



Vocational education and training policy briefs 2024

POLAND



National VET policy developments 2023-24

This vocational education and training (VET) policy brief was produced by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), Department for VET [vocational education and training] and Qualifications under the supervision of [Jürgen Siebel](#), Acting Head of Department/Executive Director.

The report was drafted by [Inés Sancha](#), Cedefop expert, and peer reviewed by [Anthie Kyriakopoulou](#), Cedefop expert.

This report is part of Cedefop's monitoring of vocational education and training policies and systems. It is based on detailed information on VET policy implementation submitted by Cedefop's European network of expertise on VET (ReferNet) and other sources. For additional information please visit Cedefop's online tool [Timeline of VET policies in Europe](#).

Please cite this publication as:

Cedefop. (2025). *Vocational education and training policy briefs 2024 – Poland*. National VET policy developments 2023-24.
<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/1150934>

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (<https://european-union.europa.eu/>).

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2025.



© Cedefop, 2025.

Unless otherwise noted, the reuse of this document is authorised under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). This means that reuse is allowed provided appropriate credit is given and any changes made are indicated.



ISBN 978-92-896-3874-6 doi: 10.2801/1150934 TI-01-25-061-EN-N

Contents

1.	Introduction.....	4
2.	National VET context and challenges	4
2.1	National VET context.....	4
2.2	Challenges	5
3.	National VET policy priorities	6
4.	Main policy developments 2020-23	6
4.1	Improving the quality and relevance of qualifications	6
4.2	Further developing human resources for VET	7
4.3	Developing career guidance	8
4.4	Strengthening national and international cooperation in VET.....	9
5.	Statistical information in relation to EU targets.....	10
6.	Conclusion.....	13
	Abbreviations.....	15
	References	16

1. Introduction

This VET policy brief ⁽¹⁾ produced by Cedefop presents a snapshot of vocational education and training policy developments in Poland between 2020 and the end of 2024 ⁽²⁾. It presents the context and the challenges the country faces, a selection of the latest VET-related statistics, as well as the national priorities until 2030 identified in the Poland's national implementation plan. This VET policy brief provides information from Cedefop monitoring and analysis on the implementation of the [Council Recommendation on VET](#) and [Osnabrück Declaration](#). [Osnabrück Declaration](#) and contributes to shaping new EU priorities in VET as of 2026 and informing the mid-term evaluation of the Council Recommendation on VET.

2. National VET context and challenges

2.1 National VET context

Vocational education and training (VET) is an important pillar of education in Poland, with a three-level governance structure: national (ministries), regional (school superintendents, mainly in pedagogical supervision) and county (governing schools). The Ministry of National Education regulates secondary-level VET, supported by other ministries responsible for specific occupations and by the Council of Directors of Sectoral Vocational Education Schools and Training Institutions, a consultative body. Social partners advise policy makers on necessary changes in VET (Cedefop, 2025a).

VET is mainly provided in school-based upper secondary and post-secondary programmes. Work-based learning (WBL) is compulsory for all VET-oriented programmes, usually in school workshops, continuing education or vocational training centres. However, it can also be partly or fully organised by an employer, including apprenticeship.

Polish VET is a flexible system that allows for changing pathways at any point. It is based on the classification of occupations, each consisting of one or two qualifications linked to a core curriculum. VET schools have autonomy to develop these core programmes, easily adapted to labour market needs. Vocational qualification courses allow adults to acquire qualifications. Non-formal and informal learning can be validated through external examinations.

Since September 2017, the Polish education system underwent substantial changes completed by the 2022/23 academic year. In November 2018, new measures were adopted to improve the quality and effectiveness of vocational education. Main measures aimed to strengthen employers' involvement in VET and systematically adapt VET to meet the needs of the labour market (Cedefop, 2025b).

⁽¹⁾ See also the previous edition: Cedefop. (2024). [Vocational education and training policy briefs 2023 – Poland](#). Cedefop monitoring and analysis of vocational education and training policies.

