

Vocational preparation of juvenile workers

Przygotowanie zawodowe młodocianych

 Poland

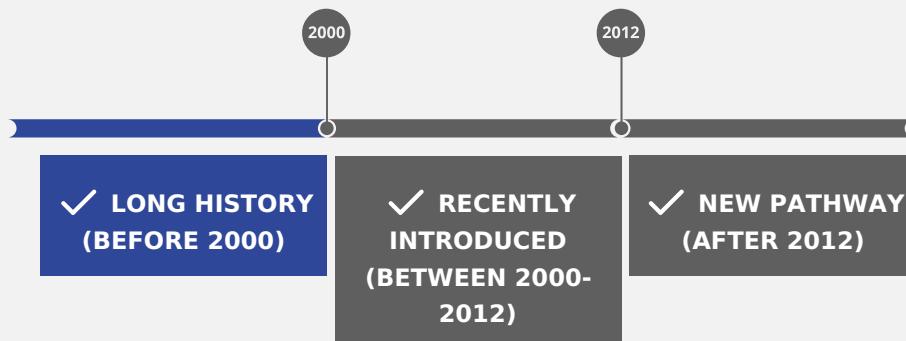
Reference year 2023

Content updates and contributors

Version 2023 - Drafted by Andrzej Stępnikowski, Senior researcher at the Centre for Vocational Education Research and Development of the Łukasiewicz Research Network - Member of [Cedefop Community of apprenticeship experts](#) for Poland

① SCHEME HISTORY

Q1. When was the scheme introduced?



The scheme has been functioning since the 1930s and was further developed in the 1950s by the Act of 2 July 1958 on professional learning, certain jobs training, conditions for employment of juveniles and initial practice Journal of Laws, no 45, item. 226 [1]. It was reshaped in the 1970s, by the Act of Labour Code and special rights for apprentices and - later on - it was widely spread by the end of 1989. In the following next three decades the apprenticeship system has been changed several times (1989, 1998, 2005, 2012, 2015, 2017, 2019) and the number of apprentices has fallen from 291,250 apprentices (schooling year 2000/2001) to the level of 122,500 (schooling year 2016/2017) [2]. Since then, the figures remain low. In February 2023, there were 129,643 apprentices, of which 71,741 in craft companies.

Apprenticeship has not regained popularity despite some actions undertaken by the Ministry of National Education (which are mostly focused on technical schools where apprenticeship is not offered) and the Polish Craft Association.

[1] Ustawa z dnia 2 lipca 1958 r. o nauce zawodu, przyuczeniu do określonej pracy i warunkach zatrudnienia młodocianych w zakładach pracy oraz o wstępnym stażu, Dz. U. nr 45, poz. 226

[2] Stępnikowski A. (2019), Master Craftsman's competencies in the craftwork

Q2. How did the apprenticeship scheme originate?



✓ TRADITIONAL
CRAFTSMANSHIP
(MASTER-
APPRENTICE
RELATION) TO
PREPARE
APPRENTICES FOR
THE OCCUPATION

✓ SCHOOL-BASED
VET TRACK BY
INCLUDING MORE
WORK-BASED
LEARNING TO
SUPPLY SKILLED
WORKFORCE TO
MATCH LABOUR
MARKET NEEDS

✓ EX-NOVO



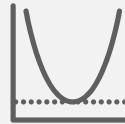
✓ OTHER

The apprenticeship scheme started from traditional craftsmanship (master-apprentice relation) to prepare apprentices for the occupation and in the 2nd half of the 19th century it was being enriched by schools. In the period 1918-1939 the craft system was developed in parallel to industry and strengthened by the school-based system. After 1945 apprenticeships in the industry were gradually more and more expanded. Starting from 1958 more and more apprentices had "dual status" of a juvenile worker and student.

Nowadays only about 2-2.5 thousand apprentices have the status of a juvenile worker without being a school student (~5% of all apprentices).

② BENEFICIARIES

Q3. Does the legal basis define the minimum and maximum age limits for enrolment of the target group of this scheme?



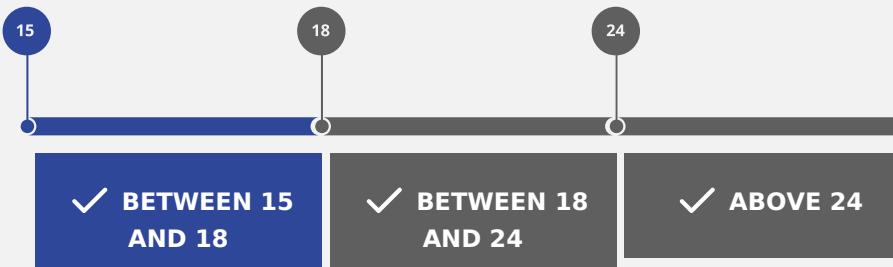
✓ MINIMUM AND
MAXIMUM AGE
LIMITS DEFINED

✓ MINIMUM AGE
LIMITS DEFINED
ONLY

✓ OTHER

Apprentices are at least 15 years old according to the Act of Labour Code and executive regulations. To start an apprenticeship, learners may not be over 18 years old.

