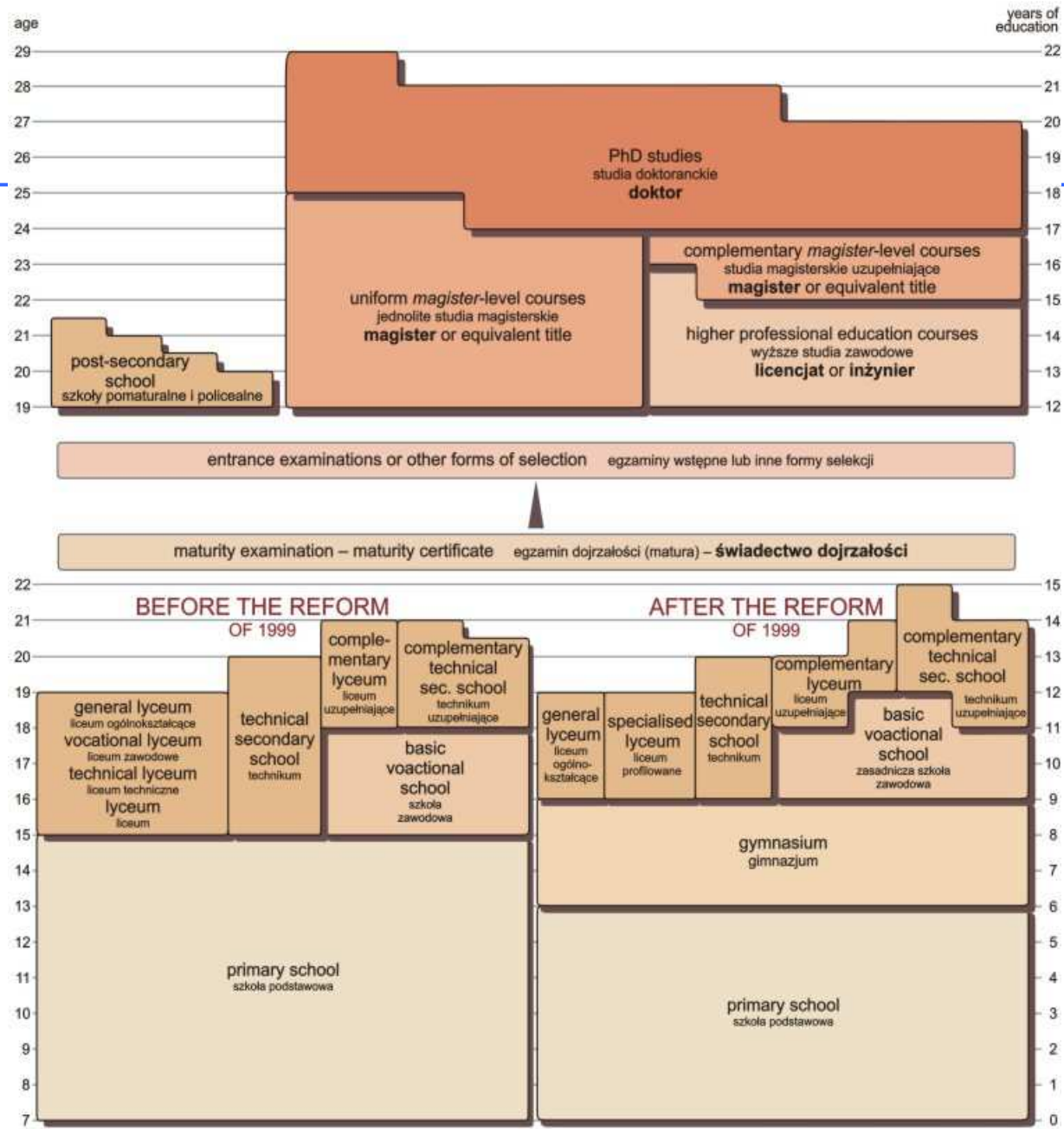


The System of Education in Poland



THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN POLAND



Scheme elaborated for the Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange June 2002

