

POLAND

Key: *Red* – name of school/college

Green – name of examination

Blue – name of qualification

Introduction

As a result of political transformation in Poland in 1989, new legislation and changes in education were introduced e.g. compulsory regulation for children to attend pre-school for a year and the introduction of two level secondary education. Education in the Republic of Poland is compulsory usually from the ages of 6 – 16 but in no case continuing beyond 18. The medium of instruction is Polish.

The Minister of National Education and Sport controls the long term educational policy, although the Ministers of Culture and Justice are responsible for arts and correctional institutions. The implementation of the Ministries policies are ensured by the provinces (*voivoidships*). The Administration of public nursery, primary schools and *gymnazjum* are the responsibility of local authorities (*communes*) and upper secondary schools, artistic and special schools are administered by the districts (*powiaty*).

Pre-school

Facilities are available in Poland for children to attend pre-primary school. Previously compulsory education began when children reached the age of 7, however since 2004/05 it is compulsory for children aged 6 to attend kindergarten (*prezedszkila*) or pre-primary classes attached to a primary school (*oddzialy przedszkolne*) which is considered to be 0 grade.

Primary Education

Primary school (*szkoly podstawowa*) lasts 6 years from ages 7-12 and the academic year consists of 2 semesters, 1 September until the end of January and from 1 February until the last Friday in June. Primary education is divided into Stage 1 (grades 1-3) and Stage II (grades 4-6). Students undertake a standardised test at the end of grade 6 which was introduced in 2002 by the Regional Examinations Commission. Students are awarded a certificate of completion (*Swiadectwo Ukonczenia Szkoły Podstawowej*) having passed the exam which is required for admission to lower secondary schools.

Compulsory Secondary Education

Pre 1999

1999 saw a reform to the structure of the secondary education system in Poland. Prior to 1999 there was no distinction between levels of secondary education in Poland and students completed 8 years in primary school until they were 15 years old. Students would then progress onto secondary school and a number of types of institutions were available to them:

- General lyceum (*liceum ogólnokształcące*)
- Vocational lyceum (*liceum zawodowe*)
- Technical lyceum (*liceum techniczne*)
- Lyceum (*liceum*)
- Technical secondary school (*technikum*)
- Basic vocational school (*szkola zawodowa*) and progress onto either complementary lyceum (*liceum uzupełniające*) or complimentary technical secondary school (*technikum uzupełniające*)

At the end of secondary school students would sit the *Matura* examination (*egzamin dojrzałości*) and have the opportunity to progress to post secondary school.

Post 1999

1999 saw the introduction of a lower and upper secondary tiered system and the formation of the *gimnazjum* which students aged 13-15 attend. Internally assessed exams are taken at the end of each year and at the end of 3rd year a compulsory externally assessed exam which examines students' abilities, skills and knowledge in humanities and science is undertaken. The results are detailed on the *gimnazjum* leaving certificate (*Świadectwo Ukończenia Gimnazjum*)

Post-compulsory Education

The upper secondary education level covers the ages of 16 to 20 and students in Poland have a number of options of school types to attend:

- *Liceum ogólnokształcące* – a 3 year full time general secondary school. Having completed their 3 year study here students are awarded a certificate (*świadectwo ukończenia liceum ogólnokształcącego*) which details their subjects and marks gained at the end of the final year. This certificate gives access to post-secondary education or the *Matura* examination.
- *Liceum profilowane* – this is a new a 3 year full time specialised secondary school established in 2002/03. It results in students undertaking the *Matura* examination.
- *Technikum* – a 4 year full time technical and vocational secondary school which results in students being evaluated by *egzamin zawodowy* which is a compulsory vocational proficiency exam. Successful students are awarded a school leaving certificate (*Świadectwo Ukończenia Technikum*) and the title of skilled worker (*robotnik wykwalifikowany*) or technician (*technik*). The *technikum* also offers the *Matura* examination.
- *Zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa* – a 2 – 3 year full time basic vocational school which results in students leaving with access to trade, occupation or *liceum uzupełniające* or *technikum uzupełniające*. On leaving the school they are awarded a Certificate of Completion of Education from Basic Vocational School (*Świadectwo Ukończenia Szkoły Zasadniczej*)

Two new types of institution were introduced in 2004/05:

- *Uzupełniająca liceum ogólnokształcące* – a 2 year full time or part time supplementary general secondary school for 18 to 20 year old students. It offers progression for leavers of the *zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa*. Students leaving this institution will undertake the *Matura* examination
- *Technikum uzupełniająca* – a 3 year full time or part time supplementary secondary technical and vocational school for students 18-21 and students undertake the *Matura* exam at the end. The *technikum uzupełniająca* offers progression from the *zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa*

One final type of upper secondary education institution exists which is the

- *Szkoła policealna* – a maximum 2 ½ year post-secondary school which enables students with secondary education to obtain a vocational qualification diploma (*Dyplom Ukończenia Tytuł Zawodowego*) having passed an exam.

The *Matura* examination has recently been amended. The examination is part written and part oral. Previously the written part is set by the regional education authorities and assessed by teachers, however in future the written part will be externally assessed. The implementation of the new *Matura* examination is expected to take place from 2005 onwards.

The core curricula for all upper secondary schools includes Polish language, Modern foreign language, latin and ancient culture, mathematics, history, civics, geography, biology, physics and astronomy, chemistry, technology, information technology, art, music, defence training, physical education, education for life, cultural studies, entrepreneurship and minority language. In addition ethics and philosophy are optional subjects.

