools by type and managing institution, 2015



Source: own calculation based on Local Data Bank, Central Statistical Office of Poland <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start>. Accessed on August 30, 2016.

In 2015, more than 36% of VET schools in Poland were post-secondary vocational schools, followed by 33% of basic vocational and 30% of vocational upper secondary schools. Since 2010, the general number of all VET schools has been decreasing but the trend is not that visible when basic vocational youth schools are considered. The decreasing number of VET schools is primarily due to government reforms, which have gradually closed adult VET schools and supplementary VET schools. Instead, the government has introduced vocational qualifications courses that enable students to gain certification of an individual vocational qualification after passing a State examination. The first courses started in September 2012 and can be provided by public or non-public schools, as well as continuing education centres or practical training centres. In 2014/15, 1270 such courses were offered and over 33 500 participants attended (almost 14% of all adult VET students). In 2015/16, the number of courses and its participants increased to 2042 and 48877 respectively.

Figure 2.4 The number of VET schools by type in 2010-15



Source: own calculation based on Local Data Bank, Central Statistical Office of Poland <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start>. Accessed on August 30, 2016.

Most ⁽⁷⁾ learners choose a vocational path at age 16 after completing lower secondary education. Admission to upper secondary education depends on the results of the lower secondary school leaving examination. In 2014/15, about 47% of pupils chose general education; five years earlier the share was almost 49%.

Table 2.1 The share of students who continue in VET and general education after graduating lower secondary programme*

school year	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
all VET programmes	51.0	51.9	52.4	53.1	52.6
general upper secondary programmes	49.0	48.1	47.6	46.9	47.4
basic vocational programmes	16.7	16.7	15.4	15.6	14.7
vocational upper secondary programmes	34.3	35.2	37.0	37.5	37.9

(*) This table presents the share of first year students who received their lower secondary diplomas in the previous school year.

Source: own calculation based on GUS 2015 and earlier issues.

The structure of pupils by programme type reflects the above mentioned choices. In 2015, over 58% of those in schools were in VET, with more pupils in vocational upper secondary programmes than in basic vocational programmes (42% in the first type of programme and almost 16% in the latter). Since 2010, there has been a gradual rise in the share of VET programmes, which is probably due to the 2011 government reform and the changing image of VET education in society. This growing popularity of VET is mainly visible for the vocational upper secondary programmes, but not so for basic vocational programmes, where the share of pupils is fluctuating.

Table 2.2 The distribution of shares of youth between general upper secondary programmes and VET programmes

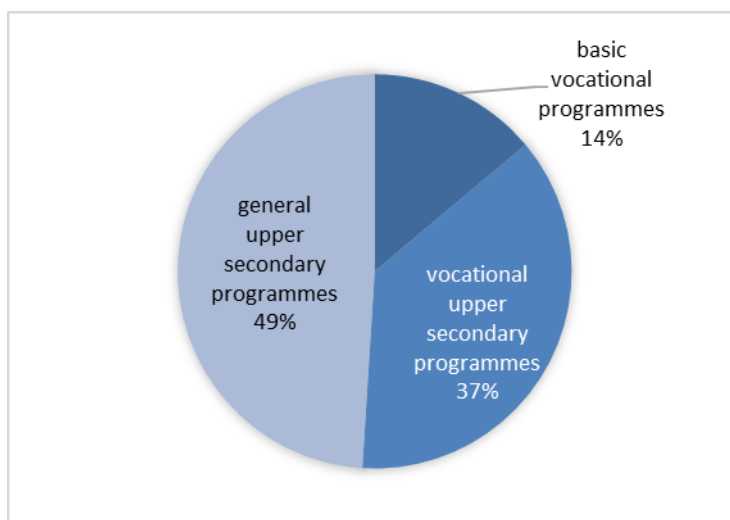
year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
all VET programmes	55.2	55.3	55.7	56.5	57.6	58.1
general upper secondary programmes	44.8	44.7	44.3	43.5	42.4	41.9
basic vocational programmes	16.6	16.3	15.9	15.5	16.3	15.8
vocational upper secondary programmes	38.6	39.0	39.8	41.0	41.3	42.3

Source: own calculation based on Local Data Bank, Central Statistical Office of Poland <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start>. Accessed on August 30, 2016.

The structure of pupils in all age groups, including adults, differs slightly – the shares of VET and general education population are almost equal due to the significant number of adult learners in general upper secondary programmes.

⁽⁷⁾ About 1% of lower-secondary school pupils, usually with learning difficulties, choose work preparation classes after the first year in the lower secondary school where 25% of the curriculum is devoted to vocational education. In 2015, there were 84 schools with work preparation classes.

Figure 2.5 The structure of pupils in all age groups between general upper secondary programmes and VET programmes in 2015



Source: own calculation based on Local Data Bank, Central Statistical Office of Poland <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start>. Accessed on August 30, 2016.

The majority of pupils in VET programmes are men, but the share of women differs significantly between different types of programmes – from 70% in post-secondary programmes and 40% in vocational upper secondary programmes to 33% in basic vocational programmes.

The curriculum for vocational programmes consists of general education and vocational education – theoretical and practical aspects.

Table 2.3 Curriculum subjects for basic vocational programmes and vocational upper secondary programmes

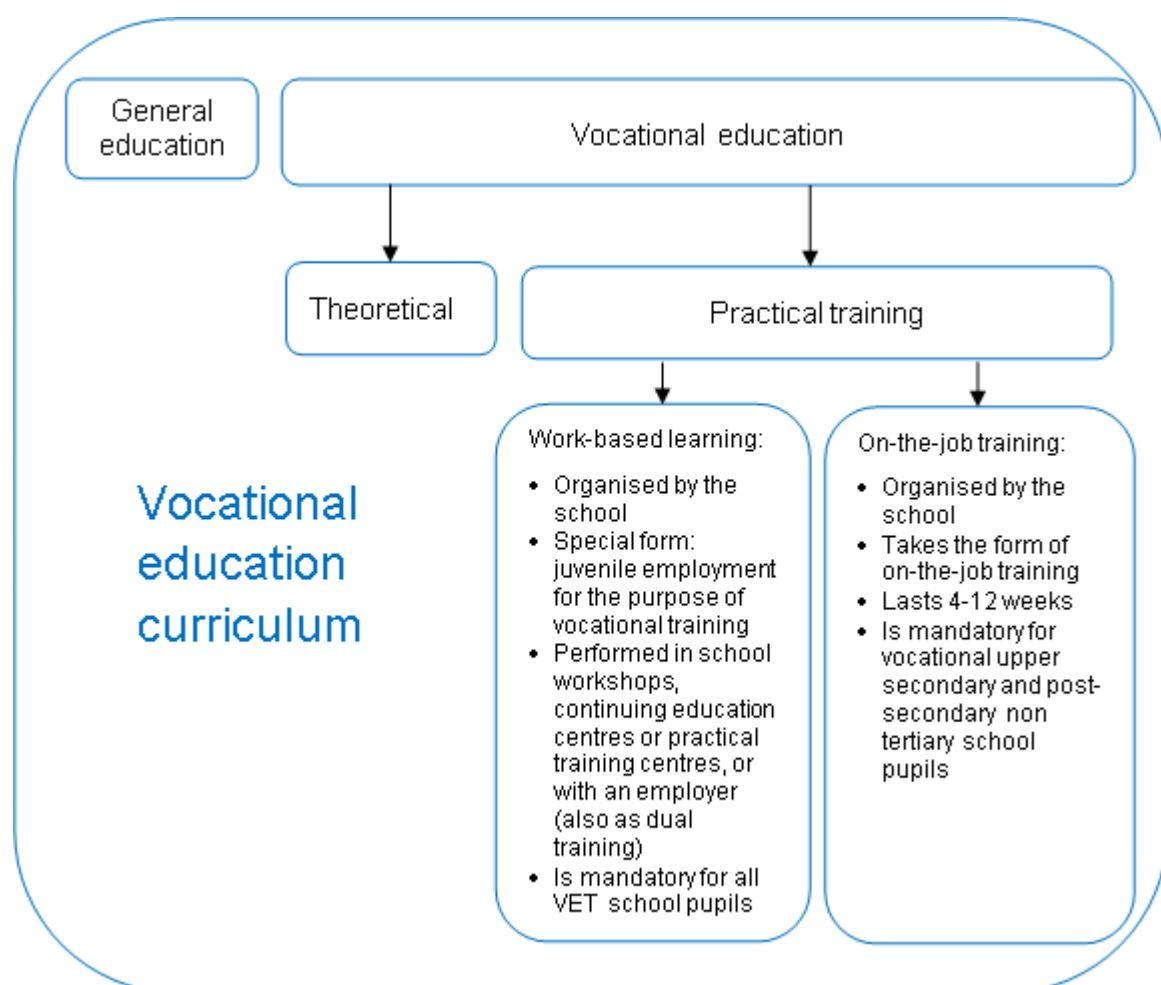
Vocational upper secondary programme	Basic vocational programme
Polish language	Polish language
Modern foreign language	Modern foreign language
Second modern foreign language*	History
History	Civic education
Civic education	Mathematics
Culture studies*	Physics
Mathematics	Chemistry
Physics	Biology
Chemistry	Geography
Biology	Introduction to entrepreneurship
Geography	Information technology
Introduction to entrepreneurship	Physical education
Information technology	Education for safety
Physical education	Lessons with class tutor
Education for safety	Theoretical vocational training**
Lessons with class tutor	Practical vocational training**
Subjects at advanced level*	

