



THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN POLAND

WARSAW 2006



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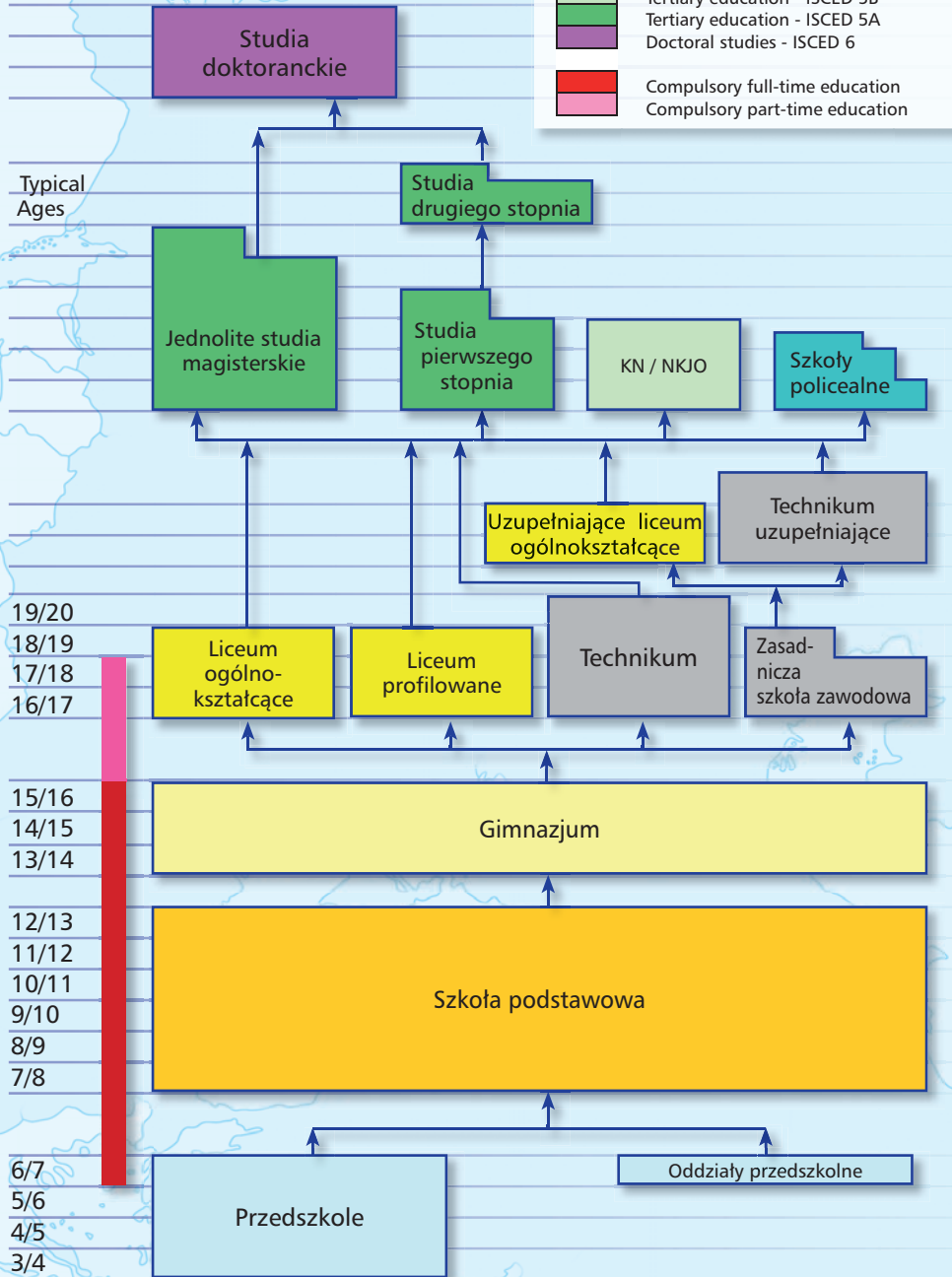
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Organisation of the education system in Poland







1. Responsibilities and administration

1.1. Background

Poland is situated in the centre of Europe and covers 312 685 square kilometres. In the year 2004 Poland had a population of 38.18 million, 61.5% of whom lived in 886 towns and urban areas and 38.5% in rural ones. The country is divided into 16 voivodships (provinces), 379 districts (*powiaty*) and 2478 local government communes (*gminy*) (30 June 2004).

The birth-rate is decreasing, in 2004 it equalled -0.2‰.

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 *Senat*. Members of the *Sejm* and the *Senat* 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 35.8 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 – 140 000, Jehovah witnesses – 126 000 and Old Catholic – 50 000).

