

## Vocational and continual education in Poland in documents

Documents on continual vocational adult education	Contents/Conclusions
<b>Constitution of the Republic of Poland</b>	Article 65, section.5. Public authorities apply a policy aiming at full productive employment through implementing programmes of eliminating unemployment, including organizing and supporting <b>vocational education and guidance</b> .
<b>Act of 7 September 1991 on the system of education</b>	(a very general reference!) The system of education provides in particular opportunities of complementing one's education by adults having general certificates of education, gaining or changing professional and specialist qualifications (Art.1, section. 8). The principles of upgrading professional qualifications and general education of adults are to be specified in a separate directive of the Minister for Education (Art. 68, section. 1). A directive was also to regulate the organization and principles of functioning of vocational development centres and other institutions of continual education of adults (Art. 68, section. 2).
<b>National Development Plan for 2004-2006: a Sector Operational Programme – Developing Human Resources</b>	Priority 2 – <b>Developing a society based on knowledge</b> by (1) <b>adapting the educational offer</b> of schools, universities and institutions of vocational education to the needs of labour market (levelling the educational chances for the purpose of providing an easier access to the labour market, education of an IT-literate society, developing vocational counseling and guidance, improving the quality of education and developing the system of vocational education and training of school and university teachers; (2) <b>enhancing the system of continual education of adults</b> through implementing accreditation of institutions providing continual education in out-school forms and developing distance learning in education the society; and (3) <b>developing human resources of modern economy and enterprise</b> through developing especially innovative skills and qualifications of managerial staff and employees, initiating and enhancing cooperation between scientists, educationalists and economy, facilitating the implementation of new forms of employment and organization and developing enterprising attitudes, promoting enterprise and employment through, among others, supporting individuals willing to start their own businesses.
<b>“A strategy for the computerization of Poland – ePoland”</b>	Aim C – <b>a common ability to use information technology</b> : C1 - a common ability to use a computer (each secondary school graduate can use a computer and benefit from using the Internet); C2 – preventing information (IT-related) exclusion (providing technological conditions

	<p>and opportunities of levelling the chances of full participation in the IT society for the citizens requiring training, the “middle generation”, and the disabled, using e-learning and promoting tele-work as a method of professional activation); C3 – increasing IT vocational preparation (supporting IT training curricula for adults with special reference to trainings for the unemployed).</p>
<p><b>“Modernising continual and adult education in Poland as an integral part of lifelong learning”</b> – a report commissioned by Polish Ministry of Education from the Institute of International Education, Stockholm University, 2003</p>	<p>General remarks on the current (2003) situation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adult education in state schools is financed by the government;</li> <li>2. out-school forms of education are <i>in majority</i> financed by clients of the educational service;</li> <li>3. a network of institutions of continual education has been established (CKU and CKP), yet these focus on school forms of education;</li> <li>4. legislative measures are taken to implement systems of quality assurance of educational services (external examinations and systems of accreditation);</li> <li>5. standards of examination requirements allowing professional qualification examinations irrespective of the mode of education are being developed.</li> </ol> <p>Two approaches to adult education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Traditional: it is one of the duties of the state (including local governments) to organize, maintain, monitor and finance the system of adult education</li> <li>▶ Market-oriented: educational authorities define aims, standards and norms (i.e requirements concerning acquired skills) as well as ensure appropriate quality of such educational services. The <i>supply</i> of educational services with regard to conditions, forms and number of participants is a function of regional and local <i>demand</i>.</li> </ul> <p>It is urgent to develop an environment and conditions encouraging a more widespread participation in vocational education of persons who have already left the system of education.</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing frameworks limit the feasibility of implementing reforms and introducing innovations;</li> <li>• There is a lack of diversity of forms and methods of education;</li> <li>• There are difficulties in adapting contents to needs within education of different groups of participants;</li> <li>• Underlining uniformity of curricula and related to it qualifications required in different systems of education leads to focusing on school methods of education;</li> <li>• There is a lack of information on real demand in the field of education from employers and students;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a shortage in infrastructure of public continual education;</li> <li>• poorly-educated and old-fashioned managers in education and leaders (school headteachers);</li> <li>• There is a clear lack of knowledge and appreciation of broader implications resulting from correct functioning of the system of lifelong learning.</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a national system of standards of qualifications and curricula;</li> <li>• Developing a national system of quality assurance and assessment;</li> <li>• Increasing the share of full vocational education on the level of secondary education at the expense of its share on the level of education in vocational schools;</li> <li>• Increasing the participation rate of young adults aged 20 – 24 to the level of ca. 33%;</li> <li>• Developing a system of career guidance and other services of his kind to provide them in schools and other specialist institutions;</li> <li>• Diversifying and broadening post-secondary education and feasibility of attending courses up to the level of B.A./B.S.;</li> <li>• Considering the feasibility of introducing distance learning, especially as a means of supporting rural areas;</li> <li>• Introducing the concept of “lifelong learning” in practice in order to provide a possibility of education and training, full- or part-time, for all age groups.</li> </ul>
<p><b>“A strategy for the development of continual education until 2010”</b> – passed by the Government of the Republic of Poland on 8 July 2003</p>	<p>The <u>General Aim</u> of the strategy is to <b>specify directions of development of continual education in Poland in view of the idea of lifelong learning and developing societies based on knowledge.</b></p> <p>Factors determining the aims and character of the strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Demographic processes</li> <li>▶ Situation on the labour market</li> <li>▶ System of education</li> <li>▶ Scientific and technological advancement changing work environment and its contents</li> <li>▶ Integration and globalization</li> <li>▶ Increased educational aspirations of the society</li> </ul> <p>The <u>Strategic Aim</u> of the strategy is to <b>support and direct the development of personality, and stimulate innovation, inventiveness and creativity of a human being.</b> This will in turn favour the increase of competitiveness, improvement of organization of work and</p>

