

Cedefop monitoring of vocational education and training policies and systems

Progress towards the medium-term deliverables  
of the Riga conclusions

**Country chapter**

**POLAND**

Developments in vocational education and training policy  
in 2015-19

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This report was produced by Cedefop and reflects contributions from Cedefop's VET policy and systems team, and Cedefop experts working on common European tools and principles for education and training, and statistics. It is based on detailed information on VET policy implementation submitted by Cedefop's European network of expertise on VET (ReferNet) and other sources.

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# Introduction

In June 2015, the ministers in charge of vocational education and training in the EU Member States, the candidate countries and the European Economic Area countries, convened in Riga, agreed on objectives for vocational education and training (VET) policies for 2015-20<sup>(1)</sup>.

Cedefop has been entrusted with monitoring the countries' policies implemented towards reaching these objectives.

This country chapter is part of the monitoring process. It was drafted based on input from the national ReferNet team. It presents an overview of the major policy developments that have taken place in the country in 2015-19, in the areas covered by the Riga medium-term deliverables (MTDs).

The country chapter is structured as follows:

- (a) the introductory section Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015 briefly sketches the VET context in the country in 2015, highlighting selected figures and major policy initiatives that were just being adopted or started at that time. This introductory section is targeted at setting a baseline to put in perspective the policy choices and developments that have taken place since the beginning of the Riga cycle;
- (b) five thematic chapters then follow, devoted to the five respective MTDs outlined in the Riga conclusions. Each thematic chapter also begins with a 2015 baseline, more specifically addressing the MTD-related topics. The baseline is followed by the presentation of the major policy developments in the MTD since 2015;
- (c) the country chapter ends with a conclusion summarising the main lines of the 2015-19 policy developments and highlighting possible priorities for the future.

This country chapter is part of the information which the European Commission used to prepare the European Semester exercises<sup>(2)</sup> in 2017-19. The chapter also informs the work of Cedefop and the European Training

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(1) *Riga conclusions 2015 on a new set of medium-term deliverables in the field of VET for the period 2015-20, as a result of the review of short-term deliverables defined in the 2010 Bruges communiqué:*

[https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/RigaConclusions\\_2015.pdf](https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/RigaConclusions_2015.pdf)

(2) European Semester: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester_en)

Foundation (ETF) in preparing a joint monitoring report on the implementation of the Riga conclusions. Both the joint report and the country chapter are aimed at informing the work of EU Member States' Directors General for Vocational Training (DGVTS) and Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT) on taking stock of the outcomes of the Riga conclusions and preparing the next steps for the EU VET policy for the next few years.

## Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, the proportion of upper secondary students enrolled in vocational education and training VET programmes in Poland was above the EU average: 49.2% in 2014 compared to 48% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017c, p. 109); 50% in 2015 compared to 47% in the EU <sup>(3)</sup>. However, the employment rate of recent upper secondary graduates was lower than in the EU: 65.6% in 2014 (European Commission, 2015, p. 7) and 68.5% in 2015 (European Commission, 2015, p. 7) compared to 70.8% and 74.1% in the EU respectively); the employment rate for VET graduates only was 70% in 2015 (European Commission, 2015, p. 8), compared to 73% in the EU. Adult participation in lifelong learning was low at 4% in 2014 (European Commission, 2015, p. 8) and 3.5% in 2015 compared to 10.7% on average in the EU in both years (Cedefop, 2017c, p. 109) (Table 1).

VET in the country was facing the challenge of meeting labour market needs better, especially through reinforcing its practical training component and cooperation with employers. VET reform had been started in 2012-13. In 2014-15, a VET advisory committee had been set up to guide reflection and bring suggestions forward. Measures to strengthen cooperation between VET and business, revise VET curricula, improve career guidance, monitor transition to work, and fund teacher training were being considered. From a lifelong learning perspective, measures in support of the validation of non-formal and informal learning had just been adopted in 2014.

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<sup>(3)</sup> Eurostat, data for 2015.

Table 1. Framework data: score on VET indicators in Poland and in the EU: 2010-15

Indicator label	2010		2015 (*)		Trend in 2011-15 (per year)			
	PL <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Yr	PL <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Range	PL	EU
<b>Access, attractiveness and flexibility</b>								
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	A	A	'14	49.2 <sup>b</sup>	48.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E1</sub>	'13-'14	▪ 0.4	▪ -0.9
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	A	A	'14	34.0 <sup>b</sup>	34.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E2</sub>			
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET			'14	74.7	69.2 <sup>E3</sup>	'13-'14	▪ 0.7	▪ -1.4
Employees participating in CVT courses (%)	31.0	38.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	31.0	38.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Employees participating in on-the-job training (%)	11.0	20.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	11.0	20.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Adults in lifelong learning (%)			'15	3.5 <sup>b</sup>	10.7 <sup>b</sup>	'13-'15	↘ -0.4	→ 0.0
Enterprises providing training (%)	22.0	66.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	22.0	66.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	A	A	'14	38.8 <sup>b</sup>	42.7 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E1</sub>	'13-'14	▪ 0.8	▪ -1.0
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	9.0	25.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	9.0	25.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)			'15	25.9 <sup>b</sup>	33.0 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ -0.8	▪ -0.3
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)		5.3	'15	1.0 <sup>b</sup>	6.9	'13-'15	↘ -0.1	↗ 0.1
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)			'15	0.6 <sup>b</sup> <sub>C</sub>	4.3 <sup>b</sup> <sub>C</sub>	'13-'14	▪ -0.1	▪ 0.0
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)			'15	3.4 <sup>b</sup>	9.5 <sup>b</sup>	'13-'15	↘ -0.4	↘ -0.4
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)	9.6 <sup>B</sup>	9.5 <sup>e</sup> <sub>B</sub>	'11	9.6	9.5 <sup>e</sup>			
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)	85.2 <sup>B</sup>	80.2 <sup>e</sup> <sub>B</sub>	'11	85.2	80.2 <sup>e</sup>			
<b>Skill development and labour market relevance</b>								
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)			'13	0.54 <sup>b</sup> <sub>F</sub>	0.56 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E4</sub>	'12-'13	▪ -0.01	▪ 0.03
IVET public expenditure per student (1 000 PPS units)			'13	4.2 <sup>b</sup> <sub>F</sub>	6.4 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E5</sub>	'12-'13	▪ 0.2	▪ 0.0
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.5	0.8 <sup>e</sup>	'10	0.5	0.8 <sup>e</sup>			
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET			'14	1.6 <sup>b</sup>	1.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E6</sub>	'13-'14	▪ 0.0	▪ 0.0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	A	A	'14	44.5 <sup>b</sup>	30.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E7</sub>	'13-'14	▪ 4.9	▪ -0.4
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates			'14	1.0	9.3 <sup>E8</sup>	'13-'14	▪ -0.2	▪ 0.4
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)	55.4	41.5 <sup>E9</sup>	'12	48.1	41.6 <sup>E9</sup>	'10-'12	▪ -3.7	▪ 0.0
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20- to 34-year-olds)			'15	74.6 <sup>b</sup>	77.2 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ 1.9	▪ 0.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)			'15	2.3 <sup>b</sup>	5.3 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ -0.4	▪ -1.0

Indicator label	2010		2015 (*)		Trend in 2011-15 (per year)			
	PL <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Yr	PL <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Range	PL	EU
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)			'15	28.0 <sup>b</sup>	23.7 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ 0.6	▪ -0.1
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)			'15	87.3	83.7			
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	59.8	55.2	'15	58.2	57.3	'10-'15	▪ -0.3	▪ 0.4
<b>Overall transitions and labour market trends</b>								
Early leavers from education and training (%)		13.9	'15	5.3 <sup>b</sup>	11.0 <sup>c</sup>	'13-'15	↘ -0.1	↘ -0.5
30- to 34-year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	34.8	33.8	'15	43.4 <sup>c</sup>	38.7 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↗ 1.7	↗ 1.0
NEET rate for 18 to 24-year-olds (%)		16.6	'15	14.7 <sup>b</sup>	15.8	'13-'15	↘ -0.8	↘ -0.7
Unemployment rate for 20 to 34-year-olds (%)	13.1	13.1	'15	10.6	12.9	'10-'15	↘ -0.4	↗ 0.1
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)		77.4	'15	77.4 <sup>b</sup>	76.9 <sup>c</sup>	'13-'15	↗ 2.1	↗ 0.7
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	11.5	27.3	'15	9.2 <sup>c</sup>	23.5 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↘ -0.5	↘ -0.8
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds (%)	64.3	68.6	'15	67.8	70.0	'10-'15	↗ 0.7	↗ 0.3
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)	39.2	53.4	'15	39.8 <sup>c</sup>	52.6 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	→ 0.0	↘ -0.2
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2020 (% of total)			'16	95.6 <sup>d</sup>	82.8 <sup>d</sup>			

(\*) The data in this column are the data available in 2016. Where 2015 data were not available, data from previous years were used.

(<sup>A</sup>) UOE (UNESCO OECD Eurostat) back reconstruction of 2010 values based on ISCED (international standard classification of education) 2011 not yet available.

(<sup>B</sup>) AES (adult education survey) 2011, used as proxy for 2010 baseline.

(<sup>I</sup>) 2014 b flags in Eurostat online tables ignored on the basis of other relevant Eurostat metadata.

(<sup>D</sup>) Forecast made in 2016.

(<sup>E1</sup>) Based on 28 countries; partial information for NL.

(<sup>E2</sup>) Based on 25 countries (missing: ES, PL, RO); partial information for NL.

(<sup>E3</sup>) Based on 27 countries (missing: NL); partial information for EL, IT.

(<sup>E4</sup>) Based on 19 countries (missing: BE, DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT, SK).

(<sup>E5</sup>) Based on 21 countries (missing: DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT).

(<sup>E6</sup>) Partial information for NL.

(<sup>E7</sup>) Based on 25 countries (missing: HR, IT, UK).

(<sup>E8</sup>) Based on 23 countries (missing: BE, IE, FR, CY, UK).

(<sup>E9</sup>) Based on 22 countries (missing: DE, IE, EL, NL, SI, UK).

(<sup>b</sup>) Break after 2010, therefore baseline data not included.

(<sup>u</sup>) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.

(<sup>z</sup>) Eurostat: 'not applicable'.

(<sup>e</sup>) Eurostat: 'estimated'.

NB: Definitions in the indicators table differ from those used in national legislation.

