



World TVET Database Poland

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Abbreviations

CKP	Practical Training Centres
CKU	Continuing education centres
CTVET	Continuing Technical and Vocational Education and Training
ECQ	European Qualification Framework
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
ECVET	European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
EQARF	European Quality Assurance Reference Framework
ESF	European Social Fund
ITVET	Initial Technical and Vocational Education and Training
LGU	Local Government Units
LLL	LifeLong learning
MEN	Ministry of National Education
MENiS	Ministry of National Education and Sport
NQF	National Qualification Framework
OHP	Voluntary Labour Corps
PKD	Polish Classification of Activities
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
ZDZ	Vocational upgrading and further education centres

TVETipedia Glossary

Below are listed TVET terms mentioned in this report. Click on a term to read its definitions on the UNESCO-UNEVOC TVETipedia glossary.

Adult learning/education	Job
Apprentice	Labour market
Apprenticeship	Lifelong Learning
Certificate	Monitoring
Competence/y	National Qualifications Framework
Continuing education/training	Non-formal education
Continuing TVET	Post-secondary education
Curriculum	Qualification
Diploma	Quality
Distance education/learning	Quality Assurance
Employment	Skills
Flexibility	Social Partners
Formal Education And Training	Teacher
Further education	Teacher In VET
General education	Tertiary Education
Higher education	Trainer
Informal Learning	TVET
Initial TVET	TVET provider
In-service training	Upper secondary education

Poland

Population:	38,612,000 (2015)
Youth population ¹ :	4,472,000 (2015)
Median population age:	39.6 (2015)
Annual population growth (2010-2015) ² :	0.02%



Data © OpenStreetMap Design © Mapbox

1. TVET mission, strategy and legislation

TVET strategy

Polands' innovations in terms of TVET were introduced in the latest amendment of the Act on Education. On 1 September 2012 the following changes took place:

- Overall facilitation of acquiring TVET and making the TVET system more flexible;
- Creating possibilities for a successive acquisition of qualifications required for specific occupations;
- Division of occupations on the basis of the relevant qualifications and their classification based on common or related qualifications in eight broad vocational areas;
- Changes in the system's organisation - some institutions ceased to exist (specialised post-lower secondary and supplementary post-lower secondary schools, which will now function as general education post-secondary schools for adults). In parallel, vocational schools will have an option to be transformed into vocational and continuing education centres, with a more varied offer and improved opportunities for cooperation with employers;
- Change in the core curricula - TVET at the post-lower secondary level will be merged with the core curriculum for general secondary schools. Pupils will continue their education, having the general education core curriculum as the basis for instruction, in the first year of post-lower secondary vocational school, and in post-lower secondary general education schools for adults, starting from the second year;
- Changes in the organisation of exams will make it easier to acquire new qualifications and learn new occupations: exams confirming specific qualifications will be held for different education levels, and not only following the completion of vocational school; validated qualifications will be confirmed by a certificate (students will receive a TVET certificate once all the qualifications required for a given occupation have been validated); and
- New, out-of-school TVET opportunities will be opened up, in the form of vocational courses, whose participants will be able to take examinations leading to qualifications.

¹ Population aged 14-25

² All statistics compiled from the United Nation's Population Division's *World Population Prospects, the 2015 Revision* (<http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/DVD/>)

TVET legislation

- The Constitution of the Republic of Poland safeguards the right to education and the freedom of teaching.
- The Education System Act of 7th September 1991 (last amended in 2009) provides basic legislation for the functioning of the educational system, including vocational and continuing education for youth and adults. Among other points Employment of people for TVET was introduced in the last amendment.
- The Act on Promoting Employment and Labour Market Institutions of 20th April 2004 together with numerous ordinances of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy and the Minister of National Education and Sport provide for the training of the unemployed and other job seekers and vocational guidance and counselling.

