



# The System of Education in Poland

Warsaw 2008



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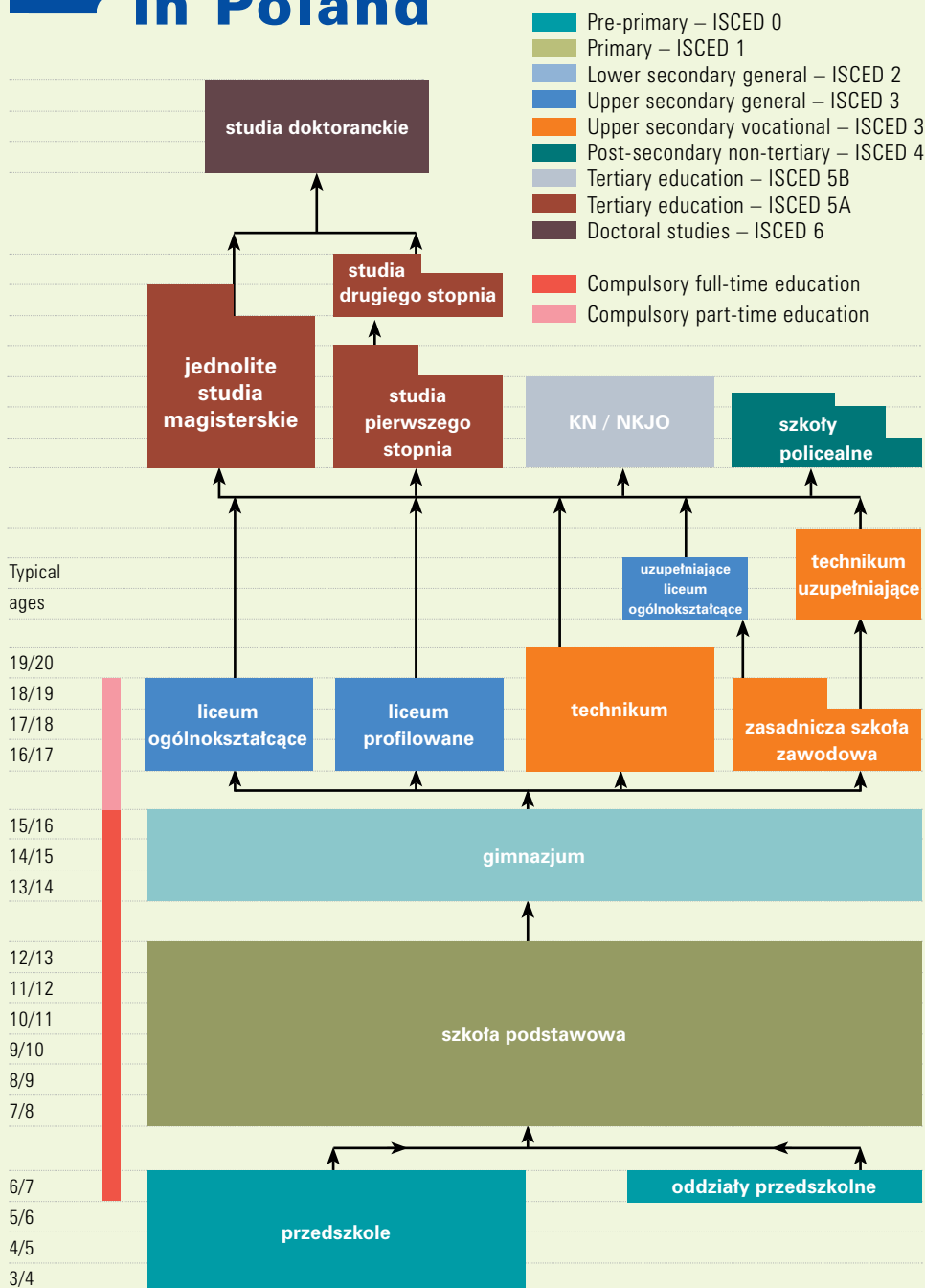
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# Organisation of the education system in Poland



# 1

# Responsibilities and administration

## 1.1. Background

Poland is situated in the centre of Europe and covers 312 679 square kilometres. In the year 2006 Poland had a population of 38.157 million, 61.3% of whom lived in 889 towns and urban areas and 38.7% in rural ones. The country is divided into 16 voivodships (provinces), 379 districts (*powiaty*) and 2478 local government communes (*gminy*) (31 December 2006).

In 2006 the birth-rate equalled +0.1‰.

In accordance with the Constitution, Poland is a Parliamentary Republic headed by the President of the Republic elected by direct popular vote for five years. The bicameral Parliament consists of the 460 members of the Sejm (lower chamber) and of the 100 members of the Senate. Members of the Sejm and the Senate are elected by General Election for a four-year term.

The overwhelming majority of the population are native Poles. Poland is predominantly Roman Catholic (about 34.2 million baptized). Other religions and denominations are represented by a large number of relatively small communities (among them the biggest are: Orthodox – 510 000, Protestant and related – 148 000, Jehovah witnesses – 128 000).

In 2006 the annual increase of the Polish GDP amounted to 6.2%.

In 2006 the rate of unemployment was 14.8%

## 1.2. Basic principles – education

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

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

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

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

- Act of 27 July 2005 – The Law on Higher Education
- The Act of 14 March 2003 on Academic Degrees and Title and on Degrees and Title in the Area of Art



- Act of 8 October 2004 on the Rules of Financing Research
- The Act of 17 July 1998 on Loans and Credits for Students (with further amendments).

The new Act on Higher Education was adopted on the 27 July 2005 replacing the Act on Schools of Higher Education and the Act on Higher Vocational Schools. The new Act has been operational since the academic year 2005/06.

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

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

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

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

The main role in initiating and exercising control over current and long-term educational po-licy is played by the Minister of National Education with respect to school education and by the Minister of Science and Higher Education with respect to higher education (since 5 May 2006).

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

Teachers' Unions have a considerable role in shaping current educational policy. The Minister of National Education is obliged to consult Teachers' Unions on the most important decisions, and in certain cases he/she must have their approval.



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

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

### Central level

This is the responsibility of the Minister of National Education, deputy-ministers and the director general. Deputy-ministers are responsible for such matters as e.g. school system or international co-operation. The Minister of Science and Higher Education is responsible for higher education, and scientific research, as well as formulating educational policy with respect to higher education with the support by the General Council for Higher Education.

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

The Minister determines the following groups of problems and tasks:

1. Outline timetables;
2. Core curricula for pre-primary education, for compulsory general subjects and general vocational education;
3. Conditions and procedures for the approval of curricula and textbooks for the school use; the recommendation on teaching aids as well as lists of those curricula, textbooks and aids;
4. Rules for assessing and promoting pupils and for conducting tests and examinations;
5. Requirement standards being the basis for tests and examinations;
6. Record keeping methods concerning the teaching process and educational activities, as well as types of these records;
7. Rules and conditions for implementing innovations and experiments by schools or other institutions;
8. Organisation of the school year;
9. Establishing rules for subject competitions and national competitions;

10. Rules and conditions for organising care for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream and integration schools, and organising special education;
11. Rules and conditions for organising psychological and pedagogical assistance for pupils;
12. Procedures for organising correctional gymnastics and optional physical education lessons;
13. Rules and conditions for organising tourism and sightseeing activities by schools.

The following matters are under supervision of the Minister of Science and Higher Education: development of research in Poland, studies for students and PhD students, and functioning of higher education institutions.

## Regional level

Regional level in Poland is the level of voivodship. As from 1999 the number of voivodships is 16.

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

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

1. Pedagogical supervision over public and non-public schools and educational institutions, including central in-service teacher training institutions located in the given region.
2. Administrative decisions in certain fields defined by the Education System Act.
3. Co-operation with school councils.
4. Administrative decisions regarding public and non-public schools – as an administrative body superior to the self-government units; and administrative decisions regarding compulsory education and expulsion of pupils from schools – as a body superior to a school head.
5. Implementation of the state educational policy, cooperation with territorial self-government units in creation and implementation of the local and regional educational policy coherent with the state policy.
  - 5a. Issuing opinions on the documents regarding organisation of schools and institutions before their final approval (with an exception of institutions run by ministers).
  - 5b. Issuing opinions on the work plans for in-service teacher training institutions (with an exception of institutions run by ministers).
  - 5c. Preparation of plans for the use of funds for in-service teacher training earmarked in the regional budget upon consultation with relevant trade unions.
6. Organisation of subject „Olympics”, competitions and contests for pupils in the given region and presentation of pupils achievements in the respective voivodship.
7. Cooperation with regional examination commissions.
8. Diagnosis of teachers’ needs in terms of in-service training, organisation and coordination of activities related to in-service teacher training, cooperation with school running bodies, promotion of in-service teacher training, especially of the training related to the innovation in education approach.
9. Support to the organisation of tests and exams.
10. Cooperation with territorial self-government units with regard to the financial situation of schools and institutions.
11. Cooperation with relevant bodies on the matter of conditions for children’s development including prevention of pathologies and support to such organisations and institutions.
12. Coordination, support and supervision of organisation of summer and winter holidays in the given region.