In 2004 the annual increase of the Polish GDP amounted to 5.4%.

In 2004 the rate of unemployment was 19.1%.

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):

- The Act of 12 September 1990 on Schools of Higher Education (with further amendments)
- The Act of 14 March 2003 on Academic Degrees and Title and on Degrees and Title in the Area of Art
- The Act of 26 June 1997 on Higher Vocational Schools (with further amendments)
- The Act of 17 July 1998 on Loans and Credits for Students (with further amendments)

The 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 is operational starting the academic year 2005/06.

The basic principles of the Polish 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 contained in universal, international legislation and conventions.

In particular, this system should provide, among other things, a fulfilment of the right of each citizen in the Republic of Poland to learn and the right of children and

young people to be educated and cared for; support provided by schools to back up the educational role of the family; the possibility for various entities to establish and run schools and institutions; the adjustment of the contents, methods and organisation of education to pupils' psycho-physical abilities, and the possibility to avail oneself of psychological assistance and of special forms of didactic work; the possibility for disabled and maladjusted children and young people to learn at all types of schools and general access to secondary schools.

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

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

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 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 for education is obliged to consult Teachers' Unions on the most important decisions, and in certain cases he must have their approval.

The ministry of education is responsible for nearly the whole system of education. Vocational schools, which in the past were run by other ministries, are now the responsibility of the ministry of 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 gymnasias 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 education, deputy-ministers and the director general. Deputy-ministers are responsible for such matters as e.g. school system, higher education, scientific research, and international co-operation.

The minister of 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, additionally, in relation to vocational education, core curricula for particular specialisations, as well as general vocational education in particular vocations;
3. Conditions and procedures for the approval of curricula and textbooks for the school use; the recommendation on teaching aids as well as lists of those curricula, textbooks and aids;
4. Rules for assessing and promoting pupils and for conducting tests and examinations;
5. Requirement standards being the basis for tests and examinations;
6. The way of keeping records concerning the teaching process and educational activities, as well as types of these records;
7. Rules and conditions for implementing innovations and experiments by schools or other institutions;
8. Organisation of the school year;
9. Rules for subject competitions and national competitions;
10. Procedures for offering and organisation of psychological and pedagogical support in schools;
11. Rules and procedures for organising tourism by schools.

Regional level

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

The education superintendent (*kurator*) is the chief educational body at regional level. He is responsible for general administration of education in a voivodship. He is appointed by the head of province, the voivode, so he is a regional admini-

stration official supervised by the voivode (a voivode is subordinated to the prime minister). The education superintendent implements the policy of the minister of education.

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

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

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

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

District level

District level in Poland is the level of *powiat* (an intermediate administrative unit between the voivodship and the commune, established on the force of the Act on the introduction of the three-tier administrative division of the country of 24 July 1998). There are 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*). In 2004 there were 2 478, of which most were rural ones.

Communes exercise administrative control over pre-school institutions, primary schools and lower secondary schools called gymnasium (*gimnazjum*), established in 1999/2000. Pedagogical supervision is excluded from their 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 to the outside;
- takes care of pupils and provides background for their harmonious psychological and physical development through various pro-health activities;
- brings into life the resolutions of the school council or the teachers' council (undertaken in accordance with their competencies);
- has financial means at his/her disposal and is responsible for their proper use;
- co-operates with higher schools and teacher training institutions in the field of organising teacher pedagogical training.

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

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

1.4. Inspection, supervision and guidance

Administrative and pedagogical supervision have become separated.

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

Upon the implementation of the 1991 Act, the Ministry of Education declared that "... supervisory and disciplinary aspects of pedagogical supervision have been rejected in favour of the evaluation (diagnosis) of educational achievements...". The measurement of educational achievements and the partial assessment of school performance are carried out now by the Central Examination Commission and eight Regional Examination Commissions. The external examinations at the end of the primary school and the 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 about 500 centres for guidance and counselling in Poland. They are intended mostly for primary and lower secondary school pupils, with the aim of psychological assistance. The other field of activity of these centres is focused on counselling and guidance when a child chooses upper secondary school (it is intended for those who are either hesitant or have poor results at the gymnasium).

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

1.5. Financing

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

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

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

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

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

1.6. Advisory and consultative bodies

Teachers' Unions have a considerable role in shaping current educational policy. The minister of 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 work does not occur on a large scale. However, the legislative framework concedes significant rights to parents and pupils as members of the school councils – they have the same rights as teachers – and all these three groups have equal representations (one-third each) 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 social groups – mostly parents and teachers.

All these schools may have their own curricula, which are approved by the minister of education. They are financed by fees received from parents. Funds can also come from private enterprises and foundations. 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 personalised teaching programmes, by a wider range of curriculum choice and by a higher standard of foreign language teaching.

