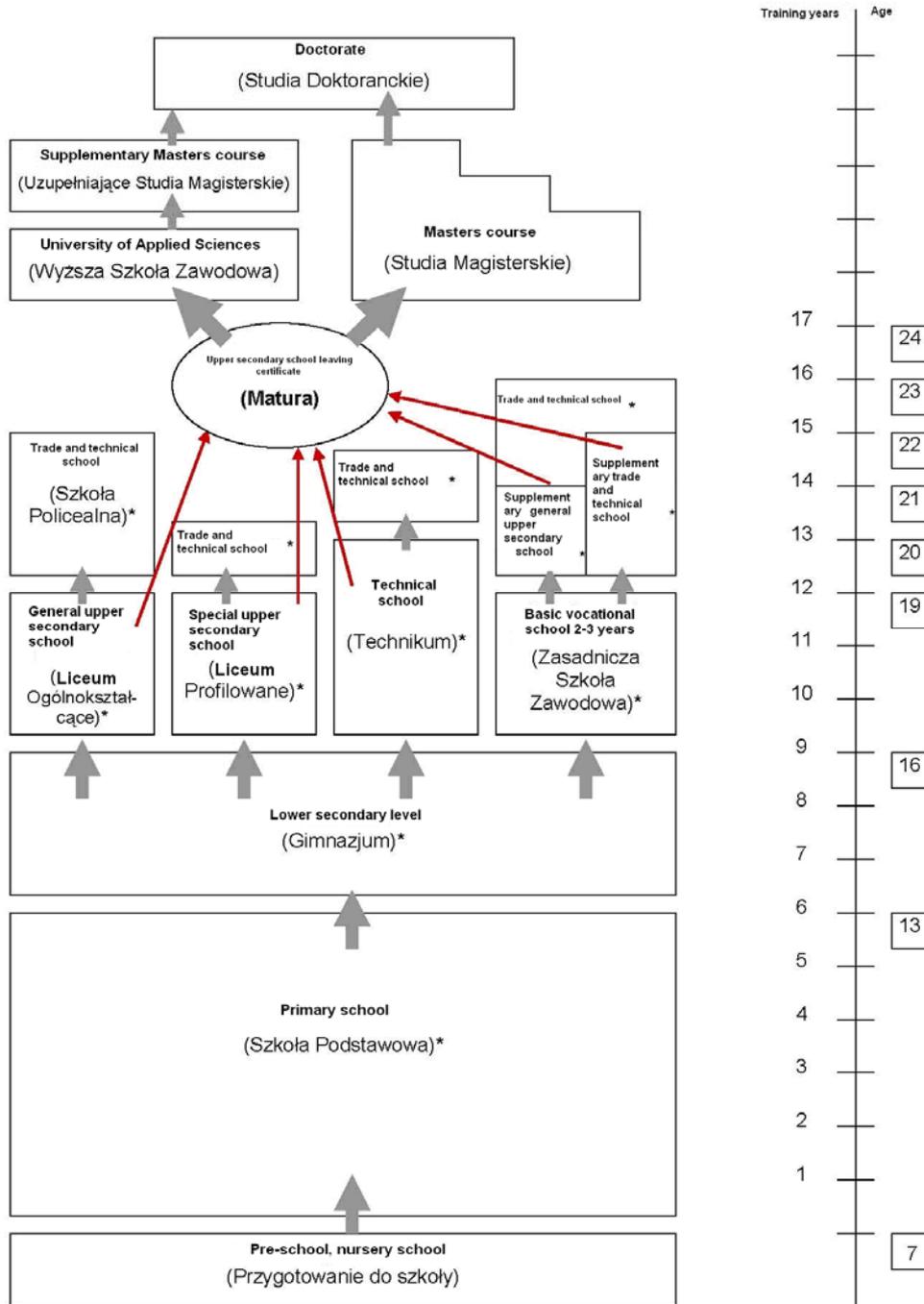


The educational system in Poland

Polish educational system



* With special schools

Explanation of the Polish educational system

Since 1999, a fundamental reform of the Polish educational system has been underway, the aim being for this to be concluded in 2007. The effect has been a decentralisation of the system.

<p>1. Pre-school</p>	<p>Compulsory schooling begins at the age of 6 in class zero, where the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic are acquired.</p>
<p>2. Primary and lower secondary school</p>	<p>Primary schooling is of 6 years' duration and concluded with an examination merely serving as an indicator of the level which has been achieved.</p> <p>Primary schooling is followed by the 3-year lower secondary level (Gimnazjum), the equivalent of the German intermediate secondary level. This concludes with a compulsory examination where there is no possibility of failure, the marks achieved, however, being of significance in terms of the selection of the subsequent school. These marks form the basis of access to a higher school, some schools conducting additional entrance examinations.</p> <p>The reform of the school system saw the introduction of two compulsory foreign languages for all pupils.</p> <p>Intermediate school education is followed by a choice of attending a general upper secondary school, a specialist upper secondary school, a technical specialist school or a basic vocational school.</p>
<p>3. Upper secondary education</p>	<p>Both the general upper secondary school and the specialist upper secondary schools are of 3 years' duration and conclude with the upper secondary school leaving certificate.</p> <p>In 2003, 42.7 % of young people attended a general upper secondary school, representing an increase of 69 % compared to 1990.</p> <p>Aside from general education, specialist upper secondary schools provide broad-based basic vocational education and training in 15 profiles. These include engineering and technology, the environment and agricultural technology, services, culture, transport and forwarding, electro technology and information management.</p> <p>It is also possible to attend a 4-year technical specialist school concluding with the upper secondary school leaving certificate and a vocational examination.</p> <p>Since 2005, new regulations have been in place for the upper secondary school leaving certificate. It consists of a central (external) written examination and a decentralised oral component, the latter remaining within the responsibility of the individual schools. Performance in the upper secondary school leaving certificate now determines access to the institutes of higher education, the entrance examinations having been abolished.</p>
<p>4. Vocational education and training</p>	<p>Vocational education and training is of 2 - 3 years' duration, takes place predominantly in full-time schools and concludes with an external vocational examination. The possibility exists of acquiring VET within an alternating (dual) scheme in craft trades and</p>

	<p>commercial companies. Around 10 - 15 % of all pupils at vocational schools undergo an apprenticeship in the dual system, attending parallel theoretical lessons in state-run vocational schools.</p> <p>Registration of trainees and the implementing and conducting of journeyman examinations is incumbent on the chambers of crafts and trades. VET concludes with an external vocational examination.</p> <p>After VET, there is the possibility of supplementing education by attending general upper secondary school or technical specialist school.</p> <p>Fewer and fewer young people are deciding to pursue vocational education and training. The current figure of those completing VET is only 11.5 %, a fall of 75 % compared to the year 1990.</p>
<p>5. Higher education</p>	<p>The number of higher education students in Poland is constantly rising. Whereas in 1991 13.1 % of those aged between 19 and 24 were attending an institute of higher education, by 2005 the number had already risen to 48.5 %. In European comparative terms, this figure is one of the highest. About ¾ of all students come from the urban areas and about ¼ from the countryside.</p> <p>Higher education study may take place at a university or at an institute of higher education (Universities of Applied Sciences). 3 to 4 year vocational courses of study, concluding with a bachelor degree, are offered (the universities also providing such courses.) This may be followed by a Masters course of study. Doctorates are possible at institutes of higher education, institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences and at research and development institutes. Institutes are accorded the right to award doctorates on an individual basis.</p> <p>The ECTS is already in use at most institutes of higher education. Since 2005, it has been compulsory for institutes of higher education to issue graduates with a diploma support.</p>