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

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

### Discrit level

District level in Poland is the level of *powiat* (an intermediate administrative unit between the voivodship and the commune, established on the force of the Act on the introduction of the three-tier administrative division of the country of 24 July 1998). There are 379 *powiaty* now.

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

### Local level

Local level in Poland is the level of commune (*gmina*). There are 2 478 *gminy*, of which most are rural.

Communes are responsible for running of the pre-school institutions, primary schools and lower secondary schools called gymnasium (*gimnazjum*). Pedagogical supervision is excluded from their tasks – it is the responsibility of education superintendent (*kurator*).

### Educational institutions

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

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

In particular, the school head:

- manages the school (institution) and represents it externally;
- exercises pedagogical supervision;
- takes care of pupils and provides background for their harmonious psychological and physical development through various pro-health activities;
- implements the resolutions of the school council or the teachers' council (undertaken in accordance with their competencies);
- is in charge of financial means and is responsible for their proper use;
- co-operates with higher education and teacher training institutions in the field of organising teacher pedagogical training;
- is responsible for the organisation and implementation of the tests and exams in his/her school.

The school head, being the manager of the institution employing teachers and non-teaching

staff, decides also on the following matters:

- employment and dismissal of teachers and non-teaching staff;
- in cooperation with the school running body – teacher salaries (in general they are determined at the central level, however there is a scope for variation at the institutional level);
- discipline and reprimands;
- proposals concerning rewards and honours awarded at upper levels.

## 1.4. Inspection, supervision and guidance

Administrative and pedagogical supervision have been separated.

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

The measurement of educational achievements and the partial assessment of school performance are carried out now by the Central Examination Commission and eight Regional Examination Commissions. The external test at the end of the primary school and the external examination at the end of gymnasium have already been implemented (for the first time organised in 2002). These examinations are conducted by the Regional Examination Commissions. In May 2005 a new external *Matura* examination was introduced at the end of upper secondary general and specialised schools.

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

There are 559 public centres for psychological and pedagogical support in Poland (including 29 specialist ones). Their tasks include as follows: support to children, youth, parents and teachers in learning difficulties, and behaviour problems also connected with drugs, alcohol, therapy in the case of development problems and prevention of addictions.

The second field of activity of these centres is focused on counselling and guidance when a child chooses post-gymnasium school or his/her future profession.

Some large schools employ special teachers, psychologists, speech therapists or career advisers who organise special classes and contribute to the solving of individual or internal school problems.





## 1.5. Financing

As from 1999, and in its complete form from 2000, all educational tasks carried out by the three levels of territorial self-government are financed in the framework of general subsidy from the state budget.

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

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

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

Educational investments belong to territorial self-governments' own tasks, although they can be co-financed from the state budget through regional authorities.

## 1.6. Advisory and consultative bodies

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

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

The National Convention of Parents and Parents' Councils is an organisation representing pupils' parents at the national level.

## 1.7. Private schools

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

All these schools may have their own curricula, which are approved by the Minister of National Education. They are financed by fees received from parents. Funds can also come from private enterprises and foundations. Non-public schools with the rights of public schools are eligible for a grant calculated according to the number of pupils, which equals 100% of the average cost of educating a pupil in a public school.

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

Most non-public schools have small numbers of pupils and small classes. They may be distinguished from the public schools by their individualized teaching programmes, by a wider range of curriculum choice and by a higher standard of foreign language teaching.

In the 2006/2007 school year, there were 808 non-public primary schools (221 private, 81 church and 506 civic), 645 non-public lower secondary schools (205 private, 124 church and 316 civic), 447 non-public general upper secondary schools (179 private, 105 church and 163 civic), and 323 non-public vocational secondary and basic vocational schools – 2223 non-public schools altogether.

Non-public primary school pupils make up 2.0% of the total number of pupils attending primary schools, pupils in non-public lower secondary schools – 2.9%, non-public general upper secondary school pupils – about 4.3% and non-public vocational secondary and basic vocational school pupils – 2.6%.

# 2

## Pre-school education

A child aged 3 to 5 may receive pre-primary education, which is not compulsory, but all the six year-old children attend either kindergartens (*przedszkola*) or pre-primary classes attached to primary schools (*oddziały przedszkolne*), as the Ministry of National Education and Sport has introduced an obligatory 0 grade starting the school year 2004/2005 and therefore the age of beginning of the compulsory education has been lowered from 7 to 6.

Pre-school education in Poland underwent certain changes caused by a decrease in the number of pre-school children and by the partial introduction of fees into this type of educational institution. In 1995 the attendance rate was calculated as 46.2% of children aged 3 to 6 and in 1998 – 49%. In the school year 2003/2004 52.3% of 3 to 6 year olds attended pre-school institutions. In 2006/07 the attendance rate for children aged 3 to 5 (0 grade is obligatory for 6-year olds) amounted to 44.6%.

Public kindergartens are administered and financed by local governments – communes.

Parents' payments cover children's meals, extra lessons, and a so-called extra fee if a child attends the kindergarten for more than 5 hours a day. The fee is set by the commune.

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

Starting the school year 2004/05 children aged 6 are obliged to complete the „zero year” either in a kindergarten (*przedszkole*) or in a pre-primary class attached to a primary school.

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

Education of a 6-year old includes stimulating his/her general development and teaching primary reading skills and basic mathematics.

The Ministry of National Education plans to lower the age of beginning of compulsory education in primary school from 7 to 6.

### 2.1. Organisation

Starting September 1990, a kindergarten is obliged to provide unpaid teaching and nursing for at least 5 hours a day – the time necessary





for the implementation of the content included in the Core Curriculum for Pre-School and General Education. The majority of pre-school institutions work for 9 hours a day. As a rule, two teachers working in shifts take care of one section (group of children) – one up to 12 o'clock, the other from 12 o'clock.

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

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

## 2.2. Curriculum/assessment

### Curriculum

The Regulation of 26 February 2002 by the Minister of National Education and Sport introduced the „Core curriculum for pre-school education in kindergartens and pre-school sections in primary schools“. It comprises the basic objectives and the teacher's tasks in a framework of 4 educational areas.

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

1. Acquisition of knowledge and understanding of oneself and the world
2. Acquisition of skills through activities
3. Finding one's place in the peer group and community
4. Construction of the system of values.

The pre-school curricula are reviewed and accepted by the Minister of National Education on the basis of the regulation of the 5th of February 2004. At present there are 25 different curricula accepted for use in kindergartens and pre-school classes. Both kindergartens and pre-school classes are obliged to follow a curriculum based on the core curriculum, either selected from the Ministry's register or prepared by an individual teacher or a team of teachers. The selected curriculum can be accepted by the head of the institution (kindergarten or school) upon the opinion of the pedagogical council and the parents' council.

### Methods

There are no official recommendations or guidelines with respect to the methods. In general work with children is based on the spontaneous child's activity. The kindergarten environment stimulates and directs this activity towards learning and creativity. Playing and activities stimulating development are the most common methods applied here.

### Assessment

There are no formal principles for evaluating or monitoring pre-primary school children. A child graduating from pre-school education does not receive any formal document with the assessment of knowledge and skills. The only exception is so called „balance-sheet of the child aged 6“ which is connected with the recruitment to primary schools. This form of evaluation concerns only health state and physical development of a child. It aims at the selection of pupils that ought to be directed to special schools.

On the force of the Regulation by the Minister of National Education introducing the statutes



of public kindergartens, the teacher was made responsible for continuous observation of the child and keeping up-to-date records of his/her achievements. The gathered information helps the teacher in his/her daily work with the child and in the co-operation with the child's parents in the support of his/her development.

## 2.3. Teachers

The pre-primary school teachers have the same rights, duties and salaries as teachers in primary education (years 1 to 3). The working time of every teacher may not exceed 40 hours per week. The differences concern the teaching load which depends on the post and amounts to 18 hours per week for primary school teachers, 25 hours for pre-school teachers of the younger age groups, and 22 hours for pre-school teachers of six-year-olds.

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

Master's Degree studies seem to be the most popular route of training for teachers in pre-primary education.

The pre-school teachers are mostly female – women make up 99% of teachers at this level.