In the 2004/2005 school year, there were 723 non-public primary schools (180 private, 71 church and 472 civic), 599 non-public lower secondary schools (182 private, 117 church and 300 civic), 447 non-public general upper secondary schools (173 private, 102 church and 172 civic), and 340 non-public vocational secondary and basic vocational schools – 2042 non-public schools altogether.

Non-public primary school pupils make up 1.7% of the total number of pupils attending primary schools, pupils in non-public lower secondary schools - 2.3%, non-public general upper secondary school pupils - about 3.8% and non-public vocational secondary and basic vocational school pupils - 1.8%.



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 schooling 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 2004/05 the attendance rate for children aged 3 to 5 (0 grade has become obligatory for 6-year olds) amounted to 38.2%.

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 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.

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

There are 23 sets of curricula (prepared on the basis of the core curriculum and approved by the Minister of National Education and Sport) for pre-school education. Kindergartens and pre-school classes attached to primary schools are obliged to follow one of these curricula. On the force of the Regulation by the Minister of National Education of 21 September 2000 amending the regulation on the rules of the approval of curricula and textbooks and the recommendation of teaching aids, pre-primary teachers can write so-called "author's curricula", always based on the national core curriculum.

Methods

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

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 was so called „balance-sheet of the child aged 6" which was connected with the recruitment to primary schools. This form of evaluation concerned only health state and physical development of a child. It aimed at the selection of pupils that ought to be directed to special schools.

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

2.3. Teachers

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

The system of pre-primary teacher training is constantly changing. At present, the forms of training offered are: three-year teacher training colleges, teacher higher

education schools (pedagogical academies), and teacher education faculties at universities.

Out of the total number of teachers working in pre-primary schools, as few as 4.3% have completed only secondary education. Teachers with a Master's degree constitute 53.6% of pre-school teaching staff.

The pre-school teachers are mostly female - women make up 99.3% 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, 2004/2005

Age of children	Population	Children in pre-school institutions	% of total population of children
3 - 6 years	1 511 329	811 740	53.7
3 - 5 years	1 119 574	427 570	38.2
6 years	391 755	384 170	98.1

Table 2. Pre-primary education institutions, 2004/2005

	Pre-school institutions	Kindergartens	Pre-school classes attached to primary schools
Total	17 299	7 746	9 553
Towns	6 824	5 151	1 673
Rural areas	10 475	2 595	7 880



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.

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 education in a separate regulation. The ministry issues the calendar for the school year on an annual basis, specifying the dates of the start and the end of the school year and school holidays. The school year is divided into two semesters: (1) from 1 September, until the end of January; (2) from 1 February, until the end of school year.

Classes are organised:

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

Principal teaching materials used are textbooks, audio-visual aids, 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 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 1 is meant to provide a smooth transition from pre-primary to school education. Educational activities are conducted according to a flexible timetable prepared by the teacher, in which the duration of lessons and breaks is influenced by the pupils' activity.

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

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

Stage 1 (grades 1-3, primary school)		
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

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

Stage 2 of the 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.

Stage 2 (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	9 + 3
11.	Lessons with Class Tutor	3
Total		72
Religion /Ethics		6
Hours left to the school head's discretion		9
Total		87

*These subjects can be combined in one art subject

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

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

28 hours in grades 4 to 6.

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

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

3.A.3. Assessment/certification /guidance

Pupils are assessed separately in each subject. The evaluation depends entirely on the teacher. Only final marks per semester and at the end of the school year have to be approved by 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.

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

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

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

mentioned in the primary school leaving certificate.)

Institutions of special assistance for pupils (i.e. psychological and vocational counselling centres) perform important diagnostic and therapeutic functions. 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 newly introduced teacher training standards (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 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*).

In 2002/03 almost 90.2% of 232 193 primary school teachers had completed higher education (81.1% - held a Master's degree), and 2.9% of teachers had only completed secondary education. Many primary school teachers who have completed higher education are graduates of universities or teacher higher education schools (pedagogical academies).

The legal act defining the professional status and conditions of service of teachers employed in the school education sector is the Act of the 26th of January 1982 – The Teachers' Charter (with further amendments 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 new Teachers' Charter (amendments of 18 February 2000 and 24 August 2001) established new rules for the remuneration of teachers as well as a new mechanism for the State to guarantee the availability of funds for their salaries. The average salaries for teachers classified in individual categories are calculated on the basis of the average salary of the trainee teacher, fixed at a level of 82% of the average state sector salary. This is a fixed mechanism for the annual revaluation and rise of teachers' salaries, identical to that for other parts of the public sector.

