

Quality Assurance in VET: Poland

This document provides an overview of quality assurance in VET in the respective country. It covers information on VET systems and how quality assurance takes place, which organisations are responsible for VET policy and any recent developments in VET policy.

VET system and quality assurance



Overview of the VET system and how quality assurance takes place

The VET system is managed by the Minister of National Education and Science and is provided at secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary levels. The Minister is also responsible for VET provided at the higher education level.

At secondary level, after graduating from primary school (grades 1 to 8) students can obtain vocational qualifications in a three-year stage I sectoral vocational school or in a five-year technical secondary school. Graduates of stage I sectoral vocational school can further upgrade their knowledge in two-year stage II sectoral vocational school, where they can train in an occupation on technical level, or in four-year general secondary school for adults (starting with the second grade). VET students qualify in a given occupation after taking an external vocational exam in each qualification (1 or 2 depending on the occupation). In addition, students of stage II sectoral vocational school and technical secondary school have the option of taking maturity exam, which gives entrance to tertiary education.

Students with intellectual disabilities can continue their vocational education after primary school at a three-year special needs school to prepare to work. Students with mild intellectual disabilities may be educated at stage I sectoral vocational school in all occupations, including auxiliary occupations which are specifically designed for them.

Students with sectoral secondary or general secondary education can acquire vocational qualifications in a post-secondary non-tertiary school where the learning process lasts from one year to two years and a half. Students at post-secondary non-tertiary level, like those at secondary level, obtain a certificate for a given qualification upon successful completion of an external vocational exam for each qualification. After passing exams for all prerequisite qualifications in a given occupation, students obtain a vocational diploma confirming all vocational qualifications required for the occupation.¹

All VET students and learners may also upgrade their skills or gain new qualifications (re-qualify) at vocational qualification courses leading to an external vocational exam. Upon passing the exam, which is conducted for each qualification separately, students receive

¹ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/poland-u2>

a certificate for a given qualification. A vocational diploma (confirming qualifications for a given occupation) is awarded when students have passed exams for all the qualifications required to practice a given occupation and have completed the required level of education.

Practical vocational training in VET is delivered in all occupations. There are two forms of practical vocational education: it can be organised in a form of practical training and work placements. Practical training is organised for students, including juvenile workers, to acquire and master their professional skills required to work in a given profession. Work placements are organised for students to apply and deepen their knowledge and skills in real working conditions. According to current practice, work placements are organised for occupations taught on technical level. Their length is usually limited to 8 weeks (280 hours) spent at the employer's premises.

Practical training can take place at the workplace, in line with the principles of the dual education system, on the basis of:

- A contract of employment for vocational preparation, concluded between an apprentice and an employer.
- A contract of practical vocational education concluded between the school principal and the employer who hosts students undertaking practical vocational education.²

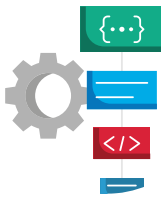
As for the contract of employment, it is organised by an employer upon signing a job agreement between an employer and a student - juvenile worker that aims at vocational preparation. Juvenile workers may be also employed for a purpose other than vocational training (i.e., when performing light work). The share of practical training in total in a VET programme is a minimum of 50%, except for stage I sectoral vocational schools where the share of practical training is a minimum of 60%.

Craft vocational preparation of juvenile workers is organised in micro, small and medium enterprises. After passing the external exams in crafts, apprentices obtain apprentice certificate.

Vocational preparation of juvenile workers is also organised by the employers, who do not belong to the craft organisation. Then students pass exams at Regional Examination Boards and obtain a certificate for a given qualification and a vocational diploma upon completion the required level of education.