Administration and financing

- Since 2006 there are two ministries: Ministry of National Education and Ministry of Science and Higher Education
- Most pupils learn in public schools (98% in 2006/2007), financed by Polish government
- In 2006/2007 school year there were about 800 non-public secondary schools (private, church and civic), more than 500 non-public lower secondary schools, almost 450 non-public general upper secondary schools and 323 non-public vocational secondary and basic vocational schools

Pre-school education

- A child aged 3 to 5 may receive pre-primary education, which is not compulsory, but:
 - All the six year-old children attend either kindergartens or pre-primary classed attached to primary schools, as the Ministry of National Education and Sport had introduced an obligatory „0” grade starting the school year 2004/2005 and therefore the age of beginning of the compulsory education has been lowered from 7 to 6
- Next school year some of the six year-old children may start their education at school (the parents decide). In 2011 all the six year-old children should start their school education in primary school
- Public kindergartens are administrated and financed by local governments - communes

Primary education

□ Primary school

Duration: Six years (ages 7 to 13)

Curriculum: Polish language and literature, history and civics, modern languages, mathematics, natural science, music, art, technology, computing science and physical education

Leaving Certificate:

Certificate of Completion of Primary School

Primary education - stages

□ There are two stages:

- STAGE I – grades 1 to 3, called integrated teaching
- STAGE II – grades 4 to 6

Primary education - stages

□ STAGE I

The teaching in Stage I is meant to provide a smooth transition from pre-primary to school education.

Educational activities are conducted according to a flexible timetable prepared by the teacher, in which the duration of lessons and breaks is influenced by the pupil's activity

□ STAGE II

Teaching at this stage is arranged by subjects listed in the outline timetable (Polish language, History and civics, Modern foreign languages, Mathematics, Natural science, Music, Art, Technology, Computer science, Physical education, Religion/Ethics)

Primary education – number of lessons

- At the level of primary school there are minimum 18 compulsory lessons (periods) per week (grades 1 – 3) and 24 in senior grades (4 – 6)
- On top of these figures 2 hours of religion or ethic classes (non-obligatory) should be added at all levels and 3 to 4 hours left to the discretion of the school head

Primary school - teachers

- In the grades 1–3, one teacher teaches all subjects (integrated teaching), while in the grades 4–6 each subject is taught by a different teacher and pupils change classroom for each subject. To date, teachers have been trained to teach one subject.
- The teacher training standards envisage training of teachers as specialists in 2 subjects.
Acquisition of computing skills and a good command of one foreign language have also become obligatory.

Primary school - teachers

- A teacher working in 6-year primary school ought to have one of the following qualifications:
 - university education or equivalent completed (the title of *magister*)
 - 3-year teacher training college completed (the title of *licencjat*)
 - 3-year teacher training college completed (ended with diploma, without the title of *licencjat*)
 - a diploma of the formerly existing 2-year teacher training colleges (phased-out at the beginning of the 1990)

Compulsory secondary education

□ Middle School

Duration: Three years (ages 13 to 16)

Curriculum: Polish language, Modern foreign languages, History, Civic education, Mathematics, Physics and astronomy, Chemistry, Geography, Biology, Fine art/Music, Computer science, Physical education and Technology

Leaving Certificate:

Certificate of Completion of Education in the Gymnasium

Compulsory secondary education Curriculum

- ❑ Core curriculum for the gymnasium is included in the Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 26 February 2002 on Core Curriculum for Pre-school and General Education. That has be respected by every school. The teaching at this stage is arranged in subjects, taught by specialist teachers (as Polish language, History, Physics, Biology and others)
- ❑ On the basis of the outline timetable, the school head develops the school timetable, divided into school years
- ❑ The school running body is allowed to increase the number of compulsory teaching hours by the number not exceeding, however, 3 hours per week for one grade in one school year. The weekly number of compulsory teaching hours, additional teaching hours and religion/ethics classes cannot exceed a total maximum of 31 hours in all grades of lower secondary school