	<p>development the basis of developing a society based on knowledge.</p> <p><u>Priorities:</u> The aim will be achieved through <b>(1) increasing the availability of continual education, (2) improving the quality of continual education, (3) cooperation and partnership, (4) increasing investment in human resources, (5) creating information resources with regard to continual education and developing counseling services, (6) raising awareness of the role and significance of continual education.</b></p>
<p><b>“A strategy for the development of education 2007-2013” –</b></p>	<p><b>General objective:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ raising the level of education of the society while simultaneously providing high quality of educational services</li> <li>▶ continually raising qualifications of adults, especially vocational and general ones indispensable for their functioning in today’s society</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendations in the field of continual education (how to do it):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ developing pro-educational attitudes of citizens;</li> <li>▶ propagating continual education relating to acquiring and improving vocational qualifications and general competences;</li> <li>▶ developing a clear system of vocational qualifications;</li> <li>▶ developing a system of recognition of vocational qualifications gained outside the system through certification (formal recognition) and recognition in practice (by employers);</li> <li>▶ giving priority to educating (1) older people and those of low qualifications (supporting their professional activeness) as well as (2) young people, including university graduates (promoting enterprise and competitiveness);</li> <li>▶ introducing and implementing efficient mechanisms of joint financing of continual education by the state and private businesses.</li> </ul>
<p><b>A Report on Continual Education in Poland</b> – by the Ministry of Education 2005</p>	<p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. difficult situation on the labour market</li> <li>2. inexact place of continual education in the Polish law (unlike in Lisbon Strategy!)</li> <li>3. pauperization of society</li> <li>4. lack of clear correlation between education and successful life</li> <li>5. lack of clear correlation between upgrading one’s qualifications / gaining new ones and promotion</li> <li>6. state organizations/schools of continual education are underfunded</li> </ol>

## Recommendations:

### 1. Legal and organizational:

- ▶ introducing an article in the Law on Government Administration on *continual education*, thus **equalizing it with school education and post-secondary and higher education**
- ▶ developing a new *Act on the System of Education* comprising all issues relating to education and training (as in EU legislation), including a new (uniform for everyone) *definition of continual education*, used in UE documents, which will in consequence lead to e.g. developing a system of recognition of qualifications. It should also include regulations present in other legal acts, yet referring to education and training.
- ▶ adapting existing law to the idea of continual education understood as „lifelong learning“.
- ▶ verifying existing legal acts relating to continual education, simplifying them and limiting their number and above all unifying terminology (e.g. all documents should contain a uniform definition of continual education).