⁽²⁾ For some developments, the information available until mid-2025 has been included.

2.2 Challenges

The challenges faced by vocational education and training in Poland are closely related to the current socio-economic situation, as education and training policies are intended to meet economic and labour market needs.

The pandemic revealed that Polish schools, teachers, learners, and society in general, were not fully prepared to meet the challenge of the new forms of education needed during that period (distance/hybrid education). Disparities at the level of digital literacy and the shortage of ICT equipment and tools were the main problems, together with the teachers' lack of technological and methodological skills. The influx of Ukrainian refugees also made it necessary to provide refugees with education and support.

Compared to other Member States, the Polish labour market is among those most affected by labour shortages. In the context of the green transition, labour shortages in key sectors have increased in recent years, also linked to a lack of relevant skills; this is creating bottlenecks in the transition to a net-zero economy. In Q4-2023, employers reported labour shortages as limiting production in industry (67%), construction (72%) and services (55%) (European Commission, 2024a).

Although Poland's position in the European Skills Index (ESI) has improved significantly over the last seven years, there are still persistent gaps regarding human capital. The country moved up from 13th place in 2017 to 9th place in 2024, improving by four positions. The areas that showed the largest improvements were long-term unemployment and the employment rate of recent graduates. Throughout this period, no indicators showed a decline in scores. On the other hand, its weakest indicators remain High digital skills and Recent training (Cedefop, 2024).

VET is losing ground among young people. Over the last three decades, the share of learners in VET has fallen from 78% to almost 60% and has remained stable for several years, while participation in tertiary education has increased significantly (Cedefop & Educational Research Institute, 2022). Better coordination of lifelong learning, including VET, is needed at the regional level, given the challenges posed by the decentralised governance structure between the state and regions.

Teachers are a key factor in successful VET systems and one of the challenges facing the education system in Poland, as in Europe, is to counteract potential staff shortages. Research findings suggests that problems persist with recruiting and retaining teachers, mainly due to low salaries (increased from January 2024 by 30%), the poor image of the teaching profession, and their deteriorating working conditions (European Commission, 2023). Nevertheless, compared to other EU countries, the situation of VET teachers in Poland in terms of the age structure is better than the European average.

The 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey revealed the low skill levels of students starting IVET. This issue, together with skills shortages and educational inequalities, risks holding back productivity, competitiveness, labour supply, and green and digital transitions (European Commission, 2024a).

3. National VET policy priorities

The national implementation plan (NIP) named in Poland as the [Vocational education and training action plan for 2022-25](#) (Poland, 2022) presents the actions Poland will take to implement the [Council Recommendation](#) on VET, as well as the [Osnabrück Declaration](#) on vocational education and training as a factor in recovery and a fair transition to the digital and green economy.

The NIP's main goal is to prepare people for the modern economy by developing high-quality, relevant, effective and inclusive vocational education at all levels. This overall purpose is addressed through the following four objectives:

- (a) improving the quality and relevance of qualifications;
- (b) further developing human resources for VET;
- (c) developing career guidance;
- (d) strengthening national and international cooperation in VET.

Poland's national strategies, reforms, and projects—such as the Strategy for Responsible Growth 2020 (with an outlook to 2030), the Human Capital Development Strategy 2030, and the Integrated Skills Strategy 2030—highlight the importance of professional skills in people's lives and the key role of VET and lifelong learning in personal and professional development (ReferNet Poland, & Cedefop, 2022).

4. Main policy developments 2020-24

4.1 Improving the quality and relevance of qualifications

The 2017 [classification of occupations](#), which informs VET qualifications and their associated programmes, has undergone multiple amendments to reflect new vocational skills and occupations, following the 2018 VET reform (ReferNet Poland, & Cedefop, 2021). The latest update in 2024 introduced the "Electromobility Technician" and revised professions in sectors like mechanical, automotive, and agriculture. These changes have led to updates in core curricula and professional skills, along with a review of existing qualifications in fields such as construction, health care, robotics, agriculture, car servicing, and water transport.

