

POLAND

Summary

**Country Report on the Vocational Education and
Training system, REFERNET Cedefop**

and

**Summary report on Vocational Education and
Training (VET) for learners with Special
Educational Needs (SEN)**



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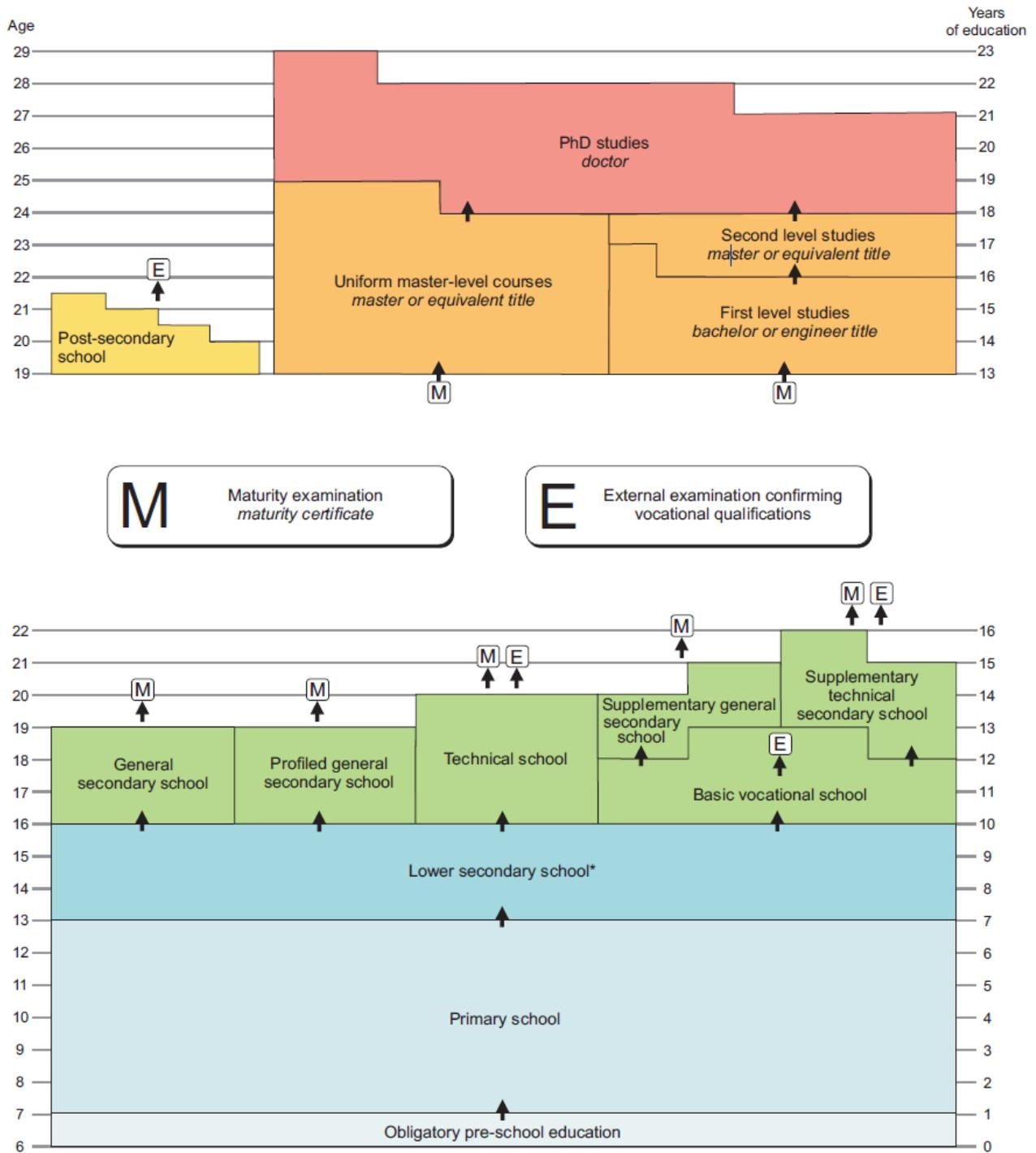
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1 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