Q4. What is the average age of learners in practice?



In the Polish education system, apprentices are only those who have status of a juvenile worker and are between 15-18 years old.

Q5. How many learners are enrolled in this scheme?

According to the Ministry of National Education (in the review of public expenditures) there were 129,643 apprentices in February 2023 [1].

Approximately 2,000-2,500 apprentices that are not students (trained entirely at employers' premises) are not included in the calculations, as their data are not included in System of Educational Information (SIO).

There are no complete statistical data as apprentices are caught "in-between" two ministries – that of education and of family, labour and social policy. They are also not included in the GUS statistics (General Statistics Office).

[1] MEN, dane.gov.pl

Q6. What is the share of apprentices enrolled in this scheme in relation to all VET students for the corresponding educational level(s)?



✓ MORE THAN
60% OF VET
LEARNERS

✓ BETWEEN 30%-
60% OF VET
LEARNERS

✓ BETWEEN 10%
AND 30% OF VET
LEARNERS



✓ LESS THAN
10% OF VET
LEARNERS

Apprentices represent approximately 40% of all learners in the corresponding VET level, that of the 1st level Branch Schools (SBI).
Recent data are not available.

Past data allow more accurate comparison. For example, in the 2016/2017 school year:

- Apprentices account for about 38.4% of 1st level Branch Schools (SBI) students. All SBI students (166.2 thousand) were estimated to account for about 12.6% of all post-gymnasium students, including general education ones (upper-secondary education).
- In overall, apprentices accounted for 5.27% of all post-gymnasium students. The share is 5.5% if juvenile workers that had no student status are added to the estimation.

③ QUALIFICATIONS

Q7. Are the qualifications included in the National Qualification Framework (NQF)?



✓ YES



✓ NO



✓ THERE IS NO
NQF

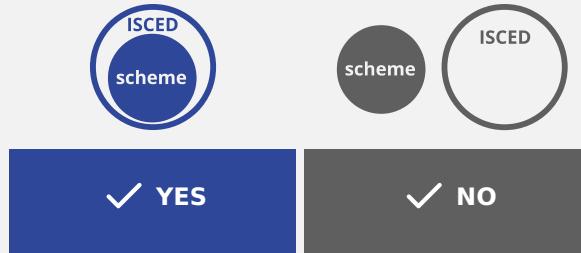
Yes, all apprentices who pass the professional exam receive qualifications at Level 3 of the NQF/EQF.

This applies to graduates of 1st level of Branch School (former basic vocational school) that complete the apprenticeship qualification or the journeyman's certificate in professions listed in Classification of professions for Branch schools (KZSB, see Q11) [1].

The Ministry of Education develops and updates its classification of professions (qualifications) for branch schools (KZSB), whereas the Ministry of Labour maintains a much wider classification for labour market professions and specialties. Apprenticeships, and especially craft ones, can be organised for professions in any of the two classifications.

[1] Act of 22 December 2015 on Integrated Qualification's System (Journal of Laws of 2016, item 64. Ustawa z dnia 22 grudnia 2015 r. o Zintegrowanym Systemie Kwalifikacji, Dz. U. 2016, poz. 64wiade

Q8. Is the scheme included in the ISCED 2011 mapping?



ISCED-2011 level (ISCED-P, 3-digits):

Basic vocational school (for youth) / juvenile workers; Basic vocational school leaving certificate (basic vocational education) - 353, Diploma confirming vocational qualifications (at the basic level) or Journeyman certificate - 353.

Basic vocational schools were renamed to branch (sectoral) schools as of 2017/2018.

Q9. Are the qualifications offered only through apprenticeships?



The answer for this question depends on the character of qualifications.

In the case of the craft qualifications (journeyman), they can be obtained only through apprenticeship (or by experience and confirmed by exam conducted by craft chamber).

In the case of non-craft qualifications (e.g. in sales), the same qualifications can be achieved through apprenticeship or the school-based VET programmes at the corresponding level. Not all the qualifications offered at this level are envisaged for apprentices (and generally for students under 18 years old).

Information about the form of education cycle is included in Europass (diploma supplement) and in a form of a number of NQF level written in "latin" (roman for school connected path qualification – but also students-apprentices in crafts).

Q10. Which is the type of qualification obtained through the apprenticeship scheme?