Theoretical vocational training**	
Practical vocational training**	

NB: *Subjects shared by general and vocational upper secondary programmes; **shared by technical upper secondary and basic vocational programmes. The rest are shared by all types of programmes.
Source: Eurydice 2015

The practical part of vocational education can be performed as work-based learning (in school workshops, continuing education centres and practical training centres or with an employer) or as an on-the-job training (which is mandatory for of vocational upper secondary and post-secondary programmes and lasts from 4 to 12 weeks, depending on the type of job performed). Practical vocational education is equal to 60% of the total hours of classes in basic vocational programmes and 50% in vocational upper secondary and post-secondary programmes.

Figure 2.6 Schema of vocational education curriculum



Source: own elaboration based on legal acts

A special type of practical training is juvenile employment for the purpose of vocational training (*przygotowanie zawodowe młodocianych pracowników*) for young people between 16-17 years of age with lower secondary education. Around 60% of basic vocational programme pupils participate in this form of practical training.

The juvenile vocational training can take the form of:

- training for a profession (*nauka zawodu*) is dual training with the theoretical education taking place at school or in an out-of-school system (e.g. courses) and the practical training is organised by the employer on the basis of a work contract. It lasts not more than 36 months and is finalised by a State vocational examination. The practical training can also be organised by an employer in the crafts on the basis of a work contract. It also lasts not more than 36 months and is finalised by a journeyman's examination (*egzamin czeladniczy*).
- training for a specific job (*przyuczenie do wykonywania określonej pracy*) prepares a pupil to perform specific job tasks. It lasts from three to six months ⁽⁸⁾ and is finalised with a verifying examination.

During the training period, the juvenile worker is entitled to a salary (from 4 to 6 percent of an average salary, depending on the year of training), social security benefits and holiday leave. The employer can be reimbursed for the salary and social security contribution for the juvenile worker for the period of vocational training from the Labour Fund (established to counter unemployment and financed by compulsory contributions from employers), but every year, the minister responsible for labour sets financial limits on the reimbursements.

If the juvenile worker passes the examination, the employer is entitled to financial support for the training period equal to PLN 8 081 (around EUR 1 900) in the case of 36 months of training (if the training is shorter, the amount is calculated proportionally to the training period), as well as to 254 PLN (around EUR 60) for each month of training. This financial support is financed from the Labour Fund.

In order to update the training offer, VET schools cooperate with local employers. According to IVET teachers' survey (Pfeiffer, 2013) the most popular forms of this cooperation are consultations, field trips to learn about occupations, and obtaining training materials. Only around 11% of teachers stated that the cooperation was related to apprenticeships.

In regard to the school-enterprise cooperation, employers frequently criticise the lack of financial incentives, bureaucracy, legal frameworks and the necessity to engage employees in supervising trainees.

Completing VET programme is not the same as attaining a vocational qualification. Vocational qualification can only be attained by passing a vocational examination.

Table 2.4 Main types of vocational examinations and vocational certificates

Name	Managing institution	Name of certificate	Short description
State vocational examination (<i>egzamin potwierdzający</i>)	Central Examination Board (<i>Centralna</i>)	Certificate of the vocational qualification in an occupation (<i>świadectwo</i>)	Certifies a qualification in an occupation or all qualifications in an occupation. Has two parts: written and

⁽⁸⁾ For pupils at Voluntary Labour Corps (*Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy*) the training in can last up to 22 months.

kwalfikacje w zawodzie)	<i>Komisja Egzaminacyjna)</i> together with 8 regional examination boards (<i>okręgowe komisje egzaminacyjne</i>)	<i>potwierdzające kwalifikację w zawodzie)</i> Vocational qualifications diploma* (<i>Dyplom potwierdzający kwalifikacje zawodowe</i>)	practical; the candidate has to pass both in order to receive a certificate or diploma. It is based on uniform requirements, the same examination tasks, assessed according to the same criteria and organised in the same way regardless of where the examination is held. It is free for school graduates.
Journeyman's examination (egzamin czeladniczy) Master's examination (egzamin mistrzowski)	Examination boards of crafts chambers	Journeyman's certificate (<i>świadcstwo czeladnicze</i>) Master's diploma (<i>dyplom mistrzowski</i>)	Has two parts: practical and theoretical. The practical part consists of tasks individually performed by a candidate. The theoretical part is both written and oral. Tasks are based on common examination requirements and the curriculum of the occupation. It is fee based.
Verifying examination for particular qualifications in crafts (egzamin sprawdzający wybrane kwalifikacje zawodowe w rzemiośle)	Examination boards of crafts chambers	Document certifying that the verifying examination has been passed. (<i>zaświadczenie o zdaniu egzaminu sprawdzającego</i>)	It certifies selected qualifications in an occupation that correspond to a specific craft. Has two parts: practical and theoretical. The theoretical part is oral. It is fee based.
Verifying examination after training for a specific job (egzamin sprawdzający po przyuczeniu do wykonywania określonej pracy)	Employer or examination boards of crafts chambers	Document certifying the specific skills acquired during the training for a specific job. (<i>zaświadczenie stwierdzające nabycie umiejętności w wykonywaniu prac których dotyczyło przyuczenie</i>)	This is for both adult and juveniles after the training. In the case of unemployed persons, the form of the examination is individually determined during the training in the programme.

(*) Awarded to holders of certificates of vocational qualifications for all qualifications in a given occupation who also have completed their education at the basic vocational or upper secondary education.

Source: own elaboration based on legal acts

In 2015, the State vocational examination for basic vocational programmes was administered for 45 occupations; 75% of the participants passed the examination. For vocational upper secondary and post-secondary programmes, the examination was administered for 105 occupations; 66% of those taking the examination have passed it.

Table 2.5 The most popular qualifications for which State vocational examinations were taken in 2014 (before the 2011 reform)

(%)

Occupation	Share of candidates*	Share of students who passed the examination
Basic vocational programmes		
Car mechanic	18.7	74.3
Construction technologist	10.9	93.1
Automotive electrician	5.3	91.8
Vocational upper secondary and post-secondary programmes		
IT technician	10.8	57.0
Economics technician	8.2	76.2
Hospitality industry technician	5.5	70.8

NB: * the share of examination candidates in an occupation of the total number of examination candidates.
Source: GUS 2015

The 2011 vocational education reform modified the organisation of State vocational examinations. A person now can separately certify every qualification that is a part of an occupation. The first round of new examinations was introduced in 2013. In 2015, the examination was administered for 195 qualifications and about 72% of the participants passed. The table below presents the most popular qualifications and the share of students who passed the examination.

Table 2.6 The most popular qualifications for which State vocational examinations were taken in 2015 (new)

(%)

Qualification	Share of candidates*	Share of students who passed the examination
Preparation of meals and beverages	8.5	65.2
Assembly and use of personal computers	7.0	85.1
Designing and administering local computer networks	6.4	70.6
Planning and managing activities in organisations	3.6	84.4
Automotive electronic and electrical system diagnosis and repair	2.9	53.0

NB: * the share of examination candidates in an occupation of the total number of examination candidates.
Source: CKE 2015

Adults aged 18 and over can be awarded a certificate for a vocational qualification after passing an extramural (*eksternistyczny*) State vocational examination. They can be awarded a vocational qualification diploma when all the qualifications in an occupation are certified and they have an education level of basic vocational or upper secondary. A candidate for an extramural State vocational examination has to have at least a lower

secondary education and at least two years of education or employment in an occupation related to the qualification for which the examination is being taken. Adult candidates pay a fee for taking the examination.

Voluntary Labour Corps (*Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy - OHP*) is an organisation specialised in supporting youth at risk of social exclusion and unemployed persons under 25 years of age. It is supervised by the minister responsible for labour. In the area of education and development, the organisation offers young people over 15 years of age who are not in education and have no lower secondary school education the possibility to attain vocational qualifications and/or to supplement the education they have in one of the 217 corps agencies. All students with low/no income receive free meals and accommodation during the education period. Students also receive pedagogical support. OHP provides education in over 60 professions, both in their own workshops or as on-the-job training with an employer. The OHP is one of the key institutions implementing the 'Guarantee for Youth' programme ⁽⁹⁾.

