

Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Poland

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Introduction

Career guidance services are provided primarily by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Development, Labour and Technology. Services reflect the administrative setup of the education and employment system in Poland distributing tasks between the state and regional (poviat and voivodship) level. The services are mostly financed from public funds and identified in national legislation.

Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders

The following ministries are responsible for the implementation of career guidance in Poland:

1. the Ministry of Education and Science: for career guidance for children and young people in education, as well as for adults continuing their education and for students and graduates of higher education;
2. the Ministry of Development, Labour and Technology: for career guidance to adults (public employment services, PES) and youth (Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy, OHP/Voluntary Labour Corps, VLC), particularly young people at risk of social exclusion.

In the non-public sector, there are several NGOs and associations, which, to a varying degree, are also active in the field of career guidance. Some commercial education institutions employ career counsellors who assist learners in choosing the appropriate training opportunities and also advise graduates.

The [Ministry of Development, Labour and Technology](#), as the body responsible for, among other things, reducing unemployment, develops labour market policies in accordance with the Act of 20 April 2004 on the promotion of employment and labour market institutions. The ministry's activities focus on activation measures for those outside the labour market. The objectives of labour market policy are:

1. allowing adolescents to acquire qualifications and professional skills;
2. supporting employers interested in employing young people;

3. enabling the unemployed return to employment and acquire new skills/qualifications;
4. enabling the employed maintain their employment and update their skills/qualifications.

The Act also specifies the tasks of public employment services (PES) that operate at the local level (poviat and voivodship Labour Offices) and work directly with the unemployed in the field of career counselling.

The Minister of Education and Science is responsible for developing career counselling, mainly for learners, young adults, and adults continuing their education. The need to implement classes in the field of vocational counselling and classes conducted as part of psycho-pedagogical support (including providing learners with support in the choice of occupation or education) is specified in the Act of 14 December 2016 Education Law and Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 12 February 2019 on career guidance.

Access to guidance

The school education system in Poland provides conditions for all citizens' right to education - children, youth and adults - and care as suitable for their age and stage of development. The school education system provides psycho-pedagogical and career counselling, focusing on addressing learning and education problems and developing educational skills for children, young people, parents, and teachers. It is offered free of charge in all types of education institutions and counselling and guidance centres.

Adults, jobseekers, people at group risk have access to free support and guidance services from various PES institutions, such as the district labour office and the VLC (Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy, OHP/Voluntary Labour Corps).

Quality assurance

In school education, the pedagogical supervision system aims to support schools and other educational institutions, contribute to improving the quality of education and equal education opportunities, and enable comprehensive development of learners, teachers and other specialists. It also aims to support national authorities in designing and pursuing an education policy based on comparable data for the entire school education system. The system includes four inter-related components of pedagogical supervision:

1. evaluation, based on uniform requirements laid down by the legislation, which focuses on the quality of activities conducted by schools;
2. legal compliance auditing, which aims to check the compliance of activities undertaken by schools and teachers with the legislation;
3. support for schools and teachers (for example, publication of findings from pedagogical supervision; organisation of conferences and meetings; dissemination of information on school education issues and changes in legislation) aimed at inspiring and intensifying performance improvement processes in schools;
4. monitoring, which involves collecting and analysing data on the activities of schools to identify and eliminate risks to the proper performance of their tasks (more [here](#)).

The tasks of these four components are obligatorily performed by external pedagogical supervision bodies for public and non-public pre-schools, schools and educational institutions. These tasks are also performed by the directors of public and non-public pre-schools, schools and educational institutions in cooperation with other school managerial staff and teachers as part of their internal evaluation. The outcomes of internal evaluations are taken into consideration when performing the external evaluation.

The key actors in external quality assurance are pedagogical supervision bodies. They are responsible for the four specified processes: evaluation, legal compliance auditing, support and monitoring for any kind of education institutions. These bodies include:

1. the minister responsible for school education, the ministers responsible for culture and national heritage, agriculture and environment, and justice who supervise specific types of schools;
2. the heads of the Regional Education Authorities (REAs) (kurator oświaty).

The provisions of the law concerning internal pedagogical supervision do not apply to non-public schools and other non-public educational institutions that may put in place their own arrangements. In the public sector, the director of the given educational institution is responsible for performing internal pedagogical supervision, working together with other teachers holding managerial positions. The school director and other management staff conduct internal evaluations regularly, use their findings to improve the school's performance and check teachers' compliance with the legislation. They also support teachers in the execution of their tasks; for example, they analyse the school's performance, plan development measures, including those encouraging teachers to undertake continuing professional development activities, and implement measures such as training activities and staff meetings). As part of monitoring, mechanisms are put in place to identify and eliminate risks to the proper performance of tasks.

School directors have the liberty to determine the scope of their internal evaluation. They carry out their tasks by following a pedagogical supervision plan for each school year. The school director presents the plan to the school's teaching council (a collective body composed of the Head as its chair and all teachers) before the beginning of the school year and discusses findings from internal pedagogical supervision with the teaching council at the end of the school year. The legislation does not define the role of the teaching council or individual teachers in internal evaluation explicitly. However, the active involvement of teachers in internal evaluation processes is not only a good practice promoted in training seminars on evaluation for school directors but also an aspect taken into consideration in the external evaluation.