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

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

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

a given school.

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

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, 2004/05

Type of school	Schools	Pupils
Primary school	14765	2723661

Table 2. Enrolment rates, 2004/05

Type of school	Age group	% of youth population	
		Gross	Net
Primary school	7-12	99.9	98.4

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

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

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

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

The main objectives are formulated as follows:

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

3.B.1. Organisation of the school

See Section 3.A.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 3 (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	9 + 3**
14.	Lessons with Class Tutor	3
Total		82
Religion /Ethics		6
Hours left to the school head's discretion		6
Total		94

* - can be taught as one art subject

** - the fourth hour of PE in a week has become obligatory starting September 2005

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

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

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

3.B.3. Assessment/certification /guidance

Internal evaluation is the same as that in primary education (see Section 3 A.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 will receive certificates in a standardised form.

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

3.B.4. Teachers

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

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

In 2002/03 almost 97.1% of lower secondary school teachers had completed higher education (88.9% held a Master’s degree), and 1.5% of teachers had only completed 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, 2004/05

Type of school	Schools	Pupils
Gymnasium	6980	1648667

Table 2. Enrolment rates, 2004/05

Type of school	Age group	% of youth population	
		Gross	Net
Gymnasium	13-15	101.2	95.8



4. Post-compulsory education

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

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

- a) *liceum ogólnokształcące* (3-year general secondary school) offering 3 years of full-time general upper secondary education for students aged 16 to 19. It 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 upper secondary school which opens admissions to new pupils (starting 1 September 2002 these schools have become post-gymnasium schools).

Schools with open admissions define the following:

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

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

The admission to the 2/3-year basic vocational school (*zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa*) is based on successful completion of the 3-year gymnasium, 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 secondary school is as follows:

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

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

The number of teaching hours in the 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 3 hours left to the school head's discretion, which gives a total of 100 hours of classes a week in a three-year cycle.

The 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 videos).

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

4.A.3. Assessment/certification/ guidance

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

The principles of internal evaluation are the same as those at primary schools (see Section 3.A.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*] and at the end of the 4-year *technikum*. It consists of the written part, prepared 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 will be 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. The highest qualifications are held (school year 2002/03) by general secondary school teachers – 98.7% of those (full-time) teachers have completed higher education. In vocational schools, this percentage is lower, 95.7% in technical and vocational secondary schools and 78% in basic vocational schools.

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, 2004/05

Type of school	Schools	Pupils
General upper secondary schools	2553	747716
Specialised upper secondary schools	1655	234921

Table 2. Enrolment rates, 2004/05

Type of school	Age groups	% of youth population	
		Gross	Net
General upper secondary schools	16-18	52.0	42.3

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 for additional subject teaching envisaged in the curriculum	50
Total	129

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

The number of teaching hours in the 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
Total	63

Moreover, there are 4 non-compulsory hours of religion or ethics and 3 hours left

to the school head's discretion, which gives a total of 70 hours of classes a week in a two-year cycle.

The 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 videos).

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

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

Starting 2004 the new external vocational examination (*egzamin zawodowy*) is replacing gradually 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 is taking 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 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, 2004/05

Type of school	Schools	Pupils
Technical and vocational upper secondary schools*	3956	580626
Basic vocational schools	1845	239239

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

Table 2. Enrolment rates, 2004/05

Type of school	Age groups	% of youth population	
		Gross	Net
Technical and vocational upper secondary schools*	16-18	54.1	35.2
Basic vocational schools	16-18	14.2	12.6

* This category also includes specialised upper secondary schools (*licea profilowane*) and 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 2004/05 there were 3476 post-secondary schools (public and non-public) in Poland, attended by 291223 students.