1.1 Diagram of the education and training system



*Including lower secondary schools with work preparation classes



1.2 Definitions

Pre-vocational education (*Kształcenie przedzawodowe*) Period of learning until vocational education is started; it comprises education acquired in the family (at home), and in pre-school, primary and lower secondary school. Specific tasks associated with pre-vocational training include: 1) preliminary introduction into the world of labour and economy; and 2) preparation for choosing an occupation.

Vocational education (*Kształcenie zawodowe*) Vocational education refers to pre-vocational education, vocational education proper and all forms of vocational development or further education and continuing professional development. We could therefore define vocational education as all structured activities and processes leading to the acquisition of vocational competence/qualifications, including career guidance, and in particular preparation to work in a specific occupation in a specific sector, and at a specific position. Upon completion of vocational education in basic vocational school, technical secondary school or post-secondary school, the candidate may sit an examination confirming vocational qualifications. Such an examination is not compulsory.

Technical education (*Kształcenie techniczne*) Technical education can be divided into general technical education and technical vocational education. Its main goals include provision of basic technical and technological knowledge and development of skills needed for the proper performing of tasks specific to a given occupational profile.

Apprenticeship (*Nauka zawodu u pracodawcy*) Apprenticeship in Poland can take one of 2 forms: as practical training at the employer's with theoretical knowledge completed in formal basic vocational school or in non-formal forms in order to acquire qualification of an apprentice or skilled worker and as training at the employer's to perform a specific job, covering only selected work activities comprised by training for a specific occupation.

1.3 Objectives and priorities of the national policy development areas of VET

- The *Education Development Strategy* for the years 2007- 2013 foresees creating "special educational zones" in the areas where specific educational problems occur, additional funding will be available.
- *National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education (KOWEziU)* organizes courses for vocational counsellors upgrading their skills and knowledge, amongst the others, in vocational counselling for disadvantaged groups, e.g. disabled people.
- From the 1st of September 2009, curricula changes: Vocational education will be better linked with enterprises and external exams validating vocational qualifications will also take into account qualifications acquired outside vocational schools.

1.4 Institutional and legislative framework for IVET

National Level

- The Minister of National Education, by means of regulations and detailed arrangements, creates a legal framework for functioning of all educational establishments, including vocational education and training. The Minister of National Education co-operates with other branch ministers supervising vocational schools: the Minister of Culture and National Heritage (artistic schools), the Minister of Agriculture (agricultural schools) and the Minister of Environment (forestry schools).



- The main institutional platform for social partners' involvement in VET at national level is the Tripartite Commission on Socio-Economic Issues (*Komisja Trojstronna ds. Społeczno- Gospodarczych*) established by resolution of the Council of Ministers of 15th February 1994.
- Central Employment Board (*Naczelna Rada Zatrudnienia*) fulfils an advisory role to the Minister of Labour.

Regional Level

The regional authorities (*województwa*) mainly play a co-ordinating role: they supervise the implementation of the national policy and provide pedagogical supervision.

District Level

The district authorities (*powiaty*) and their heads (*starosta*) are in charge of managing upper secondary education (including vocational education), post-secondary schools and special schools (primary and secondary), sports schools and schools of sports mastery, practical and continuing education centres, psychological and pedagogical centres.

Policies:

The basic legislative act which regulates the functioning of the education system, including vocational education and continuing education, for youths and adults is the Education System Act of 7th September 1991, with further amendments of 1995, 1998, 2001 and 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2009.

1.5 Systems and mechanisms for the anticipation of skill needs

Studying the work environment, which is done by specific research centres, requires close cooperation with employers, relating the research findings to macroeconomic forecasts and transposing the results into sets of desirable skills and qualifications. Methods which are used most frequently include diagnostic surveys, as well as questionnaires and interviews using survey questionnaires and interview questionnaires as tools.