The VET reform in Poland has opened up new opportunities for adapting curricula to better prepare students for vocational skills, particularly in sports and IT, within the [integrated qualifications system](#) (IQS). The IQS now features over 250 non-statutory qualifications below EQF level 6, aligned with current and future labour market needs in the green and digital economy. Furthermore, more than 20 sectoral qualifications frameworks have been developed, enabling industry representatives to create qualifications tailored to various fields like agriculture, banking, IT, or sport. These qualifications can also assist with competence assessment for recruitment and staff evaluation.

The [Badge+ \(Odznaka+\)](#) application, partly funded by the EU under the Knowledge Education Development programme (ReferNet Poland, & Cedefop, 2023a), issues, stores, and shares digital credentials for various achievements, such as qualifications and skills.

From 2020 to 2023, around 13 000 badges were issued by 32 institutions, with improvements and new features being gradually integrated in 2024. In late 2023, the Educational Research Institute launched the project 'Micro-credentials - Piloting a New Solution to Support Lifelong Learning', running until 2026. This initiative aims to explore micro-credentials for skill development and establish a digital issuance process through the Badge+ app, alongside a promotional strategy (Bielecki et al., 2024).

The Centre for Education Development ran a project to create [VET e-resources](#) to improve the use of ICT in VET, develop students' digital competences, personalise teaching, and foster teamwork, with a budget of around EUR 2.2 million. Between 2019 and 2023, 800 e-resources were developed across 32 vocational education branches, available on the [integrated learning platform](#), a user-friendly online tool recommended by the education ministry for distance learning. The platform covers primary and secondary-level education programmes, including VET. A new project focusing on creating new e-learning materials for recently classified professions and supplementary materials for existing ones is set to run from 2024 to 2028.

The [digitisation of vocational examinations](#) in the education system was launched to expand multimedia materials. This includes creating multimedia tasks and animations for better verification of professional and key competences, and exploring the possibility of using virtual technologies and augmented reality in the future.

During the reporting period, various initiatives were launched to foster [stakeholder involvement in developing and delivering VET](#) to make it more responsive to labour market needs. With partial ESF funding, projects were developed to design a quality framework for work-based learning in enterprises and to build model work-based learning programmes for technician-level occupations. All 21 planned quality assurance principles were developed, along with a verification tool for employer-provided work experience. Organisational solutions have been created for 112 occupations, exceeding the initial target of 106, with more in the pipeline.

Other ESF jointly funded projects aimed to develop new vocational test items with employers' support to [strengthen the participation of employers in the examination process](#) and increase VET quality. All examination tasks are gradually posted on an internet platform. By the end of the project in 2023, 98 960 tasks were produced and added to the task bank. This included 96 200 written tasks, which were part of 2 405 written tests, and 2 760 practical tasks, covering 75 professions and 125 qualifications.

4.2 Further developing human resources for VET

The Polish government implemented several measures to provide, prepare, and train vocational teachers. These measures build on changes introduced before 2020, which made CPD mandatory and tailored to school needs. The government also facilitated in-service training for VET teachers in enterprises.

The Act of 23 July 2021 enabled vocational colleges (*uczelnie praktyczne*) to [prepare future teachers for the teaching profession](#). Under this regulation, vocational colleges that

meet the conditions set out in the regulation can use the title of practical college and train future teachers without having to sign an agreement with an authorised university.

The Educational Research Institute (IBE) is undertaking a significant project to develop postgraduate programmes and practical training designed for future VET teachers. This initiative aims to support students, recent graduates, and current professionals from September 2023 to June 2025, with a budget of approximately PLN 5.2 million (EUR 1.2 million), co-financed by the European Fund for Social Development (ReferNet Poland, & Cedefop, 2025).

Poland encourages its teachers to participate in the European platform [EPALE](#), promoted by the Foundation for the Development of the Education System, mainly online and through numerous events. The platform offers adult educators and trainers a variety of resources. The national office organises adult education forums, live chats, workshops, and webinars to improve educators' skills and promote collaboration with career counsellors and VET experts.