EU refers to EU-28, unless otherwise specified. Arrows ↗ or ↘ signal a positive or negative trend based on more than two data points and of a magnitude of 0.1 per year or more. Trends based on more than two data points but of a smaller magnitude are indicated by →; trends based on two points only are marked ▪. Trends are estimated by means of regression models.

Source: Cedefop, 2017c.

## CHAPTER 1.

# MTD 1 – All forms of work-based learning with special attention to apprenticeships

### 1.1. Baseline 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, formal VET in Poland was offered at upper-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary levels. The share of practical training varied between 50-60%, depending on the programme and the occupation concerned. The content of the practical training was defined by occupation-specific curricula. Practical training was delivered either in mainly school-based settings <sup>(4)</sup> or as on-the-job training with an employer or through a special form of apprenticeship (*juvenile employment*).

On-the-job training with an employer was organised by the school, based on a contract between the school and the employer.

Apprenticeship (*juvenile employment*) was organised in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), mainly in the crafts, mostly for young people aged 16-18, based on a contract between the company and the apprentice. The apprenticeship lasted between 24 and 36 months and ended with the apprenticeship exam. Around 60% of basic vocational school learners participated in this form of training in 2015. Shorter apprenticeships (three to six months) were also available to those (aged 15 or older) who had not completed lower secondary education. Short apprenticeships led to the attainment of a certificate stating the acquisition of particular skills in a specific occupation. The certificate was issued by the enterprise and recognised by the education system. Certificate holders could afterwards decide to enrol in further apprenticeship training to obtain a vocational qualification. In such a case, the short apprenticeship period would be considered an integral part of the longer apprenticeship programme (Cedefop ReferNet Poland, 2014, p.20). Apprentices received at least 4%, 5% or 6% of an average monthly salary depending on whether they were in the 1st, 2nd or 3rd year of training.

Employers offering practical training placements could receive financial support (Cedefop, 2015).

Apprenticeship for adults was in place as part of active labour market programmes operated by local labour offices to help the unemployed acquire

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<sup>(4)</sup> School workshops and laboratories, school farms, continuing education centres, continuing education centres, and practical training centres.

skills and formal qualifications. Funding came from the Labour office. Both short apprenticeship programmes (three to six months) (Cedefop Refernet Poland, 2014) and long ones (12-18 months, enabling participants to take the journeyman exam) were available. Programmes consisted of 80% practical training and 20% theoretical instruction. Courses could be organised by VET schools (Cedefop, 2014).

Apart from the crafts trades, employers' involvement in practical training provision was limited. As obstacles to further engaging, companies mentioned the lack of financial incentives, bureaucracy and legal issues (Cedefop ReferNet Poland, 2014). Employers also tended to consider work placements in enterprises as rather short, hence not worth the investment (Chłoń-Domińczak et al., 2016). More broadly, social partners considered that their role in shaping VET policy was mostly consultative (issuing opinions) without any power in decision making (Cedefop ReferNet Poland, 2014). As a consequence, at the beginning of the reporting period, quality apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities were insufficient <sup>(5)</sup>. Yet, promotional activities had been conducted: the 2014-15 school year was declared the 'Year of Vocational Schools', which was aimed – among others – at promoting apprenticeships and the cooperation of schools with employers (ReferNet Poland, 2015). Also, legislation was revised so that, as of September 2015, employers had an increased role in shaping VET curricula, based on their needs and through direct interaction with VET schools (ReferNet Poland, 2016).

## 1.2. Policy priorities for 2016-20

The country's priorities in this area <sup>(6)</sup> for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training (DGVT), are threefold:

- (a) for apprenticeship:
  - (i) increase the share of apprentices in basic vocational schools from 60% to 70%;
  - (ii) support the implementation of the amended regulation of 6 August 2015 on practical learning;
- (b) for work-based learning in school-based VET, enhance cooperation between employers and vocational schools;

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<sup>(5)</sup> European Commission (2015). *Commission staff working document: country report Poland*. SWD(2015) 40 final. Pages 18, 32.  
[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file\\_import/cr2015\\_poland\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/cr2015_poland_en_0.pdf)

<sup>(6)</sup> According to a survey by Cedefop among Directors General for VET in early 2016.

- (c) increase the number of social partners involved in VET:
  - (i) increase the share of social partners relevant for particular occupations from 40% (presently on the list of social partners actively cooperating with the Ministry of National Education) to 80% and engage representatives of sectoral councils;
  - (ii) ensure long-term systemic cooperation with employer representatives for each occupation, aiming for better adjustment of VET graduate skills to labour market needs.

### 1.3. Main actions in 2015-19

#### 1.3.1. Amending the regulation on practical vocational training

In August 2015, the Ministry of National Education amended the regulation on practical vocational training. The amendments came into force in September 2015, bringing important changes, including:

- (a) vocational schools are required to ensure the provision of work-based learning in their vocational programmes to an amount that varies by education level (basic vocational, upper secondary, post-secondary);
- (b) the legal basis for practical training offered at employers' premises is an agreement concluded between an employer and either the learner or the school headmaster;
- (c) employers are entitled to influence the curriculum of vocational programmes by recommending changes in the study programme to school directors <sup>(7)</sup>.

Another amendment was adopted in February 2019. It specifies such issues as the types of contracts with employers, the organisation of practical training with employers during school breaks, and the number of hours of practical training per day. It also introduces changes to requirements for the practical vocational training instructors (such as more flexibility and a framework programme for pedagogical courses).

#### 1.3.2. Strengthening cooperation between vocational schools and employers

In the reporting period, the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP) continued to implement the ESF shared finance project to establish and support the functioning of sectoral skills councils. As of February 2019, seven sectoral skills councils were established in the following sectors: IT, finance, construction,

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<sup>(7)</sup> The Republic of Poland, 2016.

fashion industry and innovative textiles, healthcare and social care, tourism, motorisation and electro mobility.

Several public debates with various stakeholders and a national conference took place in the first half of 2016. The topics discussed included cooperation models between employers and schools and the strengthening of work-based learning in VET. The problems identified (including insufficient permeability of basic vocational schools and negative perception of VET) were considered in the proposals for the new school system introduced in December 2016. They were also taken on board in the preparation of the Law changing the Education Act adopted on 22 November 2018 <sup>(8)</sup>. The law stipulates that the VET system is supported, among others, by employers, employer organisations, sectoral skills councils, and the Programme Council on Competences. VET schools are required to cooperate with employers. Various areas of cooperation are possible including the organisation of practical training, the organisation of vocational examinations, participation in teachers' council meetings, teacher training, and providing schools with certain equipment. Cooperation will be based on contracts. Schools will also have to secure a positive opinion from employers to operate 'pedagogical experiments' to teach new occupations. Employers will benefit from tax deduction for donations to VET schools. The law also introduces 'student apprenticeship': dual training for students in first-stage sectoral schools or vocational upper secondary education. Student apprenticeship is a form of vocational training distinct from juvenile employment.

In January 2018 the Ministry of National Education appointed regional VET coordinators in the regional education authorities. These coordinators are tasked with supporting schools and employers in developing cooperation actions.

Debates with representatives of employers were conducted as a part of the ESF joint-financed project *Partnership for VET* <sup>(9)</sup> implemented by the Centre for Education Development to adjust VET to labour market needs by engaging employers. In the first phase of the project, a social partner forum was established. A total of 25 sectoral teams of social partners (representatives of sectoral associations, employer organisations and trade unions) were set up to adjust VET to labour market needs better, and particularly to recommend

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<sup>(8)</sup> Proposal of the Act changing the Education Act, School Education Act and some other acts:

<https://legislacja.rcl.gov.pl/projekt/12313102/katalog/12518250#12518250>

Ministry of Education rationale to the Act, 2018:

<https://legislacja.rcl.gov.pl/projekt/12313102/katalog/12518250#12518250>

See also ReferNet Poland, 2019; and Chłoń-Domińczak, A. et al., 2019.

<sup>(9)</sup> <https://www.ore.edu.pl/category/projekty-po-wer/partnerstwo-na-rzecz-ksztalcenia-zawodowego/partnerstwo-na-rzecz-ksztalcenia-zawodowego-aktualnosci/>

changes in the vocational core curricula. Several VET curricula were changed and new ones were developed. The curricula developed were included in the core curriculum for vocational education in 2017, and are meant to be included in the new core curriculum expected to come into force in September 2019. Teaching plans and programmes, career development paths together with diplomas and qualification supplements in Polish and English were also designed. By February 2018, 1 048 employers had actively participated in the project. As a result, indicators on the share of social partners relevant for particular occupations engaged in cooperation with the ministry, as well as employers declaring their willingness to cooperate over the long-term, were met and even exceeded the set targets.

An ESF-supported initiative *Preparation of model solutions of engaging employers in the organisation of practical vocational training* has been set up for the period 2017-19, with a EUR 5 million budget. A first call for projects was launched from 31 July to 15 September 2017 <sup>(10)</sup>. Two projects were chosen and have been developing models for VET-enterprise cooperation through the organisation of workplace practical training. A second call was launched in March 2018 <sup>(11)</sup>.

### **1.3.3. Modernising school infrastructures and equipment related to practical training**

In the reporting period, all regions within ESF and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) jointly-financed regional operational programmes have supported projects aimed at developing the infrastructure of VET schools, particularly improving practical training related infrastructures and equipment in vocational schools, to create conditions similar to those in a workplace. The projects include the development and/or reconstruction of school workshops and laboratories, as well as equipping schools with tools and appropriate materials.

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<sup>(10)</sup> See Cedefop ReferNet Poland (2017).

See also:

<https://men.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/praktyczna-nauka-zawodu-w-rzeczywistych-warunkach.pdf> and

[https://www.funduszeuropejskie.gov.pl/media/40460/Regulamin\\_konkursu\\_pnz.pdf](https://www.funduszeuropejskie.gov.pl/media/40460/Regulamin_konkursu_pnz.pdf)

<sup>(11)</sup> <https://efs.men.gov.pl/ogloszenia-nabory/przygotowanie-rozwiazan-w-zakresie-angazowania-pracodawcow-w-organizacje-praktycznej-nauki-zawodu-pnz-ii/page/6/>

#### **1.3.4. Erasmus+ programme for tailored apprentice support to SMEs**

From October 2016 to September 2018, the *Erasmus+* project *Apprenticeship helpdesk for small and medium-sized enterprises* <sup>(12)</sup> was established in Poland (and Cyprus), to build the capacity of key intermediary bodies to support SMEs offering training placements for apprentices. Among the main project results are:

- (a) a national apprenticeship support service for SMEs offered by the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development <sup>(13)</sup>;
- (b) training provided to the appointed staff acting as apprenticeship facilitators;
- (c) an online apprenticeship resource centre, providing support to SMEs and apprenticeship facilitators.