Compulsory secondary education

Teachers

- ❑ Teachers employed in the 3-year gymnasium ought to have – at the minimum – the qualifications confirmed with the title of *licencjat*
- ❑ 3-year gymnasium teachers are employed according to the same rules as apply to 6-year primary school teachers
- ❑ Many gymnasium school teachers who have completed higher education are graduates of universities or teacher higher education schools (pedagogical academies). Master's degree studies seem to be the most popular route of training for teachers in lower secondary education

Post compulsory education

- The upper secondary education covers the age group 16 to 18 or 19/20
- The following post-gymnasium schools are open to candidates who have successfully graduated from gymnasia:
 - 3-year general secondary school
 - 3-year specialised secondary school
 - 4-year technical secondary school
 - 2 to 3-year basic vocational school
 - 2-year supplementary general secondary school
 - 3-year supplementary secondary technical school
 - maximum 2.5-year post-secondary school

Post compulsory education

□ Upper Secondary General School

Duration: Three years (ages 16-19)

Leaving Certificate:

*Maturity Certificate of the General Lyceum
or Certificate of Completion of Education
in the General Lyceum*

General secondary education

- ❑ The main objective of general upper secondary education is to prepare youth for admission to higher education establishments of various types
- ❑ Core curriculum for general education in all types of upper secondary schools are included in the Annex to the Regulation by the minister of National Education and Sport of 26 February 2002 on Core Curriculum for the Pre-school and General Education with further amendments
- ❑ They are divided by subjects: Polish language, Modern foreign languages, Latin and ancient culture, Mathematics, History, Civics, Geography, Biology, Physics and astronomy, Chemistry, Technology, Information technology, Art, Music, Defence training, Physical education, Ethics (optional), Philosophy (optional), Education for family life, Cultural studies, Entrepreneurship, Minority language. Additional, there are 6 non-compulsory hours of religion or ethics and 4 hours left to the school head's discretion, which gives a total of 98 hours of classes a week in a three-year cycle

General secondary education

Teachers

- Upper secondary school teachers ought to have completed a university education (*magister* degree) or equivalent
- Master's Degree studies seem to be the most popular route of training for teachers in upper secondary education

Post compulsory education

□ **Technical Secondary School**

Duration: Four years (ages 16 to 20)

Leaving Certificate:

Maturity Certificate of Technical Secondary School or Certificate of Completion of Education in Technical Secondary School

Post compulsory education

□ Vocational Secondary

Duration: Three years

Leaving Certificate:

*Maturity Certificate of Specialized Lyceum
or Certificate of Completion of Education
from Specialized Lyceum*

Post compulsory education

□ **Basic Vocational Secondary**

Duration: Two to three years

Leaving Certificate:

*Certificate of Completion of Education
from Basic Vocational School*

Tertiary education

- Graduates from upper secondary schools in Poland, those possessing the *Matura* certificate, have a wide variety of educational possibilities at the level of tertiary education:
 - **Schools of higher vocational education** or first cycle of university-type courses, of 3 to 4 years' duration and 3-year teacher training colleges
 - **Schools of higher education** (university-type, uniform Master-Degree studies) of 4.5 to 6 years' duration.

The latter are as follows:

universities, technical universities, agricultural schools, schools of economics, pedagogical academies, medical academies, academies of physical education, schools of arts, schools of theology and others.

Tertiary education

There are more than 100 institutions of higher education in Poland. These include 11 universities, 14 technical universities, 4 higher schools of engineering, 8 agricultural academies, 5 academies of economics, and 10 teacher-training colleges.

University higher education

- Graduates from higher vocational schools or from the first cycle of university-type studies, if they wish to obtain a Master's degree or its equivalent, can undertake **supplementary Master-degree studies** of 2-2.5 years' duration.

In the Polish system of higher education, for these Master's degree holders who wish to obtain a Ph.D., there is a possibility to pursue doctoral studies of 3 to 4 years' duration.