In 2022, [the For Life \(Za życiem\) project](#) created a comprehensive set of educational materials designed to help educators and career counsellors support students with special educational needs (SEN) as they transition into the labour market. Furthermore, schools with SEN students can receive additional financial support to [develop their ICT infrastructure and digital competences of learners and teachers](#) following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 'An Accessible School for All' (ASA) project, running from 2023 to 2025, aims to improve education quality by equipping teachers with skills to support diverse learners, including Ukrainian refugees and SEN students. By September 2025, the project expects to involve 1 120 specialist teachers —such as pedagogues, psychologists, special educators, and speech and language therapists—, 11 200 teachers, 500 school administrators (20% from VET schools), and representatives from universities and NGOs. With a budget of PLN 2.37 million (EUR 522 thousand) in 2023 and PLN 7 million in 2024 (EUR 1.625 million), it aims to benefit approximately 30 000 learners (ReferNet Poland, & Cedefop, 2024).

In 2022, a [vocational teacher competition](#) was held across 100 vocational fields with the goal of motivating VET teachers to achieve the best results in their work and promote a positive image of vocational education. The competition included several categories, such as promoting VET, introducing new didactic and methodological solutions, collaborating with employers and the socio-economic environment, supporting students' vocational interests, working with gifted students, and engaging in continuing professional development. The competition received 537 applications from 62 sectoral fields, and 118 winners were announced in March 2023.

4.3 Developing career guidance

Starting in 2018, a [systemic approach to vocational/career guidance](#) in schools has been implemented, making career guidance classes compulsory. As part of ESF funding, the

government supports developing e-resources for career guidance and a new web portal that serves as a source of information on careers and vocational education.

To [support vocational guidance](#), more than one hundred materials have been created and published on a sub-tab on the [integrated learning platform](#), providing free educational materials for teachers, students, and parents. This portal is regularly updated with news on legislative changes in vocational education and guidance, conferences, training sessions and publications.

From 2023 to 2027, the Centre for Education Development (ORE) is running a new project to improve the portal, including cooperation between employers and schools and career counselling for different age groups - audiences at all levels of education. The 2024 report 'Training needs of the modern career guidance in contemporary schools' (ORE, 2024) addressed current challenges and opportunities in the field.

Poland also draws on the European network of expertise [Euroguidance and the Europass](#) initiative to raise awareness of international mobility and support using the Europass service in learning mobility. Two key developments occurred in 2024: the Europass-Mobility On-Line (EMOL) system was improved with the Supplement On-Line (SUPOL) for issuing National Europass Certificate Supplements for Polish artisans; and Europass digital credentials (EDC) were promoted and integrated into the national 'Badge+' micro-credentials initiative. Additionally, EMOL received crucial cybersecurity updates and usability enhancements based on user feedback.

4.4 [Strengthening national and international cooperation in VET](#)

Timely and accurate information is essential for effectively adapting VET to the ever-changing external environment. This process can be significantly improved through cooperative engagement with stakeholders and the application of both established practices and innovative solutions.

Forecasting national and regional demand for employees in VET occupations is part of the VET reform that began in 2018. This [annual forecast](#) is constantly evolving in its approach and methodology, and impacts VET funding. Since 2020, local governments receive increased State subsidies for schools and employers training learners in high-demand occupations. It also provides support for VET provider directors who determine the educational offer as well as for career counsellors, tutors, parents, and learners. In addition, Voivodeship Labour Market Councils evaluate the validity of training in specific professions based on the forecast (ReferNet Poland, & Cedefop, 2023b).

The [VET graduate tracking system](#) uses data from public registers to monitor the career paths of graduates, with the fourth monitoring cycle report submitted in 2024. Ongoing software development for automated reporting involves input from school directors and career advisors. Revised indicators and specific IT solutions support new interactive monitoring results, legal recommendations and methodological reporting. A new EU-funded project, led by the Educational Research Institute from 2023 to 2028, will improve the system by tracking diverse student groups, including SEN and international learners, such as Ukrainian students.