2.2.2 Educational outcomes

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

Table 2.7 PIAAC mean cognitive skills score of students aged 16-19 by programme type in 2011/12

Programme type	literacy	numeracy
general upper secondary programmes	292	276
basic vocational programmes	243	238
vocational upper secondary programmes	279	251

Source: Rynko 2013

The employment rate of recent graduates (one year after completing education) in the 1st quarter of 2016 was 58% for post-secondary and vocational upper secondary programmes graduates and almost 49% for basic vocational programmes graduates (which was almost equal to the employment rate of general upper secondary programmes graduates) ⁽¹⁰⁾. In comparison, the rate for tertiary graduates was 76%. The employment rate of VET graduates has been slowly rising in 2011-16, especially for vocational upper secondary programmes graduates, but the first quarter of 2016 it has decreased. Similarly, the

⁽⁹⁾ <http://ohp.pl/>

⁽¹⁰⁾ Labour force survey (LFS) data

unemployment rate of vocational programmes graduates has been slowly declining as of 2011, while the indicator for basic vocational programmes graduates is fluctuating.

Table 2.8 Employment and unemployment rates of recent graduates (one year after leaving education) in the 15-30 age group

First quarter of the year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
employment rate							
tertiary	72.1	74	73.3	67.9	70.8	71.7	75.9
vocational upper secondary programmes and post-secondary programmes	59.6	49.5	49.5	52.1	52.3	62.1	58.6
general upper secondary programmes	50.0	44.2	37.5	43.8	28.6	36.6	49.1
basic vocational programmes	51.2	43.8	38.0	47.6	37	50.0	48.8
unemployment rate							
tertiary	21.5	19.8	21.3	26.2	23.7	23.2	17.9
vocational upper secondary programmes and post-secondary programmes	34.3	44.2	40.7	41.0	42.9	31.8	30.7
general upper secondary programmes	30.0	47.1	44.4	41.7	60.0	48.4	33.3
basic vocational programmes	42.1	50.0	51.3	47.2	57.1	41.9	46.2

Source: GUS 2016 and earlier issues

The share of young people in the age group that is no longer in compulsory education, not in employment nor in education and training (NEET) is relatively high in Poland – 17.6% of people aged 20-24. The NEET rate is much higher for young people with vocational education than for those with general education. This is because a large share of persons with general upper secondary education continue their education at higher levels, while most young people with a vocational education enter the labour market. Women are especially at risk of NEET, probably due to responsibilities related to motherhood.

Table 2.9 The share of young people aged 20-24 neither in employment nor in education and training in 2015

Programme type	men	women
general upper secondary and general post-secondary programmes	2.4	4.0
basic vocational, vocational upper secondary and vocational post-secondary programmes	9.9	9.1
all education levels	17.2	18.0

Source: Eurostat [edat_ifse_21] Accessed on August 30 2016.

2.2.3. Tertiary VET

The law on higher education distinguishes two types of higher education institutions: academic and vocational (*uczelnie akademickie i zawodowe*). The second type offers first (Licentiate degree) and second (Master's degree) cycle study programmes as well as

uniform master's studies, but not doctoral programmes. The 'higher education vocational schools' are also not obliged to conduct scientific research and educate academic staff.

Apart from higher education institutions, colleges of social work (*kolegia pracowników służb społecznych*) offer three-year programmes at ISCED 5 level ⁽¹¹⁾ for the occupation of social worker. In 2014/15, there were seven colleges of social work with 463 students (85% of whom were women).

2.2.4. Teachers ⁽¹²⁾

Almost nine-tenth of teachers work in public schools. Teacher's Charter (Karta Nauczyciela) specifies their working conditions, duties, rights, professional development requirements and salary levels. In non-public ⁽¹³⁾ schools, teachers are employed only on the basis of labour and civil law regulations.

Nearly 82% of all teachers in Poland are women, but the share of women teachers in VET schools is much lower – from 56% in basic vocation schools to 65% in vocational upper secondary and 67% in post-secondary schools.

Teachers in Poland are required to have a higher education degree, but for basic vocational schools, the minimum requirement for teachers and theoretical vocational education teachers is a Licentiate degree, while for practical training teachers – the title of master in a crafts or a vocational qualifications certificate and two years of experience. All teachers are also required to have pedagogical qualification. Moreover, specialists who are not teachers may also be employed by vocational schools, e.g. employers.

The Teacher's Charter specifies the following categories in the profession of teaching:

- (a) trainee teacher – this is a first stage in a teacher's career;
- (b) contractual teacher – awarded after nine months of internship and an interview with a qualification commission;
- (c) appointed teacher – awarded after two years and nine months of internship as a contractual teacher and after passing an examination;
- (d) chartered teacher – awarded after two years and nine months of internship and after obtaining professional achievements' acceptance from a qualification commission.

For teachers with a PhD degree the internship period may be shortened to one year and nine months.

Teachers with outstanding performance may also be awarded the title of honorary school education professor. In 2014/15, 53% teachers were appointed and this share is similar for all VET schools except for post-secondary schools, where the share is 21% ⁽¹⁴⁾.

⁽¹¹⁾ Teacher training colleges (*kolegia nauczycielskie*) and foreign language teacher training colleges (*nauczycielskie kolegia języków obcych*) will be closed as of 1 October 2016.

⁽¹²⁾ The chapter refers to non-academic teachers. The requirements for academic teachers are governed by separate legislation.

⁽¹³⁾ The Polish legislation uses the term "non-public" for schools that are funded and run by natural or legal persons, such as foundations, associations, etc.

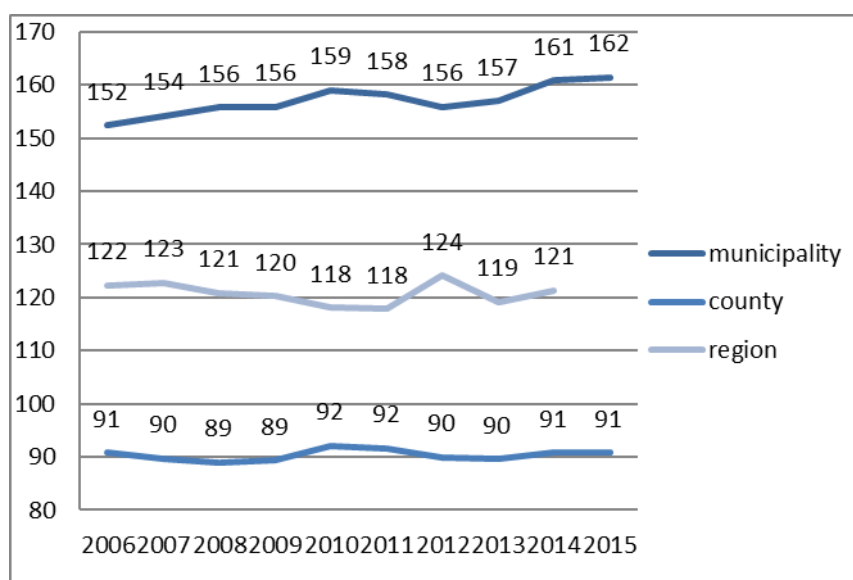
⁽¹⁴⁾ For more information please refer to ReferNet article 'Supporting teachers and trainers for successful reforms and quality of vocational education and training: mapping their professional development in the EU –

2.2.5. Financing VET

The State budget is the major source of funding for IVET in Poland. The amount of the educational part of the general subsidy for local government is defined annually in the Budgetary Act, and then the Education Minister prepares an algorithm to distribute the educational funds among the local government units based on the responsibilities ascribed to different levels of local government – basically the number of students in each type of programmes ⁽¹⁵⁾. Different weighting coefficients for vocational programmes and vocational post-secondary programmes are part of the algorithm.

Local governments have the power to decide how to use the subsidy – to allocate to schools or to use them for non-educational purposes. As the chart below illustrates, municipalities (*gminy*) and regions (*województwa*) spend more on education than they receive in the subsidy, but counties (*powiaty*), which are mainly responsible for vocational schools, do not use the entire amount for education.

Figure 2.7 The ratio between educational expenditures and the State general subsidy for education by type of local government in the period of 2006-15



Source: own calculation based on Local Data Bank Central Statistical Office of Poland <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/BDL/start>. Accessed on August 30 2016.