VET for adults is organised by IVET schools (stage II sectoral vocational school and post-secondary school) or as other institutions, such as continuing education centres (CEC), vocational training centres (VTC), and (mainly) out-of-school forms, delivered by public

² <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/poland-u2>

	<p>and private providers. It is a flexible system of vocational courses, based on national core curricula for sectoral vocational education, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational Qualification Courses – organised by IVET schools, CEC, VTC and other VET providers, where a single course covers a single qualification, upon completion of which learners may take an external vocational exam (confirming a given qualification), conducted under the same conditions and according to the same rules as for IVET students; • Vocational Skills Courses – organised by IVET schools, CEC, VTC, focus on one unit of learning outcomes specified in a given qualification or additional professional skills; • Other vocational courses organised by CEC and VTC, enabling the acquisition and supplementation of knowledge, skills and professional qualifications. <p>Apprenticeships for adults are within the scope of responsibilities of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy. The apprenticeship programme is provided by Local Labour Offices, and it seeks to improve the employability of unemployed people and jobseekers by helping them to formally validate their skills and qualifications.</p> <p>More information about the VET system in Poland can be found on Cedefop's VET in Europe database: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/poland</p>
 <p>System-level QA arrangements</p>	<p>The legal basis for guidelines assuring the quality of education, both general and vocational, is set by the School Education Act of 2016, and the regulations of the Minister of National Education of 2017: the Regulation on Pedagogical Supervision, and the Regulation on the Requirements for Schools and Institutions.</p> <p>Pedagogical supervision is performed taking into account the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation of the bodies exercising pedagogical supervision with the authorities managing schools or institutions, headmasters and teachers. • Creating conditions conducive to the development of schools and institutions. • Obtaining information ensuring an objective and complete evaluation of the teaching, educational and care activities as well as other statutory activities of the school or institution. <p>In the event of finding insufficient learning outcomes at a school or institution, the pedagogical supervision authority instructs the headmaster to develop, in agreement with the leading authority, a programme and schedule to improve the effectiveness of education. The programme is implemented on the dates specified in the</p>

schedule, approved by the pedagogical supervision authority. The programme must take into account the comments and conclusions of the pedagogical supervision authority.

Support provided by education superintendents aims to inspire and help principals to improve the work of schools and institutions, and it includes:

- Preparing and publishing analyses of the results of pedagogical supervision, including conclusions from the control, on the body's website.
- Organising conferences and meetings for directors of schools and institutions.
- Providing information on important issues related to the education system and changes in legal provisions relating to the functioning of schools and institutions.

In an effort to improve the quality and effectiveness of vocational education and training as well as their relevance to labour market needs, major reforms were undertaken. They included the structural reform of educational system establishing sectoral vocational schools, as well as issuing, by the Minister of National Education, new regulations on the Classification of Occupations in Sectoral Vocational Education and on the National Core Curricula for Occupations in Sectoral Vocational Education. The new revised classification defines over 200 occupations in 32 sectors of industry and describes the occupations on the basis of qualifications that can be obtained within IVET and CVET. Within an individual occupation 1 or 2 prerequisite qualifications are specified, which in total gives over 250 qualifications. The new core curricula for VET occupations, which were developed to set standards in theoretical teaching and practical training for each individual occupation, define sets of expected learning outcomes and verification criteria of learning outcomes for each qualification in the following areas: vocational knowledge, occupational skills, professional foreign language, personal and social competences, occupational health and safety, and, in occupations taught at technical level, also organisation of work in small teams.

For all public and non-public institutions providing continuing education, including continuing education centres, vocational training centres and professional development centres, a mechanism for accreditation was created, as a confirmation of meeting certain requirements and ensuring high-quality of out-of-school continuing education. It is applied for on a voluntary basis, and it is issued by regional superintendents following a thorough analysis of the institution's functioning. Public and non-public continuing education centres and vocational training centres may apply for accreditation of the education superintendent for out-of-school forms of continuing education: qualification vocational course, vocational skills course,

general competence course, training camp for adolescents, other than qualification vocational course, vocational skills course, a course of general competences, a course enabling the acquisition and completion of knowledge, vocational skills and vocational qualifications.

To be accredited, an institution must meet specific requirements, e.g., conduct education in the form to be accredited or in other out-of-school forms for a period of at least three years, develop and apply a system for ensuring the quality of education and systematically improve it, provide suitable premises, teaching aids, qualified teaching staff, curriculum compliant with the provisions of the education law and conditions for implementation of practical vocational training. Accreditation is granted for a period of five years but may be withdrawn by the education superintendent if the above requirements are no longer met by the institution.


VET students and learners take part in standardised vocational examinations, designed by the Central Examination Board, which confirm knowledge, skills and competences acquired in different learning contexts: formal, non-formal/informal, including professional experience. Vocational exams are administered both during and at the conclusion of the learning process.