Since 2019, fostering national and regional partnerships with employers has been a central pillar of VET reform. Several initiatives have been implemented to [strengthen employers' involvement](#), increase their participation in monitoring, and improve the quality and effectiveness of VET programmes.

A network of [sectoral skills centres](#) (SSCs) has been established to provide targeted skills acquisition, upskilling and reskilling services. Operating under the concept of Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs), these SSCs engage a variety of sectoral organisations, including employers' associations and vocational schools. They serve a diverse audience, including students, teachers, employees and adults looking to retrain in specific sectors. The plan is to establish 120 SSCs, which will be co-financed by the national recovery plan. Since 2022, several calls for proposals have been issued to support the organisation and operation of these centres.

The education ministry has been funding 17 projects since 2020 with the aim of improving [cooperation between vocational schools and higher education institutions](#) (HEIs). These projects include exemplary teaching programmes, activities to introduce new technologies to students and VET teachers, and professional development for VET staff. Solutions have been developed for 25 occupations and 15 integrated curricula that combine vocational and higher education methodologies. In addition, teaching frameworks have been developed for 16 occupations to improve practical learning and to foster stronger links between vocational schools and universities.

Cooperation at international level is promoted through various measures. A [National team of experts for vocational education and training](#) (EVET) was set up in 2021 to support the implementation of EU tools related to VET (e.g. EQAVET framework, EU basic profiles, graduate tracking, etc.). The EVET team, consisting of 23 experts nominated by the education ministry, organises different types of activities such as seminars, conferences and thematic meetings to promote the Erasmus+ programme and the VET sector. The EVET Team website was launched, and a [selection of articles](#) touching upon different issues prepared by this group of experts was published.

Participation in national and international [skills competitions](#) helps to make VET more attractive to learners and plays a significant role in strengthening cooperation. SkillsPoland, run by the Foundation for the Development of the Education System, organises these events with the help of companies, employers and higher education institutions. Poland hosted EuroSkills 2023 competition.

5. Statistical information in relation to EU targets

Vocational education and training continued to be more popular than general education in Poland in 2024, with 53.45% of all upper secondary students enrolled in VET. This figure marked a slight decrease of one percentage point (p.p.) compared to the previous year, breaking a ten-year upward trend, but still above the EU-27 average of 49.1%.

After reaching a peak of 82.3% in 2022, the employment rate for recent IVET graduates has returned to pre-pandemic levels, standing at 75.4% in 2024, i.e., 2.6 p.p. lower than the 2020 figure and 4.6 p.p. below the EU average of 80.05%, moving away from the VET Council's recommendation benchmark of 82%.

Poland shows very positive results regarding early school leavers and NEET rates. The percentage of students who leave education and training prematurely in 2024 was just 4.1%, well below the EU-27 average of 9.3%, and already below the benchmark set for 2030 of less than 9%. Additionally, although the NEET rate rose to 9.4% in 2024 from 9.1% in 2023 (the lowest value in the last decade), it remains below the EU-27 average of 11.0%. This rate is a significant improvement on the rate of 14.6% recorded in 2015.

Concerns about the reliability of data related to the Polish Eurostat/LFS-based indicator on the percentage of recent IVET graduates (aged 20-34) who have gained work-based learning experience during their vocational education led to methodological changes at national level, starting in 2023. These changes may account for the significant increase in this indicator, which rose from 16.3% in 2022 to 62.0% in 2024 (Bielecki et al., 2024).

Poland ranks 24th, scoring below average in all the indicators covered by the Digital Decade policy programme. In 2023, only 44.3% of individuals aged 16 to 74 had at least basic digital skills, compared to 55.6% across the EU-27, and only 20.5% had above basic digital skills. ICT specialists and female ICT specialists account for a lower percentage of the workforce in Poland compared with the EU average (European Commission, 2024b).