4.C.1. Curriculum

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

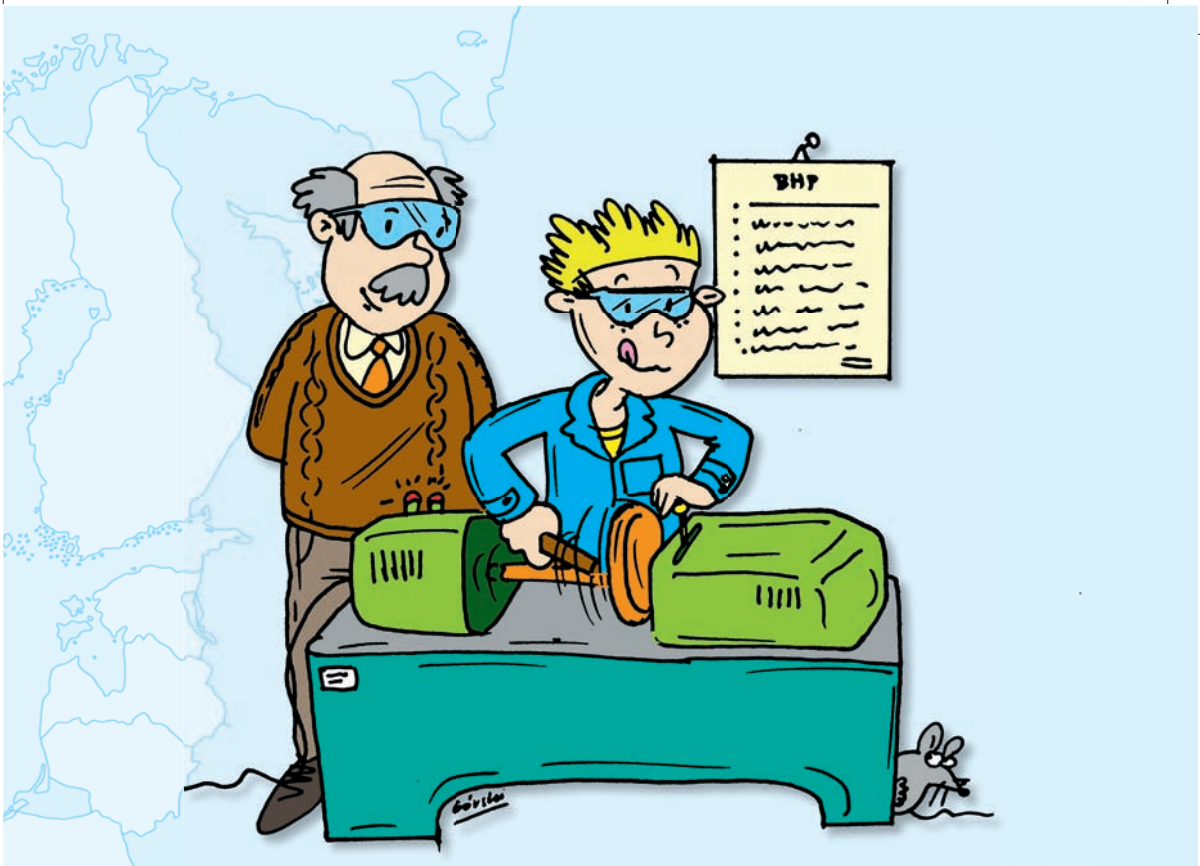
4.C.2. Assessment/certification/ guidance

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 envisaged for the years 2006-2008. 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 assure suitable conditions for such training, at the Continuing Education Centre, Practical Training Centre, at a school farm, school workshop, school lab or at an individual farm. The training is implemented on the basis of a contract concluded between the employer and a particular training institution.

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

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

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

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

In 2002 a requirement of in-service training was imposed on all workers below the age of 18, which is due to the Polish Constitution regulation on compulsory 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, Practical Training Centres and Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP), which enable people with learning difficulties to obtain vocational qualifications. Continuing Education Centres and Practical Training Centres are public out-of-school educational institutions.

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

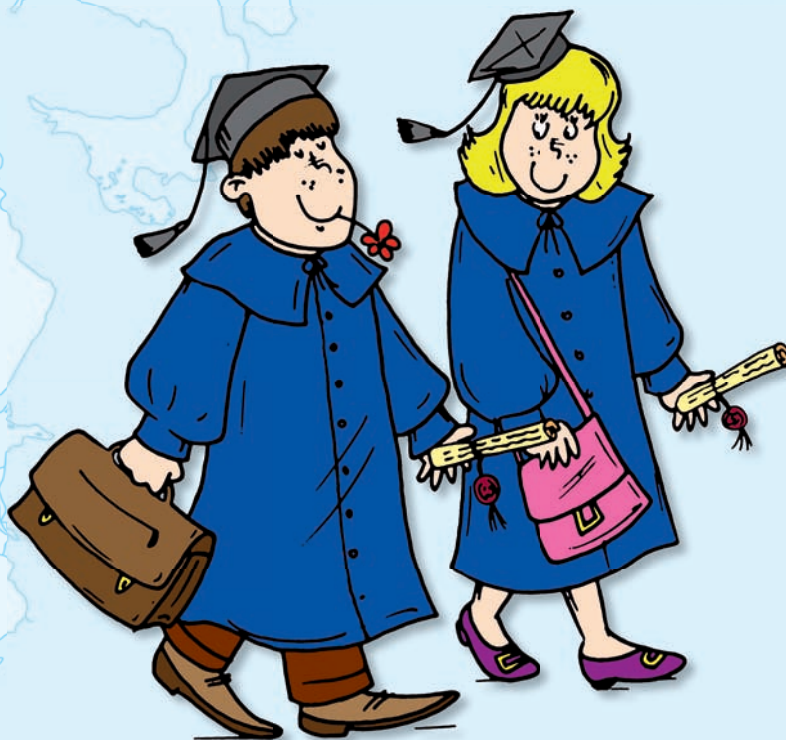
There is no data available regarding graduates of education and training in alternance in school and out-of-school forms or on school drop-out, future careers of such graduates, their further training and professional life.