✓ FORMAL VET
QUALIFICATION
(WHICH DOES NOT
INDICATE THE
PATHWAY)

✓ FORMAL VET
QUALIFICATION
(WHICH INDICATES
THE PATHWAY)

✓ FORMAL
APPRENTICESHIP
QUALIFICATION
(JOURNEYMAN,
ETC.)



✓ OTHERS

Starting from 2019 each VET student is obliged to take the professional exam for vocational qualifications.

In the case of apprenticeships where the employer is a craftsman (in the vast majority), apprentices take the journeyman exam at the Chamber of Crafts, according to the regulations for qualification exams for the titles of journeyman (and for adults, of master) in the profession.

Where the employer is a non-craft company, apprentices take the exam in the relevant qualification at the Regional Examination Boards (OKE - *Okręgowa Komisja Egzaminacyjna*).

Apprentices in non-craft employers, who complete their theoretical education outside a branch school, i.e. in a further education and vocational qualification centre (*ośrodek dokształcania i doskonalenia zawodowego*), or at the employers' premises, takes extramural exams.

The two options result in qualifications that are equivalent/ at the same level in the Polish NQF (level 3, see more: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/country-reports/poland-european-invent...>).

Q11. Does the scheme provide direct access to higher education?



✓ YES

✓ NO

Graduates of the apprenticeship scheme run in the context of the 1st level branch schools (most frequent case) receive qualifications at level 3 of the National and European Qualification Framework. They are not entitled to proceed to higher education, but they can progress to the 2nd level branch schools which, upon successful completion, lead to higher education.

About 5% of apprentices are juvenile workers carrying out the apprenticeship entirely at the employer premises (not in branch schools) do not have the status of a student and need to finish post-gymnasium (or nowadays post-primary school) education to become technician or acquire "matura" and continue their studies at higher level.

Q12. What is the typical duration of the apprenticeship programme?

Full apprenticeship programmes last for 3 years (vocational preparation of juvenile worker - *przygotowanie zawodowe*).

The number of hours of practical vocational education depends on the occupation and is specified in the core curriculum for vocational education (Regulation of the Ministry of Education). It is further defined in the framework curriculum (Regulation of the Ministry of Education).

The Regulation of 16 May 2019 on practical vocational education defines the minimum and maximum percentages of education at the employer's premises. In the case of apprentices, the share of the workplace component depends on the agreement with the employer and the school: the minimum is 970 hours for 3 years, or approximately 60% of the total programme duration.

The range of knowledge and skills acquired by students during practical activities including apprenticeships as well as the number of hours of these activities is determined in the curriculum for a given profession (approved for use in the school by the school principal).

After recent amendment of the education law there are some new possibilities for school directors to shape learning programmes, including access to additional vocational skills.

④ GOVERNANCE

Q13. Is there any organization at the national level with roles in co-ordinating the scheme?



✓ YES



✓ NO

The Ministry of Education has a central role when it comes to training standards, qualifications to be reached through branch schools and examinations of apprentices in non-craft employers.

Regarding apprenticeships in crafts, which represent the majority of all apprenticeships, at national level, the Polish Craft Association (*Związek Rzemiosła Polskiego*) supervises the apprenticeship processes and the development of professional examination standards for journeyman and craft master titles.

<https://zrp.pl/dzialalnosc-zrp/oswiata-zawodowa/>

Q14. What is the role of chambers, employers' and employees' representatives, sectoral councils (if existent), in shaping apprenticeship content, as per regulation?



✓ ROLE IN
DESIGNING
QUALIFICATION

✓ ROLE IN
DESIGNING
CURRICULA

✓ OTHER

✗ NO ROLE

Chambers

Craft chambers supervise the learning process. Together with Polish Craft Association they develop standards and requirements for journeyman and craftmaster examinations. They are also invited by ORE (Centre of Education Development) to support VET curricula development, including those used in apprenticeship programmes.

They can initiate development of new specialties with their curricula and examination standards. They are members of the newly created sectorial councils and the Programme Council for Competencies (*rady sektorowe i Rada Programowa ds Kompetencji*).

Social partners

Social partners have the right to draft opinions on developed proposals regarding the apprenticeship system. Those opinions can be in written or presented also at the forum of Social Dialogue Council (RDS). Members of those organizations can be nominated for members of other competent bodies (like sectorial councils, etc.). In Poland there are five employer representatives (LEWIATAN, ZRP, BCC, Pracodawcy RP i ZPP) and three trade unions (Solidarnosc, FZZ, OPZZ).

Both employers and employees' representatives are members of the newly created sectorial councils and the Programme Council for Competencies (*rady sektorowe i Rada Programowa ds Kompetencji*).

They are also involved by ORE in the process of designing curricula, and they can also disseminate opinions on the developed curricula.