Labour market competition and the need to adapt qualifications of school leavers to employers' requirements forces vocational schools to test both internal and external effectiveness of their instruction. Employers carry out random surveys related to vocational competences of school leavers and demand for specific skills as part of regional or local research projects, in some cases funded from grants of the State Committee for Scientific Research (KBN). Development of sets of skills for individual occupations is mainly done within the formal vocational education system(s), at different levels of education, supervised by different ministries.

1.6 Types of teacher and trainer occupations in VET

From the 1st of September 2009, teachers in basic vocational schools will have to have at least higher vocational education and pedagogical preparation.

Types of teachers/trainers	Place of work
Teachers	
General subject teachers*	VET secondary and post-secondary schools for young people; public and accredited non-public continuing education centres (CKU); Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP)
Theoretical vocational subject teachers*	VET secondary and post-secondary schools for young people; public and accredited non-public continuing education centres (CKU), retraining and further training centres (ODiDZ) and practical training centres (CKP); Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP)
Practical vocational training teachers*	VET secondary and post-secondary schools for young people; public and accredited non-public continuing education centres (CKU) and practical training centres (CKP); Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP)
College teachers	Colleges of social work, teacher training colleges (not recognised as HE in the national legislation)
Teachers-pedagogues	VET secondary schools for young people
Teachers-psychologists	
Academic teachers	
Research and teaching staff	Higher education institutions
Teaching staff	
Trainers	
Practical vocational training instructors	Mainly: employers (workplace) and privately owned farms; on a limited basis: training institutions within the education system
Trainers-specialists	Mainly: employers (workplace) and accredited commercial providers; on a limited basis: training institutions within the education system

1.7 Practices to match VET provision with skill needs

The methodology of doing research and preparing the results was developed by research institutions themselves, but the content of individual standards was as a rule defined by employees working in a specific job, their immediate superiors and directors (owners) of enterprises. Vocational qualification standards are among the basic considerations (on a par with the core curriculum for a given occupation) in designing modular curricula.

The Centre of Human Resource Development (CRZL) is currently carrying out a project called "Diagnosing qualification and skills demand on the regional and local labour market – cooperation between labour offices, employers and other partners on the labour market" aimed at gathering information on all methods, tools and procedures for diagnosing demand for occupations / qualifications / skills on regional and local labour markets; analysing their functionality and usefulness; and designing new adequate methods, tools and procedures for public employment services. Another project carried out by CRZL regards working out recommendations for changes in the presently used methodology for monitoring surplus and scarce occupations on the local labour market.

1.8 Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment in IVET

Vocational guidance services under the remit of the department of education are provided by specialised pedagogical assistance and counselling centres, which offer a broad range of psychological and pedagogical assistance, including vocational guidance services to



children and young people, and counselling to both teachers and parents related to the education and raising children and young people. Services offered by pedagogical assistance and counselling centres are provided free of charge and on a voluntary basis.

School Career Centres (*Szkolne Ośrodki Kariery-SZOK*) belong to the internal career guidance system at schools. *SZOKs* are designed as facilities in the *gimnazjum* or upper secondary schools where pupils can acquire knowledge and skills helpful in their future career paths, such as information about the local labour market, rules and principles governing the labour market as such, and about labour law.

1.9 Funding for initial vocational education and training

Governing and financing vocational education takes place on the central and regional levels. In 2009, non-governmental organisations offer scholarships for vocational school pupils. Local self-governments accept applications for material aid for vocational school pupils (scholarships, allowances).

1.10 References

Cedefop Refernet Poland (2009): VET in Europe. Country Report Thessaloniki: Cedefop.



2 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

2.1 Population

The target group in the Special Educational Centre for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing in Racibórz is young people aged 14 to 25, with hearing impairments, mild mental disabilities, autism or multiple disabilities. This group falls within the definition of the project.

Vocational training is organised in a specialised way. The vocational training is also conducted in accordance with the established Polish educational system for students with SEN in special education.