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<sup>(12)</sup> <https://www.apphelp4smes.eu/>

<sup>(13)</sup> <https://www.parp.gov.pl/component/grants/grants/organizacja-praktyk-i-stazy-w-mssp>

## CHAPTER 2.

# MTD 2 - Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET and continuous information and feedback loops to IVET and CVET

### 2.1. Baseline 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, a quality assurance national reference point (QANRP) was in place: the Centre for Education Development had been appointed in 2012 for that role. Its remit covered initial vocational education and training (IVET), continuing vocational education and training (CVET), and adult learning. A national approach to quality assurance in general education, IVET and CVET had also been set forth, as described in the regulation for pedagogical supervision. The approach required headmasters to perform internal evaluations and use the results to improve school performance. External quality assurance was also in place, conducted by the Regional Education Authorities (*kurator oświaty*) overseen by the Minister of Education. By 2015, quality standards had been developed, using the EQAVET <sup>(14)</sup> framework (criteria, indicators), to support VET providers in self-assessment and promote a culture of continuous improvement. All public and private institutions providing continuing education had been subject to accreditation since 2004.

Some VET graduate tracking initiatives existed in 2015, but not on a systematic and regular basis at the national level. Regional labour market observatories monitored transitions annually within regional projects. Some VET providers also collected data on their graduates. Two ESF-funded surveys on school-to-work transition were also being prepared in 2015. More systematic graduate monitoring was planned.

Since 2005, the Deficit and Surplus Occupation Monitoring survey (MZDiN) has been conducted by county and regional labour offices as well as the labour ministry. In 2015, a new methodology was applied, mainly drawing on employment offices' data (regarding unemployed persons, reported vacancies); studies of online job offers; information obtained from employers in a questionnaire study; data from the Central Statistics Office; and School

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<sup>(14)</sup> European quality assurance in vocational education and training.

Information System data <sup>(15)</sup>. An important forecasting tool was the Study of Human Capital in Poland, a labour market monitoring project implemented by the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development – PARP <sup>(16)</sup> in collaboration with the Jagiellonian University. The project operated in 2010-14. Its main objectives were to narrow the skills gaps at national and regional levels, support the adjustment of workforce skills to employers’ needs, and support the development of national human capital. The information produced by the study was used by ministries, local governments, PES, employers’ organisations, trade unions, universities and research institutes to support changes in national legislation and evaluate the core education curriculum. VET schools also analysed and identified regional and local educational and skills needs.

## 2.2. Quality assurance in line with EQAVET in 2015-2019

For 2016-20, the country’s priority in this matter, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to update and enlarge the database of test items in VET. The key measure guaranteeing the quality of VET is the external examination system. Due to changing labour market needs, the profile of VET graduate skills is changing and the test items database needs constant updating. The enlarged database will help improve the quality and efficiency of vocational education and training.

In 2016, the Ministry of National Education started an ESF jointly funded project to develop new vocational test items with employers’ support. The objective of the project was not just to develop the items but to strengthen the participation of employers in the examination process. In 2017, a call was published for employers/professionals to become authors of the examination tasks. Another call was aimed at the methodical training for the future authors of the examination tasks. The project finished in January 2019. As a result, a database with 51 716 new examination tasks was prepared, with the support <sup>(17)</sup>

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<sup>(15)</sup> Since 2015, the Occupational barometer, previously only used in the Małopolska region, also started to be implemented in the whole country, conducted by the regional labour offices. It is a qualitative short-term (annual) forecast providing information on deficit, balanced and surplus occupations:

[https://barometrzwodow.pl/userfiles/Barometr/2018/english\\_version/raport\\_ogolnoposki\\_ang\\_gotowy.pdf](https://barometrzwodow.pl/userfiles/Barometr/2018/english_version/raport_ogolnoposki_ang_gotowy.pdf)

<sup>(16)</sup> Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości.

<sup>(17)</sup> <https://cke.gov.pl/efs/projekt-zrealizowany/>

of employers. The second stage of the project is planned for 2019-22, with the aim of further engaging employers in developing examination tasks, methodical training for the authors of examination tasks and the development of 84 200 examination tasks for different sectors <sup>(18)</sup>.

Since 2016, the Polish Craft Association has implemented an EFS joint-financed project to develop examination tasks in the crafts sector, support the methodological preparation of examination board members and develop a new internet platform for examination board members and examination candidates in the crafts. The expected result is 17 360 examination tasks for 40 different occupations, together with the methodological training of their authors, training for 1 000 examination board members in the chambers of crafts and additional training for female candidates to the examination boards. The internet platform for exams in the crafts sector will be developed with an application allowing for the organisation of online exams <sup>(19)</sup>.

The Law of 22 November 2018 (Section 1.3.2) further developed the accreditation system for institutions providing continuing education in out-of-school forms, introducing the possibility of limited scope accreditation (accreditation for a given education activity instead of for all activities of an institution) and time-limited accreditation (five years instead of indefinite).

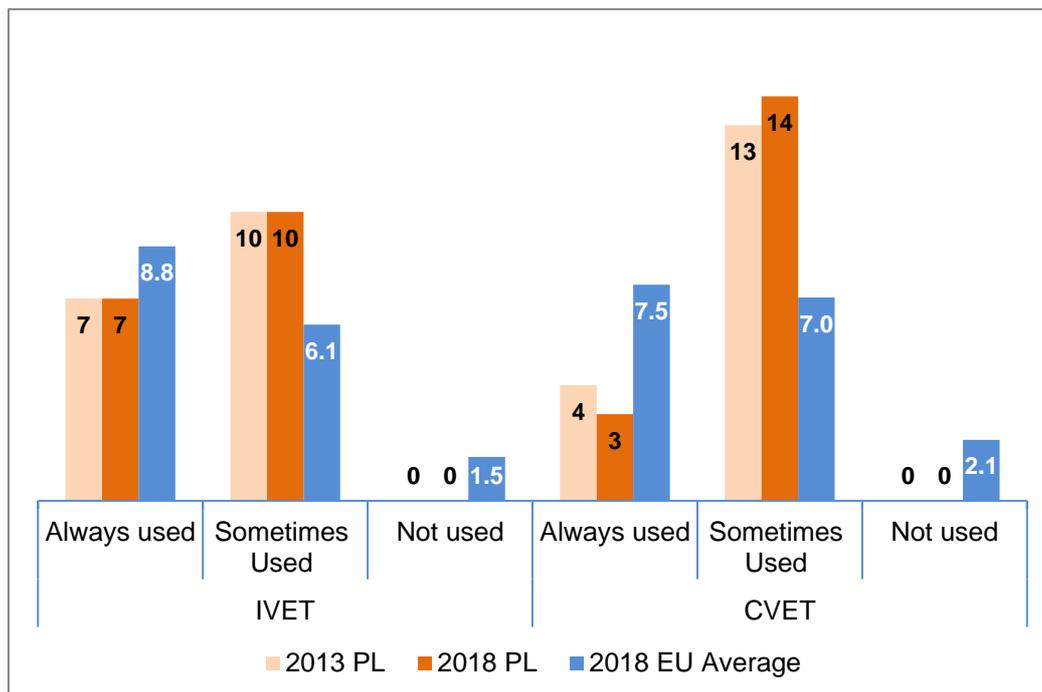
The situation in IVET concerning the systematic use of EQAVET indicators to monitor the VET system ('always used' item in Figure 1), has remained unchanged compared to 2013. In 2018, Poland was below the EU average in IVET and CVET. All EQAVET indicators are used (most frequent reply: sometimes).

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<sup>(18)</sup> <https://cke.gov.pl/efs/projekt-w-trakcie-realizacji/>

<sup>(19)</sup> <https://ewr.zrp.pl/#/informacje/informacje-o-projekcie>

Figure 1. Use of EQAVET indicators



NB: Of the 17 indicators suggested by the 2009 EQAVET recommendation, seven were 'always used' in IVET in 2013 and 2018 compared to 8.8 in the EU on average in 2018.

EU average was calculated based on available information for 31 out of 35 VET systems.

Source: Cedefop calculations based on EQAVET Secretariat surveys for 2013 and 2018 data.

### 2.3. Continuous information and feedback loops in initial VET and continuing VET in 2015-19

For 2016-20, the country's priority in initial VET, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to develop and provide access to systemic tools for monitoring VET school graduates.

In 2016, the Education Research Institute launched an ESF joint-financed project to develop a system to track the educational and professional trajectories of VET graduates at national, regional, local and school levels. The project has been using administrative data from the social security administration (for professional trajectories) and educational resources (for educational trajectories) to monitor the trajectories of VET graduates. First results and recommendations are expected for 2019. A second stage, planned for 2019-22, will further develop the tools and solutions for the systemic tracking of VET graduates, including research, legal, IT, and organisational aspects.

In January 2018, the Ministry of National Education established a Vocational School Heads Council and regional coordinators for VET <sup>(20)</sup>: 42 head teachers from vocational schools from all regions of the country, representing different sectors, were appointed to the council. The council will be a consultative body supporting the ministry in the development of new initiatives and policies in VET (initiation of changes, consultations, participation in the development of regulations). Regional VET coordinators were also appointed. These will participate in consultations on the developments in VET and activities relating to vocational/career guidance.

The Law of 22 November 2018 (Section 1.3.2) set an annual forecast of the demand for professions and skills (on central and regional levels). Conducted by the Education Research Institute, the forecasting exercise will take into account various available data sources, including data from Statistics Poland, the Education Information System (SIO), social insurance data and the views of skills councils.

The law also reformed the process for introducing new occupations into the classification of occupations. Employers' organisations will be allowed to submit an application to the relevant ministry to propose a new occupation. Also, the ministry introducing a new occupation will simultaneously determine its core curriculum (classification of occupations and definition of core curriculum were two separate legal acts previously), which will improve responsiveness to labour market developments <sup>(21)</sup>.