In addition to the subsidy, local government units can apply for targeted grants to implement specific public tasks, which usually require co-funding by the unit. For example, in 2013, local governments received grants for pre-schools and in 2014, for textbooks and teaching aids.

Poland', <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/supporting-teachers-and-trainers-successful-reforms-an-16>

⁽¹⁵⁾ Weights are ascribed to different groups of pupils, such as the disabled, sports classes, ethnic minorities, rural school.

Non-public schools with a public school status ⁽¹⁶⁾ are entitled to public funding equal to that of public schools.

In 2014, public (local and central government) expenditures on the education system reached PLN 64.5 billion (around EUR 15 billion), of which 11.3% was spent on vocational schools (GUS, 2015). Public spending on education as a share of GDP has been stable for over a decade and is about 4% (GUS, 2015).

2.3. Other forms of training

Public and private training providers offer various forms of continuing vocational training (CVET), e.g. courses, seminars, lectures and workshops. Chapter 4 describes the vocational training offered by public employment services.

2.3.1. Adult participation in non-formal education, including vocational education

This chapter focuses on non-formal education as many survey (GUS, 2013; GUS, 2013a; Turek and Worek, 2015) show that non-formal education is in majority of cases work-related and vocation oriented. Participation in non-formal education in Poland has been decreasing since 2010. In 2015, only 3.5% of adults aged 25-64 participated in some form of organised training within the 4 weeks before the survey on this issue (Eurostat, 2016a). The average for European Union countries is 10.7%, while for some countries, it exceeds 30%. If the last 12 months are taken into account, the rate rises to 24%, but the comparison with the EU mean (40%) is still not favourable. Most Poles also do not plan on participating in training activities in the next 12 month – only 21% of persons aged 24 to 59/64 declared that they plan to participate in some form of educational activity (Turek and Worek, 2015).

The data show the traditional model of educational activity dominates in Polish society, where education is concentrated in the early stages of life preceding a person's professional career.

Table 2.10 Adult participation in lifelong learning (age group: 25-64)

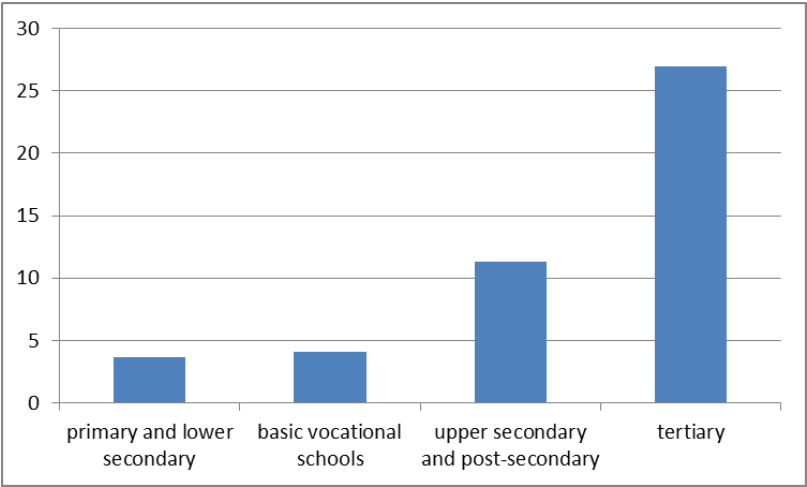
year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Labour Force Survey (last 4 weeks)	5.1	4.7	4.7	5.2	4.4	4.5	4.3	4.0	3.5
Adult Education Survey (last 12 months)	21.8				24.2				

Source: Eurostat <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>. Accessed on August 30 2016.

Education level, age and labour market activity are the factors differentiating the rate of participation in training – persons who are unemployed and have a low level of education often do not participate in educational activities.

⁽¹⁶⁾ A non-public school can have a public school status if it fulfils requirements of a public school, such as class duration, pupils evaluation, documentation, teaching staff, etc.

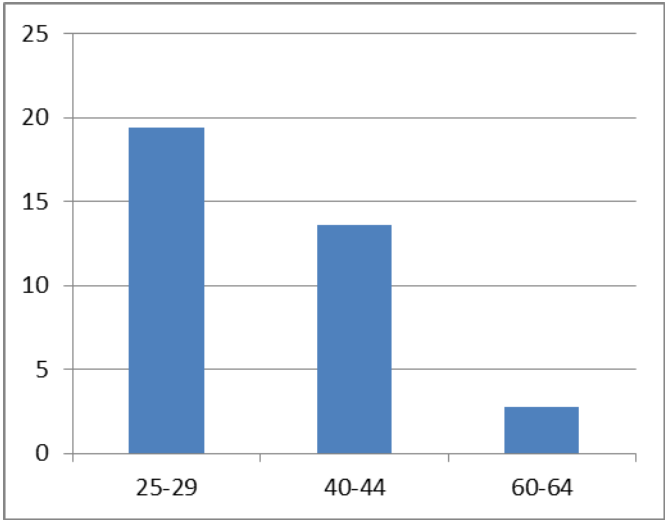
Figure 2.8 The share of 20 to 65 year-olds participating in training in 2014 by level of education



Source: own elaboration based on the Determinants of Educational Decisions Pane Study IBE

Age is a strong determinant of participation in education – people in older age groups not only participate in training less, but also study less on their own (informal learning). In the Survey on Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe, the main reason given by Polish people 55 and older for not participation in non-formal education was the lack of need. It appears that for older people, training in the traditional form is not attractive and therefore considered as not needed.

Figure 2.9 The share of 25 to 65 year-olds participating in training in 2011 by age



Source: GUS 2013

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

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

2.3.2. Employers

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

Employers can also apply for financial support from the National Training Fund (*Krajowy Fundusz Szkoleniowy*), which uses the strategy of employee professional development to combat layoffs. More information on public support for employers is presented in chapter 4.

2.3.3 Training institutions

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

CHAPTER 3.

Shaping VET qualifications

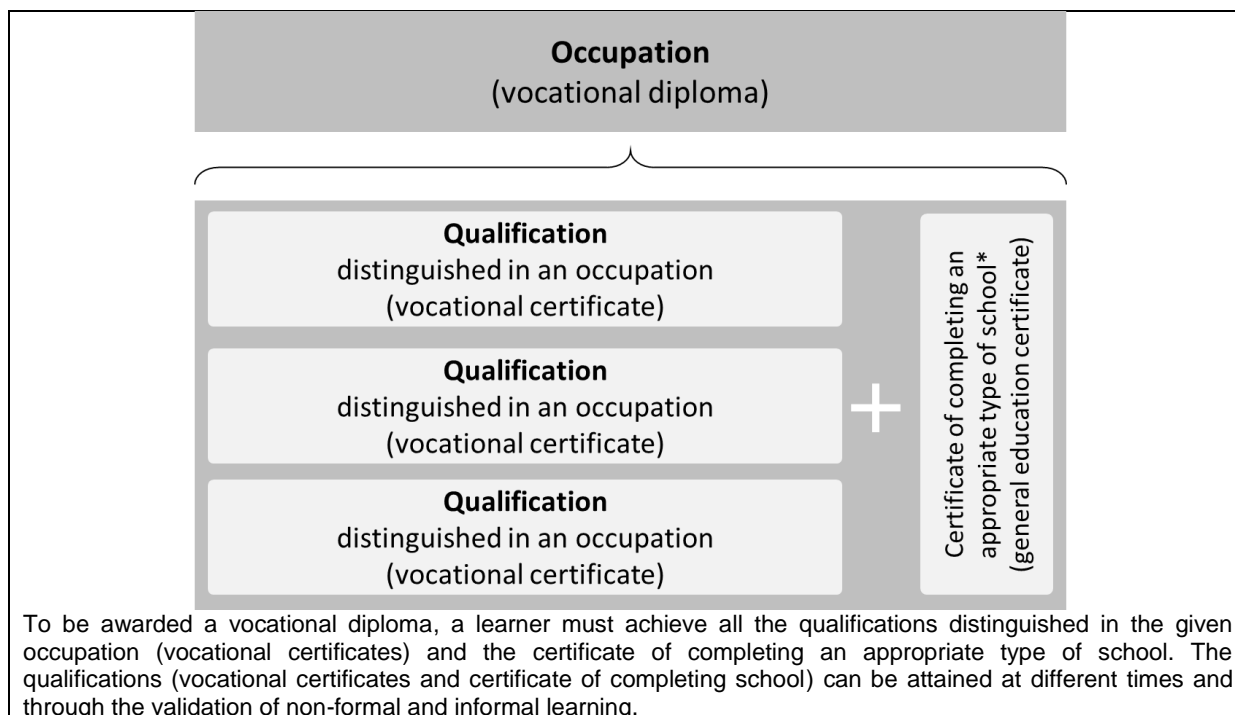
3.1. Relations between occupations, qualifications, core curricula and teaching programmes

The basis for VET offer is developed at the national level by three decrees of the education ministry:

- the classification of occupations for vocational education (KZSZ);
- the core curriculum for vocational education (PPKZ);
- the core curriculum for general education (PPKO).