The students' transition to employment is assisted by programmes run by NGOs such as PFRON. However, these programmes should improve the stated aims for VET for 2011-2020 due to the need for a connection between school education and the labour market, as stated by employers and other persons involved. The vocational education of students with SEN needs a more adaptable and flexible system for vocational training, with a greater focus on both inclusive and special education. A part of the training must be conducted by the employers according to the capacity of the students with disabilities. VET is excellent for students with SEN who want to experience training in various forms of work with the opportunity to complete an international internship. The experience of working with different people will help to prevent the student's social exclusion.

2.2 Organisation and Provision of VET programmes

2.2.1 IVET system options for SEN learners: lower and upper secondary levels, apprenticeship training and other youth programmes.

Whilst completing the VET project we ensure that there is non-discriminatory access to, and participation in, education and training. We pay attention to the needs of individuals or groups at risk of exclusion, especially those that prematurely ended their school education, those that have low qualifications or those in a particularly difficult situation.

We have also implemented a programme of vocational counselling led by a coordinator, who is a full-time counsellor working in the areas listed below. He/she works in a manner that is adapted to the needs of our students with SEN:

Vocational guidance - a range of services designed to "help individuals at any age, at any stage of life, in making choices in education, training and their career, as well as provide assistance in managing their own careers" (R.Sultana, *Strategie usług poradnictwa zawodowego w społeczeństwie wiedzy – europejskie trendy, wyzwania i działania*. [Strategies for career guidance services in the knowledge society - European trends, challenges and action.] Report CEDEFOP, KG HP, Warsaw 2005, p.32)

Vocational orientation – a range of educational procedures for the school, parents and other individuals, groups and institutions. These prepare young people for career planning, which is an important element in making decisions for choosing professions and schools. (K.Lelińska: *Założenia i kierunki rozwoju poradnictwa zawodowego w warunkach reformy edukacji*, 1999, *Problemy poradnictwa psychologiczno - pedagogicznego* [Aims and directions of development of guidance in terms of education reform, 1999, *Problems of psycho – pedagogical counselling*] No. 2/11, p.29)



Professional counselling - assistance in making a decision to choose another profession or form of work, - in the form of individual and professional advice - through the analysis of problematic field units and providing professional tips, suggestions and instructions. The professional counselling tasks are shared by a psychologist, tutor, teachers and educators within an integrated system. (K.Lelińska: Założenia i kierunki rozwoju poradnictwa zawodowego w warunkach reformy edukacji, 1999, Problemy poradnictwa psychologiczno - pedagogicznego [Aims and directions of development of guidance in terms of education reform, 1999, Problems of psycho – pedagogical counselling] No. 2/11, p.29)

Source: website of the Ministry of Education (MEN) Career Advice (Doradztwo zawodowe) tab.

2.2.2 Different types of educational/VET settings

In Poland, the vocational training of students with SEN is provided through all three options. Students with SEN may be educated:

- 1) according to their needs in small groups and class laboratories that meet professional standards and technical requirements adjusted to the disability, such as hearing protection and the use of machines that provide protection in the event of inadvertent actions by people with intellectual disabilities,
- 2) individually by employers
- 3) in public schools adapted to the individual needs of SEN pupils

2.2.3 The curricula of VET programmes, the assessment procedures, types of qualifications and assessment criteria (e.g. flexibility on curricula composition and individual adaptations, diplomas etc.)

The curriculum for disabled learners contains all the core elements of the curriculum studied by their non-disabled peers, but the manner and time of its execution is adjusted by the teachers in consultation with parents and an individual student's needs. The criteria for this evaluation must take into account a student's psychological and physical capabilities, the contribution of the student's own work, the time required to teach the curriculum, the form of communication with the student (e.g. the level of language development and the vocabulary required to make the content understandable for the child).