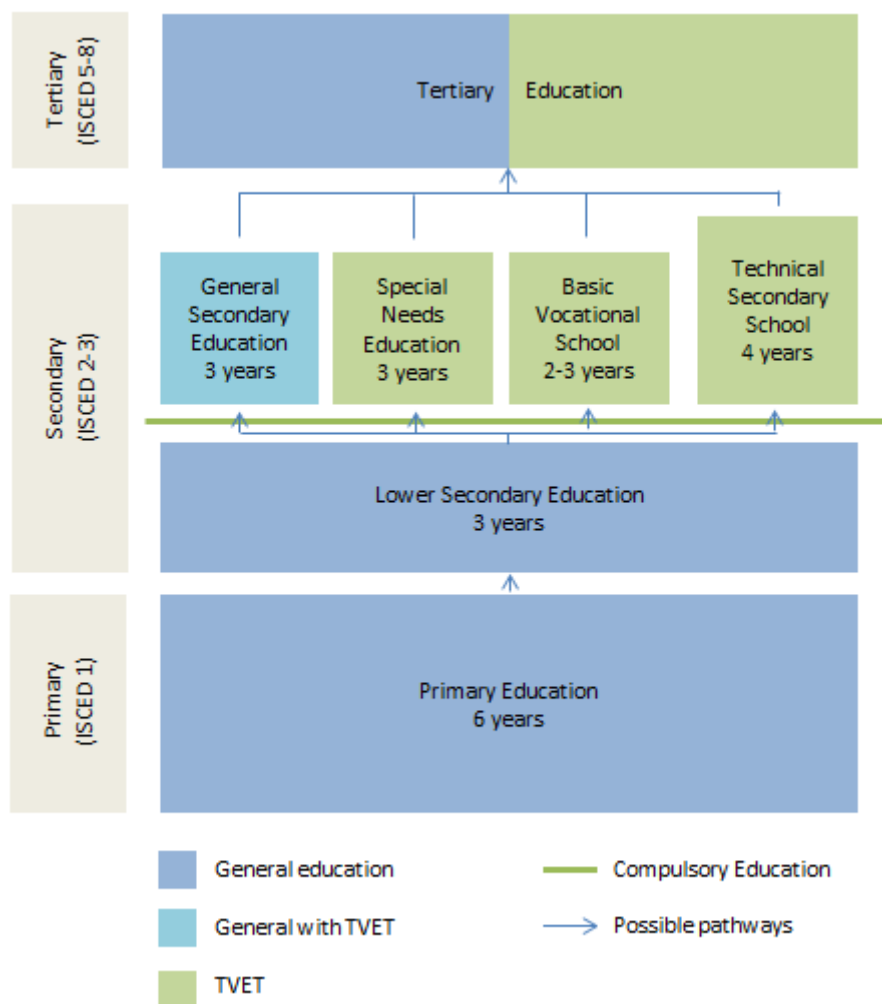
Overall most legal decisions in TVET are regulated by the ordinances of the Minister of National Education and Sport. In 2011 regulations of the Minister with regard to the core curricular of education in specific professions (the list is provided in the regulations) came into force.

There is no separate legislative framework for Continuing TVET (CTVET) in Poland. However various legal documents set out the basis for CTVET, the main ones being the Education System Act adopted in 1991 and the Act of 2004 on promoting employment and labour market institutions.

Sources:

CEDEFOP ReferNet (2011). Poland VET in Europe – Country Report. Thessaloniki: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.

2. TVET formal, non-formal and informal systems



Scheme compiled by UNESCO-UNEVOC from CEDEFOP ReferNet (2011). Poland VET in Europe – Country Report. Thessaloniki: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.

Formal TVET system

In Poland Initial TVET (ITVET) is understood as vocational education that is carried out in schools, normally before entering working life. At upper-secondary level it is provided by the following types of schools:

- Four-year technical secondary school (*technikum*): is divided into two types; Technikum for gimnazjum leavers and Technikum for basic vocational school leavers. Most popular vocations are accountant, mechanic, electronics specialist, and salesperson;
- Two/three-year basic vocational school (*zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa*): the duration of particular vocation in this type of school is indicated in the Classification of Vocations for Vocational Schooling (*klasyfikacja zawodów szkolnych*). The most popular vocations are: shop-assistant, cook, gardener, automobile mechanic, hairdresser and a baker;

- Three-year special needs school: preparing for work students who are mentally or physically handicapped (*szkola specjalna*); and
- Profiled general secondary school (*lyceum profilowane*): provides education in general vocational profiles that are listed in Polish Classification of Activities (PKD).

At post-secondary level vocational education is provided by post-secondary school that typically last two and a half years (*szkola policealna*).

Apart from general secondary schools (*licea ogólnokształcące*) that are focused on preparing students for the Matura exam, that grants the possibility to pursue higher education, the rest of the upper-secondary schools focus on providing vocational qualifications. Those qualifications are included in the classification of occupations for TVET that is consistent with the developed classification based on the needs of the labour market.

ITVET is also offered at lower-secondary level. It is however only provided by lower secondary schools (*gimnazjum*) and is addressed to pupils with learning difficulties who are not able to complete the school in prescribed period.