The percentage of adults with a learning experience in the past 12 months stands at 20.3% in 2022, a slight decrease of 0.6 percentage points since 2016. This rate is 19.2 percentage points lower than the European average (39.5%) and far below the target towards achieving the European Education Area (47%).

Table 1. **European vocational education and training policy dashboard: Poland**

Type of indicator ⁽³⁾	Indicator	Last available year	PL	EU-27	Policy Document	EU target (year)
VET for developing a lifelong learning culture						
Progress	Adults (25 to 64-year-olds) with learning experience in the last 12 months (%)*	2022	20.3	39.5	Skills Agenda	50% (2025)
					Council Resolution on EEA	47% (2025)
					ESPR Action Plan	60% (2030)
Progress	Low-qualified adults with learning experience in the last 12 months (%)	2022	4.8 ^u	18.4	Skills Agenda	30% (2025)
Progress	Unemployed adults with learning experience in the last 4 weeks (%)	2024	8.5	15.3	Skills Agenda	20% (2025)
Context	Employment rate for 20 to 64-year-olds (%)	2024	78.4	75.8	ESPR Action Plan	78% (2030)
Context	Early leavers from education and training (%)	2024	4.1	9.3	Council Resolution on EEA	<9% (2030)
Context	NEET rate for 15 to 29-year-olds (%)	2024	9.4	11.0	ESPR Action Plan	9% (2030)
VET for Resilience, transitions, sustainability and excellence						
Progress	Adults (16 to 74-year-olds) with at least basic digital skills (%)	2023	44.3	55.6	Skills Agenda	70% (2025)
					ESPR Action Plan	80% (2030)
Progress	Employment rate for recent IVET graduates (20 to 34-year-olds) (%)	2024	75.4	80.0	Council Rec on VET	82% (2025)
Progress	Recent IVET graduates (20 to 34-year-olds) with work-based learning experience as part of their vocational education and training (%)	2024	62.0 ^u	65.3	Council Rec on VET	60% (2025)
					Council Resolution on EEA	
Context	25 to 34-year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	2024	45.7	44.2	Council Resolution on EEA	45% (2025)
Context	Gender employment gap (%)	2024	11.6	10.0	ESPR Action Plan	To be halved (2030)
Context	People at risk of poverty or social exclusion (1000s)	2024	5 815	93 333	ESPR Action Plan	15 million decrease (2030)
Context	Employed ICT specialists (1000s)	2024	770.6	10 273.6 ^e	2030 Digital Compass	20 million, with convergence between men and women (2030)
VET for the European Education Area						
Progress	Learners in IVET who benefitted from a learning mobility abroad (%) **	2021	5.8	2.1 ^{dV}	Council Rec on VET	8% (2025)
Context	Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET	2023	1.8	1.2 ^d	Skills Agenda	

Available flags: d - definition differs, e – estimated, V - Cedefop estimate, u - low reliability.

* Eurostat data (Adult education survey, special calculation excluding guided on-the-job training).

** Provisional estimates affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: Cedefop. (n.d.). [European VET policy dashboard](#).

(3) [Definitions](#) of the type of indicators are available.

6. Conclusion

Poland's national implementation plan (NIP) identifies four main priorities for developing high-quality, relevant, effective, and inclusive vocational education at all levels, to prepare people for the modern economy. The NIP focuses on improving the quality and relevance of qualifications, further developing human resources for VET, developing career guidance, and strengthening cooperation in VET at national and international levels.

The [Integrated skills strategy](#), adopted in 2019, is the basis for the national recovery and resilience plan and its implementation is one of the detailed aims of Poland's NIP. The strategy emphasises lifelong learning, skills recognition, and improving management and teaching staff skills. Key measures continuing in 2024 include updating vocational education and training (VET) offers, introducing new market qualifications, supporting students with disabilities, teacher support and development, and developing IQS and e-resources.