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<sup>(20)</sup> <https://www.gov.pl/web/edukacja/minister-edukacji-narodowej-powolala-rade-dyrektorow-szkol-zawodowych>

<sup>(21)</sup> <https://www.gov.pl/web/edukacja/koordynatorzy-ko-ds-ksztalcenia-zawodowego-art>  
Other changes include a new occupational classification structure and different classification rules (e.g. more stakeholders entitled to apply to the relevant ministry to introduce a new occupation).

## CHAPTER 3.

# MTD 3 – Access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible/permeable systems, guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning

### 3.1. Baseline 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, Poland was facing the challenges of increasing VET attractiveness and tackling the low rate of adult participation in lifelong learning (3.5% in 2015 against the EU average of 10.7%) <sup>(22)</sup>.

To improve VET attractiveness, reforms were launched in 2012/13. The 2014/15 school year was declared the *Year of VET professionals*. Cooperation for VET development was being initiated between the ministries of Education, Economy, Labour and Treasury.

The lifelong learning provision was being developed on the basis of two general strategic documents, i.e. the 'Lifelong learning perspective' <sup>(23)</sup> and the 'Strategy for the development of human capital 2013-20' <sup>(24)</sup>. A 'Knowledge, Education and Development Operational Programme' (PO WER) and 16 regional operational programmes were introduced accordingly to address the issue of low adult participation in lifelong learning.

A Polish qualifications framework (PQF) was in place. It was referenced to the European qualifications framework (EQF) in 2013 and formally adopted by the Polish Parliament in 2015 <sup>(25)</sup>.

Launching an internet portal devoted to guidance was being considered.

Other challenges to tackle included: upskilling adults with regard to ICT; developing the systematic tracking of VET leavers; and, especially in the most

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<sup>(22)</sup> Eurostat, tsdsc440, accessed on: 17.8.2017.

<sup>(23)</sup> Perspektywa uczenia się przez całe życie:  
[https://archiwum.men.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/pill\\_2013\\_09\\_10zal\\_do\\_uchwaly\\_rm.pdf](https://archiwum.men.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/pill_2013_09_10zal_do_uchwaly_rm.pdf)

<sup>(24)</sup> Strategia Rozwoju Kapitału Ludzkiego; <https://www.gov.pl/web/rodzina/strategia-rozwoju-kapitalu-ludzkiego-srkl>

<sup>(25)</sup> Ustawa z dnia 22 grudnia 2015r o Zintegrowanym Systemie Kwalifikacji [Act of 22 December 2015 on the Integrated Qualifications System]:  
<http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20160000064>

disadvantaged areas, improving information about available VET-related programmes, projects and funds <sup>(26)</sup>.

### 3.2. Policy priorities for 2016-20

For 2016-20, the country's priorities in this area, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, are two-fold:

- (a) for young people:
  - (i) to support and popularise best practices of cooperation between VET schools and higher education institutions;
  - (ii) to strengthen guidance in secondary schools;
- (b) for adults: to increase learning provision and create exemplary teaching programmes for vocational qualification courses.

### 3.3. Main actions taken in 2015-19

#### 3.3.1. Developing strategies for the future

In the reporting period, Poland is in the process of defining strategies for the coming decades. Two actions affect VET.

##### 3.3.1.1. *National strategy for responsible development (Strategia na Rzecz Odpowiedzialnego Rozwoju – 'Morawiecki Plan')*

A Strategy for responsible development was adopted in February 2017. It addresses the challenges which the country will be facing until 2030, particularly in the areas of social and regional development, reduction of poverty and social exclusion, and response to demographic challenges. In the area of education, the formation of human capital will require the following actions to be taken:

- (a) achieving dual education in VET through further linking school learning with practical training (Section 1.3.2);
- (b) increasing the engagement of employers and employer associations in the development of the vocational education system, in particular through shared development of core curricula (Section 1.3.2);
- (c) monitoring the labour market and changes in professions to readjust educational policies as needed (Section 2.3);

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<sup>(26)</sup> <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/leaving-education-early-putting-vocational-education-a-11>

- (d) developing teacher training by responding to the changing needs of industry (Industry 4.0).

#### 3.3.1.2. *Integrated skills strategy*

In 2017, the Ministry of National Education initiated the design of a national skills strategy <sup>(27)</sup>. The strategy covers the whole area of education and training, i.e. general education, vocational education, higher education and adult learning. It will take into account both the demand side (demand for specific competences and qualifications) and supply (availability of qualifications and competences in society). The strategy addresses the monitoring and forecasting of the supply and demand for competences and qualifications. The general part of the strategy was developed <sup>(28)</sup> and adopted by the government in January 2019. This will be followed by the development of the more detailed part of the strategy and strategy implementation. This process will take place in cooperation with the OECD, which was invited by the Ministry of National Education to support the work in four priority areas: making the education system more responsive to labour market needs; fostering greater participation in adult learning of all forms; strengthening skills use in workplaces; and strengthening the governance of the skills system.

#### **3.3.2. Popularising best practices of cooperation between VET schools and higher education institutions**

In May 2018, the Ministry of National Education launched the first call for projects within the framework of the initiative *Development and dissemination of exemplary practices of cooperation between vocational school and higher education institutions (Wypracowanie i upowszechnienie przykładowych rozwiązań w zakresie współpracy szkół zawodowych z wyższymi)* <sup>(29)</sup>. The initiative invites projects that highlight:

- (a) exemplary teaching programmes implemented based on the cooperation between a vocational school and a higher education institution;

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<sup>(27)</sup> <http://www.sejm.gov.pl/Sejm8.nsf/interpelacja.xsp?typ=INT&nr=15772>

<sup>(28)</sup> <https://bip.men.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/08/zintegrowana-strategia-umiejtnosci-do-uzgodnien-i-konsultacji.pdf>

<https://bip.kprm.gov.pl/kpr/form/r876903221,Zintegrowana-Strategia-Umiejtnosci.html>

<http://www.kwalifikacje.gov.pl/images/zsu.pdf>

<sup>(29)</sup> <https://efs.men.gov.pl/ogloszenia-nabory/wspolpraca-szkol/>

- (b) activities familiarising students and VET teachers with the new techniques/technologies used in a given sector/occupation;
- (c) exemplary forms of professional development of VET teachers.

The projects have to be implemented in partnership between VET schools and HE institutions. The developed products will be tested in VET schools for at least one school/academic year. The aim is to support quality in VET schools. The allocated budget is PLN 27 million, around EUR 6.4 million.

### **3.3.3. Equal opportunity, equity, inclusion: broadening the rights to and within education and training**

The Law of 22 November 2018 (Section 1.3.2) provides for the so-called 'ancillary occupations; these are targeted at people with minor intellectual disabilities. When introducing a new occupation or changing an existing one, the relevant minister is required to either propose the possibility of establishing an ancillary occupation or to provide justification for why this is not possible. Learners may take the exam in their occupation or in an ancillary occupation if such an ancillary occupation for a given occupation was established.

### **3.3.4. Guidance**

In January 2016, the National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education (KOWEZIU) launched a two-year ESF part-funded project *Effective educational and vocational guidance for children, adolescents and adults*, aimed at creating an effective guidance system in education and training <sup>(30)</sup>. In 2016, KOWEZIU was merged with the Centre for Education Development (ORE), which continued the implementation of this project. In 2017, testing of the newly developed educational and vocational guidance programmes took place. Within the project, completed in June 2018, a set of examples of vocational/career guidance programmes with scenario proposals for all education levels was developed, as well as model organisational solutions for intra-school guidance systems. During the project, 98 implementation events took place, in which participated 1050 representatives of local government authorities, which govern schools. The project also proposed recommendations for the regulation on vocational guidance adopted in 2018 <sup>(31)</sup>.

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<sup>(30)</sup> <https://www.ore.edu.pl/category/projekty-po-wer/efektywne-doradztwo-edukacyjno-zawodowe/efektywne-doradztwo-edukacyjno-zawodowe-aktualnosci/>

<sup>(31)</sup> <https://www.ore.edu.pl/2017/10/efektywne-doradztwo-edukacyjno-zawodowe-dla-dzieci-mlodziezy-i-doroslych-informacje-o-projekcie/>

Within the regional operational programmes, the regions have also launched calls for ESF jointly funded projects to support schools in the development of guidance and counselling services for IVET learners. The scope of the calls includes external guidance and counselling services for schools; creating information and career points in school; supporting teachers in acquiring counsellor qualifications; supporting counsellors in upgrading and updating their qualifications; and the development of diagnostic tools.

On 1 July 2017, the Centre for Education Development initiated the design of a programme to provide trainers with training in educational and vocational guidance <sup>(32)</sup>. The project *Preparation of trainers for the implementation of training in the field of educational and vocational counselling* was completed in June 2018. It developed a training programme for trainers in the area of vocational/career guidance. Over 500 persons also received training in providing training in vocational/career guidance. The training programme and its implementation were evaluated.

As a result of the ministerial call for initiatives <sup>(33)</sup> on developing e-resources for vocational counselling, one project was chosen in June 2018. The allocated budget was PLN 15 million. In line with the idea of lifelong vocational counselling, this ESF joint-financed project is directed at different age groups, including young children. The target groups include specialists as well as non-specialists (pupils, parents, teachers). The main expected outcome of the project is the development, in cooperation with stakeholders, of sets of materials (including multimedia) for vocational counselling on 115 occupations, as well as a platform conception for employers and VET schools. The project will finish at the end of 2019.

A law establishing a systemic approach to vocational/career guidance <sup>(34)</sup> at school level was adopted in September 2018 <sup>(35)</sup>. The law defines the goals as

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<sup>(32)</sup> <https://www.ore.edu.pl/2017/12/doradztwo-zawodowe-przygotowanie-trenerow-informacje-o-projekcie/>

<sup>(33)</sup> <https://efs.men.gov.pl/nabory/ogloszenie-o-konkursie-nr-powr-02-14-00-ip-02-00-001-18-przygotowanie-i-udostepnienie-multimedialnych-zasobow-wspierajacych-proces-doradztwa-dla-wszystkich-grup-wiekowych-doradztwo/>

<sup>(34)</sup> Vocational/career guidance existed previously, based on the provisions of the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 9 August 2017 on the principles of providing and organising psychological and pedagogical assistance in public pre-schools, schools and other educational institutions. However, no specific programme content existed, and school practices differed substantially in terms of programme, organisation and persons responsible for guidance/counselling. Vocational guidance was also often treated as occasional activities rather than a process in the education system.

well as the terms and manner of implementing and organising vocational guidance, including detailed programme content. According to the law, the basic goal of vocational/career guidance is to support students in the process of making independent and responsible decisions concerning their educational and professional life, based on learning about their own resources, the education system and the labour market. Career/vocational guidance has to be perceived as a continuous process starting in pre-school and through subsequent stages of education. Vocational guidance and counselling are to be conducted at all school levels, including:

- (a) pre-schools [ISCED 0],– vocational pre-orientation;
- (b) primary school classes 1–6 [ISCED 1],– vocational orientation;
- (c) 7th and 8th grades of primary school [ISCED 2] and secondary schools [ISCED 3], vocational guidance activities.