KZSZ includes the list of occupations for which VET schools can provide education. Qualifications ⁽¹⁷⁾ are distinguished within occupations qualifications. Each occupation can be made up of either one, two or three qualifications. KZSZ includes 209 occupations and 264 qualifications. This is why formal vocational education and training system has two types of documents confirming attained learning outcomes, which can be awarded to learners – vocational certificates and vocational diplomas. Attaining qualifications (vocational certificates) together with possession of a school leaving certificate enables a learner to obtain an occupation (vocational diploma) see Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Distinguishing qualifications in the occupations listed in KZSZ



Source: Dębowski and Stęchły (2015)

⁽¹⁷⁾ The term 'qualification' is defined in the Polish School Education Act similarly as in in the European Qualifications Framework Recommendation (2008).

Each qualification includes specific sets of learning outcomes defined in the core curriculum for vocational education (PPKZ). Learning outcomes are grouped in units, which typically contain from several to over a dozen learning outcomes and reflect specific professional tasks. The core curriculum for general education (PPKO) determines the learning outcomes related to the general education component and key competences provided by VET schools⁽¹⁸⁾.

The decision to provide education for a particular occupation listed in KZSZ is made at the local (district) level by the school principal in agreement with local authorities (see more in section 3.2 below). Thus, the KZSZ classification serves as a 'menu' for the choices made by schools and local authorities about which occupations to teach. Teaching programmes can be developed individually by school. The school principal is responsible for incorporating the learning outcomes in the teaching programme and providing the organisational requirements as defined in the core curricula.

3.2. Match between labour market needs and VET provision

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

With the support of ESF funding work is being carried out to better adapt KZSZ and PPKZ to labour market needs (3.2.2). Also from the ESF funds will be developed the system sectorial councils for competences (section 3.2.3).

3.2.1 Developing occupations within KZSZ

The introduction of new occupations to KZSZ is regulated by the School Education Act. KZSZ is determined by the Education Minister on the basis of cooperation with the relevant ministers responsible for a given sector of the economy which can submit their request to include particular occupations in KZSZ. To anticipate labour market needs, KZSZ is consulted with representatives of employers and employees at the development stage.

Professional associations, social partners and other stakeholders organisations can submit their proposals to the relevant minister to establish a new occupation – in this way they shape the educational offer of the formal VET system. After the proposal has been approved, the Education Minister includes the occupation into KZSZ and appoints a working group to design the core curriculum for vocational education (PPKZ) for that occupation.

⁽¹⁸⁾ For vocational upper-secondary schools, it also defines the learning outcomes that must be achieved by a person in the process of attaining the qualification of the matura certificate.

The working group contacts the institution which submitted the proposal of the new occupation to determine the learning outcomes, and then undertakes consultations with other experts in the field. At this stage, occupational standards, which are developed by the labour ministry, are taken into account.

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

The decision on the occupations offered by a given VET school is made by the school principal in agreement with local authorities (at the county level of government, *powiat*). The decision of the principal must be made after asking the county and regional labour market councils for their opinion concerning compliance with labour market needs. The councils are advisory bodies to the county and regional labour offices. It is assumed that this procedure will guarantee that VET schools are providing the type of education, which will meet local labour demands and stimulate cooperation between VET schools and local enterprises.

3.2.2 Modernising VET curricula

A reform of the VET system was introduced since 2012/13. Among the key instruments of the reform were: a unitised learning outcomes based curriculum, new formula of external assessment, new procedures for validating non-formal and informal learning, and the out-of-school system of vocational education courses. The core curriculum for vocational education was developed as the result of an ESF project⁽¹⁹⁾ implemented by the National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education⁽²⁰⁾ – an agency supervised by the Ministry of Education. Broad consultations were carried out with representatives of different stakeholders. Work on the new core curriculum involved around 600 persons (authors and reviewers), including more than 270 employers and representatives of higher education institutions.

Since the new EU funding period 2014-20, work on the further modernisation of PPKZ is being carried out by the Centre of Educational Development within a successive ESF project⁽²¹⁾. Within this project, 25 trade working groups of social partners⁽²²⁾ were

⁽¹⁹⁾ Project title: 'Improvement of core curricula as the key for modernisation of vocational education'. Implemented in 2008-2013. Human Capital Operational Programme.

⁽²⁰⁾ As of July 2016, the National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education was merged with the Centre for Education Development, a national agency supervised by Ministry of National Education.

⁽²¹⁾ Project title: 'Partnership for vocational education and training'. Operational Programme Knowledge Education and Development

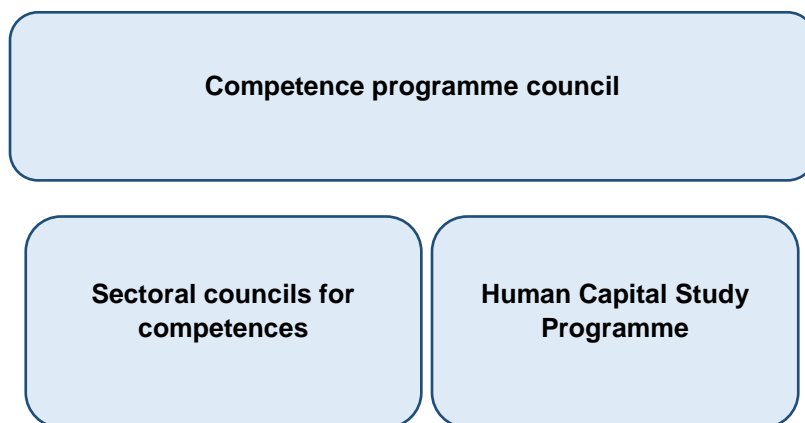
⁽²²⁾ In the following sectors (trades): (1) polygraph and photographic; (2) hairdressing and cosmetic; (3) economic, administration, office, (4) transport-logistics; (5) leather; (6) textile and clothing; (7) chemical-ceramic, glass-making; (8) wood and furniture; (9) building and construction; (10) road and engineering-installation; (11) hotel, catering and tourism; (12) food; (13) forestry and gardening; (14) agricultural and breeding; (15) Mechanical engineering - precision engineering; (16) machine building, metalworking and plastics; (17) automotive; (18) mining and drilling; (19) metallurgical and foundry; (20) electro-electronic and energy; (21) ICT; (22) health care; (23) social assistance; (24) protection and safety of persons and property; (25) artistic.

established involving representatives of employers' organisations, chambers of commerce, trade associations and trade unions. Based on this work, the skills needed by industry in future years, as well as the expectations of graduates' profiles for a given profession will be defined. This will result in the introduction of changes to KZSZ and PPKZ.

3.2.3 Work on the sectoral councils for competences

In 2016, work was started on establishing a system of sectoral councils for competences within a project managed by the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP) ⁽²³⁾. The system of sectoral competence councils consists of three components, indicated in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 System of sectoral councils for competences



Source: Polish Agency for Enterprise Development

The competence programme council will be appointed by the economics ministry (it should be done in 2017). The council will consist of representatives of the ministries for economic development, education higher education and science, labour, as well as representatives of social partners, universities and non-governmental agencies. The council will be responsible for coordinating and monitoring the work of the sectoral councils for competences and for providing recommendations on the functioning of formal and non-formal education.

15 sectoral councils for competences are planned to be established, the first five in 2016. The main aims of the sectoral councils are:

- (a) to collect information from various labour market stakeholders and recommend systemic solutions and changes in the area of education;
- (b) to stimulate cooperation between education providers and employers;

⁽²³⁾ Project title: 'Increasing knowledge about the demand for qualifications and occupations'. Operational Programme Knowledge Education and Development

- (c) to provide support in identifying and anticipating competency needs in a given sector.

The work of the competence programme council and 15 sectoral councils will be complemented by a research component. This will be a continuation of the Human Capital Study that has been carried out since 2010 by the Jagiellonian University and PARP⁽²⁴⁾. Research will continue to provide information on skills gaps in the economy. Conducting these studies in collaboration with entrepreneurs and experts from in the sectoral councils for competence will increase knowledge about current needs in various sectors and enable the demand for competences and qualifications to be anticipated.