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

## 2.4. Statistics

Table 1. Pre-primary attendance rate, 2006/2007

Age of children	Population	Children in pre-school institutions	% of total population of children
3 - 6 years	1 438 873	840 581	58.4%
3 - 5 years	1 062 879	474 388	44.6%
6 years	375 994	366 193	97.4%

Table 2. Pre-primary education institutions, 2006/2007

Age of children	Pre-school institutions	Kindergartens	Pre-school classes attached to primary schools
Total	17 329	7 811	9 518
Towns	7 049	5 232	1 817
Rural areas	10 280	2 579	7 701

# 3

## Compulsory education

Full-time compulsory education in Poland lasts 10 years and covers education in the „0 grade”, in the 6-year primary schools (*szkoły podstawowe*) and in the 3-year lower secondary schools (*gimnazja*). The „0 grade” is a year of preparation for primary education, obligatory for all six-year-old children from the 2004/05 school year. The „0” classes are attached either to kindergartens or to primary schools. At the level of primary school, full-time compulsory education starts during the calendar year in which the child reaches 7 years of age. Full-time compulsory education normally continues until the pupil is 16 years of age (i.e. the age of the completion of the gymnasium), but in no case beyond the age of 18 years.

Part-time compulsory education, however, in the school or out-of-school forms, lasts until 18 years of age (based on the Constitution of the Republic of Poland adopted in 1997). Compulsory education is free of charge for all pupils.

The Ministry of National Education plans to lower the age of beginning of compulsory education in primary school from 7 to 6.

### 3.A. Primary education

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

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

#### 3.A.1. Organisation of the school

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

Schools usually are used for one set of pupils per day – sometimes for two, working in shifts. The length of the school day is determined by legislation (outline timetables are prescribed for each age group).

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

semesters: 1) from the day of the start of lessons (the first working day of September) till the last Saturday preceding the winter holidays; 2) from the Monday directly after the winter holidays till the last day of school lessons (the first Friday after the June 18). With respect to the winter break, it lasts for 2 weeks and there are regional variations.

Classes are organised:

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

Principal teaching materials used are textbooks, audio-visual aids, computers and internet. Teachers are free to choose teaching materials, depending on the finances of the school. They also choose textbooks, but only from the list approved by the Minister of National Education.

### 3.A.2. Curriculum

The scope of primary education is determined by three elements: the core curriculum, outline timetables and requirement standards. Core curricula have to be respected by each school.

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

Stage I – grades 1 to 3, called integrated teaching;

Stage II – grades 4 to 6.

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

At the level of primary school there are minimum 18 compulsory lessons (periods) per week (grades 1-3) and 24 in senior grades (4-6).

On top of these figures 2 hours of religion or ethic classes (non-obligatory) should be added at all levels and 3 to 4 hours left to the discretion of the school head.

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

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

Stage I (grades 1-3, primary school)		
No	Compulsory educational activities	Number of teaching hours per week in a period of 3 years
1.	Integrated teaching	54
	Religion/ Ethics	6
	Hours left to the school head's discretion	12*
	Total	72

\* 6 hours will be devoted to foreign language teaching starting 1 September 2008 (on the basis of amended Regulations by the Minister of National Education on Core Curriculum for Pre-school and General Education and on Outline Timetables for Public Schools).

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

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

In addition to subjects, the following cross-curricular themes have been introduced at this stage:

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

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

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

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

Stage II (grades 4-6, primary school)		
No	Compulsory educational activities	Number of teaching hours per week in a period of 3 years
1.	Polish language	16
2.	History and civics	4
3.	Modern foreign language	8
4.	Mathematics	12
5.	Natural science	9
6.	Music*	2
7.	Art*	2
8.	Technology	2
9.	Computer science	2
10.	Physical education	12

11.	Lessons with Class Tutor	3
Total		72
Religion /Ethics		6
Hours left to the school head's discretion		9
Total		87

\*These subjects can be combined in one Art subject

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

The school running body is allowed to increase the number of compulsory teaching hours by the number not exceeding, however, 3 hours per week for one grade in one school year. However, the weekly number of compulsory teaching hours, as well as religion/ ethics classes and additional classes, cannot exceed a maximum of 28 hours in grades 4 to 6. Teachers have the right to choose forms and methods of teaching. The methods depend on the number of pupils per class and on the school equipment (e.g. the number of computers or DVD players/video machines).

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

### 3.A.3. Assessment/certification/guidance

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

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

Moreover, pupils have the right to take a verifying examination if the periodical or annual mark, given by the teacher, is in their or their parents' opinion too low.



Pupils also receive marks for their behaviour (conduct) according to the following scale: excellent, very good, good, acceptable, unacceptable and reprehensible.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 3.A.4. Teachers

In the grades 1-3, one teacher teaches all subjects (integrated teaching), while in the grades 4-6 each subject is taught by a different teacher and pupils change classroom for each subject. To date, teachers have been trained to teach one subject. The teacher training standards (introduced on the basis of the Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 7 September 2004 on teacher training standards) envisage training of teachers as specialists in 2 subjects. Acquisition of computing skills and a good command of one foreign language have also become obligatory.

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

Many primary school teachers who have completed higher education are graduates of universities or teacher higher education schools (pedagogical academies). Master's Degree studies seem to be the most popular route of training for teachers in primary education.

The legal act defining the professional status and conditions of service of teachers employed

in the school education sector is the Act of the 26th of January 1982 – The Teachers’ Charter (with further amendments including the most important ones of 18th of February 2000 and 24th of August 2001).

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

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

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

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

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

- trainee teacher
- contract teacher
- appointed teacher
- chartered teacher.

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

The level of teacher’s basic salary depends on the professional promotion grade, qualifications and the scope of obligatory teaching hours. The level of bonuses depends on the length of service, the quality of teaching, additional obligations or tasks, position held and difficult or hazardous employment conditions.

The average remuneration of a trainee teacher equals 82% of a basic salary defined for state employees, which is defined annually in a budgetary Act.

The average remuneration of other teachers is as follows:

- For contract teacher – 125%
- For appointed teacher – 175%
- For chartered teacher – 225%

of the average salary of a trainee teacher.

The powers concerning pay regulations are as follows: the Minister of National Education defines the minimum rates of basic pay, whereas the rates for bonuses or allowances (except the allowances for the period of service and for work in rural areas, which are directly fixed by the law) and the rules for granting these are determined by the body responsible for the administration and management of a given school.



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

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

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

### 3.A.5. Statistics

Table 1. Number of schools and pupils, 2006/07

Type of school	Schools	Pupils
Primary school	13 725	2 453 600

Table 2. Enrolment rates, 2006/07

Type of school	Age group	% of youth population	
		Gross	Net
Primary school	7-12	99.1	97.6

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

Before 1999 there was no distinction in the Polish education system between lower and upper secondary schools. The lower secondary level was included in the 8-year single structure school.

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

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

The main objectives are formulated as follows:

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

### 3.B.1. Organization of the school

See Section 3.A.1. (Organisation of the school in primary education).

### 3.B.2. Curriculum

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

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

Beside separate subjects, the following cross-curricular themes have been introduced at this stage:

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

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

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

Stage III (grades 1-3 of the gymnasium)		
No.	Compulsory educational activities	Number of teaching hours per week in a period of 3 years
1.	Polish language	14
2.	History	6
3.	Civic education	3
4.	Modern foreign language	9
5.	Mathematics	12
6.	Physics and astronomy	4
7.	Chemistry	4
8.	Biology	4
9.	Geography	4
10.	Fine art/ Music*	3
11.	Technology	2

12.	Computer science	2
13.	Physical education	12
14.	Lessons with Class Tutor	3
Total		82
Religion /Ethics		6
Hours left to the school head's discretion		6
Total		88

\* can be taught as one Art subject

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

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

Subject teachers have the right to choose methods of teaching, depending on the number of pupils per class and on school equipment (e.g. the number of computers or DVD and video machines). The list of teaching aids recommended by the minister has been prepared in order to help teachers with their choice.

### 3.B.3. Assessment/certification/guidance

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

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

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

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

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

At the end of the 3rd year of the gymnasium, an external standardised examination has been introduced. For the first time it was conducted





in 2002 by Regional Examination Commissions. This examination checks both abilities, skills and knowledge in the field of humanities and science. Starting 2009 the exam will encompass foreign language proficiency. It is compulsory for all pupils. The results are attached to the gymnasium leaving certificate. They are comparable on the national scale and have strong bearing on admission to upper secondary schools.

### 3.B.4. Teachers

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

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

Many gymnasium school teachers who have completed higher education are graduates of universities or teacher higher education schools (pedagogical academies). Master's Degree studies seem to be the most popular route of training for teachers in lower secondary education.