Additionally, there are also extramural vocational exams designed for those who want to confirm their vocational qualifications without having to complete additional schooling or courses. However, admission to the exams is only for those who have completed eight-year primary school or former lower secondary school and have been studying or working for at least two years in an occupation in which a given qualification was specified in accordance with the classification of VET occupations.

Vocational exams, as validation tools, allow results from different schools and institutions providing VET to be compared. The data may be used by the decision makers at the local and national level.

Poland's national quality assurance system in the education sector, including the VET system, is based on pedagogical supervision executed by regional superintendents in the form of regular, ongoing control and support conducted in the area of learning processes, learning outcomes, school/centre functioning and management. The quality assurance system makes provision for the external review of both IVET and CVET providers.

External reviews measure some EQAVET indicators achieved by learners and the centre's functioning in the local environment. It also measures non-EQAVET indicators, such as the processes of the centre and its management.

	<p>System-level QA arrangements have been extended to the partial VET qualifications awarded outside formal VET that are included in the Integrated Qualifications Registry (market qualifications). The Act on the Integrated Qualifications System of 22 December 2015 provides that the awarding institutions are obliged to have internal quality assurance systems of validation process and are evaluated periodically by external quality assurance bodies.³</p>
 <p>Provider-level QA arrangements</p>	<p>VET providers conduct internal assessment of the school and institution. The assessment is carried out by the headmaster in cooperation with teachers and managers, and it helps to gather information about the quality of its work and the effectiveness of its activities. The results are presented to the teachers' council, which determines the method of using the results in order to improve the work of the school or institution.</p> <p>Internal assessments use EQAVET performance indicators as well as student learning and care indicators. The goal is to diagnose quality deficits and plan further development to improve quality.</p> <p>Internal pedagogical supervision over teachers employed in the school or institution is exercised by the headmaster and other teachers holding managerial positions. As part of this supervision, the headmaster:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controls the teachers' compliance with legal provisions relating to teaching, educational and care activities as well as other statutory activities of the school / institution as well as the course and effects of education processes and other statutory activities. • Supports teachers in the performance of their tasks by diagnosing the work of the school or institution, planning and conducting development activities, motivating teachers to professional development, organising trainings and meetings. <p>Internal evaluations use EQAVET indicators on outcomes, as well as indicators on teaching and learner care. The aim is to diagnose quality deficits and plan further developments aiming at improving quality.</p> <p>The quality of education on the level of VET providers in out-of-school CVET education is assured by the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 2017 on lifelong learning in non-school forms, which obliges the entities providing lifelong learning in out-of-school forms to provide supervision aimed at improving the quality of education.⁴</p>

³ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/poland-u2>

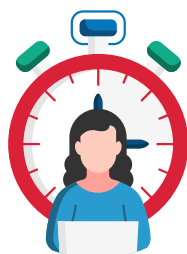
⁴ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/205aa0ac-460d-11e9-a8ed-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>



Which organisation(s) are responsible for VET policy?

VET policy in Poland at secondary and post-secondary level is formulated by the Ministry of Education and Science in cooperation with ministries responsible for specific occupations, e.g., the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (art schools), the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (agricultural schools), the Ministry of Climate and Environment (forestry schools), the Ministry of Justice, and others. Higher vocational education policy is designed solely by the Ministry of Education and Science.

The management and administration of the VET system in Poland has a three-level structure: national level (within the purview of the Ministries in the area of education policy, core curricula, national QA standards), regional level (within the area of pedagogical supervision executed by superintendents being the heads of the regional education authority - REA), and district level (within the area of establishing and governing VET schools). Social partners are involved in developing VET system and providing opinions on any planned changes to VET.



Recent policy developments (in the last 12 months)

In response to request of the employers' organisations and the competent minister's formal proposal, new VET occupations were introduced in the classification of VET occupations, and changes in the training of some VET occupations were implemented. The aim of the changes in the classification of VET occupations, specifying the list of occupations in IVET and CVET, is to regularly adjust the national VET system to the requirements and expectations of the labour market.

As a result of the changes in the classification of VET occupations, national core curricula for the newly introduced occupations were developed, setting the expected learning outcomes and verification criteria for each qualification specified in a given occupation. Additionally, appropriate modifications to the core curricula for VET occupations were introduced in line with the implemented changes in VET training.

