

Apprenticeships in Poland

Zawartość

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1. The new educational system

In December 2016, the Minister of National Education introduced reform that changed the structure of upper secondary VET. It has established two-stage sectoral VET schools (Polish: Dwustopniowa Szkoła Branżowa) replacing the so-called basic vocational schools (Polish Zasadnicza Szkoła Zawodowa)¹

The new structure of the educational system started with the school year 2017/18 and is to be fully implemented by the school year 2019/20 (the transition period will last three years).

The structure of educational system in Poland begins at 8-year primary school (single structure education ISCED 1+ISCED 2) and it is compulsory for all pupils who are usually aged 6/7-15.

It includes two stages:

grades 1-3 (early school education)

grades 4-8 where teaching is done by subject.

At the end of grade 8 of primary school pupils will take a compulsory external exam and its results will influence admission to secondary schools.

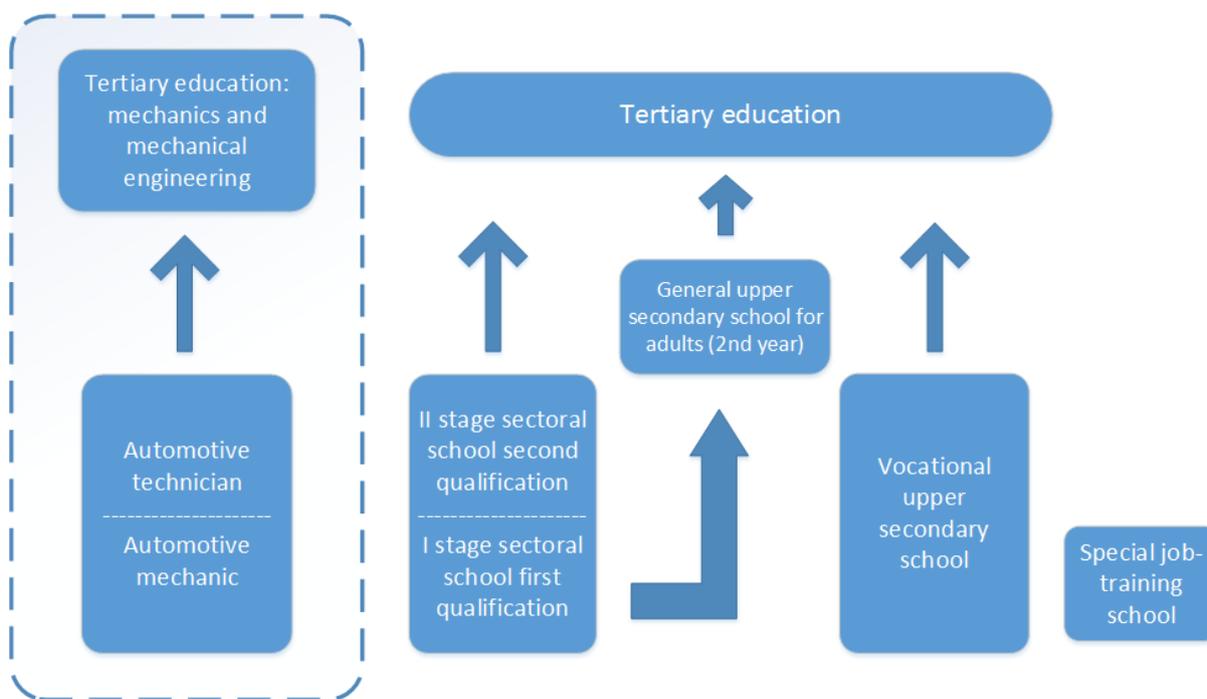
The new reformed structure of **upper secondary education** (ISCED 3) envisages the following types of schools:

- 4-year general secondary school (Pol. *liceum ogólnokształcące*)
- 5-year technical secondary school (Pol. *technikum*)
- stage I 3-year sectoral vocational school (Pol. *szkoła branżowa I stopnia*)
- stage II 2-year sectoral vocational school (Pol. *szkoła branżowa II stopnia*).

The stage I 3-year sectoral vocational school and stage II 2-year sectoral vocational school consist the new base of VET education in Poland.

The new structure of VET education, with the example of example of automotive mechanic and automotive technician qualifications is presented in graph 1

¹ <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/poland-two-stage-upper-secondary-vet-programmes>



Graph. 1 Initial VET after the reform: example of automotive mechanic and automotive technician qualifications

Source: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/poland-two-stage-upper-secondary-vet-programmes>

Stage one comprises three-year programmes leading to a vocational qualification. Graduates are able to continue in stage-two programmes or in the second year of upper secondary general education for adults.

Stage two comprises two-year programmes leading to a vocational qualification. It also allows graduates to enter higher education after passing matura examinations in three compulsory subjects and a qualification examination.