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

### 3.B.5. Statistics

Table 1. Number of schools and pupils, 2006/07

Type of school	Schools	Pupils
Gymnasium	6 256	1 494 153

Table 2. Enrolment rates, 2006/07

Type of school	Age group	% of youth population	
		Gross	Net
Gymnasium	13-15	101.3	95.6

# 4

## Post-compulsory education

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

The following post-gymnasium schools are open to candidates who have successfully graduated from gymnasias:

- A. *liceum ogólnokształcące* (3-year general secondary school) offering 3 years of full-time general upper secondary education for students aged 16 to 19. It offers the *Matura* examination necessary for admission to higher education.
- B. *liceum profilowane* (3-year specialised secondary school) – new institution established in 2002/03 offering 3 years of full-time general and specialised upper secondary education for students aged 16 to 19. It offers the *Matura* examination necessary for admission to higher education.
- C. *technikum* (4-year technical secondary school) – institution offering 4 years of full-time technical and vocational upper secondary education for students aged 16 to 20. It offers the *Matura* examination necessary for admission to higher education.
- D. *zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa* (2 to 3-year basic vocational school) – institution offering 2 to 3 years of full-time upper secondary vocational education for students aged 16 to 18. The leavers have access to the trade or occupation or to the *liceum uzupełniające* or *technikum uzupełniające*.

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

- E. *uzupełniające liceum ogólnokształcące* (2-year supplementary general secondary school) – new institution introduced in 2004/05 offering 2 years of full- or part-time general upper secondary education for students aged 18 to 20 in preparation for the *Matura* examination. This school is meant for the leavers of the 2/3-year vocational school.
- F. *technikum uzupełniające* (3-year supplementary secondary technical school) – new institution introduced in 2004/05 offering 3 years of full- or part-time vocational upper secondary education for students aged 18 to 21 in preparation for the *Matura* examination. This school is meant for the leavers of the 2/3-year vocational school.
- G. *szkoła policealna* (maximum 2.5-year post-secondary school) – this institution enables people with secondary education to obtain a vocational qualifications diploma upon passing of an exam.

Upper secondary schools are non-compulsory and mostly coeducational. There is also a small number of single-sex schools within vocational and professional education. Public (state) schools are free of charge.

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

The detailed admission rules are defined by each post-gymnasium school which opens admissions to new pupils.

Schools with open admissions define the following:

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

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

The admission to the 2/3-year basic vocational school (*zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa*) is based on successful completion of the 3-year gymnasium, confirmed by the school leaving certificate. The admission to *liceum uzupełniające* and *technikum uzupełniające* is based on the successful completion of *zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa* (2/3-year basic vocational school).

## 4.A. General secondary education



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

### 4.A.1. Organisation of the school

The use of school buildings and the organisation of school time are arranged according to the same rules as those established for primary schools (see Section 3.A.1.).

### 4.A.2. Curriculum

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

They are divided by subjects: Polish language, Modern foreign language, Latin and ancient culture, Mathematics, History, Civics, Geography, Biology, Physics and astronomy, Chemistry, Technology, Information technology, Art, Music, Defence training, Physical education, Ethics

(optional), Philosophy (optional), Education for family life, Cultural studies, Entrepreneurship, Minority language.

Beside separate subjects, the following cross-curricular themes have been introduced in the *liceum ogólnokształcące* (general upper secondary school), in the *liceum profilowane* (upper secondary specialised school) and in *technikum* (upper secondary technical school):

1. reading and media education
2. ecological education
3. European education
4. philosophical education
5. health education
6. regional education – cultural heritage of the region
7. preparation for family life.

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

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

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

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

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

Lessons for additional subject teaching envisaged in the curriculum	10
Total	88

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

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

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

Additionally, there are 6 non-compulsory hours of religion or ethics and 5 hours left to the school head's discretion, which gives a total of 102 hours of classes a week in a three-year cycle.

The school running body is allowed to increase the number of compulsory teaching hours by the number not exceeding, however, 3 hours per week for one grade in one school year in all types of upper secondary schools.

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

Subject teachers have the right to choose methods of teaching, depending on the number of





pupils per class and on school equipment (e.g. the number of computers or DVD and video machines).

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

### 4.A.3. Assessment/certification/guidance

The system of pupil evaluation for all types of upper secondary schools is based on the Act of 25 July 1998 amending the Act on the Education System and Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 7 September 2004 on Conditions and Rules for Pupil Evaluation, Eligibility for Assessment, Promotion and Examinations and Tests in Public Schools with further amendments.

The principles of internal evaluation are the same as those at primary schools (see Section 3.A.3.). A pupil is promoted to a higher grade if he/she has received „acceptable” (2) marks or above for all compulsory subjects at the end of the school year. If he receives „unsatisfactory” mark in one subject, he can take a repeating exam.

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

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

At the end of upper secondary education (except basic vocational schools), starting the school year 2004/05, pupils may sit for *egzamin dojrzałości (Matura)*, a new external national examination, which is compulsory only to receive the *Matura* certificate and to gain access to higher education.

The old type *Matura* examination consisted of written and oral parts. Topics for the written

part were set by regional educational authorities (*kuratoria*), but the assessment was done by teachers. The oral parts were totally the responsibility of teachers.

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

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

The new *Matura* examination is held at the end of the 3-year general or specialised lyceum (*liceum ogólnokształcące* or *liceum profilowane*) by the Central Examination Commission and at the end of the 4-year technikum. It consists of the written part, prepared by the Central Examination Commission and assessed by Regional Examination Commissions, and oral examinations, prepared and assessed by school teachers. The new *Matura* examination was introduced in *liceum ogólnokształcące* and *liceum profilowane* in 2005. In *technikum* and *liceum uzupełniające* it was introduced in 2006 and in *technikum uzupełniające* in 2007.

#### 4.A.4. Teachers

Upper secondary school teachers ought to have completed a university education (*magister* degree) or equivalent.

Master’s Degree studies seem to be the most popular route of training for teachers in upper secondary education.

Upper secondary school teachers are employed according to the same rules which apply to primary and lower secondary school teachers.

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

#### 4.A.5. Statistics

Table 1. Number of schools and pupils, 2006/07

Type of school	Schools	Pupils
General upper secondary and supplementary schools	2 494	737 447
Specialised upper secondary schools	1 394	159 173

Table 2. Enrolment rates, 2006/07

Type of school	Age group	% of youth population	
		Gross	Net
General and specialised upper secondary schools*	16-18	64.3	52.9

\* including post-primary general upper secondary schools for adults and post-gymnasium supplementary general upper secondary schools

## 4.B. Vocational secondary schools

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

### 4.B.1. Organisation of the school

The use of school buildings and the organisation of school time are arranged according to the same rules as those established for primary schools (see Section 3.A.1.).

### 4.B.2. Curriculum

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

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

Additionally, there are 8 non-compulsory hours (45-minute periods) of religion or ethics and 5 hours left to the school head's discretion, which gives a total of 142 hours of classes a week in a four-year cycle.

The number of teaching hours in the 2-year basic vocational school (the Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 12 February 2002 on the Outline Timetables for Public Schools) is as follows:

Compulsory subjects	Number of lessons per week in a period of 2 years
Polish language	5
Foreign language	3
History and civic education	2
Mathematics	4
Physics and astronomy	2
Geography with environmental protection	2
Introduction to entrepreneurship	1
Physical education	6
Defence training	2
Lessons for Class Tutor	1
Vocational training according to relevant curriculum	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>

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

The school running body is allowed to increase the number of compulsory teaching hours by the number not exceeding, however, 3 hours per week for one grade in one school year in all types of upper secondary schools.

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

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

Teachers are free to choose textbooks from the list approved by the Ministry. The list of teaching aids recommended by the minister has been prepared in order to help teachers with their choice.

### 4.B.3. Assessment/certification/guidance

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

At the end of upper secondary technical education (*technikum*) pupils may sit for *egzamin dojrzałości (Matura)*, a new external national examination, which is compulsory only to receive the *Matura* certificate and to gain access to higher education.

Until 2004 at the end of the *zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa* vocational preparation of pupils was

evaluated by means of *egzamin z nauki zawodu*, a compulsory vocational examination. Its content and the level of requirements were defined by each school. Success in the theoretical and practical parts of this examination, relating to the occupation, gave entitlement to the respective vocational school leaving certificates and the title of skilled worker.

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

Since 2004 the new external vocational examination (*egzamin zawodowy*) has gradually replaced the vocational examinations called *egzamin z przygotowania zawodowego* (in *technika*) and *egzamin z nauki zawodu* (in basic vocational schools). The introduction of this new exam has taken place according to the following schedule:

- In basic vocational schools (*zasadnicze szkoły zawodowe*) in 2004 (in 2-year cycle) and in 2005 (in 3-year cycle)
- In upper secondary technical schools (*technika*) in 2006
- In supplementary upper secondary technical schools (*technika uzupełniająca*) in 2007.