In the school year 2002/03 53349 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:	67430
General subjects	36231
General vocational subjects	6466
Theoretical vocational subjects	16053
Practical vocational subjects	8680
Instructors of practical training	1854*

* In full time equivalents



6. Tertiary education

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

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

The latter are as follows: universities (*uniwersytet*), technical universities (*politechnika*), agricultural schools (*akademia rolnicza*), schools of economics (*akademia ekonomiczna*), pedagogical academies (*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.

Graduates from higher vocational schools or from the first cycle of university-

type studies, if they wish to obtain a Master's degree or its equivalent, can undertake **supplementary Master-degree studies** of 2-2.5 years' duration.

In the Polish system of higher education, for these Master's degree holders who wish to obtain a Ph.D., there is a possibility to pursue doctoral studies of 3 to 4 years' duration.

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

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 is operational starting the academic year 2005/06.

6.1. Admission

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

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

Enrolment is based on results of the new *Matura* examination (introduced in May 2005). This means that HEIs are not able to organise entrance exams in subjects taken by candidates during their maturity exam. The HEIs are however allowed to define the results of the *Matura* exam required for entry to their institution. If the number of candidates exceeds the number of available places, the senats of HEIs have a right to set additional criteria, e.g. requirements concerning marks in the given or related subject, marks in a given subject indicated on the school leaving certificate or results of so-called predispositions checking tests.

The holders of old type *Matura* certificates are subject to an old type admission procedure such as an entrance examination or a qualifying interview.

6.2. Fees

The Constitution of the Republic of Poland guarantees that higher education is free of charge in public sector institutions, full-time day courses. However, there are exceptions to this rule (The Act of 12 September 1990 on Schools of Higher Education): (1) Charging fees is permitted in the case of courses that are repeated by a student as a result of his/her unsatisfactory achievements; (2) Students applying for admission have to pay for the entrance examinations (the amount is

fixed by an institution, but it cannot exceed the maximum defined by the minister responsible for higher education).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.3. Academic year

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

6.4. Courses

Vocational studies last at least 6 semesters, i.e. three years. Vocational studies may be provided as full-time, extramural or evening studies. At present, a frequently adopted arrangement involves the introduction of a system based on study plans implemented in parallel: 3-year studies leading to the vocational title of *licencjat*, 4-year vocational studies leading to the title of *inżynier* and 5-year uniform Master-degree studies leading to the title of *magister* or its equivalent. Uniform Master degree courses last longer in some branches (or specialisations), e.g. 6 years in medical sciences.

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. At present they are already quite popular. **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.