The school director also conducts the teachers' appraisal and assessment of professional achievements, and the relevant regulations apply to both the public and non-public sectors. The teacher may appeal against the Head's decision to an external pedagogical supervision body, which, in most cases, is the Head of the REA.

Issues related to implementation conditions as well as to the mode and way of providing services by the poviats and voivodeship labour offices, as well as agency services of the Voluntary Labour Corps in the framework of the EURES network, are regulated by the Ordinance of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 14 May 2014 on specific conditions for the implementation as well as for the mode and ways of providing labour market services ([Dz. U. of 2014 r., item 667](#)). This covers employment agency, vocational advisory and training organisation services: that is, labour market services. In line with the Ordinance, labour market services are provided without undue delay in ways appropriate to individual needs and guaranteeing equal access and equal treatment, which preclude any discrimination.

Career management skills

On 28 December 2020, the Council of Ministers adopted the [Integrated skills strategy 2030 \(detailed part\)](#) ([Zintegrowana Strategia Umiejętności 2030 - część szczegółowa](#)). The strategy has the status of a public policy and is in line with the provisions of the [Act of 15 July 2020](#), amending the principles of conducting development policy. Based on the national medium-term strategy for [responsible development](#), it defines the sector-specific primary conditions, objectives and directions to achieve social, economic and spatial development. The strategy has also taken into account the [European skills agenda](#) recommendations included in the [OECD report Skills strategy: Poland](#) and [partnership agreement](#) between the

EU and Poland on implementing the cohesion policy 2021-27. The strategy promotes:

1. basic, transversal and professional skills of children, youth and adults;
2. skills development of the management staff in formal education;
3. skills development of the teaching staff in formal education;
4. skills development outside formal education;
5. skills development and use in the workplace;
6. career counselling;
7. collaboration of employers in formal and non-formal education;
8. planning lifelong learning and the [recognition of skills](#).

In each area, specific action themes, lines of action, as well as the entities involved in carrying out the strategy, are described. The strategy sets the policy framework for developing the necessary skills to strengthen social capital, promote social inclusion, foster economic growth and achieve a high quality of life. It is also a common frame of reference enabling the most advantageous planning of projects and programmes by the administrators of individual parts of the State budget, local government units and other public and private entities.

The Education Ministry also monitors labour demand in vocational education occupations at both [national and regional levels](#). A forecasting mechanism was introduced in November 2018. From 2019, the forecast is announced annually from the education ministry. The methodology of the forecast includes different qualitative and quantitative data taken from a variety of stakeholders _ including Statistics Poland, the Polish Social Insurance Institution, the School Information System – for its analyses of online job vacancies. The main part of the forecast consists of a list of vocational education occupations for which there is a specific demand in the national labour market and a list of occupations for which both significant and moderate demand are forecast in Poland's regions. From 2020, based on the forecast, local government units received increased State subsidies for VET learners in the occupations in demand. Increased funding will also be available for employers involved in training VET learners (juvenile employees) in those occupations ([more here](#)).

Evidence, monitoring and assessment

The effectiveness of career guidance services provided by the PES in individual counselling is measured by the number of unemployed and jobseekers who began work during or within three months after their participation in this form of support. It is assumed that the individual was employed for at least three months, not interrupted by unemployment, from the time of using individual counselling ([Information on the implementation of the career counselling service in labour offices in 2018, Warsaw, 2019](#)).

In education institutions, monitoring or assessment of career guidance services can be implemented under the pedagogical supervision system (see section on [Quality Assurance](#)).

Career information, ICT in guidance

Article 4 of the Act on the promotion of employment and labour market institutions, in paragraph 1(2) specifies that the minister of labour performs tasks for the labour market. This is partly through coordination of public employment services, and particularly through the introduction and development within the PES of ICT systems guaranteeing the consistent labour market service system as well as keeping and sharing an online database of job offers.

The most popular tool in PES is a professional interests questionnaire (PIQ) (*Kwestionariusz*

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Zainteresowań Zawodowych, KZZ). It is used for diagnosing occupational interests and for career planning for both adults and young people. It is available in two versions: paper-based and electronic. Another initiative was the project Competence testing tool, developed along with manual and training courses carried out for career counsellors, including administrators and coaches of the PES and VLC (Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy, OHP/Voluntary Labour Corps) units.

As part of supporting counsellors in the education system, two editions of the competition for the development of diagnostic tools for vocational counsellors were produced. Apart from the [21 diagnostic tools](#), career counsellors have also access to methodical guides, guidebooks for learners and parents, multimedia presentations, and scenarios for classes. This wide range of materials is dedicated to working with learners, the young and adults. These resources are available free of charge (open access) at the portal www.doradztwo.ore.edu.pl. This portal, addressed to learners and parents, career counsellors and teachers involved in career guidance, school directors and employers, contains information about Poland's career counselling system, news about events in educational and vocational guidance, and collections of guide books.