University higher education

- The establishment, organisation and activity of university- type higher education institutions in Poland are regulated by the 12 September 1990 **Act on Schools of Higher Education** (with further amendments).
- The vocational higher education sector is governed by the **Act of Higher Vocational Schools** of 26 June 1997 (with further amendments).
- The new **Act of Higher Education was** adopted on the 27 July 2005 replacing the Act on Schools of Higher Education and the Act on Higher Vocational Schools.

University higher education

□ Entrance requirements:

The ***maturity certificate*** with a minimum score of 2 (mediocre) in the grading scale introduced in 1991. Before that, the minimum score requirement was 3. Some institutions require entrance exams for admission to their programs.

University higher education

□ Programs and Degrees

Stage I: There are two academic/professional qualifications: the Licentiate, which takes 3-3,5 years to complete and the Title of Engineer which takes between 3 and 4 years to complete.

The Diploma of Completion of Foreign Language Teacher Training School is for teacher training and takes 3 years to complete. The entrance requirement for all three qualifications is the **maturity certificate**.

University higher education

Stage I and II: Two academic/professional qualifications are awarded at this level: the **Title of Master**, awarded after 4-5 years of study and the **Title of Master in Engineering** which is awarded after 5 years of study. The entrance requirement for both is the **maturity certificate**.

There are also several professional degrees: The **Title of Physician** which takes a total of 6 years to complete, the **Title of Dental Physician** which takes 5 years and the **Title of Veterinary Physician** which takes between 5 and 5,5 years.

Stage III: The **Doctor of Science** takes a minimum of 3 years and requires the *Title of Master* or *Title of Master in Engineering* for admission. The **Habilitated Doctor** takes a minimum of 1 year and requires the *Doctor of Science*.

The system of higher education

- Both state and private institutions of higher education exist in Poland.

The latter began to appear after 1990. A private school of higher education must receive permission to operate from the Ministry of National Education. It acquires a legal status when registered by the Minister of National Education.

- In 1998 the first state and private higher professional (vocational) education schools began to appear. These schools train students in professional specializations and prepare them for specific professions by including 15-week internships and school practice in the mandatory curriculum.

System of higher education

Study programs can take the form of daily, evening or extramural studies and distant learning courses. Daily studies is the prevalent form.

To qualify for admission to an institution of higher education, the applicant must hold the maturity certificate.

The rules of admission to the first year of study are determined autonomously by each institution. Some organize competitive entrance examinations, others use ranking procedures based on the final grades listed in the maturity certificate, still others admit all who apply.

Non-university education

- The *post-secondary, after lyceum without the maturity exam* and *post-secondary, after the maturity exam* are the two types of institutions in Poland that provide non-university higher education.
- The *post-secondary* (no maturity) train students in a variety of vocational fields, including technical, allied health and business. Students who successfully complete these training programs are awarded the certificate of completion of education in post-secondary school. Programs at this type of institution last between 1 and 2.5 years. Graduates can then go on and take a vocational examination for the vocational title diploma.
- Nurses and midwives are only trained at the *post-secondary* (after maturity). Since 1999 the training of nurses and midwives has been incorporated into the higher education system. Graduates are awarded the diploma of completion of education in the post-secondary school. Programs at these institutions last 2.5 years.

Grading system

□ Usual grading system in secondary school

Full Description: 6 - excellent, 5 - very good, 4 - good, 3 - satisfactory, 1 - unsatisfactory, fail, 2 - mediocre; often, the marks '+' and '-' are added to the principal grades

Highest on scale: 6 (excellent)

Pass/fail level: 2 (satisfactory)

Lowest on scale: 1 (fail)

□ Main grading system used by higher education institutions

Full Description: 5 - 2 (5 very good, 4 good, 3 satisfactory, 2 unsatisfactory)

Highest on scale: 5 (very good)

Pass/fail level: 3 (satisfactory)

Lowest on scale: 2 (unsatisfactory)

□ Other main grading systems

For non-final exams, the marks '+' and '-' are often added to the principal grades. In some schools the grade 6 (excellent) exists.