The reform increases the length of upper secondary VET programmes from four to five years.

2. Apprenticeships in the system

2.1 Approach 1: practical learning of a profession - a vocational training

2.1.1 General description

Practical learning of a profession (a vocational training) is an integral and compulsory part of stage I 3-year sectoral vocational school (Pol. szkoła branżowa I stopnia) and stage II 2-year sectoral vocational school (Pol. szkoła branżowa II stopnia). The aim of such apprenticeships is the prepare the students for efficient operation in the taught profession.

It takes place in two forms:

- practical exercises, usually taking place during the classes in school workshops or organized by an employer during 1-2 days a week (dual studying).
- apprenticeships organized by an employer, usually lasting for a longer period of time (2 weeks, 1 month or longer).

2.1.2. Program of the apprenticeship - practical learning of a profession (a vocational training)

The vocational training (practical learning of a profession) is conducted in accordance with the **curriculum developed by the vocational school teacher**, who defines, among other things, **the type and number of hours of classes at the employer**.

The curriculum must meet all the conditions specified in the core curriculum (defined by the ministry of education for all recognized professions), which contains a description of the skills that the student must learn as a result of learning, recommendations for teaching equipment, the conditions for practical vocational training and its duration. The employer may submit comments to the school's curriculum to the headmaster regarding the classes that are provided for him.

2.1.3. Organization of the apprenticeship - practical learning of a profession (a vocational training)

An employer who wants to organize a practical vocational training must make contact with a selected vocational school (both stage I or stage II sectoral vocational school). In practice, such contact is most often initiated by vocational schools, but this is not the rule. Increasingly, it is employers (especially large companies having problems with finding suitably qualified job candidates) who search for schools that conduct education in their professions and propose cooperation aimed at educating future employees of a given company by the school.

At school, the person responsible for cooperation with employers is usually the manager of apprenticeship, who provides the employer with support in all matters related to the organization of practical vocational training. The practical learning of the profession is organized by the school in accordance with the internal rules of apprenticeship. This document details the rules of the organization and practical training of the profession, including, among others, student work time, contractual requirements with the employer, rules for doing apprenticeship journals, the method of apprenticeship examinations, insurance method for students taking apprenticeship, accidents etc. The school apprenticeship regulations should be attached to the contract for the organization of practical vocational training.

The practical learning of the profession is based on the **contract concluded by the employer with the school's director**. All rules of the practical vocational training organization must be specified in that contract. The contract is prepared by the school, however an employer can influence the details of this contract or propose a new one. An appendix to the contract is always a curriculum for a given profession. The curriculum includes the program of practical learning.

2.1.4. Responsibilities of an employer - practical learning of a profession (a vocational training)

An employer who decides to accept students for practical vocational training is required to:

- preparation of training positions equipped with necessary devices, equipment, tools, materials and technical documentation,

- providing students with appropriate clothing and work shoes, personal protection and personal hygiene, providing free preventive meals and beverages as well as sanitary and hygienic equipment that are typical for employees at a given workplace,
- appointing a mentor of the apprenticeship. Training with students must be conducted by an instructor (mentor) -appointed practical vocational training instructor who must have pedagogical preparation and at least a technician or master diploma in the profession they will teach. If the employer does not have an employee who meets these requirements, classes with students can be carried out by the vocational school teacher delegated by the school.,
- acquaint students with the organization of work, work regulations, rules of observance of order and discipline of work and with the provisions and principles of health and safety,
- supervising the course of practical vocational training,
- keeping a diary of apprenticeships. It is connected with the need to document the students' working time, topics of classes given to the employer or describing professional skills that the student has obtained from the employer. The diary usually also contains a certificate signed by the student that he / she had received training in the field of health and safety or instruction in the scope of work regulations and the manner of performing tasks covered by the apprenticeship.

2.1.5. Some financial aspects - practical learning of a profession (a vocational training)

The employer may receive the reimbursement of the costs of practical vocational training from two sources

- from the poviast (Pol. county)
- from the vocational school

The funds are awarded by the poviast head (Pol. starosta) or a city president at the request of the employer (the model of such application is usually available in the school, often in the form of an attachment to the contract). The employer can get a refund for:

- remuneration for mentors of practical vocational training, for whom the care of students is a basic occupation, up to PLN 2 361
- remuneration for instructors of practical vocational training, in the amount of at least PLN 450
- the cost of clothing and footwear as well as personal protective equipment allocated to students (the cost cannot exceed the 20% of the average salary).