The vocational examination is held in two forms: written and practical. The exam is organised by the Central Examination Commission and by the relevant Regional Examination Commission and aims at the assessment of students' knowledge and practical skills related to a given vocation. The scope of the examination is defined in the vocational qualifications examination standards (the Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 3 February 2003).



## 4.B.4. Statistics

Table 1. Number of schools and pupils, 2006/07

Type of school	Schools	Pupils
Technical and vocational upper secondary schools*	2 650	556 552
Basic vocational schools	1 372	210 018

\* This category also includes supplementary secondary technical schools (*technika uzupełniająca*).

Table 2. Enrolment rates, 2006/07

Type of school	Age group	% of youth population	
		Gross	Net
Technical and vocational upper secondary schools*	16-18	37.6	25.1
Basic vocational schools	16-18	14.6	12.3

\* This category also includes supplementary secondary technical schools (*technika uzupełniająca*). (Data as presented by the Central Statistical Office.)

## 4.C. Post-secondary vocational education

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



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

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

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

In the school year 2006/07 there were 3736 post-secondary schools (public and non-public) in Poland, attended by 327876 students.

### 4.C.1. Curriculum

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

### 4.C.2. Assessment/certification/guidance

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

The introduction of a new external vocational examination in post-secondary schools is under way and it is envisaged to be completed in the year 2008. Starting the school year 2006/07 the vocational examination is conducted once a year – in the period between June and August, the precise date is decided by the Head of the Central Examination Commission. See also information on new vocational examinations in the point 4.B.3.

### 4.C.3. Teachers

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

# 5

## Initial vocational education and training in alternance

### 5.1. Organisation

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

- A. The most popular form is based on an employment contract between an employer and a young worker. The employer is responsible for the organisation of training. The practical training is organised either at the employers' enterprise or, if the employers cannot provide suitable conditions for such training, at the Continuing Education Centre, Practical Training Centre, at a school farm, school workshop, school lab or at an individual farm. The training is implemented on the basis of a contract concluded between the employer and a particular training institution.
- B. School based form of training which can be considered as training in alternance in the case when practical training takes place outside school, at the employer's place and is based on a contract between the employer and the school head. In this case the school is responsible for the organisation of training.

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

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

The contracts between the employer and the trainee can be concluded for indefinite or limited period of time (e.g. for the time required for training in a particular vocational area). In 2002 a requirement of in-service training was imposed on all workers below the age of 18, which is due to the Polish Constitution regulation on compulsory part-time education for all citizens below the age of 18.

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

The signing of the agreement on the co-operation in promoting vocational, continuing and practical education between the Ministry of National Education and Sport and the Association of Polish Artisanry and with the Federation of Polish Employers in 2003 created a very important basis for further development of vocational education and training in alternance. This agreement has initiated the process of establishing networks of artisan workshops and companies where the practical training of students enrolled in schools and educational institutions will be taking place.

### 5.2. Vocational/initial training establishments

The following institutions organise education and training in alternance: vocational schools, out-of-school education institutions and employers. The out-of-school education institutions are: Continuing Education Centres (CKU), Practical Training Centres (CKP) and Voluntary



Labour Corps (OHP), which enable people with learning difficulties to obtain vocational qualifications. Continuing Education Centres (CKU) and Practical Training Centres (CKP) are public out-of-school educational institutions.

Information concerning job vacancies for young workers intending to undergo training in alternance is passed from the employers to the regional labour offices.

### 5.3. Access requirements

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

### 5.4. Financing

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

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

### 5.5. Assessment/qualifications

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

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

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

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

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

### 5.6. Teachers/trainers

Practical classes carried out at the employer's premises are taught either by teachers



or practical vocational training instructors. In both cases pedagogical qualifications as well as specialist knowledge in the given area are required.

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

For employment as an instructor the following qualifications are required:

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

## 5.7. Statistics

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

According to data provided by the Polish Association of Crafts, in the 2003/2004 school year, in 34 500 enterprises, 85 000 juvenile workers were participating in apprenticeship training. Vocational training in the crafts is offered in 101 occupations listed in the Classification of Occupations for Vocational Schooling and in non-school occupations covered by the classification of occupations and specialities for the labour market. The most common occupations were: an automobile mechanic, a hairdresser, a carpenter and a baker.

In the school year 2005/06 52876 young workers commenced education (grade 1) in basic vocational schools providing training in alternance.

Table 1. Teachers and instructors in basic vocational and upper secondary vocational schools for youth 2002/2003

Full time teachers in total, including those teaching the following subjects:	67 430
General subjects	36 231
General vocational subjects	6 466
Theoretical vocational subjects	16 053
Practical vocational subjects	8 680
Instructors of practical training	1 854*

\* In full time equivalents

Table 2. Participants in education and training organised by Voluntary Labour Corps in the school years 2005/2006 and 2006/2007

School year	Participants	
	Total	In which girls
2005/2006	32 068	8 502
2006/2007	32 706	8 542

Table 3. Participants in education and training organised by Voluntary Labour Corps in the school years 2005/2006 and 2006/2007 – by the type of education

School year	Education at the level of primary and lower secondary school	Vocational education and training
2005/2006	14 731	17 337
2006/2007	14 586	18 120

Table 4. Juvenile workers in Voluntary Labour Corps in the school years 2005/2006 and 2006/2007

School year	Juvenile workers
2005/2006	29 255
2006/2007	30 309

# 6

## Tertiary education

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

- **college programmes** (ISCED 5B), provided by public and non-public teacher training colleges, foreign language teacher training colleges and colleges of social work, which last 3 years and are classified as tertiary education for international comparisons, but are not recognised as higher education in the national legislation;
- **degree programmes** (ISCED 5A), provided by both public and non-public university-type and non-university higher education institutions, which comply with relevant requirements, including:
  - **first-cycle** (Bachelor's degree) programmes which last 3 to 4 years and lead to the degree of *licencjat* or 3.5 to 4 years and lead to the degree of *inżynier*, depending on the field of study;
  - **second-cycle** (Master's degree) programmes which last 1.5 to 2 years and lead to the degree of *magister* or an equivalent degree, depending on the field of study;
  - **long-cycle** (Master's degree) which last between 4.5 and 6 years and lead to the degree of *magister* or an equivalent degree;
- **third-cycle or doctoral programmes** (ISCED 6) which last 3 to 4 years and are provided by: units of university-type higher education institutions authorised to confer either the post-doctoral academic degree of *doktor habilitowany* or the academic degree of *doktor* in at least two different disciplines of a given area of science; and research institutions other than higher education institutions (units of the Polish Academy of Sciences and research and development institutions) authorised to confer the post-doctoral academic degree of *doktor habilitowany*.

Until recently, HEIs were divided into „higher education schools” and „schools of higher vocational education” (or „higher vocational education schools”). Higher education schools and higher vocational education schools were established and operated on the basis of separate legislation (1990 Higher Education Act, and 1997 Act on Schools of Higher Vocational Education respectively). The Act „Law on Higher Education” of 27 July 2005, which repealed the legislation previously in force, distinguishes university-type HEIs and non-university HEIs.

University-type HEIs are HEIs in which at least one organisational unit (e.g. faculty) is authorised to award the academic degree of *doktor*. University-type HEIs may provide degree programmes (ISCED 5A), including first-cycle programmes leading to a Bachelor's degree (*licencjat* or *inżynier*) and/or second-cycle or long-cycle programmes leading to a Master's degree (*magister* or an equivalent degree), and doctoral programmes (ISCED 6). Non-university HEIs are HEIs which provide the same types of degree programmes as university-type HEIs, i.e. first-cycle, second-cycle and/or long-cycle programmes, but are not authorised to award the academic degree of *doktor* or provide doctoral programmes. Non-university HEIs include HEIs referred to as „higher vocational education schools” which are authorised to provide only Bachelor's degree programmes.

In general, university-type HEIs can be divided into the following types: universities (*uniwersytet*), technical universities (*politechnika*), agricultural schools (*akademia rolnicza*), schools of economics (*akademia ekonomiczna*), pedagogical academies (*akademia pedagogiczna*), medical academies (*akademia medyczna*), academies of physical education (*akademia wychowania fizycznego*), schools of arts (*uczelnia artystyczna*), schools of theology (*akademia teologiczna*) and other.

## 6.1. Admission

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

Access to first-cycle programmes, leading to a Bachelor's degree (*licencjat* or *inżynier*), and long-cycle programmes, leading to a Master's degree (*magister* or an equivalent degree), is open to holders of *Matura* certificate. After the introduction of a new *Matura* examination in 2005, admission to first-cycle and long-cycle degree programmes must be based on results of this examination. Thus, HEIs may not organise entrance examinations in the subjects taken by student applicants at the maturity examination. However, each HEI may specify which results of the maturity examination provide the basis for admission to first-cycle and long-cycle programmes. Additional entrance examinations may be conducted by HEIs, upon the consent of the minister responsible for higher education, only when it is necessary to assess the knowledge or skills which are not assessed by the maturity examination or when an applicant holds an upper secondary school leaving certificate obtained abroad.