3.3. Assessment and validation of non-formal and informal learning

Assessment in formal VET is carried out by schools and by external examination bodies. A positive result in the school assessment (formative and summative) provides learners with a certificate of school completion. In order to receive a vocational certificate, learners must pass external examinations conducted by regional examination boards (OKE). The external examination consists of written and practical parts. This issue is discussed further in section 3.5.2

The VET system allows learners to acquire qualifications (certificates) through the validation of non-formal education and informal learning⁽²⁵⁾. Persons can take extramural external examinations carried out by the regional examination boards if they are over 18 years of age, have completed lower secondary school and have at least two years of learning or work in an occupation related to the qualification for which the examination is being given⁽²⁶⁾. If they do not have two years of learning or work experience, they can enrol in vocational qualifications courses. Completion of the vocational qualification course allows the student to take the OKE examination.

The examinations are the same as for regular VET students, and they are the only way to validate non-formal and informal learning. Poland's VET system does not foresee the use other validation methods, such as portfolios, observation or document analysis.

After successfully passing the OKE examinations, learners obtain a vocational certificate. The certificates are exactly the same as those awarded to regular VET students. The fee to be paid by the applicant for the extramural examinations is rather low, approximately EUR 40 EUR (13 EUR for the written and 27 EUR for the practical part) ⁽²⁷⁾.

⁽²⁴⁾ See more on the Human Capital Study programme at <https://bkl.parp.gov.pl/>

⁽²⁵⁾ By taking extramural exams adults might also acquire certificate of completion of the: primary school, lower secondary school (*gimnazjum*), basic vocational school and upper secondary school (*liceum*).

⁽²⁶⁾ Documents confirming the fulfilment of these requirements are, in particular, school certificates, indexes, education certificates or employment certificates related to work in a specific occupation, including those obtained abroad.

⁽²⁷⁾ Regular VET school students and attendees of vocational qualifications courses are exempted from having to pay the examination fee (unless they fail to pass the exam for two times, then for taking the exam for the third time (and subsequent times) students pay the fee which is equal to the fee for the extramural exam).

3.4 National qualifications framework

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

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

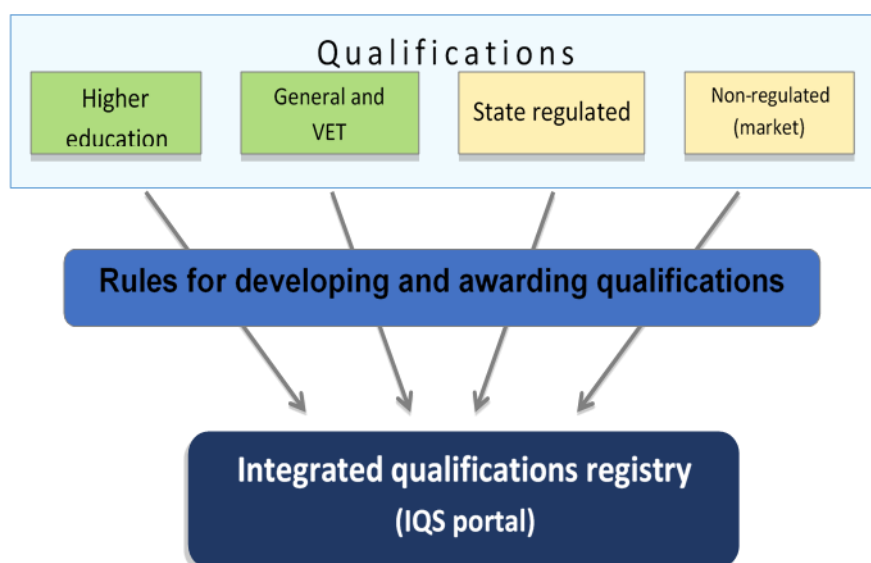
The implementation of the PQF, which includes all types of qualifications, is therefore seen as an action that concludes the series of reforms in the formal education system. It provides a new impetus for change in non-formal education, and enables the greater integration of Poland's qualifications system.

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

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

Every qualification included in the ZSK will be registered in the ZRK. All information about qualifications included in the ZSK is publicly available via an internet portal (www.kwalifikacje.gov.pl), as depicted in Figure 3.3. The portal was launched in July 2016. Currently, it includes information on qualifications in the higher and initial VET education. Further qualifications will be included, after relevant ministers accept new qualifications in the system.

Figure 3.3 Qualifications in the Polish Integrated Qualifications System



Source: IBE

3.5. Quality assurance in VET

3.5.1. External and internal quality assurance systems

All VET schools are included in external and internal quality assurance systems.

External quality assurance is provided by the system of pedagogical supervision. External pedagogical supervision is conducted by the Regional Education Authorities (*kurator oświaty*) under the responsibility of the Education Minister. Pedagogical supervision covers three aspects: evaluation, an audit of legal compliance and support ⁽²⁸⁾.

The Head of the Regional Education Authority prepares an annual report on the results of the educational supervision conducted and presents it to the Education Minister.

School principals are obliged by law to design and implement an internal quality assurance system. They should do this in cooperation with teachers. School principals are relatively free in how they design and implement these systems, but they are obliged to include the three aspects of pedagogical supervision mentioned above: evaluation, compliance audit and support. Internal evaluation is carried out annually and its results are taken into consideration in the external evaluation. In order to help school principals in developing and implementing internal quality assurance procedures, the National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education prepared 'Quality Standards for VET' (2013), a

⁽²⁸⁾ Evaluation of schools is conducted according to certain uniform requirements set in the legislation which concern among others: the concept and organisation of work; educational processes; the implementation of the core curriculum; active participation, and support for the development, of students; shaping social attitudes, and respect for social norms; cooperation among teachers, and with parents and the local community; and management. Legal compliance auditing aims to check whether the activities of schools comply with legislation. See more: Eurydice Report for Poland.

document covering ten thematic areas related to quality assurance in VET⁽²⁹⁾ which are in line with the 2009 EQARF/EQAVET Recommendation. This document can be voluntarily used by schools. The EQAVET reference point is placed in the Centre for Education Development (*Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji*).

3.5.2. The system of external examinations

The system of external examinations is a key element for ensuring and improving the quality of education and qualifications attained in schools. The central examination board and eight regional examination boards are responsible for organising external examinations. The external examination system is supervised by the Education Minister. In the external examination system, all examinees solve the same problems to verify whether they have achieved the learning outcomes defined in the core curriculum. Trained examiners registered at the regional examination boards assess examination results. The central examination board analyses aggregate test and examination results and initiates research in the field of assessment. Results of external examinations are taken into consideration in both external and internal quality assurance as part of pedagogical supervision.

3.5.3. School information system

The collection and dissemination of information on the formal general and vocational education system by the school information system (SIO) is an important element in ensuring the quality of qualifications. The system is maintained in electronic form and uses the Internet to provide information collected under the terms of a legal act⁽³⁰⁾. Every school and educational institution has to submit data regarding the number and categories of students, teachers, facilities, expenses, etc. Submission of data is done by school through a web application. Information is collected regionally and then exported by regional education authorities to the education ministry. Each user group (ministries, Central Statistical Office, local authorities, etc.) has access to its relevant part of the data base. Some information is available to the public. The system has functioned in this way since 2012.

⁽²⁹⁾ The ten thematic areas of the quality standards are: (1) teaching programmes; (2) school staff; (3) school material resources; (4) organisation of teaching; (5) students with special needs; (6) cooperation with employers; (7) cooperation with domestic and international partners; (8) assessment and validation of learning outcomes; (9) counselling; (10) strategic management of the school.

⁽³⁰⁾ Act of 15 April 2011 on the school information system (Journal of Laws 2011, no. 139, item 814).

CHAPTER 4.

Promoting participation in VET

Participation in initial VET remains low but increasing due the higher share of students in VET education at technical secondary level (*technika*). Basic vocational schools are becoming less popular. The reform of vocational education (2012) ⁽³¹⁾ introduced changes in the content and the evaluation of outcomes of basic and vocational upper secondary and post-secondary VET.

The government is currently revising the vocational education system in order to increase incentives for the participation in VET, including development of vocational guidance, broad introduction of dual system in VET schools and promoting better co-operation between schools and employers. A reform of the financing of the initial VET schools is planned through higher financing provided for qualifications needed on the labour market ⁽³²⁾.

The new law on educational system adopted in January 2017 envisages an introduction of the new type of branch school (*szkoła branżowa*) at first and second levels that would replace the current basic vocational schools, since the school year 2017/2018.

4.1. Incentives for learners, education providers and enterprises

There are two main areas of VET policy that include incentives for participation in VET. In the case of initial VET, these incentives are included in the education policy area coordinated by the education ministry. Some of the activities for youth coming from disadvantaged backgrounds and NEET are also provided by the Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP) that is a part of the employment services network. Adult participation in continuous VET is supported mainly through the active labour market policies implemented by the public employment services and supported from the labour fund. This area of VET policy is coordinated by the labour ministry.