The system does not provide for the possibility (as in higher education) of issuing a supplement to certificates, which can be a description of specific professional skills gained in the various stages of implementing the curriculum. Students with SEN may not pass a vocational exam purely because of their psycho-physical abilities and low resistance to stress or because of the format of the exam, despite their excellent skills, e.g. an excellent manual dexterity, which is a crucial ability sought by employers in certain professions.

2.3 VET programmes and employment

2.3.1 Strategies and practices used to match the local labour market needs with the skills acquired by learners in the course of the VET programmes

The Special Centre for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing in Racibórz conducts training for local students with intellectual disabilities who are interested in a carpentry or cooking profession. Similar facilities across Poland offer education in various other occupations and we therefore conduct career counselling classes for junior high school students and high school students to inform them of the professions offered by these centres.



The institutions also promote certain professions by organising competitions, such as a photo contest that promotes the professions of photographer and photo technician. Our institution has been involved in several European projects:

1. "Man - the best investment"- project co-funded by the European Union under the European Social Fund, implemented by the Government of the Silesian voivodship in the Special Educational Centre for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing in Racibórz. The project's aims for students with SEN included working for equal educational and vocational opportunities for students with disabilities and strengthening skills in extracurricular clubs.

2. "Crossing Borders" - Unknown modernism of Upper and Lower Silesia, the Polish and Czech lands from the European Regional Development Fund. This has allowed young vocational trainees in the profession of a photo technician to collaborate with a higher education institution - the University of Technology in Gliwice- to promote and showcase their skills in the country and abroad. European Regional Development Fund activities focus on the following areas:

- initiatives for local development and employment, as well as activities of small and medium sized enterprises
- profitable productive investment in the creation or maintenance of permanent jobs
- infrastructure
- tourism development and investment in culture
- protecting and improving the environment
- development of the Information Society

Participation in this type of local programme meets the IVET requirements.

3. "4 steps - Supporting deaf people in the labour market II" - project co-financed by the European Union under the European Social Fund. The programme supports the plight of the deaf in the Polish labour market. It was developed on the basis of research indicating the number of barriers to this group entering the labour market. These are primarily communication, social and emotional barriers.

The project has the following objectives: it aims to meet the objectives of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, approved in 2006. It aims to increase the access of people with different disabilities to knowledge and the labour market. Simultaneously, the project responds to changes in Polish law e.g.: changes in the law on sign language, which is one of the main ways of increase the capabilities of deaf people to learn and work in the open market and to reduce social exclusion of this group. The overall objective of the project is to support and prepare a group of 1600 deaf people from all over the country to enter or return to the labour market and start or continue their learning with the help of personalised and comprehensive services.

4. "Foreign Languages... yes I can!" - the project involves extra classes in English language skills and enhancing e-entrepreneurship with the use of ICT technology.

2.4 Data (relating to learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 years old and enrolled in VET programmes in the academic year 2010/2011 and relating to their transition to employment)

2.4.1 Data on the number of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 years old who are enrolled in VET programmes, at national and/or local level.

29 710



Source: <http://www.cie.men.gov.pl/index.php/dane-statystyczne/139.html>

2.4.2 Data on how many of these learners are enrolled in mainstream VET programmes, how many are enrolled in special units within mainstream VET settings and how many are enrolled in special VET programmes.

29 710 - number of pupils with SEN in the school year 2011/2012 at the national level

Number of pupils with SEN by type of school at the national level:

3 754 - (non specific) public schools

25 956 - special schools

Number of pupils with SEN in relation to the total youth population (national) -

- the general youth population - **1 016 213** to students with SEN - **29 710**

source: <http://www.cie.men.gov.pl/index.php/dane-statystyczne/139.html>

2.4.3 Data on the number and percentage of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 who are enrolled in VET programmes, in comparison with the number and percentage of the general youth population of the same age enrolled in VET programmes, at national and/or local level

Number of pupils with SEN in relation to the total youth population (national) -

-the general youth population - **1 016 213** to students with SEN - **29 710**

source: <http://www.cie.men.gov.pl/index.php/dane-statystyczne/139.html>

2.4.4 Brief definition and explanation of “drop out”. Data concerning the drop out rate of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 who are enrolled in VET programmes, in comparison with the drop out rate of the general youth population, at national and/or local level.