To improve qualification relevance and quality, the [integrated qualification system](#) (IQS) has been expanded to include market and new qualifications in line with current and forecast skills demands and the transition to the green and digital economy. IQS is supported by the new classification of occupations and the development of respective core curricula, which VET schools can flexibly adapt to meet labour market needs.

Developing sector-specific qualification frameworks contributes to more employer participation in vocational education and training, ultimately leading to better quality VET provision. Recent changes in practical training and in other areas of employer involvement, such as identifying the skill needs or designing tasks for assessing VET students, are also helping to improve the quality of VET provision, better aligned to labour market demands.

Projects supported by European funds also focus on improving the VET system, i.e. through the establishment of a framework for micro-credentials or engaging employers in various areas.

The latest PISA survey results for Poland highlight opportunities for improvement in the quality of basic skills and addressing educational inequalities. By focusing on these areas, Poland can improve its educational system (European Commission, 2024a).

The development of e-resources for purposes like VET examinations and career guidance provides opportunities to promote digital literacy in curricula. While VET programmes can foster green and digital skills, greater efforts are needed to support the green transition. A national green skills strategy could help meet the demand for these skills, especially given the country's high carbon dependency (European Commission, 2024a). Furthermore, significant efforts are necessary to achieve at least 80% of the population with basic digital skills by 2030. As an example, this last goal requires a growth five times greater than the current pace (European Commission, 2024b).

Measures have been put in place to promote the development of human resources in VET. These initiatives include regulatory changes, support for continuous professional development for teachers, efforts to increase participation rates, enabling vocational colleges to provide initial teacher training, and organising a competition to recognise the best VET teachers and raise awareness of their profession. To address current and

projected staff shortages, together with the 30% increase in salaries that took place from January 2024 (European Commission, 2024c), it is crucial to equip educators with essential skills, by designing innovative collaboration models and improving teacher training programmes, especially in digitisation. These actions will help create a more resilient educational workforce.

Implementing a systemic approach to career guidance and developing digital resources for guidance practitioners improves the effectiveness of guidance services. This, in turn, can help make VET more appealing and increase enrolment rates. If combined with more targeted measures to unlock the potential of inactive population, these initiatives could also contribute to the mitigation of skills shortages.

Additionally, by encouraging more students to engage in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), Poland can develop a robust pipeline of highly skilled workers. To maximise these efforts, it would be beneficial to adopt more comprehensive policy measures that align with the country's long-term goals. This could involve providing targeted methodological and organisational support for career guidance, as well as refining the quality assessment processes for school performance in this field. This would create a more supportive environment that promotes student success and engagement in VET.

The labour market integration of VET graduates in Poland is close to the EU average, and the NEET rate is lower than that of EU-27. However, graduates from special VET schools often face difficulties in finding employment or further education shortly after graduation due to disabilities, limited access to inclusive job opportunities, or inadequate post-school support. Implementing the strategies outlined in the 2023 report on the career monitoring of secondary school graduates in Poland (Institute for Educational Research, 2024) could lead to improved outcomes for graduates from this particular group.

Annual forecasting of the most in-demand occupations and tracking VET graduates are important steps towards providing skills intelligence and guiding policy-making. Collaborating with key stakeholders, such as employers and higher education institutions, makes the VET system more responsive to labour market needs. Once operational, the sectoral skills centres aim achieve similar outcomes for their specific sectors and facilitate participation for groups with limited access to the labour market. While progress has been made, there remains an opportunity for further development in their implementation.

Participation in adult learning is below EU-27 average. The lack of clear coordination within the complex institutional system of adult learning poses additional challenges in this area. As part of its national RRP, Poland is setting up 16 regional teams dedicated to vocational education and skills development (European Commission, 2024c). Improved coordination between the various education and training sectors at regional and national levels should help to reduce skills shortages and boost participation in adult learning. Access to upskilling and reskilling opportunities must be improved, particularly for individuals and the sectors and regions most affected by the green transition, where bottlenecks are likely to occur (Council of the European Union, 2023).

While many projects supported by European funding offer valuable opportunities, it is important to consider that reliance on such funding can create challenges in ensuring long-term sustainability and continuity.