Vocational Education and Training

Young people in Poland wishing to undertake vocational education will attend *wyższa szkoła zawodowa* for 3-4 years or teacher training colleges (*kolegium nauczycielskie*). Students are prepared for employment in specific professions by including a 15 week work experience in the chosen profession.

Prior to the 2004 students in the basic vocational school (*zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa*) students had to undertake a compulsory exam (*egzamin z nauki zawodu*). The exam included written and practical assessment relevant to their chosen profession. When students pass the exam they are awarded vocational school leaving certificate (*Świadectwo Ukończenia Technikum*) and the title of skilled worker (*robotnik wykwalifikowany*).

Since 2004 a new exam, (*egzamin zawodowy*) which includes written and practical assessment is gradually replacing *egzamin z przygotowania zawodowego* (in *technika*) and *egzamin z nauki zawodu* (in basic vocational schools (*Zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa*)).

Students attending vocational institutions also have the opportunity to sit the *Matura* examination.

Vocational education and training can also be undertaken by a young worker in employment. In this instance it is the responsibility of the employer to organise the training. People undertaking this mode of training are required to have completed lower secondary and can obtain either of the following qualifications:

- the title of apprentice and receive an apprenticeship certificate by passing an apprenticeship exam which is two part – theory and practical
- or
- the title of master and receive a master diploma by passing the master exam.

Post Secondary Vocational Education

For admission post secondary vocational schools (*szkoły policealne*) students are required to have obtained a secondary school leaving certificate (*świadectwo dojrzałości*) but not necessarily the *Matura* certificate. Students who wish to gain employment in blue-collar occupations or employment that requires secondary vocational qualifications such as nurses, accountants, computer technicians, librarians etc attend these institutions. Having completed their first year students undertake a vocational examination (*egzamin z nauki zawodu*) and after 2 or 2 ½ years of study take a vocational proficiency examination (*egzamin z przygotowania zawodowego*). Students that are successful in this exam are awarded a leaving certificate (*dyplom ukończenia szkoły policealnej*) and the title of technician (*technik*) or a job title listed in the Classification of Occupations and Vocational Education Specialities which can be obtained from:

Ministry of Economy and Labour of the Republic of Poland
Labour Market Department
Division of Vocational Counselling and EURES Network
1 Tamka Street
00-349 Warsaw
Poland

Higher Education

To gain entry to higher education students are required to have obtained the *Matura* certificate and enrolment may be subject to an entrance exam or interview. The academic year consists of two semesters from 1 October – end of June including two weeks winter holidays (first half of February) plus Christmas and Easter breaks. It is the responsibility of each institution to organise the exact dates of the semesters.

Students wishing to follow an academic line of study can attend the following types of institution:

- Universities – *uniwersytet*
- Technical universities – *politechnika*

- Agricultural schools – *academia rolnicza*
- Schools of economics – *academia ekonomiczna*
- Pedagogical academies – *academia pedagogiczna*
- Medical academies – *academia medyczna*
- Academies of physical education – *academia wychowania fizycznego*
- Schools of arts – *uczelnia artystyczna*
- Schools of theology – *academia teologiczna*

Licencjat and Inżynier

The *licencjat* was introduced gradually since 1992 but has become more popular since the Bologna process. European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is not mandatory in Poland but it is gradually being introduced and is implemented in over 160 institutions.

Students must pass the *egzamin dyplomowy* exam after 3 or 4 years and when they are successful in the exam they will receive the *dyplom ukończenia studiów wyższych* and as a result receive the title of *licencjat* or *inżynier* depending on the subject of their studies.

Magistr

After 5-6 years students must pass the *egzamin magisterski* and are awarded the *dyplom ukończenia studiów wyższych* and then they will have the title of *Magistr* or *lekarz* (plus relevant specialisation) conferred upon them. As part of obtaining the award they must submit a thesis or practical project if it is a technical subject.

From 2005 the Europass Diploma Supplement (*supplement do dyplomu*) will be appended to all higher education qualifications. Having obtained these students may practice within their chosen profession or progress to postgraduate study.

Doktor

Having obtained the *Magistr* qualification students may progress to obtaining a doctorate. This can be achieved by studying for a PhD for 3-4 years or by successfully passing doctoral exams and submitting and successfully defending a doctoral dissertation.

The *doktor habilitowany* can be awarded to those who have obtained the degree of doctor and who have an appropriate scientific or artistic record and have submitted a 'habilitation' dissertation.

Profesor

Having obtained the *doktor habilitowany* it is possible for the title of *profesor* to be conferred upon an individual however it must be approved by the State Commission for Academic Degrees

Higher Education is governed by the Act on Schools of Higher Education – 12 September 1990 (with further amendments) and the vocational sector of higher

education is governed by the Act on Higher Vocational Schools – 26 June 1997 (with further amendments).

In March 2003 the Act on Academic Degrees and Title and on Degrees and Title in the Field of Art was published. It defines academic degrees and titles, rules applied to granting of degrees and titles, the rights of the Central Commission for Degrees and Titles and the PhD studies system.

The degrees of *doktor* and *doktor habilitowany* in a given study area are defined as academic degrees, and in the area of art: the degrees of doctor and habilitated doctor in the area of art in a given artistic discipline.

The title of *profesor* in a given study area is defined as an academic title, and the title of *profesor* in the area of art – is defined as a title in the study area of art.

Links

Link to all HEIs in Poland

<http://www.buwiwm.edu.pl/educ/index-state.htm>

Link to diagram depicting the Polish education system

<http://www.buwiwm.edu.pl/educ/schemat.htm>