### 2. Promotion

- ▶ develop and disseminate a “White Book” of continual education explaining ideas, terminology and propagating lifelong learning
- ▶ attempt to develop a “Pact for Knowledge” binding its signatories to group and integrate different programmes, projects and activities relating to continual education, completing a list of aims, objectives, priorities etc.
- ▶ undertake to create an **educational culture** to increase people’s awareness of a close relation between qualifications-employability-mobility-level of life.
- ▶ disseminate results of programmes and projects and facilitate access to various forms of individualized training.

### 3. Support

- ▶ support citizens 50+ years old (third age universities), social misfits, people of lowest qualifications
- ▶ develop a system of grants helping to finance continual education (activate and involve employers)
- ▶ provide legal environment for establishing other forms of education, e.g out-school

### 4. Quality, transparency, monitoring

- ▶ make the accreditation system widespread
- ▶ spread the system of certification of acquired qualifications by external examination centres
- ▶ monitor and report on continual education on a yearly

basis

- ▶ introduce and implement quality assurance systems
- ▶ encourage trainees to keep their **portfolios** including documents required by the European Educational Pass (Europass-CV, Europass-mobility, Europass-Diploma Supplement, Europass-Certificate Supplement, Europass-Language Passport).

5. Informal and incidental education

- ▶ relate **National Standards of Vocational Qualifications** to (1) developing the course offer of continual vocational education, (2) examination standards, and (3) recognition of qualifications gained owing to informal or incidental education
- ▶ develop a system of institutions authorized to recognize qualifications gained through informal or incidental education

6. Key competences

- ▶ review curricula, handbooks, and other didactic material to check whether they make it possible for the clients of continual education to gain the **key competences** listed in "Key Competences - European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning"

7. Distance learning

- ▶ intensify and accelerate the process of developing the system of distance learning
- ▶ train teachers and instructors
- ▶ develop necessary multimedia materials and software

8. Individualized and module-based education and equipment

- ▶ gradually change the dominating class-lesson system of education into individualized forms of training using flexible, module-based curricula
- ▶ provide necessary facilities and equipment and find ways of financing
- ▶ develop electronic, on-line data bases enabling students to download materials, information on courses etc.

9. Guidance

- ▶ Develop career guidance by training and employing more counselors, and providing them with indispensable information and materials

10. Financing

- ▶ Co-finance continual vocational education with employers and labour offices (courses for the unemployed)

## Assessment practices in Poland

Assessment / types of	in-school assessment	external assessment
<i>Where?</i>	Schools	Central and regional Examination Boards
<i>By whom?</i>	Teachers	examiners
<i>Requirements?</i>	established by teachers based on the curriculum	requirements established by Minister for Education based on standards of examination requirements
<i>What is assessed?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Knowledge and skills specified in the curriculum</li> <li>▶ student's progress</li> <li>▶ student's achievements in relation to the curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Knowledge and skills specified in the standards of examination requirements</li> <li>▶ student's achievements in relation to the standards of examination requirements</li> </ul>
<i>When?</i>	Throughout an educational stage (school year, course)	At the end of an educational stage
<i>Form?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Descriptive</li> <li>▶ Digitized</li> <li>▶ According to a school system of assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Point-scale relating to the standards of examination requirements</li> </ul>
<i>Type?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Tests</li> <li>▶ In-class assignments</li> <li>▶ Home assignments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Check-up test (after 6<sup>th</sup> grade of primary school)</li> <li>▶ Junior-high final exam (after 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of junior-high school → results used in recruitment for senior-high schools)</li> <li>▶ Senior-high final exam (after 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of senior-high school → results used in recruitment for universities)</li> <li>▶ <b>Vocational qualifications exam</b> (after 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of senior-high vocational schools, or after graduating from a post-secondary vocational school → results used to confirm vocational qualifications)</li> </ul>