Focusing on strengthening key competences in education, promoting inclusivity, ensuring a well-qualified teaching workforce, and making STEM more attractive, coupled with fostering a lifelong learning culture, will strengthen Poland's education system and innovation capacity for the future (European Commission, 2024a).

Abbreviations

ASA	an accessible school for all project
CoVEs	centres of vocational excellence
CPD	continuing professional development
EDC	Europass digital credentials
EMOL	Europass-Mobility On-Line
EPALE	Electronic platform for adult learning in Europe
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training reference framework
ESF	European Social Fund
ESPR	European social pillar of rights
EVET	National team of experts for vocational education and training
HEIs	higher education institutions
IBE	Educational Research Institute (from 2025, Educational Research Institute – National Research Institute)
ICT	information and communications technology
IQS	Integrated qualification system
NEET	not in education, employment nor training
NIP	national implementation plan
ORE	Educational Development Centre
PISA	programme for international student assessment
SEN	special educational needs
SSCs	sectoral skills centres
STEM	science, technology, engineering and maths
SUPOL	supplement on-line
VET	vocational education and training

References

[accessed 3.4.2024]

- Bielecki, J., Maliszewska, A., & Matuszczak, K. (2024). *Implementing European priorities in VET: making national VET agile, flexible, innovative, attractive, inclusive and quality assured: Poland*. Cedefop Refernet thematic perspectives.
- Cedefop. (2024). *European skills index: country pillars: Poland*.
- Cedefop. (2025a). *Spotlight on VET Poland*. Publications Office of the European Union.
- Cedefop. (2025b). *Vocational education and training in Poland: short description*. Publications Office of the European Union.
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2024 update) [Online tool].
- Cedefop, & Educational Research Institute. (2022). *Vocational education and training in Europe - Poland: system description* [From Cedefop; ReferNet. Vocational education and training in Europe database].
- Council of the European Union. (2023). *COM(2023) 621 final. Recommendation for a COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on the 2023 National Reform Programme of Poland and delivering a Council opinion on the 2023 Convergence Programme of Poland*.
- European Commission. (2023). *2023 Country Report - Poland*. SWD(2023) 621 final.
- European Commission. (2024a). *Commission staff working document 2024 Country Report - Poland: Accompanying the document Recommendation for a Council Recommendation on the economic, social, employment, structural and budgetary policies of Poland*.
- European Commission. (2024b). *Digital Decade Country Report 2024: Poland*.
- European Commission. (2024c). *Education and Training Monitor 2024: Country report – Poland*. Publications Office of the European Union.
- Institute for Educational Research. (2024). *Raport częściowy z monitoringu karier absolwentów szkół ponadpodstawowych i ponadgimnazjalnych z roku 2023* [Partial report on the monitoring of careers of secondary school graduates from 2023].
- Ministry of Education and Science. (2022). *Action plan for vocational education and training for the years 2022-25*.
- ORE. (2024). *Potrzeby szkoleniowe współczesnego doradcy zawodowego w nowoczesnej szkole* [Training needs of a modern career counsellor in a contemporary schools].
- Poland. (2022). *National implementation plan on VET: Poland*.
- ReferNet Poland, & Cedefop. (2021, May 20). *Poland: VET reform continues. National news on VET*.
- ReferNet Poland, & Cedefop. (2022, November 29). *Poland's VET Action Plan 2022-25. National news on VET*.
- ReferNet Poland, & Cedefop. (2023a, May 29). *Poland: Badge+, testing new tool for digital badges. National news on VET*.
- ReferNet Poland, & Cedefop. (2023b, July 27). *Poland: new entrants in top occupations most in-demand. National news on VET*.
- ReferNet Poland, & Cedefop. (2024, May 30). *Poland: skilling teachers to improve diverse learners' access to learning. National news on VET*.
- ReferNet Poland, & Cedefop. (2025, January 16). *Poland: support for future and current vocational teachers. National news on VET*.