Legal changes required for the monitoring of graduates' career system and annual VET occupation forecast were implemented. Necessary amendments to the educational law and provisions of other acts regulating the functioning of registers providing information necessary for the system were introduced.



The priority is the launch of the graduate career tracking - the system of monitoring professional and educational pathways of secondary school graduates, including VET graduates. The system will provide annually revised and reliable information coming from administrative data. The information on the graduates' activities includes type of employment, salary, unemployment or inactivity spells, as well as the graduates' further educational activities, by types of schools and

**Priority areas for
QA in your
country**

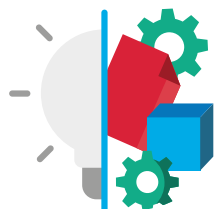
fields of study/education. The information on the course of the educational and professional careers of graduates improves the linkages between the educational sector and the needs of the labour market, and it is useful for students, employers and policymakers.

Annual VET occupations forecast - a synthetic approach to various sources describing trends in the labour market in the context of the state and regional development strategy - shows the yearly demand for employees in vocational education occupations on the domestic and regional labour market. The forecast contains an alphabetically ordered list of VET occupations for which, due to their importance for the development of the country, particular demand for employees is forecasted on the domestic labour or provincial market. On its basis the offer of sectoral education is shaped in accordance with the needs of the national and provincial labour market. The current forecast has been published in the Announcement of the Minister of Education and Science of 27 January 2021 on the forecast of the demand for employees in professional education professions on the national and provincial labor market (Official Journal of the Republic of Poland, item 122).

Sectoral training for VET teachers - compulsory cyclical sectoral training for teachers of theoretical vocational subjects and practical vocational training with the purpose to regularly update the teachers' methodological skills and knowledge of the subject taught. The training is carried out for a total of 40 hours in 3 year cycles, and held at the employers' premises, in enterprises related to the occupation and sector taught. Teachers' training is financed, inter alia, by the resources of the National Training Fund.

Strengthening cooperation with the employers at national level and school level - agreements between the Ministry of Education and Science and the employers' organisations allowing closer cooperation with the employers in the development of VET system. A new website "Professional Info" has launched in order to facilitate cooperation and communication between the employers and schools / institutions or other VET providers and disseminating e-resources for vocational education. Compulsory cooperation (from 2019) between schools and the employers in preparing students for obtaining professional qualifications. Agreement with the employer as a condition for starting education in a given VET occupation. The cooperation also relates to developing vocational school training program, implementing practical vocational training, organising student internship as a new formula of practical education, organising vocational exams, creating patronage classes, providing career guidance, equipping workshops and classrooms, providing sectoral training for VET teachers at the employers.

Specific projects in the country (optional)



Please provide a short description of recent projects or initiatives in the field of QA in VET that you would like to highlight for your country

Establishing graduate tracking system and annual VET occupations forecast – EQAVET indicative descriptor: *‘Mechanisms and procedures have been established to identify the training needs of the labour market and society.’⁵*

Graduates' career tracking system builds on the experiences of ELA, the Polish graduate tracking system in higher education, but it covers a larger number of providers and more registers. The administrative data processed by the system comes from educational information system, regional examination boards, The System of Information on Science and Higher Education and Social Insurance Institution. The graduate tracking system is characterised by a high level of data processing automation and the generation of reports tailored to the information needs of its recipients, and it is based on automatically generated country reports summarising the situation of the group of graduates of each school, educated in various sectors and regions, in various occupations. The first edition covers the first months of the professional and educational history of secondary school graduates who graduated in June 2020. Providing feedback on the course of the educational and professional careers of graduates is one of the instruments used to improve the linkages between the supply of the educational sector and the needs of the labour market. Such data will be useful for students, employers and policymakers.



Which organisation(s) are responsible for the project / initiative

Graduates' career tracking, along with the annual forecast of the demand for occupations, is the responsibility of the Minister of Education and Science. Education IT Centre - a specialised unit being the operator of the Educational Information System and acting under the jurisdiction of the Ministry - is responsible for processing and linking the data. The Educational Research Institute is responsible for analysing the data and preparing monitoring reports.

Use of EQAVET labels

Do you use an EQAVET label or seal to certify VET

No

Yes

⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1570&langId=en>

**providers in your
country?**