Schools are required to develop their own annual activity programme to implement the intra-school vocational guidance system. This programme should specify:

- (a) the activities to implement vocational guidance (including the content of the activities, methods and forms of implementation, timeframe of implementation, persons responsible for implementation);
- (b) the entities with which the school cooperates in this field.

The law indicates the requirements for those conducting vocational guidance in schools and pre-schools. Among the most important is the requirement, for teachers conducting vocational guidance activities in the seventh and eighth grades of primary school and in secondary schools, to have qualifications as a vocational counsellor. However, a transition period was set for that requirement until the 2021/22 school year.

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(<sup>35</sup>) Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 16 August 2018 on vocational/career guidance (Journal of Laws 2018, item 1675):

<http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20180001675>

Justification of the proposal of 24 May 2018 of regulation of the Minister of National Education on vocational guidance: <https://legislacja.rcl.gov.pl/projekt/12312106>

Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 12 February 2019 on vocational/career guidance (Journal of Laws 2019, item 325):

<http://www.dziennikustaw.gov.pl/DU/2019/325/1>

### 3.3.5. Permeability and flexibility

#### 3.3.5.1. Reform of progression routes in VET

In December 2016, the Ministry of National Education introduced structural reform which influences progression routes within the education and training system. The changes in VET aim for better responsiveness to a modern economy and include:

- (a) four-year upper secondary VET programmes will be prolonged to five-year duration from 2019/20 school year;
- (b) a two-stage sectoral school (*dwustopniowa szkoła branżowa*) will replace the existing three-year basic VET school.

In this new structure:

- (a) the first stage sectoral school will offer a three-year VET programme, enabling students to attain a vocational qualification diploma for occupations consisting of one qualification. Following this, learners can continue their education at a higher level;
- (b) a two-year second stage sectoral school will be introduced in the 2020/21 school year, enabling the further development of the VET qualification attained in the first stage school. This leads to a vocational qualifications diploma for occupations consisting of two qualifications. Completing this second stage school will allow learners to enter higher education after passing the secondary school examination (*matura*) in three obligatory subjects and passing the qualification exams.

The regulation modifying the VET core curriculum <sup>(36)</sup> and regulation establishing the new classification of occupations <sup>(37)</sup> after the reform of progression routes were adopted in March 2017. A subsequent change to the classification of occupations was adopted in February 2019 <sup>(38)</sup> and the new core curriculum for vocational education is expected for 2019. Both documents will take effect with the beginning of the 2019/20 school year.

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<sup>(36)</sup> Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 31 March 2017 on the core curriculum for training in individual occupations (Journal of Laws 2017, item 860).

<sup>(37)</sup> Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 13 March 2017 on the classification of occupations for vocational education (Journal of Laws 2017, item 622).

<sup>(38)</sup> Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 15 February 2019 on general aims and tasks of vocational education and training and the classification of occupations for vocational education (Journal of Laws 2017, item 622).

The Law of 22 November 2018 (Section 1.3.2) set the framework for the functioning of the newly-established second stage sectoral programmes, particularly limited general education, and vocational training to be conducted in the form of vocational qualification courses.

#### 3.3.5.2. *Standardisation of compulsory subject teaching hours*

In 2017, the Ministry of National Education adopted a regulation on framework teaching plans for public schools <sup>(39)</sup>, standardising the weekly number of teaching hours in compulsory subjects. The aim is to make horizontal permeability easier for learners.

### 3.3.6. **Transparency, recognition, validation**

#### 3.3.6.1. *National qualifications framework* <sup>(40)</sup>

The Polish qualifications framework (PQF) was referenced to the European qualifications framework (EQF) in May 2013. It is based on learning outcomes and has eight levels. It includes different layers of level descriptors (type of education and training and sector), which is an innovative approach allowing easier inclusion of qualifications awarded outside formal education and training <sup>(41)</sup>, such as sectoral qualifications. The PQF can be considered to have reached (an early) operational stage: it was formally adopted by the Parliament on 22 December 2015 together with the establishment of the integrated qualifications system (IQS) and integrated qualifications register (IQR) <sup>(42)</sup> and came into force in January 2016.

While the Ministry of National Education is responsible for overall coordination, an advisory stakeholder council was set up in September 2016. An update on the referencing report was presented in December 2016. In 2017, the Ministry of National Education established 14 bodies to act as external quality assurance institutions for awarding bodies.

The integrated qualifications system (IQS) is the part of the national qualifications system which specifically establishes the norms for describing

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<sup>(39)</sup> <http://dziennikustaw.gov.pl/DU/2017/703>

<sup>(40)</sup> Source: Cedefop, 2017a.

<sup>(41)</sup> Law of 22.12. 2015 on the integrated qualifications system, Articles 9.1, 15.1 and 38.1.

<sup>(42)</sup> *Ustawa z dnia 22 grudnia 2015r o Zintegrowanym Systemie Kwalifikacji* [Act of 22.12.2015 on the integrated qualifications system]:  
<http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20160000064>

qualifications, assigning levels, recording in the integrated qualifications register (IQR), certification, and quality standards.

Based on the IQS, sectoral qualifications frameworks (SRKs) may be created. A sectoral qualification framework is created by an industry for its own use, for example to serve as a tool for competence assessment in recruitment or staff evaluation processes. Each SRK translates the requirements of the IQS taking into account the specific realities of the given sector.

In 2017, implementation of the IQS and IQR continued. In 2018, IQS implementation reached a more advanced stage, characterised by a significant change in the dynamic of inclusion of non-statutory (market) qualifications in the system. In June 2018, the first IQS certificate for a market qualification (*installing construction carpentry - montowanie stolarki budowlanej*) was issued. By the end of January 2019, 41 market qualifications had been included and about 102 were undergoing the verification process<sup>(43)</sup>. The first 25 state-regulated (from outside of the school education/higher education systems) qualifications were added in December 2018. The inclusion of new qualifications is followed by the inclusion of relevant awarding bodies. In 2018, an additional eight external quality assurance entities were added to the system.

While consultations on the possible changes in the IQS Act have been conducted from the moment it was adopted, in 2018, a working group to propose amendments to the Act was established by the ministry. Further work on this issue is planned for 2019, as well as a public debate on achieving goals and the future development of the IQS.

As of the end of 2018, 11 proposals for sectoral qualifications frameworks were developed with the support of the Education Research Institute in the following sectors: banking, IT, sport, tourism, telecommunications, construction industry, development services, fashion industry, public health, trade, and automotive sector.

Implementation of the IQS and functioning of the IQR has been continuously supported by ESF jointly funded projects implemented by the Education Research Institute.

#### 3.3.6.2. *Validation*<sup>(44)</sup>

The 2012 national development strategy and the 2013 human capital development strategy underlined the need to develop a national recognition/validation strategy. Procedures to validate work experience were

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<sup>(43)</sup> Source: Integrated Qualifications Register: <https://rejestr.kwalifikacje.gov.pl/en/>

<sup>(44)</sup> Source: Cedefop, 2017a; Duda, 2016.

introduced by the 2012 regulation. Validation has been possible through extramural exams stipulated as part of the regular formal system; full or partial formal qualifications (below higher education) have been granted after passing these exams, which are available to persons over the age of 18. VET qualifications that can be attained are based on units of learning outcomes. The 2015 Law introducing the PQF provides a formal definition of validation and specifies the requirements for bodies conducting validation and certification ('awarding bodies'), along with the principles for quality assurance in validation. An important element of this system is the ability to validate learning outcomes achieved outside the school and higher education systems, including through non-formal and informal learning. New rules on the recognition of educational achievements obtained abroad were established in the March 2015 Act on the education system, with regards to the validation of skills for immigrants/refugees: their education qualification levels are confirmed with the provision of an original (or duplicate) of an education certificate or the authentication of such a document. New tools and materials supporting diverse approaches and methods in validation were also developed in 2018 as part of ESF joint-financed projects implemented by the Education Research Institute.

### **3.3.7. Training, reskilling and upskilling vulnerable groups, jobseekers and employees**

3.3.7.1. *CHANCE: new opportunities for adults: new upskilling pathways project*  
From October 2018 to December 2021, the Ministry of Investment and Economic Development is carrying out the project *CHANCE: new opportunities for adults*, implemented by the Foundation for the Development of the Education System and the Educational Research Institute <sup>(45)</sup>. The project is aligned to the recommendation of the Council of the European Union of 19 December 2016 on *Upskilling pathways: new opportunities for adults*. The main goal of the project is to design and pilot innovative models to support different groups of adults with low levels of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The models will consist of effective ways of reaching and motivating selected target groups, skills assessment, individually adjusted learning offer, and validation of learning outcomes. The implementation of the project comprises three major phases:

- (a) Phase 1: research phase (selection of priority target groups, development of specifications and requirements for the models);

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<sup>(45)</sup> <http://szansa-power.frse.org.pl/> - project website

- (b) Phase 2: development and piloting of the models (to be carried out by entities selected from an open grant call);
- (c) Phase 3: recommendations (particularly addressing issues of effectiveness in supporting adults with low levels of basic skills; financial efficiency of the intervention; and best practices for implementation).

The project supports the consistent use of learning outcomes. The models (including skills assessment, training programme, and validation of learning outcomes) will be based on the learning outcomes approach. Actions will provide beneficiaries with the opportunity to validate the acquired skills and progress towards higher Polish qualifications framework levels relevant to the labour market. Partners to the project include government bodies, social partners, non-government organisations, experts, and sectoral associations.

#### 3.3.7.2. *Measures for NEETs*

In the reporting period, expanded measures for NEETs are provided to a large extent through the activities of labour offices at the county and regional levels, including ESF jointly funded initiatives. This includes individualised comprehensive support through diagnosis and needs identification, vocational counselling and guidance, development of individual plans, job placement and various forms of support adjusted to the individual situation.