Legal background:

1. **A directive of the Minister for Education of 7 September 2004** on the requirements and way of assessment, grading and promoting students and graduates and carrying out tests and examinations in state schools
2. **A directive of the Minister for Education of 3 February 2003**, with further amendments, on standards of requirements constituting the basis for carrying out an examination confirming vocational qualifications

**Vocational qualifications exam**, according to a definition, is ***a way of assessing a student's knowledge and skills with regard to a specific profession according to standards of requirements;***

Two parts: written & practical

	<b>Written</b>	<b>Practical</b>
<b>Stages</b>	<p><b>Stage 1:</b> knowledge and skills relating to a given profession (<i>50 closed tasks</i>)</p> <p><b>Stage 2:</b> knowledge and skills relating to employment and economic activity (running a business) (<i>20 closed tasks</i>)</p>	<p>Practical skills relating to a given profession listed in a data base of practical tasks (<i>1 practical task assessed by a panel of 3 examiners observing the student's performance</i>)</p>
<b>Content</b>	<p><b>Stage 1:</b> range of knowledge and skills appropriate for qualifying for a profession: A graduate should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ read with understanding information presented in the form of description, instruction, drawings, sketches, charts, technological documentation</li> <li>▶ process numerical and operational data</li> <li>▶ safely perform professional tasks following Heath &amp; Safety, fire and environmental protection regulations</li> </ul> <p><b>Stage 2:</b> Range of knowledge and skills relating to employment and economic activity (running a business): A graduate should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Read with understanding information presented in the</li> </ul>	<p>Practical skills within the range of qualifications for a profession included in the instructions for an examination task.</p> <p>Examination requirements comprise graduate's/examinee's practical skills verified and assessed during the examination. They have been specified in four areas: A graduate should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. plan activities relating to performing the examination task</li> <li>2. organize the workstation</li> <li>3. perform the examination task following Heath &amp; Safety, fire and environmental protection regulations, and display skills specified in the instructions for the examination task.</li> <li>4. present the result(s) of the performed examination task.</li> </ol>



	<p>form of description, instruction, drawings, sketches, charts, especially:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ distinguish basic notions and terminology relating to functioning of the economy, labour and tax law, regulations defining individual economic activity (running one's own business);</li> <li>○ identify and analyze information concerning requirements and qualifications of an employee, employer, unemployed and client.</li> <li>▶ process numerical and operational data, especially: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ analyze information concerning upgrading one's qualifications, looking for a job, getting employed undertaking and performing an economic activity</li> <li>○ write documents relating to looking for a job, getting employed undertaking and performing an economic activity</li> <li>○ distinguish effects resulting from starting and terminating employment</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
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**Critique:**

- ▶ Students/candidates are preparing to PASS THE EXAM/TEST rather than learn new knowledge and master new skills;
- ▶ The examination can be taken ONLY after completing a qualification course – lack of possibility to take the exam for candidates who have gained qualifications attending out-school forms of training or through work experience
- ▶ There is a considerable shortage of examiners for certain professions, and this cannot be balanced soon since there are not enough teachers of profession matching requirements
- ▶ The change of examination calendar: the vocational qualifications examination takes place around the senior-high final exam (after 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of senior-high school) – unfavourable accumulation of serious examinations within a very narrow timespan
- ▶ Examination assessment criteria focus on assessing “performing” an examination task rather than the **quality** of the task's final product
- ▶ Fairly limited number of examination tasks
- ▶ Examination centres are underequipped - often the practical exam cannot be video-recorded → lower objectivity of the examination

- ▶ Unstable compliance of theoretical and practical preparation (training) with vocational examination requirements → poorer preparation of graduates for the exam
- ▶ Enrolment of candidates for vocational schools with poor scores in the junior-high school final exam → unable to catch up with better students or the pace of realization of the curriculum
- ▶ It is necessary to adapt the conditions in which the vocational qualifications exam takes place to the needs of graduates with dysfunctions → to ensure comparability of results
- ▶ Ensure regular verification of standards of vocational qualifications examination against regularly upgraded curricula and results of such examinations