No data available

2.4.5 Data on the transition rate of learners with SEN from VET to employment in comparison with the transition rate of the general youth population from VET to employment at national and/or local level

No data available

2.5 Legislation and policy

2.5.1 Brief description of existing legislation

Minister of National Education:

- formulates educational policy (including vocational education for students with SEN)
- creates a legal framework for the functioning of all educational institutions, including vocational training
- administers the national budget on education
- sets the core curriculum for education and training
- approves the curriculum for each subject
- approves course books used in general and vocational education
- partly supervises curators.



Board of Education

(consultative body) Institutions of social dialogue

The national level

- cooperates with the Ministry of National Education in the formulation of higher education educational policy, including for young people with SEN who undertake higher education,
- gives opinions and guidelines on proposed changes in the field of education
- consults on legislative proposals
- submits proposals for educational reform
- provides opinions on legislative proposals
- gives opinions on issues in vocational training, training for the unemployed and employment promotion programmes, including for those with SEN

The voivodeship authorities represented by the chief education officer

- oversee the implementation of national policy, including for SEN pupils
- provide pedagogical supervision over educational institutions in the voivodeship
- oversee, evaluate and control schools and educational institutions, including special schools and institutions, as well as public educational institutions for teachers and pedagogical libraries. They support teachers in working with children and young people with SEN.

The institutions of social dialogue

The voivodeship level

- issue opinions on vocational education and training in the region, including for students with SEN
- provide opinions on issues concerning the organisation and financing of education.

The dialogue institutions

Social dialogue institutions - county council on employment

(consultative body)

- issue opinions on vocational education and training in the county including opinions on the direction of education for SEN pupils

The authorities running the educational unit are the county authorities represented by the county administration or the voivodeship authorities represented by the Marshal.

The county level

- is responsible for the management of upper secondary education (including vocational and special vocational education),
- marshals post-secondary schools and special schools (primary and secondary),
- gives opinions and ensures financial resources to schools for adapting infrastructure and teaching materials for students with SEN
- is responsible for the pedagogical - psychological centres, for preparing opinions on the necessity of meeting the special teaching needs for students and also has an adjudicative / declaratory function



Communes

- are responsible for the management of secondary education and career guidance for students with SEN

The head of a school or educational institution

- chooses the curriculum for students with SEN, and provides pedagogical supervision over their adaptation for students with SEN
- manages the school budget and the provision of the necessary teaching aids for the adaptation of the curriculum for students with SEN.

Source:

Refer Net Polska (2010) w publikacji „Kształcenie zawodowe w Polsce - Charakterystyka ogólna Luksemburg: Urząd Publikacji Unii Europejskiej, 2011 ■ CEDEFOP” [in "Vocational training in Poland - Overview Luxembourg: Office for Publications of the European Union, 2011]

The transition to the labour market for disabled people, as well as financing, is overseen by a non-governmental institution – the State Fund for Rehabilitation of the Disabled Persons - which partially funds jobs and wages for people with disabilities.

2.5.2 Main objectives and priorities of the national/regional policy relating to VET for learners with SEN and the transition from VET to employment

Most of the EU financing comes from the European Social Fund (ESF). In order to improve people's skills and respond to the high levels of unemployment among students with SEN, all national ESF programmes include help for supporting young people and adults with SEN.

2.5.3 Roles and responsibilities within the institutional framework

No data available

2.5.4 The actors involved in improving standards and evaluating the VET programmes on offer for learners with SEN, relating to the job market

PFRON Programmes - Equal opportunities for disabled

The primary task of the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons is to promote the professional and social rehabilitation and activation of disabled people. Activation, as the main objective of the Fund's operations, reflects the principles of PFRON programmes, which complement the activities carried out within the framework of the statutory responsibilities of the Fund.