Individual employers

For apprenticeships, an employer may submit to the principal of the school requests regarding the curriculum content, in terms of practical work that should be carried its premises.

If an employer is an organiser of an apprenticeship, it is obliged to prepare an education programme (usually uses programmes made by crafts for their members) together with school's principal, that builds on the relevant programme basis (see Q22).

Q15. What is the role of chambers, employers' and employees' representatives in implementing the apprenticeship scheme, as per regulation?



✓ ROLE IN FINAL ASSESSMENT OF APPRENTICES

✓ ROLE IN ACCREDITATION OF COMPANIES

✓ ROLE IN MONITORING OF THE IN-COMPANY TRAINING



✓ OTHER

✓ NO ROLE

Craft guilds supervise the in-company training process, inspecting how training takes place at the workplace. They are also middlemen for remuneration of juveniles' salaries in front of public authorities. They also act as a "bridge" of communication between the employer and the school. Guilds also draft reports about number, professions and progress of apprentices, including their preparation for the journeyman exam.

Craft companies that train juvenile workers are obliged to be members of craft guilds (on the basis of the Craft act), but other non-craft companies are not obliged to such an affiliation.

Craft chambers (it takes at least ten craft guilds to create a chamber) conduct exams and the Polish Craft Association supervises process of qualification assessment for apprentices and develops examination standards.

No other chambers have such rights in Poland, although they are also involved in apprenticeship (but rather as EU project's beneficiaries).

Branch (sectoral) schools that most usually offer the theoretical part can be public and non-public, the latter established by associations, NGO's and craft guilds and chambers.

The interim and annual (semester) assessments of practical activities organized at the workplace are set by the apprenticeship instructor.

Individual employers must issue a certificate that the students completed their practical activities and followed a training programme. Without this certificate it is not possible for students to participate in the corresponding exam.

Q16. What are the main roles of key state actors?

Ministries take care of the legal framework and special protection for juvenile workers (special labour law with protective character, regulation on work conditions and salaries plus curricula)

The Ministry of Education has a significant role in elaborating the training standards (Programme Basis for branch education, followed by minimum learning programme standards). School directors enjoy some level of autonomy to specify further apprenticeship learning in collaboration with the employer.

The Ministry of Education develops and updates its classification of professions (qualifications) for branch schools (KZSB), whereas the Ministry of Labour maintains a much wider classification for labour market professions and specialties.

ORE (Centre of Education Development) is the state institution responsible for the development of curricula.

Public employment services take care of the process of paying the incentives to company owners that decide to employ juvenile worker - such incentives (*refundacje, dofinansowanie*) are paid from the Labour Fund - governed by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs (See Q34).

Regional Examination Boards (OKE) are regional public bodies dependent of the Ministry of Education, that organise the exams for apprentices in non-craft companies.

Social partners take care of law to be implemented (they propose new amendments and signal potential problems, sometimes recommend systemic solutions) plus Polish Craft Association has a special role to play as it is empowered by the Ministry of Education to supervise processes of vocational preparation in craft companies and craft exams conducted by craft chambers.

Craft chambers conduct professional exams of the journeyman and craftmasters.

Craft guilds conduct supervision of the apprenticeships among their members and other employer organisations supervise such training of juvenile workers among their members (non-craftsmen).

5 TRAINING AT THE WORKPLACE

Q17. Is it compulsory to alternate training between two learning venues (school and company)?



✓ YES

✓ NO

In line with the Regulation on vocational preparation of apprentices and their remuneration (2019, §1.2), to prepare a juvenile to work as a qualified employee or journeyman, vocational education should include:

- 1) practical vocational training, which is organized at the employer's premises on the principles set out in separate regulations, as well as
- 2) additional theoretical education.

The theoretical part of the learning process may be organized at a school (juvenile workers are also school students), the company or at a training center.

In case the employer delivers the theoretical training, it must ensure those delivering the theoretical learning hold a pedagogical qualification, statutorily specified.

In practice, only 2-2,500 of juvenile workers (5% of all apprentices) undertake their theoretical education at the workplace, by the company owner or dedicated VET instructor (in that case, juvenile workers are not school students).

Q18. Is the in-company training defined as minimum share of the apprenticeship scheme duration?



✓ YES,
EQUIVALENT OR
MORE THAN 50%
OF SCHEME
DURATION



✓ YES, BETWEEN
20% AND 50% OF
THE SCHEME
DURATION



✓ YES, LESS
THAN 20% OF THE
SCHEME DURATION



✓ NO, NO
MINIMUM SHARE IS
COMPULSORY

The minimum number of hours of compulsory teaching earmarked for vocational training in the learning cycle is specified in framework curricula (*ramowe plany nauczania*) [1] for secondary school vocational education.

The daily working hours for students over the age of 15 years is 8 hours.