The Voluntary Labour Corps (*Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy*, OHP) is also implementing several ESF and Youth employment initiative projects aimed at comprehensive and individualised support measures for NEETs. The measures include individual action plans, vocational training, apprenticeships, individual and group counselling, active job search workshops, general education and skills courses and also diverse psychological support. The employers engaged in these projects are reimbursed for their costs. The total number of participants in these projects from February 2016 to the end of 2018 was over 8 000.

#### 3.3.7.3. *Training scheme for adults in need: the LOWE project* <sup>(46)</sup>

In 2017-18, the Ministry of National Education developed an ESF jointly funded project aiming to support 45 schools to become local centres for education and knowledge (*lokalne ośrodki wiedzy i edukacji*, LOWE). The role of the centres is to help adults develop key competences to improve their situation on the labour market, support various forms of adult learning, and encourage participation of adults in learning. Beneficiary groups include:

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<sup>(46)</sup> <https://efs.men.gov.pl/nabory/ogloszenie-o-konkursie-konkurs-nr-powr-02-14-00-ip-02-00-00216/>

- (a) adults with low levels of education;
- (b) unemployed or economically inactive adults;
- (c) adults aged 45+;
- (d) adults receiving certain forms of social assistance and family support.

The measures include vocational courses and other various forms of adult education, as well as guidance and counselling preceded by diagnosis and suited to local needs. In 2017, as a result of a ministerial call, three institutions were selected to support LOWE development; each of these institutions organised a grant competition for pilot LOWE centres. Altogether, 50 LOWE were established and supported with grants. The project lasted until June 2018. Due to the positive assessment of this pilot project, another competition for LOWE support is currently being planned.

#### 3.3.7.4. *Training for inmates*

From 2016 to 2020, the Central Management of the Prison Service (Ministry of Justice) has been carrying out a training project to prepare inmates' return to work after release from prison <sup>(47)</sup>. Within this PLN 131 million (around EUR 31 million) ESF jointly funded project, vocational training courses in different occupations are organised, along with labour-market-relevant soft skills training. Prisoners will learn different occupations in construction, care, gastronomy, services and other sectors corresponding to local labour market needs. Courses last from two to six months. During the five years of the project, in which 130 prisons and detention wards will participate, it is planned that over 46 000 prisoners will be trained. It is expected that over 56% of them will take up employment even during imprisonment. A special additional offer was prepared for women. The project complements the governmental programme *Work for prisoners*.

#### **3.3.8. Creating new qualification opportunities**

In January 2016, the Ministry of National Education opened a call for proposals to develop programmes for vocational qualification courses for adults. At the end of 2016, the application assessment procedure was finalised, three projects were selected and began being implemented. The initiative is jointly financed by ESF. The aim is to support VET providers in expanding their offer for adults. The projects completed their work at the beginning of 2018, with 81 model vocational qualification courses developed in the tourism, gastronomy, electric, electronic,

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<sup>(47)</sup> *Podniesienie kwalifikacji zawodowych więźniów w celu ich powrotu na rynek pracy po zakończeniu odbywania kary pozbawienia wolności:* <https://www.sw.gov.pl>

administration and services areas <sup>(48)</sup>. Another call for creating programmes for vocational qualification courses and for vocational skills courses is planned to be announced in the second half of 2019.

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<sup>(48)</sup> Models available online at: <https://www.ore.edu.pl/2018/10/modelowe-programy-nauczania-dla-kkz/>

## CHAPTER 4.

# MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET

### 4.1. Baseline 2015

Between 2007 and 2013, several ESF-funded projects were implemented to improve ICT skills, support learners in acquiring key competences, and promote extracurricular activities for equal opportunities to develop key competences.

A core curriculum for VET was introduced in 2012 (Cedefop, 2014). It included mandatory sets of learning objectives, contents described in the form of expected learning outcomes (setting up and operating a business; foreign languages; professional, social and organisational competences), as well as knowledge, skills and personal and social competences necessary for occupations or qualifications for particular professions (Cedefop, 2014).

In 2013, the lifelong learning strategy 2013-20 stated that to combat high youth unemployment, vocational education and training (VET) should equip young learners with the skills most sought after on the labour market, such as e-skills. The Human capital development strategy 2020, also adopted in 2013, promoted key competences and creativity in education, including VET. It also promoted lifelong learning and the readiness to meet ecological, economic and social challenges having an impact on labour market needs.

In 2014, the national core curriculum for general education, which was also compulsory for VET including apprenticeship schemes <sup>(49)</sup>, emphasised the importance of mathematical skills, science, communication in the mother tongue and foreign languages, effective use of modern information and communication technologies, critical analysis of information, teamwork, and the self-identification by learners of their own learning needs.

The development of key competences was implemented not only through separate subjects (basics of entrepreneurship, native language, foreign language, computer science, mathematics) but also transversally (citizenship through civic education and extracurricular activities; social competence through projects and teamwork; cultural expression through history and arts). However, the core curriculum for general education did not provide any specific guidelines

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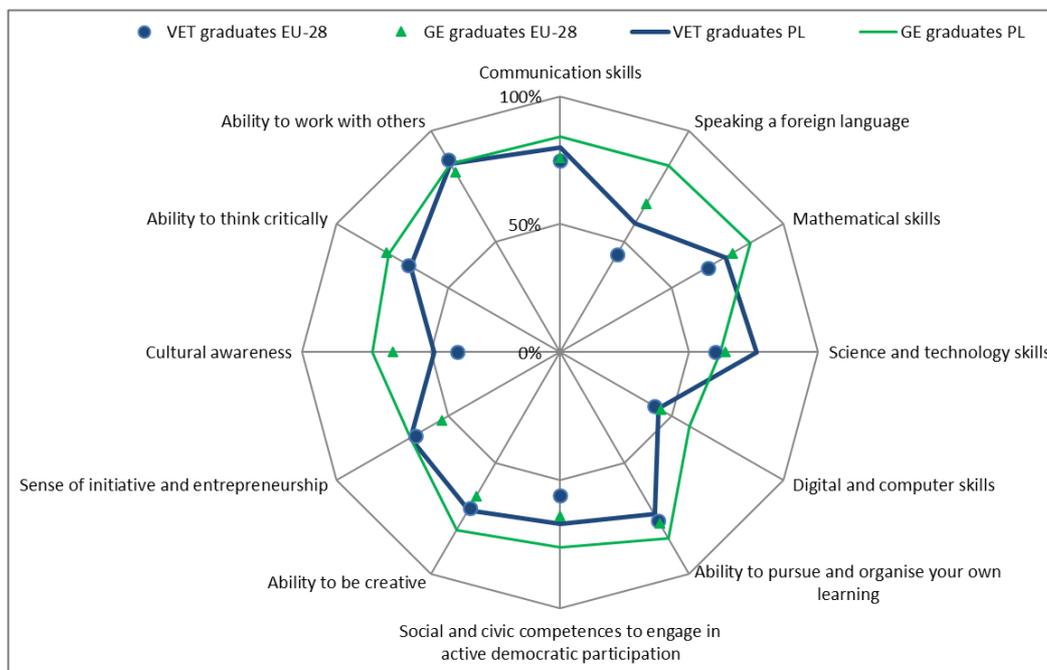
<sup>(49)</sup> Apprentices had to complete general education as part of their training.

on how to monitor and assess learners' progress. Implementation was therefore much dependent on the good will of teachers and school management.

A recent survey <sup>(50)</sup> showed that, compared to general education graduates, those who completed VET programmes felt they had:

- (a) stronger or the same (ranged by priority):
  - (i) science and technology skills;
  - (ii) sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
  - (iii) ability to work with others;
- (b) and weaker:
  - (i) foreign language speaking skills;
  - (ii) cultural awareness;
  - (iii) digital and computer skills (Figure 2).

Figure 2. **Self-evaluation of acquired skills in general education and VET in 2016**



NB: GE stands for general education.

Respondents who attended upper secondary education. Interviewees were asked in the summer of 2016 about their overall experience in upper secondary education. Aggregated data do not take account of different types and sectors of VET nor the age groups of respondents.

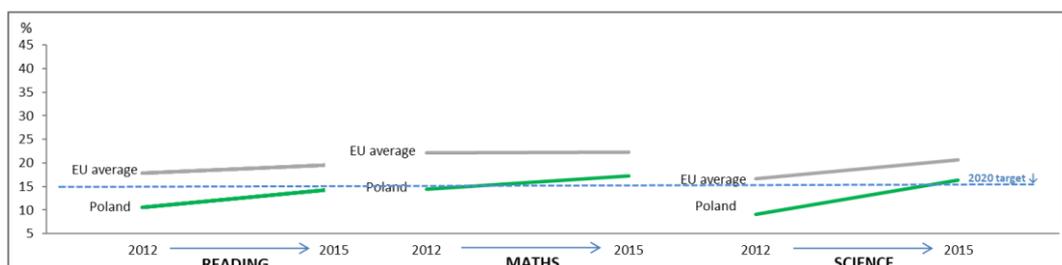
Source: Cedefop, 2017b.

The context of key competences in 2015 was mainly characterised by an increasing share of young low achievers in reading, mathematics and science

<sup>(50)</sup> Cedefop (2017). *Cedefop European public opinion survey on vocational education and training*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper; No 62. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2801/264585>

compared with 2012 (Figure 3). However, the share of low achievers in Poland was much lower than the EU average, where the trend was similar.

Figure 3. **Share of 15-year-olds with low achievement in reading, maths and science**



NB: Low achievement means failing level 2 on the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) scale.

Source: OECD, 2014; OECD, 2016.

As VET enrolled 50% of all upper secondary learners in the country <sup>(51)</sup>, this trend was likely to be reflected in the key competences trained for in VET programmes. One of the key challenges which Poland was facing in 2015 was to improve teacher training on the teaching of transversal skills, such as teamwork, problem-solving, analytical skills, and creativity (European Commission, 2015).

#### 4.2. Key competences addressed in the reporting period

Table 2 outlines the key competences in initial and continuing VET that were addressed in the reporting period. A description of the policies is provided in the following sections.

Table 2. **Key competences addressed in 2015-19**

	IVET	CVET
Country language(s) and literacy		
Foreign languages	YES	
Digital competence	YES	YES
Maths		
Science		
Technology		
Social and civic competences		
Learning to learn		

<sup>(51)</sup> Calculated from Eurostat table educ\_uoe\_enrs04; 2015 data.