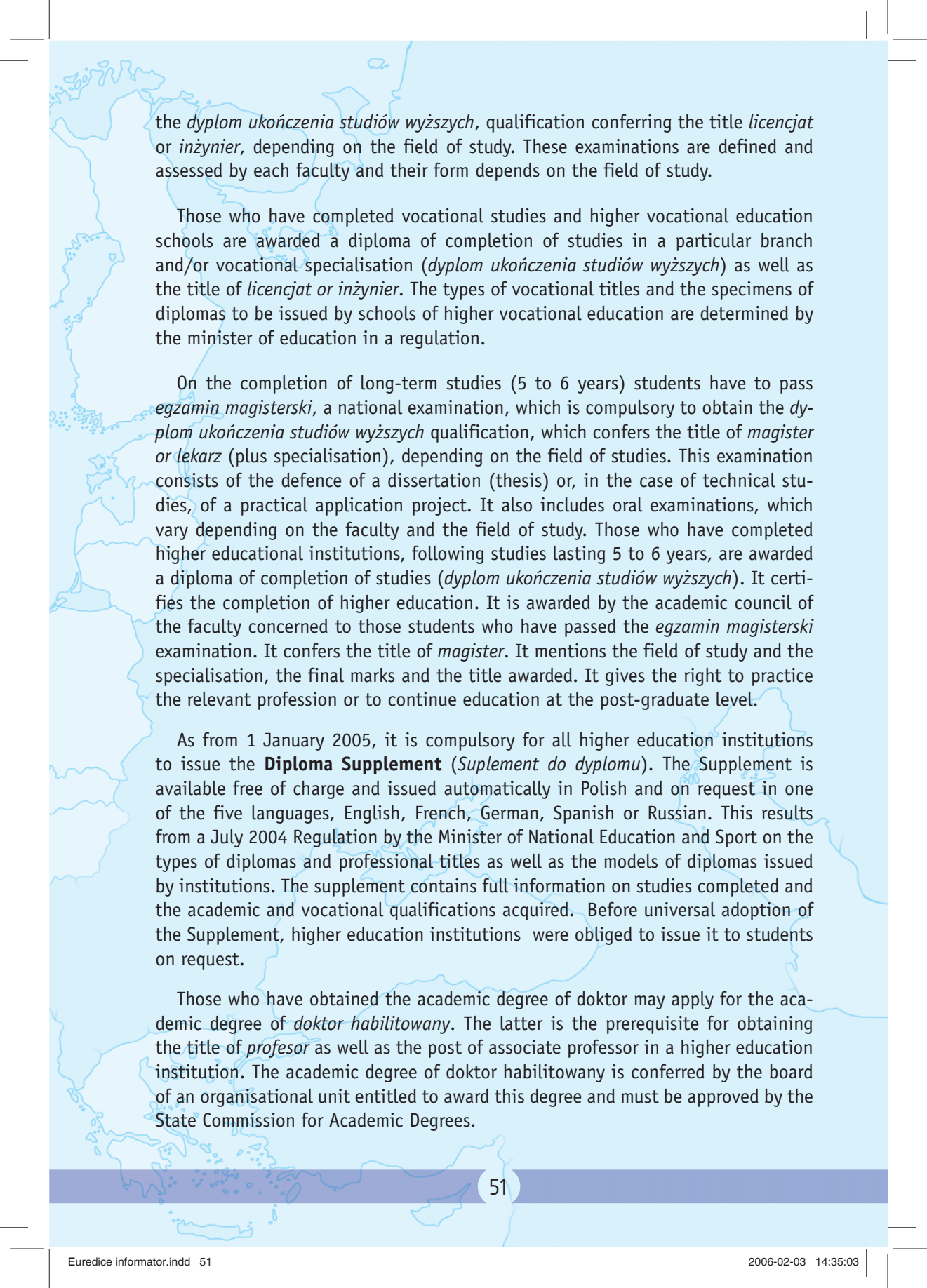
Many branches of study are now introducing subjects which are in particular demand on the labour market (these including, for example, computer science, marketing, fundamentals of ecology, psychology and sociology of advertising).

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

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), although not mandatory or underpinned by legislation, is gradually being introduced. Its implementation began under the TEMPUS PHARE programme and is continued under the Socrates programme (Erasmus). So far, 166 higher education institutions have introduced ECTS at some of their faculties (including the projects supported in the academic year 2004/05).

6.5. Assessment/qualifications

On the completion of short-term studies (3 or 4 years), students have to pass *egzamin dyplomowy*, a national examination, which is compulsory for obtaining



the *dyplom ukończenia studiów wyższych*, qualification conferring the title *licencjat* or *inżynier*, depending on the field of study. These examinations are defined and assessed by each faculty and their form depends on the field of study.

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

On the completion of long-term studies (5 to 6 years) students have to pass *egzamin magisterski*, a national examination, which is compulsory to obtain the *dyplom ukończenia studiów wyższych* qualification, which confers the title of *magister* or *lekarz* (plus specialisation), depending on the field of studies. This examination consists of the defence of a dissertation (thesis) or, in the case of technical studies, of a practical application project. It also includes oral examinations, which vary depending on the faculty and the field of study. Those who have completed higher educational institutions, following studies lasting 5 to 6 years, are awarded a diploma of completion of studies (*dyplom ukończenia studiów wyższych*). It certifies the completion of higher education. It is awarded by the academic council of the faculty concerned to those students who have passed the *egzamin magisterski* examination. It confers the title of *magister*. It mentions the field of study and the specialisation, the final marks and the title awarded. It gives the right to practice the relevant profession or to continue education at the post-graduate level.

As from 1 January 2005, it is compulsory for all higher education institutions to issue the **Diploma Supplement** (*Suplement do dyplomu*). The Supplement is available free of charge and issued automatically in Polish and on request in one of the five languages, English, French, German, Spanish or Russian. This results from a July 2004 Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport on the types of diplomas and professional titles as well as the models of diplomas issued by institutions. The supplement contains full information on studies completed and the academic and vocational qualifications acquired. Before universal adoption of the Supplement, higher education institutions were obliged to issue it to students on request.