Access to second-cycle programmes is open to holders of a Bachelor's degree (*licencjat* or *inżynier*) or to those Master's degree holders who wish to obtain a second Master's degree.

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

Access to doctoral programmes, which are provided by university-type higher education institutions (HEIs) and research institutions other than HEIs, is open to applicants who hold a Master's degree (*magister* or an equivalent degree) and fulfil admission conditions laid down by a given institution.

## 6.2. Fees

The Constitution of the Republic of Poland guarantees that higher education is free of charge in public sector institutions, full-time day courses.

Therefore no tuition fees are charged by public HEIs for full-time degree programmes (first-cycle, second-cycle or long-cycle programmes) and full-time doctoral programmes. However, public HEIs may charge fees for:

- courses which are repeated by students as a result of their unsatisfactory learning achievements;

- programmes or courses taught in a foreign language;
- courses which are not included in a study programme;
- part-time degree programmes and part-time doctoral programmes.

The majority of state higher education institutions organise fee-paying extra-mural or full-time evening classes. The proportion of students undertaking extra-mural or evening study courses, i.e. those for which fees are charged, increases every year.

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

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

Students enrolled in degree programmes and doctoral students are entitled to free medical services in healthcare institutions which receive public funds. Medical insurance contributions for both categories of students are paid by their HEIs.

In accordance with the 2005 Law on Higher Education, students enrolled in degree programmes in all types of HEIs may apply for State-budget financial support. This applies to doctoral students as well.

Refundable financial support is granted to students under 25 years of age enrolled in all types of degree programmes in all types of HEIs and doctoral students in the form of student credits and loans on the basis of the Act of 17 July 1998 on Student Loans and Credits. Student credits and loans are financed from the financial resources of commercial banks, with the costs of interest partly covered from the state budget.



### 6.3. Academic year

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

### 6.4. Courses

A degree system based on three main cycles has existed in Poland since 1990 when it became possible for university-type higher education institutions to offer three or four-year higher vocational studies leading to a Bachelor's degree (*licencjat, inżynier*), which could be followed by a Master's degree

(*magister* and its equivalents). The title *licencjat* was introduced by legislation in 1992. As institutions are autonomous, these courses have been introduced gradually over the last 10 years, but their development has been further encouraged by the Bologna process. Doctoral studies, provided by all types of higher education institutions as well as units of the Polish Academy of Sciences and research-and-development establishments, constitute the third cycle in this degree system.

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

- first-cycle programmes leading to a Bachelor's degree (*licencjat* or *inżynier*): 3 to 4 years when leading to *licencjat* or 3.5 to 4 years when leading to *inżynier*, depending on the field of study;
- second-cycle programmes leading to a Master's degree (*magister* or an equivalent degree): 1.5 to 2 years, depending on the field of study;
- long-cycle programmes leading to a Master's degree (*magister* or an equivalent degree): 4.5 to 6 years, depending on the field of study.



At present, degree programmes in most fields of study may be offered as first-cycle programmes, second-cycle programmes and/or long-cycle programmes; the exceptions are medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, law and psychology where only long-cycle studies are offered. However, in line with the Bologna Process, all HEIs are required to introduce two-cycle programmes (first-cycle programmes followed by second-cycle programmes) and replace any long-cycle programmes still in place in 101 of all 118 existing fields of study. Programmes in four of the remaining 17 fields, i.e. cosmetology, dentistry techniques, medical rescue and social work, will be provided only as first-cycle programmes. Programmes in 11 fields, including acting, art conservation and restoration, canon law, dentistry, law, medical analysis, medicine, moving image production and photography, pharmacy, psychology and veterinary medicine, will be provided only as long-cycle programmes. Programmes in the fields of theology and directing will be provided either as two-cycle programmes or as long-cycle degree programmes. These arrangements are applicable to degree programmes commencing in the academic year 2007/08.

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

The freedom regarding study plans and curricula, granted to higher education institutions by the legislation, is also linked to the diversification of teaching methods.

There are no general national regulations or guidelines concerning the teaching methods to be used in degree or doctoral programmes. Teaching is organised in the form of lectures, classes, workshops or seminars and/or practical training/placements, depending on the content of the curriculum for a given field or type of a programme. Teachers are free to decide on teaching methods and teaching materials. They use a wide variety of teaching materials, ranging from textbooks to audio-visual materials.

It is often the case that traditional forms of instruction are abandoned, a development which is however not infrequently imposed by the considerable (multiple in some branches) increase in the number of students. The modular study system is now becoming increasingly common.

ECTS has been introduced voluntarily by higher education institutions since the mid- 1990s. Efforts in this area have focused so far on Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes. Public university-type higher education institutions are the most advanced in the introduction of ECTS, which is used by an overwhelming majority in all or more than half of their fields of study. While progress was more limited in public non-university and non-public institutions several years ago, the number of those which introduce ECTS is growing each year. At present, ECTS is used for the transfer of credits by a large number of institutions, and experienced institutions also use it as an accumulation system. In October 2006, the Minister of Science and Higher Education adopted the Regulation on the requirements and procedures for the transfer of student achievements, whereby all institutions will be required to use ECTS for both credit transfer and accumulation in their Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes. The Regulation entered into force on 1 January 2007.

## 6.5. Assessment/qualifications

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

Detailed arrangements concerning student assessment, including the grading scale applied, the frequency of assessment and the requirements for obtaining passes and taking examinations, are laid down in study regulations of individual HEIs.

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

Students who have passed the final examination are awarded a higher education diploma (*dypłom ukończenia studiów*) which confirms the completion of a given type of degree programme and the award of a relevant degree in a given field of study. If the study programme does not provide for the final examination, students are only required to have completed



all courses and practical placements in order to obtain a diploma confirming the award of a relevant degree (the overall mark equals to the average mark for all the courses). The same diplomas and degrees are awarded by university-type and non-university HEIs. Diplomas are issued in accordance with specimens defined in a regulation by the minister responsible for higher education and are officially recognised documents. At the graduate's request, a HEI is obliged to issue a copy of a diploma in one of the following languages: English, French, Spanish, German or Russian. A higher education diploma includes a Diploma Supplement as its integral part, which can be issued in English upon student's request.

The following degrees are awarded to students upon completion of first-cycle (Bachelor's degree) programmes:

- *licencjat* – in the following fields: humanities, natural sciences, mathematics, physics, chemistry, economics, administration, social sciences, medical areas (except nursing and midwifery), physical education and fine arts;
- *licencjat pielęgniarstwa* – in the field of nursing;
- *licencjat położnictwa* – in the field of midwifery;
- *inżynier* – in the fields of engineering and technology (except architecture and urban planning), agriculture, forestry, and in other areas where over 50% of courses are concerned with engineering or technology, agriculture or forestry;
- *inżynier architekt* – in the field of architecture and urban planning.

The following degrees are awarded to students upon completion of second-cycle and long-cycle (Master's degree) programmes (for the fields of study in which second-cycle and/or long-cycle programmes are offered currently and will be offered in the future, see: 6.10.2.):

- *magister* – in the following fields: humanities, natural sciences, mathematics, physics, chemistry, economics, social sciences, law, medical areas (except medicine, dentistry, nursing and midwifery) and physical education;
- *magister pielęgniarstwa* – in the field of nursing;
- *magister położnictwa* – in the field of midwifery;
- *magister sztuki* – in the field of fine arts;
- *magister inżynier* – in the fields of engineering and technology (except architecture and urban planning), agriculture, forestry, and in other areas where over 50% of courses are concerned with engineering or technology, agriculture or forestry;
- *magister inżynier architekt* – in the field of architecture and urban planning;
- *lekarz* – in the field of medicine;
- *lekarz dentysta* – in the field of dentistry;
- *lekarz weterynarii* – in the field of veterinary medicine.

A Bachelor's degree (*licencjat* or *inżynier*) entitles its holder to practise a given profession and provides access to second-cycle (Master's degree) programmes. A Master's degree (*magister* or an equivalent degree) entitles its holder to practise a given profession and provides access to doctoral programmes.

Upon completion of a doctoral programme, students are awarded a certificate (*świadectwo ukończenia studiów doktoranckich*) in accordance with a specimen defined in a regulation by the minister responsible for higher education after consultation with the Central Commission for Academic Title and Degrees. However, as mentioned in the previous sections, enrolment on a doctoral programme is not a precondition for the award of the academic degree of *doktor*. It may be awarded to a person who fulfils the following conditions:

- holds a Master's degree (*magister* or an equivalent degree);
- has successfully passed doctoral examinations, the precise scope of which is determined

by the board of a given organisational unit; such examinations cover the core discipline corresponding to the topic of the doctoral dissertation, an additional discipline and a modern foreign language;

- has submitted and successfully defended a doctoral dissertation (public defence).