	IVET	CVET
Financial literacy		
Entrepreneurship competence	YES	
Cultural awareness and expression		
Key competences as a package		

NB: The list is derived from the 2006 EU key competences framework for lifelong learning; it has been restructured and expanded with additional competences that can be considered key.

Source: Cedefop based on ReferNet input.

### 4.3. Key competences in initial and continuing VET

For 2016-20, the country's priorities in this area, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, are to:

- (a) improve VET graduates' skills in undertaking and conducting business activity;
- (b) improve foreign language skills, with special regard to vocationally oriented foreign languages.

To address the issue of VET learners having limited access to vocation-oriented language teaching and learning, and in some cases the lack of appropriate learning resources, the Ministry of National Education launched in 2016 an ESF project on developing e-resources for vocational foreign language learning in 10 vocational areas <sup>(52)</sup>. This EUR 4 million project also aimed to develop methodological resources for foreign language teachers. At the beginning of 2017, 10 contractors were selected and contracts signed. The projects finished in the second half of 2018. E-resources (multimedia materials) for vocational foreign language learning in 10 areas were developed and made available online on a dedicated portal.

In 2017, the Ministry of National Education also launched an ESF project on developing e-resources on entrepreneurship in the same 10 vocational areas. This EUR 0.6 million project aimed to create methodological resources for teachers. Contractors were selected in October 2017 and projects finished in the second half of 2018, with e-resources in 10 areas developed and published on a dedicated portal.

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<sup>(52)</sup> Arts and services; administration and services; services; construction; electrics and electronics; mechanics; mining and metallurgy; agriculture and forestry; tourism and gastronomy; social and medical services.

Addressing both IVET and CVET, the Ministry of Digital Affairs appointed a digital education working group within a Digitalisation Council <sup>(53)</sup> in December 2016. In 2016-18, the working group was engaged in identifying digital competences currently needed on the labour market as well as foreseeable future trends. The focus was on e-skills gaps and e-skills needs of employers, as well as employment gaps in the IT sector. The group developed the main areas of the 'body of knowledge' for ICT occupations. A new term of the Digitalisation Council began in 2019.

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<sup>(53)</sup> [www.gov.pl/cyfryzacja/edukacja-cyfrowa](http://www.gov.pl/cyfryzacja/edukacja-cyfrowa)

## CHAPTER 5.

# MTD 5 – Systematic initial and continuing professional development of VET teachers and trainers

### 5.1. Baseline 2015

The VET reform launched in 2012 was also aimed at changing VET teachers' initial training and continuing professional development (CPD) by introducing new standards in teacher training and CPD programmes, as well as by facilitating teachers' internships in enterprises. At the beginning of the reporting period, VET in Poland was facing a shortage of suitably qualified teachers. The teaching staff was ageing, with older teachers tending to have out-dated qualifications and competences, while qualified young people would be mostly attracted to other – better paid – jobs. Another major challenge was to make training in enterprises a common form of VET teachers' professional development.

Although teachers and academic teachers <sup>(54)</sup> were distinguished in the legislation in separate categories, both could work in IVET and CVET programmes.

The main groups of teachers and trainers involved in VET programmes were:

- (a) general subject teachers/college teachers;
- (b) theoretical vocational subject teachers;
- (c) practical vocational training teachers;
- (d) teachers-pedagogues, providing educational support to pupils;
- (e) teachers-psychologists, providing psychological support to pupils, teachers and parents;
- (f) teachers - methodological advisers, providing support to teachers;
- (g) teachers-consultants, who developed teaching materials, designed and delivered in-service training courses for teachers and education managers;
- (h) in-company trainers (nationally referred to as practical vocational training instructors) <sup>(55)</sup>;

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<sup>(54)</sup> Teachers in higher education institutions.

<sup>(55)</sup> Trainers were not distinguished as a distinct occupational category.

- (i) specialist in-company trainers (various groups of practitioners providing training as their primary or additional activity, mainly as part of non-formal CVET);
- (j) academic teachers, whether also involved in research or not.

In 2013/14, there were 11 514 VET teachers in basic vocational schools, and 40 165 VET teachers in upper-secondary technical schools.

#### **5.1.1. Access to VET school teaching: entry requirements and initial training**

According to a 2009 regulation of the Ministry of National Education <sup>(56)</sup>:

- (a) teachers of vocational theoretical subjects in basic vocational schools, technical secondary schools and post-secondary schools were required to have a master or bachelor degree and pedagogical training <sup>(57)</sup>;
- (b) teachers of vocational practical training in basic vocational schools, technical secondary schools and post-secondary schools had to:
  - (i) have the same qualifications as required for teachers of vocational theoretical subjects, or;
  - (ii) be pedagogical technical college graduates, or;
  - (iii) have passed the *matura* examination and attained a vocational qualifications certificate in the subject taught, plus pedagogical training and a two-year professional experience in the subject, or;
  - (iv) be a certified master in a craft with pedagogical training.

#### **5.1.2. In-company trainers: entry requirements and initial training**

Practical vocational training instructors may be employers, their employees or private farm owners. They provide practical vocational training at a workplace. They must have the following qualifications:

- (a) if teaching is their main activity, then they are required to have the same qualifications and education level as school teachers;
- (b) if teaching is not their main activity, then they should have at least the title of master in a craft and pedagogical training. In case they are not a master in a

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<sup>(56)</sup> Regulation of the Minister of National Education on eligibility requirements for teachers, and on schools and cases in which teacher without higher education qualifications or a diploma of a teacher training institution may be employed, 2009.

<sup>(57)</sup> According to the Ordinance of the Minister of National Education of 12 March 2009, pedagogical training teachers means a diploma of post-graduate studies (a minimum of 270 hours), offered mostly by higher education institutions.

craft, they must have pedagogical training <sup>(58)</sup> and a certain combination of the various formal qualifications and years of work experience:

- (i) a certificate from a vocational upper secondary school (or from a supplementary technical or a post-secondary school), a vocational qualification diploma in the subject taught, and at least three-years of professional experience in that field, or;
- (ii) a diploma of a vocational secondary school, certificate of skilled worker (or equivalent) in the subject taught, and at least four-years of professional experience, or;
- (iii) a diploma of a general secondary school (or from a technical high school, or supplementary secondary school, or technical secondary school) not in the subject taught or vocational extramural studies, and a certificate of skilled worker (or equivalent qualification) in the subject taught, and at least six-years of professional experience, or;
- (iv) a university degree in the subject taught and at least three-years professional experience, or a university degree on another subject but at least six-years of experience in the subject taught.

### **5.1.3. VET school teachers: main lines for CPD**

Teachers were not obliged to engage in CPD according to the 2005 Law on Higher Education (2005) and the Education System Act (1991). However, as this was stated in the Teachers' charter (1982), teachers had the right to participate in all forms of CPD. Yet, evidence of CPD was required from teachers for promotions (and higher salaries).

Funding for the professional development of teachers was available in regional budgets.

There were three types of teacher training institution at national, regional and local levels, alongside with 379 non-public teacher training institutions. The teacher training institution of the National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education (KOWEZiU) operated at the national level and focused on VET teacher CPD. The main tasks of these institutions consisted of indicating CPD priorities; developing and implementing teacher CPD programmes; and developing educational materials.

Another form of CPD was offered by teachers. Methodological advisers provided direct subject-oriented and methodical assistance; supported teachers

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<sup>(58)</sup> Following the Ordinance of the Minister of National Education of 12 March 2009, pedagogical training for practical vocational training instructors means a qualification training certificate (a minimum of 150 hours), offered mostly by higher education institutions.

in their professional development; organised conferences, seminars and workshops; and identified teachers' needs for counselling and vocational training.

Other forms of CPD included internships in enterprises for VET teachers, teacher-training in entrepreneurship, teacher (and counsellor) training on working with adults and learners with special needs. An open education resource base with nearly 200 online courses was also available (Cedefop, 2015).

A career promotion scale was introduced in 2000 to assist teacher career development; it had four stages:

- (a) trainee teacher;
- (b) contract teacher;
- (c) tenured teacher;
- (d) chartered teacher.

Teachers with outstanding performance could be awarded the title of honorary school education professor. One of the key preconditions for career promotion was participation in professional development <sup>(59)</sup>.

#### **5.1.4. In-company trainers: main lines for CPD**

Practical training institutions were involved in improving the competence of practical vocational training instructors by offering a broad range of thematic training. The most common training was on the methodology of vocational education and the use of standards for examination requirements.

## **5.2. CPD for teaching/training staff in VET schools 2015-19**

The country's priority in this area in 2016–20, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to increase the skills of VET teachers.

Following an agreement between four ministries (education, economy, labour and treasury), the January 2015 ordinance on special economic zones (SEZ) called on employers to take a more active part in VET, including teacher CPD.

In October 2017, the Act on financing educational tasks was adopted. The Act made teacher CPD obligatory and to be carried out in line with the school's needs. Head teachers will report annually on teacher CPD. The Act also allowed schools to pay higher salaries to the specialists they employ who do not have the

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<sup>(59)</sup> The Ordinance of the Minister of National Education of 1 March 2013 on the attainment of advanced professional levels by teachers.

status of teacher (whereas these salaries could not be higher than 184% of the teacher 'base amount' previously).

In the reporting period, within the regional operational programmes, all regions have initiated projects to support teacher CPD. Most often, teacher CPD is an element of broader initiatives supporting VET development (e.g. projects supporting school infrastructure or school-employer cooperation). Particular emphasis is placed on providing teachers with training opportunities in companies. Projects supporting schools to act as sector-oriented centres for vocational and continuing education (*centra kształcenia zawodowego ustawicznego*, CKZiU) have also been launched in several regions (*województwa*). They upgrade vocational teachers' qualifications and equip schools with tools and materials so that the education process can be adjusted to labour market needs. Projects to support schools in developing guidance and counselling services for IVET learners have also been initiated, with activities that support teachers in attaining counsellor qualifications.

The Foundation for the Development of the Education System (FRSE), as the Polish national agency for the *Erasmus+* programme, is implementing mobility projects for school education staff (teacher mobility). In 2016, 2017 and 2018, calls to VET teachers were launched for proposals to teach in schools/companies or participate in work placements, job shadowing in schools/companies or other forms of practical training abroad.