In the case of juvenile workers/apprentices, all the hours dedicated to practical learning of an occupation provided for in the framework curriculum for vocational school are spent at the workplace. This means 970 hours of classes in the 3-year programme duration; not less than 60% of the total number of teaching hours allocated to vocational training in the framework curriculum.

In practice, the number of hours for the workplace component at SBI apprenticeship programmes (1st level of Branch School) is approximately 60.6%.

For comparison, in technical and post-secondary school (i.e. *technikum* and *szkoła policealna*), 50% of the total hours allocated for vocational training (theoretical and practical in total).[2]

[1] Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 3 kwietnia 2019r. w sprawie ramowych planów nauczania dla publicznych szkół, Dz.U. 2019, poz. 639

[2] Ministry of Education, 6 August 2015, https://men.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/uzasadnienie_pnz_06.08.15

Q19. Is there a distinction between the training time and working time for the period spent at workplace, as per regulation?



✓ YES, THE
LEGAL FRAMEWORK
MAKES THIS
DISTINCTION

✓ NO, THE LEGAL
FRAMEWORK
MAKES NO
DISTINCTION

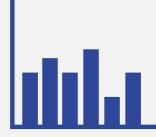
Q20. What is the form of alternation of training between workplace (company) and school?



✓ EVERY WEEK
INCLUDES BOTH
VENUES

✓ ONE OR MORE
WEEKS (LESS THAN
1 MONTH) SPENT
AT SCHOOL
FOLLOWED BY ONE
OR MORE WEEKS
AT WORKPLACE

✓ ONE OR MORE
MONTHS (LESS
THAN 1 YEAR)
SPENT AT SCHOOL
FOLLOWED BY ONE
OR MORE MONTHS
AT WORKPLACE



✓ A LONGER
PERIOD (1-2
YEARS) SPENT AT
SCHOOL FOLLOWED
BY A LONGER
PERIOD SPENT
TRAINING AT
WORKPLACE

✓ VARIOUS -
DEPENDS ON
AGREEMENTS
BETWEEN THE
SCHOOL AND THE
COMPANY

✓ OTHER

✓ NOT SPECIFIED

Generally, a typical form of alternation is as follows: Apprentice is directed by the employer to undertake theoretical training in a 1st level branch school usually in the following pattern:

- 1st year of apprenticeship: 1 day at the enterprise and 4 days at the vocational (branch) school a week
- 2nd year of apprenticeship: 2 days at the enterprise and 3 days at the vocational (branch) school a week
- 3rd year of apprenticeship: 3 days at the enterprise and 2 days at the vocational (branch) school weekly.

Different patterns also exist, as e.g. an alternate system of 2 weeks at the company and 2 weeks at school, or 1 week at school and 3 weeks at the workplace etc.

The form of alternation depends on the year of learning and the negotiations between the school and the employer (supported sometimes by craft organisations).

Q21. What is the basis for the training offered?



✓ THE SCHEME IS
IMPLEMENTED VIA
A SPECIFIC
APPRENTICESHIP
PROGRAMME

✓ THE SCHEME IS
IMPLEMENTED ON
THE BASIS OF THE
SCHOOL-BASED VET
PROGRAMME

✓ THE SCHEME IS
IMPLEMENTED
BASED ON THE VET
STANDARDS (VALID
GENERALLY FOR
ALL VET SCHEMES)



✓ OTHER

The Ministry of Education develops and updates its classification of professions for branch schools (KZSB) (branch schooling), whereas the Ministry of Labour maintains a much wider classification for labour market professions and specialties.

Apprenticeships, and especially craft ones, can be organised for professions in any of the two classifications, as there are 136 craft professions available in the two classifications

(but there are exceptions on those taught to juveniles, in particular through branch schools).

Vocational programmes are based in the Programme Basis for Branch

Education (*podstawy programowe kształcenia dla szkolnictwa branżowego*). They are created for all professions listed in the Ministry of Education classification of professions for branch schools (KZSB). A programme basis comprises competencies for all students (personal and social), competencies to be developed in all professions of a specific sector and occupation-specific competences within a sector. They also provide the ground for the examination standards for relevant journeyman exams in crafts apprenticeship (2/3 of craft apprenticeships are included in the KZSB classification) [1].

After recent amendment of the education law there are some new possibilities for school directors to shape learning programmes, including access to additional vocational skills.

The examination standards are the basis for apprenticeship training in ‘non-school’ apprenticeships that belong to the classification of the Ministry of Labour, although the theoretical part does not take place at schools.

[1] Regulation of Minister of National Education of 16 May 2019 regarding programme basis for education in branch schooling professions and added vocational skills in certain professions (Journal of Laws of 2019, item. 991)

Q22. Is the company hosting apprentices required by regulation to follow a training plan at the workplace?



