

VET in Poland

Vocational education and training (VET) has three governance levels: national (ministries), regional (school superintendents, mainly in pedagogical supervision) and county (governing schools). The Ministry of National Education is in charge of VET policy at secondary level, supported by other ministries responsible for particular occupations. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education is responsible for higher VET. Social partners advise policy-makers on necessary changes in VET.

Since September 2017 the Polish education system has been undergoing substantial restructuring, which will be finalised in the 2022/23 school year. Key elements of the reform include: restructuring the current six-year primary education into eight years, divided into two four-year programmes (basic and lower secondary level); phasing out the lower secondary school (*gimnazjum*), and extending the general upper secondary school (four instead of three years) and the technical upper secondary school (five instead of four); and introducing a two-level 'sectoral vocational school'.

VET is provided at upper secondary and post-secondary levels that are mainly school-based. Upper secondary programmes combine general and vocational education. Learners can acquire vocational qualifications in the following:

- three-year sectoral programmes (*szkoły branżowe I stopnia*, ISCED 353). Graduates can enrol in general education programmes bridging VET and higher education. For graduates of these programmes, the reform foresees introduction of new two-year programmes that will give access to tertiary education from 2020/21;
- five-year upper secondary technical programmes (*technika*, ISCED 354). Graduates can also acquire an upper secondary school leaving certificate (*matura*) giving access to tertiary education;
- three-year special job training programmes (*szkoły specjalne przysposabiające do pracy*, ISCED 243) for learners with special education needs (SEN), leading to a certificate of job training;
- work preparation classes, available for SEN learners already at lower secondary level in primary schools at age 15 and above (*oddziały przysposabiające do pracy*, ISCED 243).

At post-secondary non-tertiary level, vocational qualifications can be acquired in one- to two-and-a-half-year school-based programmes (*szkoły policealne*, ISCED 453). These programmes are strictly vocational and do not include general education. Basic or upper secondary education is required to enrol.

Work-based learning (WBL) is compulsory for all VET-oriented programmes. WBL takes place in school workshops, at continuing education centres, practical training centres, as contract-based practical training organised by an employer and as in-company training from 4 to 12 weeks, depending on the occupation. The last of these is compulsory for upper secondary technical and post-secondary VET programmes.

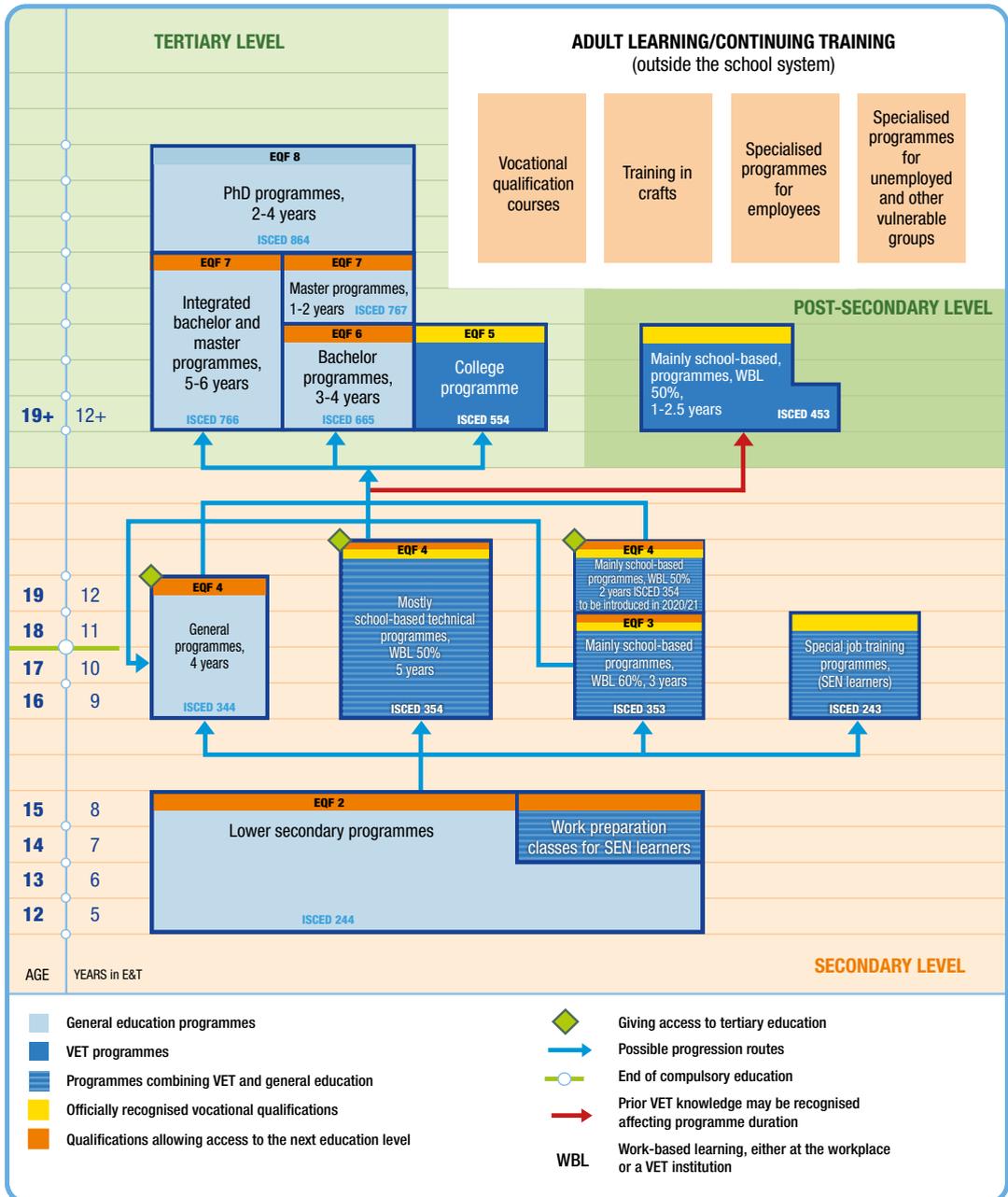
Adult learning and CVET

Adult learning and continuing VET is available in continuing education centres, practical training centres, further training and professional development centres, and initial VET schools.

These offer:

- vocational qualification courses based on curricula for a qualification in a given occupation; learners can take the State vocational examination and attain a vocational qualification certificate;
- vocational skills courses based on the core VET curriculum, including learning outcomes for a qualification or common learning outcomes for all occupations;
- minimum 30-hour general skills courses based on the general education curriculum;
- courses for juvenile employees in the crafts sector.

Adults, including the unemployed, may also undertake vocational training through courses provided by training companies and other non-formal education institutions. Since 2016, qualifications based on the curricula of such courses can be included in the national qualifications framework.



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

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