In October 2018, the Ministry of Investment and Economic Development launched an ESF jointly funded call for mobility projects for practical vocational training teachers, practical vocational training instructors and persons interested in becoming practical vocational training instructors who do not have the required pedagogical qualifications <sup>(60)</sup>. Beneficiaries will be trained (through 'observatory participation' and job shadowing) in countries with well-developed VET dual systems (Denmark, Germany and Austria), to learn more on working with a student and providing VET practical training. Aspiring practical vocational training instructors will be given the opportunity to complete a pedagogical course entitling them to work as instructors. EUR 2.4 million was allocated to this initiative. Projects are submitted by institutions (including labour market institutions, public administration, education institutions, research institutions, non-governmental organisations, social partners, third sector institutions) and are to be implemented in cooperation with partners from the three receiving countries.

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<sup>(60)</sup> <http://www.funduszeuropejskie.gov.pl/strony/wiadomosci/start-konkursu-na-mobilnosc-ponadnarodowa-dla-instruktorow-oraz-nauczycieli-praktycznej-nauki-zawodu/>

### 5.3. Initial training for in-company trainers 2015-19

The Law of 22 November 2018 (Section 1.3.2) introduced changes that were conveyed by the regulation of February 2019 on practical vocational training instructors, to come into force in September 2019. The new regulation relaxes the requirements on work experience and pedagogical training, as some of the previous regulations confined possibilities of professionals to engage in VET. It also sets a framework programme for the pedagogical course for practical vocational training instructors, the required number of hours for pedagogical training being reduced from 80 to 45.

### 5.4. CPD for trainers in enterprises 2015-19

The country's priority in this area for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, is to increase the skills of practical vocational training instructors in enterprises.

Several regions (*województwa*) have initiated CPD projects for practical vocational training instructors. The projects are jointly funded by the ESF and implemented as regional programmes. They include the development of VET suited to the socioeconomic environment and the implementation of high quality vocational apprenticeships, which includes the upgrading and updating of the qualifications of practical vocational training instructors at enterprises.

The ESF jointly funded call for mobility projects launched in October 2018 by the Ministry of Investment and Economic Development (Section 5.2) also covers practical vocational training instructors.

# Statistical overview: 2019 update

Table 3 below updates the figures that were provided in Table 1. Although Table 1 may contain data for 2015, these are not systematically repeated here. In some cases, not repeating is due to breaks in time series, which prevent comparability. In other cases, values differ due to methodological changes.

Table 3. **Score on VET indicators in Poland and in the EU: 2015, last available year and recent change**

Indicator label	2015				Last available year				Recent change			
	PL	f	EU	f	Yr	PL	f	EU	f	Range	PL	EU
<b>Access, attractiveness and flexibility</b>												
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	50.5		47.3	ce	'17	51.7		47.8	ce	'15-'17	1.2	0.5
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	15.7		28.3	ce	'17	14.9		27.9	ce	'15-'17	-0.8	-0.5
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET	73.7		68.1	ce	'17	75.7		68.6	ce	'15-'17	2	0.4
Workers participating in CVT courses (%)	37.1		40.8		'15	37.1		40.8				
Workers participating in on-the-job training (%)	34		34		'15	34		34				
Adults in lifelong learning (%)			10.7		'18	5.7	b	11.1				0.4
Enterprises providing training (%)	44.7		72.6		'15	44.7		72.6				
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	40.7		42	ce	'17	41.7		42.7	ce	'15-'17	1	0.7
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	15.1		30		'15	15.1		30				
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)			33		'18	26.8	b	33				0
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)			6.9		'18	2.5	b	7.3				0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)		u	4.3		'18	1	b	4.3				0
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)			9.5		'18	4.9	b	10.7				1.2
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)					'16	13		11.4				
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)					'16	84.7		79.4				

Indicator label	2015				Last available year				Recent change			
	PL	f	EU	f	Yr	PL	f	EU	f	Range	PL	EU
<b>Skill development and labour market relevance</b>												
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)	0.5		0.5	ce	'16	0.5		0.5	ce	'15-'16	0	0
IVET public expenditure per student (1000 PPS units)	4.5	d	7.1	ce	'16	4.7		7.4	ce	'15-'16		0.3
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.5		0.9		'15	0.5		0.9				
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET	1.7		1	ce	'17	1.7		1	ce	'15-'17		0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	39	e	29.2	ce	'17	40.3	d	29.1	ce	'15-'17		0
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates	0.3				'17	0		14.3	b ce	'15-'17	-0.3	
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)					'16	45.6		37.7				
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds)			77.2		'18	79.1	b	80.5		'15-'18		3.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)			5.4		'18	3.7	b	6.6		'15-'18		1.2
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)			23.7		'18	29.2	b	23.3		'15-'18		-0.4
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)	87.3		83.7		'15	87.3		83.7				
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	57.3		57		'15	57.3		57				
<b>Overall transitions and labour market trends</b>												
Early leavers from education and training (%)			11		'18	4.8	b	10.6		'15-'18		
30-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	43.4		38.7		'18	45.7		40.7		'15-'18	2.3	2
NEET rate for 18-24 year-olds (%)			15.8		'18	11.7	b	13.7		'15-'18		
Unemployment rate for 20-34 year-olds (%)	10.6		12.9		'18	5.7		9.4		'15-'18	-4.9	-3.5
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)			75.9		'18	82.6	b	80.6		'15-'18		
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	9.2		23.5		'18	7.6		21.9		'15-'18	-1.6	-1.6
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds (%)	67.8		70		'18	72.2		73.1		'15-'18	4.4	3.1
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)	39.8		52.6		'18	42		56.1		'15-'18	2.2	3.5
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2030 (% of total)					'18	96.1	D	85.8	D			

EU refers to EU-28, unless otherwise specified.  
(D) Forecast made in 2018.  
(ce) Cedefop estimate based on available country data  
(b) Eurostat: 'break in time series'.

(u) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.  
(z) Eurostat: 'not applicable'.  
(e) Eurostat: 'estimated'.  
(d) Eurostat: 'definition differs'.

Source: Cedefop, 2020.

In 2017, 51.7% of all upper secondary students in Poland were enrolled in IVET. This percentage is 3.8 points above the EU average. It appears that the percentage of upper secondary students in IVET is higher by 1.2 points compared to the situation in the country in 2015.

In 2017, 100% of all upper secondary IVET students were enrolled in a work-based learning setting. In contrast, the EU average is 27.9%.

In 2018, 5.7% of adults participated in lifelong learning activities. The EU average is 11.1%.

In 2018, the employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 years old) is 79.1%. The EU average is 80.5%.

For the two last indicators, though data were available in 2015 (Table 1), due to a break in time series, 2018 and 2015 cannot be reliably compared.

# Conclusion

Since 2015, Poland has further reformed its VET system, in particular by strengthening practical training and cooperation with employers and providing support to the involved SMEs. There has been action undertaken to improve quality assurance mechanisms and the information system (especially in monitoring the transitions) to guide the VET development strategy. Initiatives are being taken to develop guidance and increase flexibility and permeability in the education and training system, including VET. Further progress has been made in the Polish qualifications framework and the system for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. NEETs and adults in need are being provided with new training opportunities; new qualifications opportunities for adults were also set up. Projects were launched to support the development of key competences in initial and continuing VET and the continuing professional development of VET teachers and in-company trainers.

The main changes in 2017 have taken place in MTD 3. Poland has begun to implement its Strategy for responsible development <sup>(61)</sup>, which also has effects on VET. The design phase was started for future initiatives on a skills strategy <sup>(62)</sup> and training of trainers in guidance and counselling <sup>(63)</sup>. Poland has also launched a call for grants targeted at developing e-resources for vocational counselling <sup>(64)</sup>. In MTD 1, a call for grants was launched to promote cooperation between VET and enterprises <sup>(65)</sup>. In MTD 4, a working group on future digitisation in the labour market was set up <sup>(66)</sup>.

In 2018-19, almost all MTDs underwent substantial changes. The Law on changes to the VET system, adopted on 22 November 2018, reinforced the cooperation between VET schools and employers (Section 1.3.2). It introduced an annual forecast of the demand for professions and skills and the right for employers to propose new occupations for inclusion into the classification of occupations (Section 2.3). It provided for 'ancillary occupations', targeted at people with minor intellectual disabilities (Section 3.3.3). The law also relaxed the entry requirements to become an in-company trainer (Section 5.3).

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<sup>(61)</sup> See Section 3.3.1.1.

<sup>(62)</sup> See Section 3.3.1.2.

<sup>(63)</sup> See Section 3.3.4.

<sup>(64)</sup> See Section 3.3.4.

<sup>(65)</sup> See Section 1.3.2.

<sup>(66)</sup> See Section 4.3.

In MTD 2, a Vocational School Heads Council was established, to inform VET policy making (Section 2.3). In MTD 3, an initiative was taken to popularise best practices of cooperation between VET schools and higher education institutions (Section 3.3.2). A law establishing a systemic approach to vocational/career guidance at the school level was adopted (Section 3.3.4). An adult learning project was launched following the lines of the 2016 Upskilling pathways recommendation (Section 3.3.7.1).

The actions carried out show that the main lines of the Riga conclusions and the country's policy priorities for 2016-20 are being addressed. Yet, information available to Cedefop suggests that an issue which could benefit from further consideration is that of making more systematic use of EQAVET indicators to monitor VET developments.

# Acronyms

AES	adult education survey
CKZIU	<i>centra kształcenia zawodowego i ustawicznego</i> sector-oriented centres for vocational and continuous education
CPD	continuing professional development
CVET	continuing vocational education and training
DGVT	Director General for vocational education and training
ECTS	European credit transfer and accumulation system
ECVET	European credit system for vocational education and training
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training
EQF	European qualifications framework
ESF	European Social Fund
Eurostat	statistical office of the European Union
FRSE	Foundation for the Development of the Education System
GDP	gross domestic product
GE	general education
ISCED	international standard classification of education
IVET	initial vocational education and training
KOWEZIU	national centre for supporting vocational and continuing education
LOWE	<i>lokalne ośrodki wiedzy i edukacji</i> local centres for education and knowledge
NEETs	not in education, employment, or training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHP	<i>ochotnicze hufce pracy</i> voluntary labour corps
PISA	programme for international student assessment
PPS	purchasing power standards
PQF	Polish Qualifications Framework
QANRP	quality assurance national reference point
SEZ	special economic zone
SMEs	small and medium-sized enterprises
STEM	science, technology, engineering and math programmes
UOE	UNESCO OECD Eurostat
VET	vocational education and training

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