✓ YES, THE TRAINING PLAN IS BASED ON THE NATIONAL/SECTORAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IN-COMPANY TRAINING



✓ YES, THE TRAINING PLAN IS AGREED AT THE LEVEL OF SCHOOL AND COMPANY



✓ NO, IS NOT REQUIRED FORMALLY

An employer is obliged to hire and train a juvenile worker/apprentice in accordance with the curriculum of practical vocational education and an agreement with the corresponding school director (since 2019).

According to the law, the contract concerning practical vocational education defines, among other things, the form of practical training and its scope; dates of vocational training start and completion; the rights and obligations of the parties.

Programme Basis for branch schooling set the ground for the content of training, and are further elaborated by the Ministry of Education (see Q21).

Since 2019, increased autonomy of school directors is introduced, as they can further specify the content of training in written in cooperation with the employer.

Q23. What are the requirements on companies to provide placements, as per

regulation?



✓ HAVE TO
PROVIDE A
SUITABLE
LEARNING
ENVIRONMENT

✓ HAVE TO
PROVIDE A MENTOR
/ TUTOR / TRAINER

✓ OTHER

In line with the Regulation on vocational preparation of apprentices and their remuneration (§10.1, 1996; 2019), an employer:

- directs young people to the theoretical training at a basic vocational school (now 1st level branch school); or
- directs young people to a training center for theoretical education and vocational training; or
- organizes theoretical training on its own.

The employer is obliged to:

- recruit and train a juvenile worker/apprentice in accordance with the programme of practical vocational education;
- plan the practical training of the apprenticeship;
- equip the learner with personal protective equipment required at a given position, protective clothing and working tools, materials and other necessary equipment, and adhere to the provisions on the protection work and health of young people.

In line with the Regulation on practical vocational education (2019), the entities (including employers) that host students or young people taking part in practical vocational education (including apprentices), among others:

- provide the material conditions for the implementation of practical training;
- appoint the appropriate teachers, apprenticeship instructors and tutors;
- familiarise learners with the organization of work, work regulations, and with the provisions and principles of safety and health at work.

Q24. What are the formal requirements regarding workplace trainers/mentors/tutors? What is their profile?

Until 2019 there were stricter rules concerning the person who can act as a VET instructor, as it was required to have at least a professional title of a craftmaster or technician.

Since then, journeymen and people with IVET education (3rd level of Polish Qualification Framework) with at least 6 years of experience can become workplace instructors in apprenticeships.

Candidates also have to accomplish a pedagogical course for practical instructors consisting of 48 hours of classes, including methodology of teaching, basics of pedagogy and psychology (previously this lasted 96 hours).

[1] Regulation of Minister of National Education of 22 February 2019 regarding practical teaching of profession (Journal of Laws of 2019, item. 391)

[2] Notice of the 25 of May 2023 of the Sejm Marschall on the publishing of Act on the prevention of sexual crimes threats and protection of juvenile pupils (Journal of Laws of 2023, item 1304)

Q25. Are there any sanctions on companies that do not provide training to apprentices at the workplace?



✓ YES

✓ NO

An employer that does not provide sufficient training can lose the right to conduct training and must return the financial subsidies.

In case the apprentice does not pass the final vocational examination(s), the employer does not receive the additional subsidy of the training costs that is paid at the end of the programme (*dofinansowanie*).

⑥ CONTRACT AND COMPENSATION

Q26. What is the status of the learner?



✓ ONLY STUDENT

✓ ONLY EMPLOYEE

✓ APPRENTICE IS A SPECIFIC STATUS (STUDENT AND EMPLOYEE COMBINED)



✓ OTHER

An apprentice is formally an employee first, and usually then becomes a student and a learner of the profession.

In most cases, an apprentice carries out its training both at the workplace and in 1st level branch schools (SBI). In such case, in line with the Act on the education law (2016), the apprentice acquires a dual legal status:

- a juvenile worker to whom the rules of the Labour Code apply as well as the resulting implementing regulations;

- a student to whom the rules of the Act on the educational law apply as well as the relevant implementing regulations.

There are cases that the apprentice does not attend school at all and therefore does not have the status of learner - only that of an employee (applies to up to 5% of all apprentices).

Q27. Is there any written arrangement between the learner and company, required as per regulation?



YES

NO

The legal basis for practical activities is an employment contract for vocational training concluded between the juvenile worker/apprentice and the employer. It is a mandatory document required mainly on the basis of the Labour Code (Article 195 § 1 of the Labour Code) and its executive acts.

Q28. What is the nature of the written arrangement?