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

6.6. Teachers

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

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

6.7. Quality assurance

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

The State Accreditation Commission (*Państwowa Komisja Akredytacyjna*), established in January 2002 on the basis of the September 1990 Act on Schools of Higher Education, is the legal higher education body responsible for the improvement of teaching quality. Its activities are related to all the higher education institutions, both vocational and university-type.

The Commission presents opinions and motions to the minister related to the:

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

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

The General Council for Higher Education (*Rada Główna Szkolnictwa Wyższego*) is an elective body of the higher education system. The council co-operates with the minister 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 minister responsible for higher education.

The Conference of Rectors of the Academic Higher Education Schools (*Konferencja Rektorów Akademickich Szkół Polskich – KRASP*) - is in charge of 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 2004/05)*

Higher education institutions by type	Institutions	Students in '000
Universities	17	554.9
Technical universities	22	34.2
Agricultural schools	9	107.6
Schools of economics	93	387.9
Teacher education schools	17	133.8
Medical academies	9	44.5
Maritime schools	2	12.1
Academies of physical education	6	27.0
Schools of arts	22	15.1
Schools of theology	14	10.4
Higher vocational schools	181	207.1
Other	37	85.5
Total	427	1926.1

* Figures include non-state 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 dialog 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 dialog 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 approved by the Polish government (the Council of Ministers).

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.

A document **“Strategy on the Development of Continuing Education until 2010”** was adopted by the Polish government on the 8th of July 2003. It defines 6 priority areas for the development of continuing education as well as presents the possibilities of providing financial support to the adopted strategy. The strategy aims at the definition of main goals for the development of continuing education in the light of the concept of lifelong learning and in the context of the idea of building the knowledge society. This means that any developments in the area of continuing education will be co-ordinated and monitored in the future. Implementation of this strategy will help individual citizens to gain access to continuing education, help them to acquire active job-seeking techniques and it will contribute to the increase of quality of such education. The strategy also lists tasks for the state and local government administration, research and education institutions and social partners, such as employers’ organisations, economic and professional organisations, trade unions, foundations, associations and other non-governmental organisations. The strategy leads to the implementation of the European dimension of lifelong learning in Poland.

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 education co-operates with the minister of labour, the minister of culture and the minister of health in the area of vocational and continuing education.

Kuratorzy are in charge of education at the regional level and they report to the regional authorities. Their tasks include, among others, implementation of the educational policy prepared by the minister of education and pedagogical supervi-

sion over schools and educational institutions, including non-public ones. Regional authorities are responsible for running of the regional educational institutions, including medical upper secondary schools.

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

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

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

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

7.3. Funding

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

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

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

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

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

7.4. Human resources

In the school year 2002/2003 there were 7353 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 (KOWE-ZiU) is in charge of the preparation and co-ordination of activities in the area of training and in-service training of teachers working in schools for adults and in continuing education. It co-operates with CKU and CKP. The Centre organises meetings and seminars with a view to disseminating most recent developments in the area of vocational and continuing education, as well as research results, publications and pedagogical innovations. It also co-operates with social partners with respect to the quality assurance in the area of vocational and continuing education.

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

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

7.5. Organisation

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

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

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

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 2004/05 in 3951 schools for adults (all types) there were over 331.9 thousand students enrolled. The number of general and vocational upper secondary schools for adults is increasing, while the number of basic vocational schools for adults is going down. The primary schools for adults are very rare, there are only 9 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 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 2004 there were 86 institutions with accreditation (the highest number was noted in the *śląskie* region) offering continuing education in out-of school forms.

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 extramural 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 and those being threatened with unemployment are sent by labour offices for a course. If a course is provided on employer's direct order, the admission criteria are commonly agreed by both the training institution and the employer. 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 extramural classes are organised as consultations. It is possible to organise two teaching sessions – one as an introduction to the semester's work and the other – as a preparation for exams.

7.5.5. Curriculum

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

7.6. Assessment, accreditation, recognition

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 extramural 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 extramural 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 co-operation 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 secondary school leaving certificates and to continue education at a higher level. Primary or post-primary school leaving certificates can also be obtained on the basis of extramural examinations (with the exception of medical branch), which are carried out by the State Examination Commissions (PKE). Model certificates and other school related documents are defined by the minister of education in a separate regulation.

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

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

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

7.7. Statistics

Table 1. Number of schools for adults, 2004/05

Type of school	
Primary school	9
Gymnasium	120
Secondary general school	1816
Basic vocational school	137
Secondary vocational school	1869

Table 2. Number of students in schools for adults (in thousands), 2004/05

Type of school	
Primary school	0.1
Gymnasium	11.8
Secondary general school	171.8
Basic vocational school	7.8
Secondary vocational school	140.4

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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.

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