Since 1993, the total expenditure of the Fund for the programmes amounted to over 3.5 billion PLN.

Thanks to PFRON programmes:

- the purchase of nearly 87,000 sets of computer equipment for individuals was subsidised
- the Fund has supported more than 26,100 people in the purchase of electric wheelchairs
- from 2002, an increasing number of disabled students have received financial assistance; in 2002, approx. 1600 people with disabilities benefited from funding under the "Student" programme. In 2009, the number of disabled people using the programme "Student II" increased more than eightfold - to about 13,000.



- the Fund supported the purchase of cars (in the form of loans or grants to buy a car or vehicle financing for equipment appropriate to the type of disability) for over 31,000 people with disabilities.
- more than 8100 blind and visually impaired people benefited from computer training
- the Fund co-financed the purchase of approximately 2500 vehicles for the transport of people with disabilities. The great majority of these vehicles are equipped with an elevator, a ramp or other devices that adapt the vehicle to transport people with disabilities to rehabilitation activities and to their workplace.
- the Fund supported the programme aimed at eliminating barriers in communication with the deaf and people with hearing impairments, by partly financing sign language courses in these people's environments. The help was offered to more than 94,000 people. In addition, approximately 120 institutions received support for sign language translator services or the purchase of equipment to improve hearing in theatres, concert halls and universities in order to prevent the social exclusion of these people.
- The Fund supported around 300 NGO operations for people with disabilities, in the amount of 540.6 million PLN.
- It is estimated that approximately 7100 jobs for disabled people were created with the support of the Fund.
- Current programme: Junior – is a programme for the vocational activation of graduates with disabilities in an Outplacement Programme for Graduates - First Job.

Source: PFRON's homepage

2.6. VET teachers, trainers and other professionals

2.6.1 Information on the VET staff (teachers, trainers, career counsellors, transition officers etc.)

A) the qualifications required

B) initial training

C) in-service training possibilities

Under the new Regulation of MEN of 12 March 2009 on the qualifications required of teachers:

1) The teacher of theoretical vocational subjects in schools should have completed their studies in that particular subject and have professional background training or an undergraduate degree in that area, as referred to in the standard of training for this course, including the content of the teaching subject. They should also have professional training,

2) A teacher who gives practical teaching in a profession in vocational schools and technical colleges must follow the standard of training for this course, which includes the content of the subject taught, as well as have professional training and hold a diploma; if the teacher teaches in post-secondary schools he/she must complete a degree in the particular subject and have professional training or an undergraduate degree and a pedagogical background, or have a school leaving certificate and a document of professional competence in the profession they will teach, professional training of at least two years in the profession they will teach or a title in the profession they will teach and professional training.



Professional development for teachers is organised by the institutions in which the teachers work and by various external institutions: training centres, universities, educational institutions and teacher training establishments. Apprenticeship instructors can attend qualification courses for the teachers of the practical training.

Career counsellors - assist students in career choices and provide information relating to the student's psychological and physical potential, their education and life situation, a change in career or job searching. Coaches create opportunities for professional development, assist students in finding a "professional space for themselves" in the difficult conditions of a changing social reality. They take steps towards the development and training of a team of students.

2.6.2 Information on the careers/employment guidance and counselling services offered to learners with SEN who are enrolled in VET programmes

Thanks to our vocational counselling, about 40% of our graduates with SEN can find work in factories in the city and their hometown.

2.7 Funding

Poland receives financial support for implementing various programmes of education and training.

The programme provides a framework for international cooperation in improving quality, fostering innovations and promoting the European dimension in the vocational education and training systems. This programme includes the participation of SEN pupils but, in light of the Leonardo da Vinci programme, it aims to promote activities that focus on improving the quality of education and training and adapting the education system to labour market needs. It is one of the three EU educational programmes implemented in Poland that support the Union's policies on education and training. The main goal of the financial programme is meeting the needs of families and having the institutional support to do so.