4.1.1. Incentives for learners

In the initial VET, incentives include:

- (a) scholarships for students at secondary and tertiary levels;

Schools (including VET) offer academic, social and international scholarships to their learners as well as scholarships for students with disabilities. In 2016, they ranged from PLN 94.40 to 236 (EUR 22 to 55) per month for one to 10 months per school year. The support can also take the form of full or partial coverage of participation in education activities or in-kind support, such as purchasing of textbooks. VET students can also receive support to finance the cost related to learning outside the place of living.

⁽³¹⁾ Act of 19 August 2011 on changes in the School Education Law, introduced on 1 September 2012.

⁽³²⁾ Presentation of reform plans by the Ministry of Education
<https://men.gov.pl/ministerstwo/informacje/podsumowanie-ogolnopolskiej-debaty-o-edukacji.html>

The criteria for the social scholarship include the low income (that is less than net PLN 514 (around EUR 120) per capita in the family ⁽³³⁾) combined with social problems that the family is facing such as for example: unemployment of parents or guardians, disability in the family, long-term illness, family with many children, lack of ability to perform care of educational functions in the family, alcoholism or drug addiction in the family, single parenting.

Scholarships for good performance in basic vocational schools can be granted by county governments and the Prime Minister (Decree of 14th of June 2005 on scholarships) ⁽³⁴⁾.

(b) Salary for juvenile workers

Students who are juvenile workers (i.e. they have a contract with employers) are entitled to a salary.

The amount of the salary for the juvenile is not less than 4% (in the 1st year of training) 5% (in the 2nd year of training) and 6% (in the 3rd year of training) of the average monthly salary. The employer may decide on another salary amount for the trainee, which should not be lower than the amounts indicated above. Employers also pay mandatory social insurance on the basis of the salary paid to the juvenile worker.

Table 4.1 The minimum salary for juvenile workers in 2017

Period	1 st year of training	2 nd year of training	3 rd year of training
1.03.2017-31.05.2017	PLN 168.76 (EUR 40)	PLN 210.95 (EUR 50)	PLN 253.14 (EUR 60)
1.01.2017 – 28.02.2017	PLN 162.20 (EUR 38)	PLN 202.75 (EUR 48)	PLN 243.30 (EUR 57)

The OHP provides vocational training to youth aged 15-18 years. The service is free of charge for participants, who also sign a labour contract with employers and receive salary for their work, similarly to the rules for juvenile workers described above.

The OHP also implements Youth Guarantee projects. They offer vocational counselling and guidance ⁽³⁵⁾.

(d) developing a system to monitor the labour market entry of vocational school graduates.

The education ministry is also working on developing a national system to monitor the school-to-work transition of VET students that would be based on a mix of survey-based

⁽³³⁾ This is the threshold for receiving social assistance benefits in Poland.

⁽³⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council of Ministers of 14 June 2005 on scholarships of the Prime Minister, minister for education and development and the minister for culture and the protection of national heritage (Journal 2005, no. 106, item 890).

⁽³⁵⁾ https://ohp.pl/?page_id=91

methods and matching administrative information from the school information system to social insurance data. The information from a pilot monitoring project should be available in 2018.

In addition to activities organised at the national level, regional authorities are also developing various programmes aimed at promoting participation in VET. For example, the Mazovian region is offering scholarship programmes for IVET students ⁽³⁶⁾, the Małopolska region is implementing comprehensive monitoring of the school-to-work transition of VET students ⁽³⁷⁾.

This information will enable learners to choose schools that offer best education and as a result, also labour market outcomes.

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

- (a) Vocational training;
- (b) Loans for financing of the cost of training;
- (c) Training vouchers;
- (d) Vocational practice vouchers;
- (e) Scholarships for youth from low income families for the period of education;
- (f) Financial support for examination fees and vocational licence fees;
- (g) Statutory training leave for employees.

The Labour Fund⁽³⁸⁾ plays an important role in delivering state support for vocational educational and training. It promotes participation by granting resources for vocational training initiatives. The grants are distributed for individual and group training through the Labour Offices – UP (*Urząd Pracy*). The training is mainly offered to unemployed people, but it can also be provided to other job seekers, such as, for example, people with disabilities. The training is offered in the form of group training in courses offered by UPs or individual training, where the unemployed person receives financing to cover the cost of the training.

The participants of group training have the right to receive a monthly training grant that amounts to 120% of the unemployment benefit. The number of training hours per month should exceed 150. The cost of individual training cannot exceed 300% of the national average monthly salary.

In total, 685 000 unemployed and other eligible persons have participated in various forms of training offered by the Labour Offices. The most popular form of training (more than 15 000 participants) were driver's licence courses. The most popular type of support is

⁽³⁶⁾ <http://www.ceziu.pl/plan/stypendium/stypendium.html>

⁽³⁷⁾ <http://www.obserwatorium.malopolska.pl/raporty/badanie-losow-absolwentow-szkol-zawodowych-2015-podsumowanie-glownych-wynikow/>

⁽³⁸⁾ The Labour Fund (*Fundusz Pracy*) is a state special purpose fund which operates under the Act of 20 April 2004 on promoting employment and labour market institutions.

financing for training courses chosen by participants and participation in group training offered by UPs (see Table 4.1). Other forms of support are much less popular.

Table 4.2 Number of person participating in various forms of training offered by UPs

	Training chosen by the participant	Group training planned by the UP	Training voucher	Training loan	Financing of post-graduate studies	Financing the cost of the exam or licence
	Total number of beneficiaries					
Number of persons who applied for some type of training	24 585	19 055	6 393	234	2 459	986

Source: MRPiPS, 2016

UPs support the organisation of vocational training for employees, but only at the initiative of employers (the condition of obtaining such support is that the employer must have a special training fund in his / her company). Up to 50% of the costs of the training can be refunded from the Labour Fund, but not more than the amount of the average monthly salary per participant. In the case of persons aged over 45 years, the limit of the refund is 80% of the training costs, but not more than 300% of the average salary. In 2013, only 2% of courses (the same as in 2012) were funded by UPs for persons who were employed (Szcucka et al., 2014).

Another form of support offered by UPs is the funding of apprenticeships organised in companies. After the amendment of the Act on the promotion of employment and institutions of the labour market in 2009⁽³⁹⁾, apprenticeships were made available to all unemployed persons, not only to young people without a job, as it had been before the change. In 2015, 189 065 persons completed an apprenticeship, 77 527 of whom were 25 years of age or younger (41%).

Training leave is provided to an employee. The leave can be used to prepare for and take an examination or defend a thesis. The training leave can be up to 6 days in the case of upper secondary school completion examinations (*matura*) and the state vocational examination. More training leave (21 days) can be granted to an employee who is a student of the last year of studies and is preparing a thesis or for an examination. Training leave is payable (to cover lost income) to an employee if an employer requires or agrees to the need for the training before it starts. Training leave cannot be provided if an employee is already using another form of leave, e.g. unpaid extended post-maternity leave.

4.1.2. Support for education providers

Vocational schools can receive support from Regional Operational Programmes for activities related to their modernisation and development of educational offer. Such support can be granted, based on the regional contests, for the following activities:

- Vocational counselling

⁽³⁹⁾ Act of 20 April 2004 on the promotion of employment and labour market institutions.

- Organisation of extracurricular activities that serve gaining additional knowledge and vocational skills;
- Organisation of preparatory courses for higher education;
- Supporting students in achieving additional qualifications increasing their chances on the labour market;
- Out-of-school forms of vocational training;
- Raising competences and qualifications of VET teachers;
- Development of vocational training conditions similar to natural working conditions;
- Organisation of vocational practice;
- Development of the new VET educational offer.

Furthermore, schools can receive support for development of their infrastructure, such as:

- Building of new didactical facilities;
- Reconstruction, adaptation, modernisation of practical training rooms;
- Purchasing of the IT equipment
- Purchasing of the equipment supporting vocational training;
- Purchasing of equipment and software that would enable developing of key competencies on the labour market.

In the area of continuous VET, training companies can offer training for unemployed or employees, according to the rules specified above.

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

4.1.3. Support for enterprises

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

Employers who provide VET training to students of vocational schools can receive the following support: refund of trainers' salaries, refund of the extra salary paid to instructors, refund of the cost of work clothes and necessary protection measures, training allowance, and refund of the bonus for work placement supervisors (Pfeiffer, 2013).

An assessment of the co-operation between schools and entrepreneurs in the area of work placements (Fila et al., 2014) indicates that employers believe that the financial support offered is not fully adequate to the resources devoted to such training. The period of vocational practices is seen as being too short, which means that students are not providing added value to the company's performance.