Apprenticeships are mainly organised in small and medium enterprises.. An agreement is made between apprentices and employers, according to which theoretical education is to be followed by the apprentice.

An apprenticeship takes one of the following two forms:

- Apprenticeship as occupational training (ISCED 3); and
- Apprenticeship as training to perform a specific job (ISCED 2).

The most popular occupations taught in the apprenticeship system are: hairdresser, carpenter, baker and confectioner.

The Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP) was established for disadvantaged young people (for more details see "Governance and Financing"). It is an alternative path for youth between 15 and 18, who may go to the Corps on their own or as directed by school pedagogues, pedagogical and psychological counselling centres, etc. Students learn in three kinds of places: Labour Corps, Training and Guidance Centres and Education and Guidance Centres. By completing one of the programmes on offer young people have a chance to complete their education, work and gain vocational qualifications.

Learning at the OHP may take place at:

- Lower secondary schools (*gimnazja*) with work preparation classes;
- Lower secondary schools for adults;
- Basic vocational schools upon successful completion of *gimnazjum*;
- Basic vocational schools for adults upon successful completion of *gimnazjum*; and
- Craft-oriented vocational courses.

Post-secondary non-tertiary vocational courses are provided in accordance with the list of curricula approved by the Ministry of Education and are offered by the following entities: higher

education institutions, continuing education centres (CKU), Practical Training Centres (CKP), employers' companies and agricultural farms. Vocational profiles of these institutions include: technical sciences, economics and commerce, administration, general services, medical and social services, agriculture, culture and arts.

TVET at tertiary level is provided by teacher colleges and higher education institutions. Higher education institutions may be academic or vocational. Both are entitled to provide first and second level studies. First level studies are focused on providing professional education and have a compulsory 15 week period of practical training as part of the curriculum.

Continuing education (CTVET) in Poland takes place either in schools for adults or within out of school schemes targeted at those who want to gain additional knowledge, skills and qualifications. CTVET is divided into formal and non-formal, the former taking place in schools and institutions under the guidance of the Ministry of National Education, the latter offered by other providers.

Formal CTVET is offered by:

- Schools for adults;
- Continuing education centres (CKU);
- Practical training centres (CKP);
- Vocational upgrading and further education centres (ZDZ);
- Higher education/research institutions offering post-diploma studies, courses and distance learning; and
- Chambers of crafts.

Non-formal and informal TVET systems

Non-formal CTVET mostly responds to current trends, general continuing vocational training policy and labour market needs. It can be organised by:

- Public education institutions, units of the Polish Academy of Science, research institutes – providing training, seminars and workshops;
- Labour market institutions, including Voluntary Labour Corps;
- Private training companies;
- Enterprises (employers); and
- Associations, foundations and other corporate bodies and individuals.

Sources:

CEDEFOP ReferNet (2011). Poland VET in Europe – Country Report. Thessaloniki: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.

3. Governance and financing

Governance

The Ministry of National Education (MEN) is in charge of educational policy, including policy on TVET. It is centrally formulated and implemented. The Minister of National Education cooperates with the Ministers of different branches for the supervision of vocational schools. Those Ministers are: The Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage and the Minister of Environment.

The national centre for supporting vocational and continuing education, under the authority of the Ministry of National Education, is a central, public, national-level institution providing professional development services for teachers. Its main goals are:

- To inspire, prepare and coordinate activities related to the professional development of teachers from vocational schools and schools for adults; and
- To prepare and execute educational ventures related to the stages of educational transformation in Poland.

Social partners that are involved in TVET are represented on the national level in the form of the Tripartite Commission on Socio-Economic Affairs. The Commission consists of the representatives of public administration, employers, the largest trade unions and some sectoral trade unions. With regard to TVET these bodies are functioning as both consultants and legal measures initiators.

The Central Employment Board which acts as advisory body for the Minister of Labour is another important actor for social dialogue. It consists of the representatives of public administration, employers' organisations, trade unions and territorial self-governments.

Regional, district and local level authorities mainly play a coordinating role. They supervise and implement the national policy also with regard to TVET.

The Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP) is an important state organisation acting under the guidance of the Ministry of Labour. OHP runs a series of education centres that provide a range of training, further training and employment opportunities and work in cooperation with district governments.

The responsibility for CTNET is divided between the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

Financing

The budget allocation for all types of educational activities including those of vocational schools is annually defined in the Budget Act.