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

## 6.6. Teachers

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

According to the Act of 27 July 2005 "Law on Higher Education" the following types of employees in higher education institutions are considered to be academic staff: research and teaching staff, teaching staff, research staff, qualified librarians and qualified scientific documentation and information staff. An academic teacher can be employed at any one time in only one institution as the place of their primary employment. However, it is possible to acquire rector's consent for additional employment. The institution decides if employment is permanent or for fixed duration. The research and teaching staff and teaching staff are employed at the following posts: professor, associate professor, visiting professor, lecturer (*adiunkt*) and assistant.

The research and teaching staff are obliged to teach and educate students, to carry out research and development work, develop their research or artistic activities, and to participate in the performance of the organisational tasks in the institution.

Teaching staff are employed at the following posts: senior lecturer, lecturer, language teacher, or instructor. Persons holding the professional degree of magister or equivalent can be employed at the posts for teaching staff. Teaching staff are obliged to teach and educate students to upgrade their professional skills and participate in organisational tasks in the institution.

The working time of an academic teacher is determined by the scope of his/her teaching, as well as scientific and organisational duties. The types of teaching activities included in the teaching load are defined by the Senate of a higher education institution. In the case of the research-and-teaching staff, the minimum teaching load is between 120 hours per year and the maximum load is 240 hours. The minimum teaching load for teaching staff is 240 hours and the maximum load is 360 hours, and for language teachers, instructors and other similar posts – 300 and 540 respectively.

## 6.7. Quality assurance

The main Polish institutions aiming at the quality assurance in higher education are as follows: The body responsible for external quality assurance is the **State Accreditation Committee (SAC) (Państwowa Komisja Akredytacyjna)**, an independent national agency established in January 2002 on the basis of the amended 1990 Higher Education Act and currently operating on the basis of "Law on Higher Education" 2005. The responsibilities of the SAC are defined

in "Law on Higher Education" 2005. Its organisational and operational arrangements as well as its procedures for quality evaluation are laid down in the statutes and resolutions adopted by the SAC and are published on its website.

The primary responsibilities of the SAC include: 1) assessing the quality of education in fields of study, including compliance with the requirements for the provision of degree programmes; 2) reviewing applications for the establishment of higher education institutions; and 3) reviewing applications of higher education institutions for the authorisation to provide degree programmes in a given field and at a given level of study. The SAC's opinions and evaluations are submitted to the minister responsible for higher education. As part of its responsibilities in the area of quality evaluation, the SAC has adopted and published evaluation criteria and procedures, including guidelines for self-evaluation reports to be drawn up by higher education institutions and rules for conducting site visits in higher education institutions. Degree programmes to be assessed in individual institutions are identified by the SAC on an annual basis. For example, the evaluations in 2005 covered degree programmes in the field of economics in 27 institutions, mechanical engineering in 24 institutions, sociology in 9 institutions, design in 7 institutions, etc. In justified cases, the minister responsible for higher education may also request the SAC to assess the quality of education in a specific institution.

The State Accreditation Committee cooperates with national and international organisations involved in the evaluation of the quality of education and accreditation. The committee was granted 'provisional membership status' by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in 2003. However, because of a subsequent change in ENQA procedures, it had to reapply for membership at the beginning of 2007. The committee is a member of the European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA) and the Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEE Network).

**The General Council for Higher Education (*Rada Główna Szkolnictwa Wyższego*)** is an elective body of the higher education system. The council co-operates with the Minister of Science and Higher Education and with other governmental bodies in the establishment of the state educational policy in the area of higher education:

1. it issues opinions and proposes motions in all matters related to the higher education and science
2. it issues opinions on legal regulations
3. it issues opinions on the proposal of the state budget related to the higher education system and on the rules of distributing state subsidy to the higher education institutions
4. it issues opinions on the proposals of statutes for higher education institutions.

It is responsible for the definition of fields of study and the development of standards in education. These standards are implemented in accordance with a separate regulation by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

**The Conference of Rectors of the Academic Higher Education Schools (*Konferencja Rektorów Akademickich Szkół Polskich – KRASP*)** – is in charge of the so called peer accreditation in Poland. This type of accreditation is voluntary and is carried out by 8 accreditation commissions established by rectors of different types of HEIs involved in the KRASP activities. The 8 commissions are supervised by the KRASP Accreditation Commission which was established in June 2001. Accreditation granted by KRASP commissions is considered as a marker of a high quality of teaching in a given institution/faculty.

## 6.8. Statistics

Table 1. Higher education institutions by type and the number of students in the academic year 2006/07\*)

Higher education institutions by type	Institutions	Students in 2007
Universities	18	550.5
Technical universities	22	318.9
Agricultural schools	8	92.0
Schools of economics	95	406.2
Teacher education schools	17	117.4
Medical academies	9	53.1
Maritime schools	2	10.5
Academies of physical education	6	29.0
Schools of arts	21	14.9
Schools of theology	14	10.7
Higher vocational schools	193	244.5
Other	36	80.0
Total	441	1927.7

\*) Figures include non-public higher education institutions.

# 7

# Continuing education and training for adults

## 7.1. Specific legislative framework

„Adult education“ and „continuing education“ are often used interchangeably. The term „continuing education“ is defined as „education in schools for adults as well as the development of general knowledge, vocational skills formation and ability development in out-of-school forms by persons who have graduated from compulsory education“.

The following legal regulations define main tasks of continuing education:

- **The Education System Act of September 7, 1991**, with subsequent amendments, together with executive regulations, defines that education, training and in-service training can be provided on daily, evening, extra-mural, distance-learning, out-of-school basis or in any other system combining any of the above forms. These tasks are carried out by public and non-public adult schools, centres for continuing education, practical training centres, and other institutions of out-of-school education run by, among others, associations and foundations or folk universities. The Education System Act (amended in 1998) created a possibility for the Ministries of Internal Affairs and Administration, of Justice and of National Defence to run particular kinds of schools. However, these schools are a marginal phenomenon among schools for adults. The important change in functioning of adult schools was introduced by the Act of 21 November 2001 „Regulations introducing the reform of school system“ which introduced the new types of post-gymnasium schools.
- **The amended version of the Education System Act (of June 2003)** introduced vital changes to adult education in Poland. In this legislation a rule was introduced which separated the continuing education centres (CKU) and practical education centres (CKP) from schools, as they were institutions with different than schools statutory aims. This new position of CKUs and CKPs allows them to integrate actions undertaken by various continuing education institutions and to create regional or national networks of continuing education institutions. In the amended Act changes concerning pedagogical supervision and the system of external exams have been introduced. The act also gives basis for support to education by associations, foundations and other non-government organisations in the area of education. Local authorities can delegate tasks related to education to these organisations. This change regulates the rules related to financing of non-public organisers of continuing education from the state budget. This is of particular importance in terms of support to adult education.
- **The Act on Promotion of Employment and Institutions of the Labour Market of 20 April 2004** includes legal regulations concerning institutions of the labour market, e.g. public employment services, training institutions, social dialogue institutions, institutions of local partnership. According to the act, public and non-public bodies offering education in out-of-school forms and registered as training institutions with the regional authorities, are considered to be institutions eligible to offer training to the unemployed. Such registration is open, among others, to institutions with accreditation from the regional educational superintendents. Public employment services co-ordinate activities in the area of continuing education and training of the unemployed and job seeking persons. The act is aiming at the increase of professional activity among the unemployed and at the involvement of more



participants in the programmes focused on the promotion of employment. It is also to enhance the importance of social dialogue and local partnership institutions. According to the introduced changes, institutions of the labour market and research institutions can receive funding from the central budget or from the Labour Fund for implementation of activities related to the development of services or instruments of the labour market and social integration. The state's tasks related to tackling the unemployment problem and promoting professional activity are implemented on the basis of the Action Plan towards Employment recently approved by the Polish government (the Council of Ministers).

- **The Act „Law on Higher Education” of 27 July 2005** includes legal regulations regarding post-graduate studies and training courses offered to adults by higher education institutions.

The detailed rules and conditions for improvement of vocational qualifications and of general education of adults are included in the regulations by the Council of Ministers and by the ministers of education and of labour.

## 7.2. Administration and management

The Minister of National Education is responsible for co-ordination in the field of adult education and in particular through the activities of the Department of Vocational and Continuing Education. This department is responsible for the following activities in the field of adult education: establishment and running of public continuing education centres, public practical training centres and in-service training centres, as well as for the definition of principles underlying the acquisition, complementing and improvement of vocational qualifications on the out-of-school basis, the preparation of admission rules for distance education and for postgraduate studies in public and non-public schools of higher education, co-operation with central and local administration and social partners in the creation of continuing education policy. Moreover, the Department is responsible for the co-ordination of core curriculum development for general and specialised vocational training, for evaluation of the continuing education system and for upgrading of the accreditation system for education centres working in the out-of-school system.