APPRENTICESHIP
ARE AN ORDINARY
EMPLOYMENT
CONTRACT

APPRENTICESHIP
ARE A SPECIFIC
TYPE OF CONTRACT

ANOTHER TYPE
OF FORMAL
AGREEMENT, NOT A
CONTRACT

The employer is obliged to conclude a written employment contract with a young apprentice, according to the provisions of Article 195 § 1 of the Labour Code. This means that a young person is formally employed. The contract is based on the Labour Code, but it is a specific type of contract resulting from the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 28 May 1996 on vocational preparation of apprentices and their remuneration - and its further changes (Journal of Laws of 2019, item. 1636).

Q29. Where is the contract or the formal agreement registered?



✓ AT THE SCHOOL

✓ AT THE MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT

✓ AT THE CHAMBERS



✓ AT THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

✓ OTHER

An employer who concludes an employment contract with an apprentice shall notify the mayor competent for the place of the apprentice residence.

If an employer is a craftsman, the appropriate chamber of craft shall be also notified (§3a of the Regulation on vocational preparation of apprentices).

Additional copies of the contract are passed by a craftsman/employer to the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS), Tax Office and the vocational school, as long as a young apprentice is undertaking education in the school system.

Starting from 2019, an agreement with apprentice certification on finishing primary school is also notified to the school's director.

Some arrangements (like number of days to spend at company and ways for monitoring processes) are also attached to the apprentice-employer contract.

Q30. Do apprentices receive a wage or allowance?



✓ YES, ALL APPRENTICES RECEIVE A WAGE (TAXABLE INCOME)

✓ YES, ALL APPRENTICES RECEIVE AN ALLOWANCE (NOT A FORM OF TAXABLE INCOME)

✓ APPRENTICES RECEIVE A REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES



✓ NO FORM OF
COMPENSATION IS
FORESEEN BY LAW

Employers, who employ young people within the scheme of vocational preparation of juvenile workers, are obliged to pay a salary to their apprentices.

Employers cover parts of the social security insurance costs and may also cover other types of expenses (see Q32, Q33).

According to the Regulation on vocational preparation of apprentices and their remuneration (1996; 2019), a juvenile worker is entitled to remuneration throughout the whole period of vocational training, for which the contract has been signed.

Q31. How is the apprentice wage (taxable income) set?



✓ BY LAW
(APPLYING FOR
ALL)

✓ BY CROSS-
SECTORAL
COLLECTIVE
AGREEMENTS AT
NATIONAL OR
LOCAL LEVEL

✓ BY SECTORAL
COLLECTIVE
AGREEMENTS AT
NATIONAL OR
LOCAL LEVEL



✓ BY FIRM-LEVEL
COLLECTIVE
AGREEMENTS OR
INDIVIDUAL
AGREEMENTS
BETWEEN
APPRENTICE AND
COMPANY

✓ OTHER

According to the Regulation on vocational preparation of apprentices and their

remuneration (1996; changes in 2019), apprentice remuneration is calculated as a percentage of the average monthly wage in the previous quarter (in force since the first day of the month following the announcement by the President of the Central Statistical Office in the "Polish Monitor").

Since September 2023, the percentage of remuneration was increased by 1 p.p. as referred to above, and actually is at the level of: 1) not less than 8% in the first year of study; 2) not less than 9% in the second year of study; 3) not less than 10% in the third year of study.

This development increases the averages monthly remuneration by approximately 40 Euros, from 70-90 Euros a month before September 2023 to 125-160 Euros a month afterwards.

Despite being a positive development, is considered as insufficient to significantly improve attractiveness of apprenticeships, especially in the context of an increased attention given to other forms of upper secondary VET (see Q5 of the Polish country fiche).

The employer can also provide additional remuneration on top of the minimum one, but this is not mandatory.

⑦ FINANCING AND INCENTIVES

Q32. Who covers the cost of the wage or allowance of the apprentice?



✓ EMPLOYERS



✓ STATE



✓ OTHER

Employers pay the wage, but they can get reimbursement for the apprentice wage and social security insurance costs from the Labour Fund, which is part of the state budget (although it is created mainly by contributions from all companies in the country). See more in Q33.

Q33. What are the sources of financing of the direct costs for the in-company training part of the apprenticeship scheme?



✓ SINGLE
EMPLOYERS
HOSTING
APPRENTICES



✓ TRAINING
FUNDS



✓ STATE



✓ OTHER

Employers pay a wage to apprentices participating in the scheme and cover parts of the social security insurance costs.

Some additional salaries were also paid from the structural funds in the frameworks of projects.

Employers can be reimbursed for these expenses by the state budget (Labour Fund), largely using company contributions, and by the Polish Craft Association (see Q34).

In 2024, a new form of theoretical education has started to be offered by the Branch Skills Centres (*Branżowe Centra Umiejętności*). It is financed from the KPO (National Recovery Programme).