Local Government Units (LGU) are the ones responsible for operating and financing ITNET and formal CTNET. LGU use the following financing resources: their own revenues, general subsidy and grants. General subsidy is the most important funding source. The Minister of National

Education specifies annually the distribution of the education portion of the subsidy among LGUs.

The resources of the Labour Fund, EU Structural Funds and employers are the main financing channels for non-formal CTET and Adult Learning. Employers organise apprenticeship training or direct their employees to external training programmes.

The European Social Fund (Human Capital Operational Programme) are allocated to increase employment rates and assure a better match between the training provided and the needs of the labour market.

Funds for the training of the unemployed are administered by public employment services that operate in regions and districts.

Sources:

CEDEFOP ReferNet (2011). Poland VET in Europe – Country Report. Thessaloniki: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.

4. TVET teachers and trainers

No distinction is made between teachers, academic teachers, practical vocational training instructors and trainer-specialists working in ITVET and CTET in terms of entering and developing a career in teaching. The general requirements are subject/occupational and pedagogical qualifications.

Teacher trainers of CTET who are planning to become teachers-methodological advisors and/or teachers-consultants are required to:

- Hold a Master's degree and a pedagogical qualification;
- Have obtained the professional promotion grade of appointed teacher or chartered teacher; and
- Have at least five years' experience in teaching.

A specific occupational qualification and a pedagogical qualification are necessary to become practical vocational training instructor.

Trainers-specialists are required by law to have an occupational qualification that is appropriate for the type of training provided. Other requirements are laid out by the individual TVET providers.

In-service training is outlined by legislation as one of the criteria for promotion. It is mainly organised by institutions where teachers work and various external providers (in-service teacher training institutions, higher education institutions, CTET providers and teacher training colleges).

Sources:

CEDEFOP ReferNet (2011). Poland VET in Europe – Country Report. Thessaloniki: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.

5. Qualifications and Qualifications Frameworks

To be admitted to an upper-secondary school providing TVET completion of lower- secondary school (*gimnazjum*) is required.

Qualifications awarded upon completion of ITVET vary depending on the institution in question:

- Four-year technical secondary school (technikum): leads to vocational qualification of technician and secondary school-leaving certificate (Matura) that grants the possibility to pursue higher education;
- Two/three-year basic vocational school (*zasadnicza szkola zawodowa*): awards a vocational qualification of a skilled worker, but does not lead to Matura;
- Three-year special needs school (*szkola specjalna*): awards a certificate confirming the preparedness of the students to perform a particular type of work, but does not lead to a full vocational qualification; and
- Profiled general secondary school (lyceum profilowane): grants the right to continue education in post-secondary schools and/or higher education including higher vocational institutions.

Lower- secondary schools (*gimnazjum*): with work preparation classes that are addressed to disadvantaged youth do not award any vocational qualifications. They issue a *gimnazjum* leaving certificate where classes and courses attended by a student related to a specific occupation are annotated.

There are two types of apprenticeship qualifications:

- Apprenticeship as occupational training (ISCED 3): qualifications of an apprentice or a skilled worker; and
- Apprenticeship as training to perform a specific job (ISCED 2): a certificate stating the acquisition of particular skills in a certain occupation. The certificate enables a student to continue vocational education in apprenticeship leading to a qualification.

Post-secondary non- tertiary school leavers acquire qualifications of technician or skilled worker that is confirmed by an external vocational examination.

CTVET provides for different diplomas and certificates depending on the providers, such as:

- Schools for adults issue certificates of school completion; and
- Chamber of crafts issues apprentice certificates and a master craftsman diploma.

National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

The work on NQF started in 2006 and began with the formation of a working group at the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. In 2008 the first stage of work began within the framework of "Stocktaking of competences and qualifications for the Polish labour market and the development of the National Qualifications Framework model" project. The primary aim of the project, which was concluded in January 2010, was to form the team of experts, including experts in vocational education, to work on NQF and to initiate the introduction of the framework.

Currently the work is being continued as a part of the 'Elaboration of terms of reference for the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework and the National Qualification Register for lifelong learning' system project, carried out by the Institute of Educational Research until the end of 2013. The following aspects are focused on:

- Establishing a system of recognition of competences acquired outside of formal education;
- Inclusion of representatives of social partners and non-governmental organisations to monitor the compatibility of examination and qualification systems with a learning outcome-based approach;
- Implementing qualification quality principles in line with the provisions within the establishment of the European qualifications framework, including within the agreements on vocational education and training (the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework - EQARF) and the agreements within the Bologna process;
- Implementing the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET); and
- Ensuring compatibility between the ECVET and ECTS systems.