The Minister of National Education co-operates with the ministers responsible for economy, labour, culture and health in the area of vocational and continuing education.

The *powiat* (district) authorities are responsible for running of post-gymnasium schools

including those for adults, continuing and practical education centres and other non-school institutions.

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

All public schools for adults are organised and run by territorial self-government units. Non-public schools for adults are organised and run by individual persons or by bodies such as associations, social and religious organisations, etc.

### 7.3. Funding

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

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

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

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

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

- State budget
- Employers
- Own income of students
- Structural funds

According to research conducted by the Ministry of National Education in 2005 the majority of training courses are financed from the students' own funds. 1/3 of funds come from European Social Fund and employers contribute the lowest share. Research carried out by the Management Observatory in 2005 shows that around 50% of adults are prepared to contribute towards the costs of their own training.

The Act on Promotion of Employment and Institutions of the Labour Market of 2004 defines principles and procedures of financing the unemployed and those threatened with unemployment. Training and re-training leading to the increase of chances to find employment, improvement of vocational qualifications or to the increase of professional activity can be financed from the Labour Fund (starting 2004 this fund is based on employers' contributions only). The *powiat* labour offices are responsible for offering training schemes and other forms of professional activity to the unemployed and other job seeking persons.

## 7.4. Human resources

In the school year 2006/2007 there were 6519.27 full and part time teachers (in full time equivalents) employed in all schools for adults.

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

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

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

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

## 7.5. Organisation

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

Vocational training and general education for adults in out-of-school forms can be organised by public or non-public education institutions.

### 7.5.1. Types of training institutions

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

Postgraduate studies, considered to be a form of continuing education, are organised by public or non-public higher education institutions, research units and by units of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

#### 7.5.1.1. School forms

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

In the school year 2006/07 in 3666 schools for adults (all types) there were nearly 273.9 thousand students enrolled. The number of general upper secondary schools for adults



is increasing, while the number of basic vocational and upper secondary vocational schools for adults is going down. The primary schools for adults are very rare, there are only 8 of them in Poland.

### 7.5.1.2. Out-of-school forms

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

- public education institutions;
- non-public education institutions.

Continuing and practical education centres (CKU, CKP) are the most common public continuing education institutions.

Non-public education institutions can be organised by:

- Social organisations and associations
- Religious organisations
- Individuals.

At the end of December 2005 there were 243 institutions with accreditation offering continuing education in out-of school forms. Training institutions which direct their offer to the unemployed and job seeking persons are registered in regional Labour Offices. At the end of 2005 4022 institutions were registered of which 1/3 were also registered by the local self-government authorities as it is required for accreditation of such institutions.

Continuing education is also organised by the employers in their companies or in relevant institutions.

According to the Act on Promotion of Employment and Institutions of the Labour Market of 20 April 2004 the *powiat* (district) authorities (*starosta*) organise and fund (from the Labour Fund) education for the unemployed. This training is organised by training institutions which are considered to be institutions of the labour market. Organisation of such training is considered to be one of the most important services on the labour market offered by public employment institutions and employment agencies. Also the unemployed themselves can organise such training.

### 7.5.2. Admission requirements

Everybody who is over 18 years of age can attend schools for adults. An 18-year old person can also enter for an extra-mural exam in all subjects included in curricula of all types of schools for adults.





In out-of-school forms the admission requirements are defined by the education providers. They usually depend on the aims of training.

The unemployed are directed by labour offices for a course on the basis of criteria agreed by the training institution and the employer (if a course is provided on employer's direct order). Qualifications required by the employer should be taken into consideration while preparing the training programme. The level of education completed, psychological and physical dispositions, work experience and some additional skills are, among others, taken into account as main admission requirements. While directing staff to training, the rule of equal opportunity should be respected – this applies to the employee's gender, age, disability, political views and religion. Training can also take place on the unemployed person's request.

At the unemployed person's suggestion, or with his/her approval, the district labour office can send him/her to a job practice. This applies to the unemployed in a particular situation, e.g. persons under the age of 25, with no qualifications, or unemployed for a long period of time. This period of special training should not exceed 12 months and it is held on the basis of the contract signed by the district labour office and the employer. During this period the unemployed receives a scholarship.

### 7.5.3. Objectives of the programmes

Continuing education aims at the acquisition and extension of general knowledge, upgrading of vocational skills and qualifications needed for a given occupation, job or post. Vocational training aims at the adjustment of the knowledge and skills to developing technologies and work organisation, as well as to job changes.

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

## 7.5.4. Main principles of the organisation of time

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

## 7.5.5. Curriculum

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

Curricula for out-of-school forms of training are designed by the training institutions.

## 7.6. Assessment, accreditation, recognition

In schools for adults, as it is the case in schools for children and youth, there are two evaluation systems implemented: internal and external. The internal students assessment system includes grades from 1 to 6 (1 – insufficient to 6 – excellent). In schools for adults students are promoted to higher level after every completed semester of study. A student graduates from the school (primary, lower secondary or upper secondary) if at the end of the last semester he/she has received marks higher than insufficient for all the obligatory subjects. Moreover, in order to graduate from a primary school the student has to take a test, and to graduate from a lower secondary school he/she has to take an examination. The test/ examination results have no influence on the student's graduation. Both the test and examination are external and obligatory, based on the central examination standards for this particular level and on the standardised tools. The test/ examination results can be compared at the central level.

Assessment and promotion in extra-mural type of school is based on the examination system. This system includes exams in all the obligatory subjects defined in the school teaching programme. In basic vocational and upper secondary vocational schools students are obliged to take vocational exams as well. The organisation of semester exams in extra-mural schools is defined in the school statutes.

Vocational exam is aiming at the assessment of skills and knowledge related to a given vocation and defined in the examination standards. This exam is obligatory for all the graduates of post-gymnasium schools: basic vocational schools, upper secondary technical schools, supplementary upper secondary technical schools and post-secondary schools. The examination content, as well as the conditions and requirements for taking and passing of this exam, are defined by the regional commissions in cooperation with the Central Examination Commission and published in an information brochure.

The completion of public schools for adults is a chance to obtain a certificate or a state diploma. Secondary general and vocational schools give a chance to obtain a *Matura* certificate and to continue education at a higher education institution. Primary or post-primary school leaving certificates can also be obtained on the basis of extramural examinations (with the exception of medical branch) which are carried out by the State Examination Commissions (PKE) established by the regional educational superintendents (*kurator*). Specimen certificates and other school related documents are defined by the Minister of National Education in a separate regulation.



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

In 2005 further changes to legislation concerning the qualification exams for apprentice and master vocational exams were introduced together with amendments to the rules related to so-called vocational exams (confirming vocational qualifications).

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

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

## 7.7. Statistics

Table 1. Number of schools for adults, 2006/07

Type of school	
Primary school	8
Gymnasium	137
General upper secondary school	2 117
Basic vocational school	113
Specialised upper secondary school	103
Upper secondary technical school	1 188

Table 2. Number of students in schools for adults (in thousands), 2006/07

Type of school	
Primary school	0.1
Gymnasium	12.7
General upper secondary school	171.7
Basic vocational school	7.3
Specialised upper secondary school	10.5
Upper secondary technical school	71.6

# EURYDICE

## the information network on education in Europe

EURYDICE is an institutional network for gathering, monitoring, processing and circulating reliable and readily comparable information on education systems and policies throughout Europe. The Network focuses primarily on the way education in Europe is structured and organised at all levels. Its publications output may be broadly divided into descriptions of national education systems, comparative studies devoted to specific topics, and indicators and statistics.

EURYDICE works mainly for those involved in educational policy-making nationally and in the European Union institutions, as well as at regional and local levels. However, its publications may be consulted by anyone and are available both in print and over the Internet.

First launched by the European Community in 1980, the EURYDICE Network consists of a European Unit set up by the European Commission in Brussels and National Units established by education ministries in all countries taking part in the Lifelong Learning Programme, the EU education action programme. The Network boosts European cooperation in education by developing exchanges of information about systems and policies and producing studies on issues common to education systems.

EURYDICE is a dynamic interdependent Network to whose work all Units contribute. The European Unit coordinates the activity of the Network, drafts and distributes most of its publications, and designs and administers EURYDICE databases and the central website. National Units provide and are involved in processing the data on which this activity relies and ensure that the output of the Network reaches target groups within their countries. In most countries, Units are situated within the education ministry. In a few, however, they are located in library resource centres, or bodies for administration and research.

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