2.1.6. Perceived benefits and cost for the employer engaging in practical learning of a profession (a vocational training)

According the research, there may be indicated following pros and cons of engaging in apprenticeships by the employers:

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practical apprenticeship may be free • Possibility of receiving a reimbursement of remuneration for instructors of practical vocational training and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considerable financial and organizational costs for the employer • the purpose of apprenticeship is learning - it must be adopted to the learning

<p>apprentices mentors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the possibility of receiving a refund of clothing costs • consulting the apprenticeship program • the opportunity to "raise up" future employees 	<p>program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • short period of apprenticeship (usually a total of 1 month) • the need to appoint a mentor for apprenticeships • receiving remuneration is not guaranteed - it depends on the financial resources of the poviast and the school
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2.2 Approach 2: Professional preparation of youths

2.1.1 General description

Professional preparation of youths is the most complex and comprehensive form of apprenticeship. Unlike the practical learning of a profession, in this case the employer is the organizer of the entire learning process. This education takes place in two forms:

- learning a profession, the aim of which is to prepare a student to work as a qualified employee. It includes practical training of the profession organized by the employer and theoretical training usually taking place in the stage I or stage II sectoral vocational school, in the period from 24 to 36 months,
- apprenticeship to perform a specific job, the purpose of which is to prepare a student to work as a trained employee. It includes only selected jobs within a given profession, the training lasts from 3 to 6 months, only an adolescent who already has a certificate or a professional diploma can be accepted for this type of apprenticeship.

2.1.2. Program of the apprenticeship - professional preparation of youths

The vocational training is carried out in accordance with the education **program prepared by the employer**. Because, as a rule, the employers organize vocational training in cooperation with vocational schools, they are supported in this from the schools. In the case of an apprenticeship to perform a specific job, its duration, scope and program is determined by the employer, using selected elements of the curriculum taking into account the core curriculum of vocational education or a program ensuring compliance with the examination requirements set in the standards being the basis for conducting the professional qualification.

2.1.3. Organization of the apprenticeship - professional preparation of youths

Juveniles engaged in apprenticeship may be employed only for work covered by the apprenticeship program.

In order to start professional preparation, the employer signs a contract of employment for the purpose of vocational training with an adolescent. The employer must notify the commune head, mayor or president of the city competent for the place of residence of an adolescent about the conclusion of such an agreement. If the employer is a member of a craft chamber, the chamber must be notified. The contract can only be signed with an adolescent who has completed at least a gymnasium (or eight-year primary school) and presented a medical certificate stating that work in the profession taught does not endanger their health.

Adolescents employed for the purpose of vocational training are still required to continue their education until the age of 18. Therefore An employer is obliged to exempt a young person from work for the time needed to take part in further education. In practice, professional training serves to fulfill the obligation to provide juvenile theoretical education in the taught profession. The employer may organize theoretical training on its own, however, it usually sends juveniles to the stage I or stage II sectoral vocational school.

2.1.4. Responsibilities of an employer - professional preparation of youths

An employer who decides to accept students for professional preparation of youths is required to:

- provide the apprentice with the care and assistance necessary to adapt to the proper performance of the work, including ensuring the supervision of teachers or trainers of practical vocational training over the performance of work by the adolescent,
- dismissing a young person from work for the time needed to take part in school education,
- providing information about occupational risk and principles of protection against juvenile threats
- provide young people with work breaks in rooms isolated from factors harmful to health or onerous ones,
- providing work clothing and footwear as well as personal protective equipment,
- keeping records of young workers,
- keeping appropriate maximum working hours. The weekly working time of an adolescent during the school period may not exceed 12 hours (maximum 8 hours a day, in the case of an adolescent up to 16 years maximum 6 hours a day), while on the day of participation in school activities it may be a maximum of 2 hours . During school holidays, the working time cannot exceed 7 hours a day and 35 hours a week.

2.1.5. Some financial aspects - professional preparation of youths

The employer may receive the reimbursement of the costs of employing youths under the following conditions:

- signing the employment contract,
- has pedagogic qualifications specified in the Regulation on the professional preparation of adolescents,
- declares to employ an adolescent after finishing school for a period of at least 6 months.

For this purpose, an application for co-financing should be submitted to the appropriate department for education. In addition, the employer may receive a onetime reimbursement of the costs incurred for the education of an adolescent in the amount of PLN 8 081. If the adolescent was employed for apprenticeship, the reimbursement is PLN 254 for each month of study.

2.1.6. Perceived benefits and cost for the employer engaging in professional preparation of youths

According the research, there may be indicated following pros and cons of engaging in apprenticeships by the employers:

Pros	Cons
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• full control of the employer over the learning process• long learning period (up to 36 months)• the opportunity to receive co-financing• the opportunity to "raise up" future employees• support from industry schools and craft chambers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the need to prepare the curriculum• the employer is the organizer of the vocational training• the need to provide a mentor with practical vocational training• limiting the working time of an adolescent• considerable and financial costs for the employer
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