Q34. Are there any financial incentives for companies that offer apprenticeship places?



✓ YES, SUBSIDIES

✓ YES, TAX DEDUCTIONS

✓ YES, OTHER INCENTIVES



✓ NO FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Employers can be reimbursed for the apprentice wage and social security insurance costs from the Labour Fund (Fundusz Pracy), which is part of the State budget, but is supported by 96-98% from contributions from all companies in the country.

The Labour Fund provides incentives for employers involved in apprenticeship in two ways:

- Remuneration apprentice's salary (70-90 Euro/month) in the minimum form up to the level of 5-7% of average salary
- Subsidy for employers who had successfully trained an journeyman or led an juvenile to the acquisition of qualification after the apprenticeship (one-time "reward" 2,000-2,500 Euro per apprentice) – but only in certain professions which list is

announced by Institute of Educational Researches and published by the Minister of National Education – such as: Notice of Minister of National Education of 22 March 2019 on prognosis of the employers needs in the professions of branch schooling at the national and regional labour markets.

More information on the instruments used to finance apprenticeships in Poland is available on Cedefop's database on financing apprenticeship schemes:

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/financing-apprenticeships/appren...>

Basic vocational schools renamed lately to 1st Level Branch Schools (SBI) have recently introduced initiatives to attract learners and employers and collaborate with the crafts (38 non-public VET schools are conducted by craft organisations) [1]. Nevertheless, school directors and public schools are rather supported to promote other forms of VET and WBL at this level: technical classes, school workshops and practical learning centers.

Vocational preparation of juvenile workers in crafts, that are obliged to sit the relevant journeyman exams are also supported by the Polish Craft Association "Educational Fund" (Fundusz Oświatowy, ZRP). This Fund supports promotional spots, publications and articles that promote apprenticeship.

Some actions connected to the final journeyman / craft exams are also financed by the EFS project "New quality of craft exams" (2016-2020) conducted by the Polish Craft Association [2] – in parallel to the Central Examination Board (CKE) project [3] (which include also the development of on-line exams applications) – dz. 2.15 PO WER (2016-2020).

Wages and their subsidisation are based on several regulatory documents, e.g.:

- The Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 13 August 2019 on changes in Regulation of vocational preparation of apprentices and their remuneration (Journal of Laws of 2019, item. 1636)
- The Regulation of the Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy of 24 July 2019 on changes in the Regulation on Labour Fund's remuneration of salaries paid to the apprentices (Journal of Laws of 2019, item.1395)
- Funding for costs of training juvenile workers/apprentices (subsidy) – art. 122 of the Act of 14 December 2016 on the education law (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 1148, 1078).

[1] Stępnikowski A. (2019), Master Craftsman's competencies in the craftwork apprenticeship, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Special Pedagogics Academy in Warsaw, p.35.

[2] <https://ewr.zrp.pl>

[3] <https://cke.gov.pl/egzamin-zawodowy/>

Q35. Does the wage or allowance of the apprentice cover both the time spent at school and in the company?



✓ YES



✓ NO, IT COVERS
ONLY THE TIME
SPENT IN THE
COMPANY

According to the Regulation on vocational preparation of apprentices and their

remuneration (1996; 2019), a juvenile worker is entitled to remuneration **throughout the whole period of vocational training**, for which the contract has been signed.

Renumeration of the salary (*refundacja wynagrodzenia młodocianego*) is paid by Labour Fund mainly for the time spent at the workplace but the subsidy (*dofinansowanie*) is paid with certain sum per month and it includes both forms of education – company and school.

Q36. Are there any incentives for learners?



✓ YES, GRANTS PAID TO LEARNERS TO TOP UP THEIR REMUNERATION



✓ YES, GRANTS PAID TO LEARNERS RELATED TO OTHER COSTS (TRAVEL, FOOD ETC.)



✓ YES, RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING / FAST-TRACK OPPORTUNITIES



✓ YES, GUIDANCE OR LEARNER SUPPORT



✓ YES, OTHER TYPES OF INCENTIVES



✓ NO

In addition to paying the wage, an employer who employs juvenile workers: 1) covers the costs of the examinations if they are passed in the first available exam period; 2) may cover costs for apprentices retaking the exams.

An employer may finance the costs of travel and stay for juvenile workers who attend schools or training centers outside their place of residence and work.

The employer can also provide additional remuneration on top of the minimum one, but this is not mandatory.

Grants for apprentices are usually foreseen when it comes to involve apprentices in EU funded projects, like Erasmus+.

From 2023 there is also non-financial bonus as apprentices together with other students are allowed to take part in a branch-professional training (*branżowe szkolenia zawodowe*) enabling them to confirm and acquire another labour market qualification (Polish Qualification Framework).