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

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

(c) National training fund supporting the financing of training organised by employers;

Since 2014, employers are able to use the National Training Fund (*Krajowy Fundusz Szkoleniowy*) to finance training for their employees. The fund is part of the Labour Fund (*Fundusz Pracy*). It mainly finances courses and post-graduate studies attended by employees at the request of the employer; examinations enabling the attainment of vocational qualifications; medical and psychological examinations required for a job; and personal accident insurance. The application for funding can be submitted to the UP by any employer who employs at least one employee. In the case of microenterprises, the funding can cover 100% of the costs of continuing education, whereas in other types of enterprises, the employer covers 20% of the training cost. The amount for training for one employee cannot exceed 300% of the average salary in the economy in a given year (in 2015, PLN 3 899 PLN per month, an equivalent of about EUR 900). In 2014, 12 236 employers received support from the National Training Fund, resulting in training or other forms of assistance for 73 287 employees (MRPiPS, 2016).

4.2. Guidance and counselling

Similarly to the financial and other incentives supporting VET participation, vocational guidance and counselling is under the remit of two ministries: the education, responsible for providing guidance and counselling services to young people in schools at the lower and upper secondary levels, and the labour, responsible for guidance and counselling services to adults.

According to the 2013 rules on providing and organisation of psychological and pedagogical support in public schools and other educational entities ⁽⁴⁰⁾, schools and other educational entities are obliged to provide students and teachers with pedagogical and psychological assistance, including vocational information and guidance to help students in choosing their educational paths and careers. The tasks of the vocational counsellors include:

1) detecting students' needs for educational information and vocational training and helping plan career;

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 30 kwietnia 2013 r. w sprawie zasad udzielania i organizacji pomocy psychologiczno-pedagogicznej w publicznych przedszkolach, szkołach i placówkach (<http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20130000532>)

- 2) collecting, updating and sharing of education and occupational-specific information, relevant for the level of education;
- 3) conducting activities related to the choice of the further education and occupation, and education and career planning;
- 4) coordinating the activities of information and counselling conducted by the school and the institution;
- 5) cooperating with other teachers in the creating and ensuring the continuity of activities in the field of education and vocational counselling;
- 6) supporting the teachers, educators, educational groups and other specialists in providing psychological and pedagogical support.

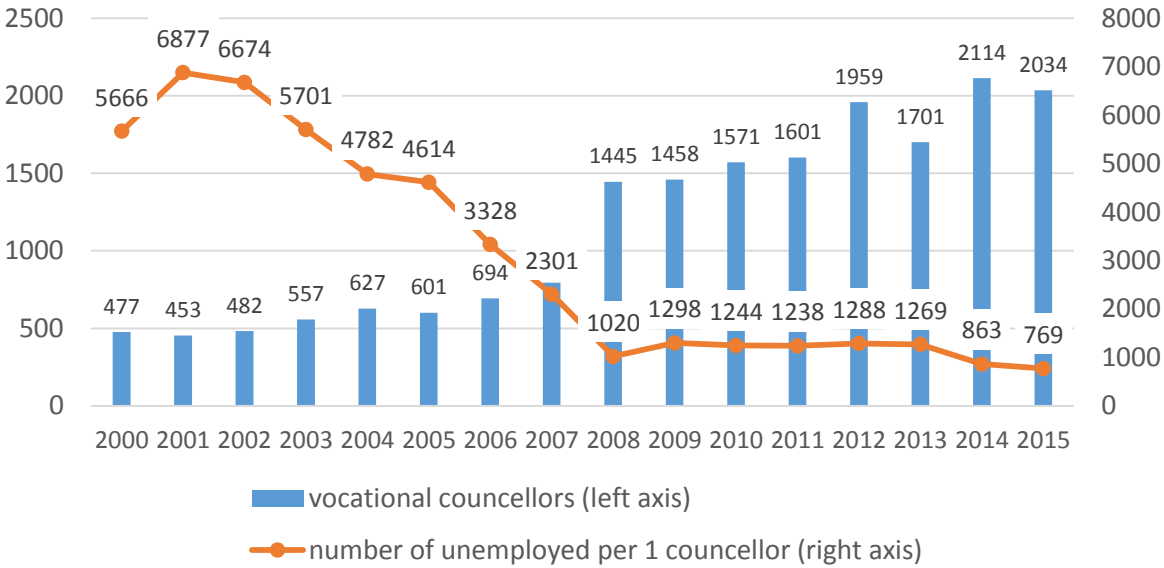
In the case when there is no vocational counsellor employed at school, the school director appoints a person (usually a teacher) that is responsible for these activities. All schools are obliged to have an interschool system of counselling, adopted in the school statute.

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

An assessment by the Educational Research Institute (Podwójcic, 2015) shows that professional counsellors are employed in 15.4% of schools, while other persons responsible for counselling are employed in 78.6% of schools. A small share (5.4%) of schools declared that they do not provide counselling services to their students. Professional counsellors work in about 20% of VET schools. According to the administrative data on education system, currently there are around 1200 teachers-counsellors in Polish schools.

In 2015, there were 2 265 vocational counsellors in UPs, including 231 employed at regional (*voivodship*) level and 2034 at county (*powiat*) level (MRPiPS, 2016).

Figure 4.1 Vocational counsellors and unemployed per counsellor at county UPs

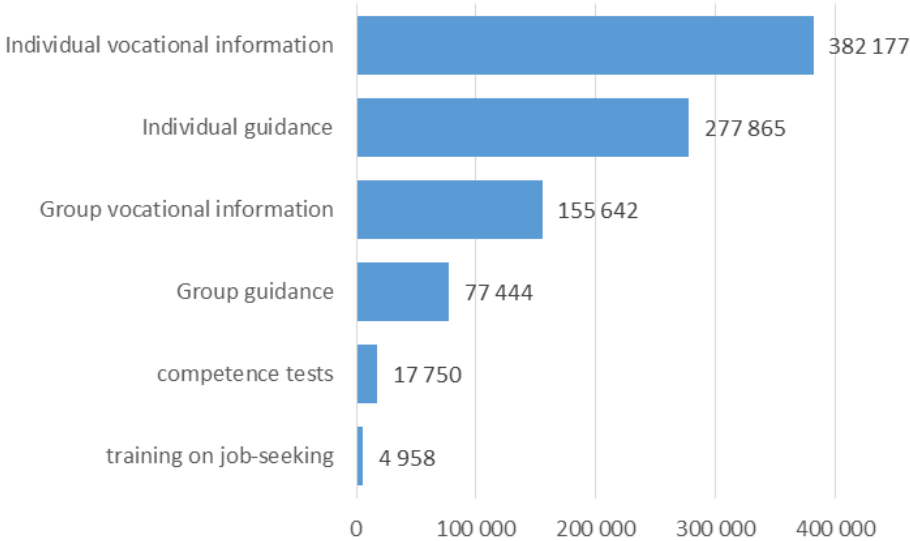


Source: MRPiPS, 2016

The number of counsellors employed at county UPs is increasing, as shown in Figure 4.1. In particular, a significant increase was noted in 2014. As a result of this increase, but also reduction in the number of unemployed, the number of unemployed people per one counsellor is falling. In 2015 this number fell to 769 people, which is almost nine times less than in 2001.

Counselling and guidance services for adults are available in the UPs for unemployed persons who are actively searching for a job. The scope of vocational counselling includes individual and group counselling and guidance. Individual counselling aims to motivate the client to talk about and solve problems related to occupations. Group vocational counselling is related to such issues as: occupations, labour market, possibilities of vocational training, services in the labour market, etc. Vocational information is also provided individually or in groups. Unemployed persons can be tested for their competences and receive training on job-seeking skills. The number of persons who received such support in 2014 is shown in

Figure 4.2 Number of unemployed persons who received various forms of vocational counselling and guidance in 2014



Source: MRPiPS, 2016

In order to promote VET, UPs also provide guidance to entrepreneurs. The support is provided in two main areas. First, employers can receive support in the recruitment of appropriate candidates, as well as support in providing a job description for a specific post. In 2014, such services were requested by 232 and 1189 employers respectively. Second, employers can receive support for their own and their employees' vocational development. In 2014, 65 employers requested such support, which was provided to 348 persons (MRPiPS, 2016).

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Legislation

- Act of 11 July 2014 on amendments to the Act – Law on higher education and other selected acts (Journal of Laws 2014, item 1198)
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- Act of 22 March 1989 on crafts trades (Journal of Laws 1989, No. 17, item 92 and later amendments)
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 27 April 2015 on the specific conditions and manner of conducting the examination confirming the qualifications for an occupation (Journal of Laws 2015, item 673)
- Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 25 June 2014 on refunds from the Labour Fund of salaries paid to young employees (Journal of Laws 2014, item 865)
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