Sources:

CEDEFOP ReferNet (2011). Poland VET in Europe – Country Report. Thessaloniki: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.

6. Current reforms, major projects and challenges

Current reforms and major projects

According to the Ministry of National Education, the main incentives for introducing organisational and substantive changes in TVET, are globalisation and the increasing significance of international trade, geographic and vocational mobility, economic changes, new techniques and technologies (especially in the field of information and communication) as well as changes in the organisation of work, being partially a consequence of technological changes and increased expectations of employers regarding the level of competence among employees. Another important thing is the European context of changes in TVET referring to the objectives of the reviewed Lisbon Strategy, the introduction of the concept of lifelong learning (LLL), European and national qualification frameworks and tools which improve the level of vocational and continuing education (ECVET, EQARF).

The main purpose of introducing a TVET reform is to change the approach from education within the requirements of a specific job to a system that allows acquiring qualifications

adjusted to the needs and predispositions of students. As a consequence, there will be one core curriculum for TVET. Moreover, acquiring TVET qualifications will be possible through common school education as well as through the participation in TVET programmes.

In order to adjust TVET to the requirements of global and local labour markets, the following changes have been developed:

- providing transparency of qualifications and competences available on the national and European labour market, which facilitates making comparisons between educational achievements gained locally and abroad;
- introduction of a new education system, the changes refer mostly to secondary education;
- vocational school education supported by comprehensive knowledge, being the basis for further education or retraining (as the continuation of comprehensive education introduced in junior high schools);
- inviting schools into the system of qualification courses for adults, especially in the realm of retraining courses determined by the requirements imposed by employers;
- arranging for practical training (more hours) and cooperation with employers; and
- performing practical vocational education in the actual work environment, participation of employers in educational processes, evaluation of students and development of technological and didactic background of vocational schools.

The changes resulting from this reform will be introduced gradually, with the first set of changes affecting first-year students of basic vocational schools and vocational high schools introduced in 2012/2013.

The Polish government is very involved in the development of a lifelong learning (LLL) strategy in accordance with European directives. The Lifelong Learning Perspective (*Perspektywa uczenia się przez całe życie*) is one of the important initiatives. It was prepared by the Interdepartmental Team for Lifelong Learning and the National Qualifications Framework, which was set up by the President of the Council of Ministers in February 2010. *Perspektywa* includes broad analysis of the current situation, formulates strategic and operational objectives and proposes ways for their implementation and monitoring. It is a plan of action with various initiatives aimed to make LLL an integral part of vocational education and training processes.

In order to attract more pupils to participate in practical vocational training and to provide incentives for the employers who so far are relatively reluctant to training, the Ministry of National Education has concluded agreements with social partners that are aimed at establishing a network of companies which will offer practical training for pupils and teachers and will support schools' technical base.

The concept of distance learning is not very common in Poland. Therefore the Ministry of National Education and Sport (MENiS) has come up with a model which includes formal, informal and non-formal education with regard to distance learning. The model is being implemented by the national centre for supporting vocational and continuing education as a part of the project 'The model of implementation and dissemination of distance learning in lifelong learning'. It is financed by the European Social Fund (ESF).

In the framework of the Human Capital Operational Programme (funded by ESF), the National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education has implemented some changes in the TVET system in accordance with lifelong learning requirements. The changes are as follows:

- Enhancing core curricula as the key to TVET modernisation (2008–2013);

- Support system for schools and institutions implementing modular TVET curricula (2009-2013); and
- Model system for an implementation and dissemination of distance learning in lifelong learning (2009-2014).

Sources:

CEDEFOP ReferNet (2011). Poland VET in Europe – Country Report. Thessaloniki: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.

EQAVET (2012). VET in Poland (IVET and CVET). Dublin: European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training.

7. Links to UNEVOC centres and TVET institutions

UNEVOC Centres

- [Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz](#)

TVET Institutions

- [Ministry of Labour and Social Policies](#)
- [Ministry of National Education](#)
- [Ministry of Science and Higher Education](#)
- [National Centre for Supporting vocational and continuing education](#)
- [Tripartite Commission for Socio-Economic Affairs](#)
- [Voluntary Labour Corps](#)

8. References and further reading

References

CEDEFOP ReferNet (2011). [Poland VET in Europe – Country Report](#). Thessaloniki: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.

EQAVET (2012). [VET in Poland \(IVET and CVET\)](#). Dublin: European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training.