The Ministry of Education and Science operates the [Infozawodowe portal](#), created thanks to co-financing from the European Social Fund, under the Knowledge education development operational programme for 2014-20. The [Infozawodowe portal](#), available as a sub-tab on the <https://zpe.gov.pl> platform (Integrated Educational Platform) and directly at www.infozawodowe.men.gov.pl, provides comprehensive information on occupations from the classification of occupations for sectoral education (IVET) and access to comprehensive materials, which include:

- a. materials about occupations; a source of knowledge about occupations in sectoral education for different age groups and information familiarising children with the world of professions;
- b. films; presenting professional tasks, everyday work, opportunities for development and improvement of qualifications;
- c. 360-degree films; films that are a form of a virtual walk around workplaces;
- d. occupational quizzes; for the acquisition and verification of knowledge about the occupations.

The aim of the [Infozawodowe portal](#) is to establish cooperation between schools providing vocational education with employers. The portal also includes information on the possibilities of supplementing qualifications in courses for both learners and adults.

Training and qualifications

From 2018, the minimum qualification requirements necessary to perform work as a career counsellor in the PES employment offices and VLC (Voluntary Labour Corps) are regulated by relevant regulations:

1. [Regulation of the Council of Ministers on the remuneration of local government employees](#) (applies to career advisers employed in labour offices);
2. [Regulation of the Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy on the conditions of remuneration for work and other work-related benefits for employees employed in specific State budgetary units](#) (applies to VLC).

According to the above regulations, a person employed as a vocational counsellor is required to have:

1. a university diploma with an appropriate field of study tasks in the position and bachelor or master degree;
2. one year of professional experience in the field of career counselling.

However, the pathways, programme, specialisation, etc., of the academic programme are

not specified. The licences for career counsellors in public employment services have not been valid since 2013. In 2013 the reform called 'Deregulation of professions' aimed to make the job market more open and give easier access to employment. The result was the abolition of different licences, [including public employment services](#).

The tasks of the education system concerning educational and vocational counselling are performed by career counsellors and teachers appointed by the school director or institution. Career counsellor qualifications are defined in the [Ordinance of the Minister of National Education](#) of 1 July 2020 on the specific qualifications required of teachers. The following is now in place:

1. qualified for a career counsellor position in schools and psycho-pedagogical counselling centres: someone who graduated in career counselling and has pedagogical qualifications, or completed a master's degree in any field and completed a three-semester post-graduate programme in career counselling and has pedagogical qualifications;
2. qualified for taking up the position of a teacher-career counsellor in primary schools: someone who has completed first-cycle studies in career counselling and has pedagogical qualifications or graduated from first-degree studies in any field and completed three-semester post-graduate programme in vocational counselling and has pedagogical qualifications;
3. every HEI which educates career counsellors can create its own curriculum approved by the Minister of Education and Science.

Funding career guidance

Carer guidance in Poland is funded primarily from public sources. The main sources of public funding in Poland include:

1. the education subsidy from the State budget provided to local government units (LGUs);
2. State-budget grants for specific purposes (targeted grants) provided to LGUs;
3. state-budget allowances allocated to HEIs;
4. LGU funds;
5. other public funds (for example, the Labour Fund; the National Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled People; budgets of central government agencies allocated for the training of specific occupational groups);
6. [EU and other funds](#).

Career guidance for school pupils

Career guidance in Poland aims to support pupils/learners in making conscious decisions about their education and career. Learners may have the contents, methods and organisation of education adapted to their psycho-physical abilities and have access to comprehensive counselling and guidance – referred to as psycho-pedagogical support – and special forms of learning and teaching (Ustawa z dnia 14 grudnia 2016 r. Prawo oświatowe ([text in Polish](#)) / Act of 14 December 2016, The Law on School Education; Journal of Law 2020, item 910).

Career guidance is provided in preschool, schools and other education institutions as part of various types of activities (Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 12 lutego 2019 r. w sprawie doradztwa zawodowego ([text in Polish](#)) / Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 12 February 2019 on career guidance; Journal of Law, item 325).

1. Preschool education:
 1. education classes based on preschool education curricula;
 2. career orientation visits to learn about the work environment for selected occupations.
2. Grades I to IV of primary school:
 1. compulsory classes which are part of general education;
 2. career orientation visits to learn about the work environment for selected occupations.
3. Grades VII and VIII of primary school and secondary schools:
 1. compulsory classes which are part of general education;
 2. in schools providing vocational education,- compulsory classes which are part of vocational education;
 3. in special schools preparing for employment,- compulsory classes;
 4. education and career planning classes conducted as part of psycho-pedagogical support;
 5. classes/lessons with the class tutor (except in stage II sectoral vocational schools, special schools preparing for employment, post-secondary schools and schools for adults);
 6. career orientation visits to learn about the work environment for selected occupations (except in stage II sectoral vocational schools, post-secondary schools and schools for adults);
4. Other secondary schools:
 1. education and career planning classes conducted as part of [psycho-pedagogical support](#).

Each school is obliged to organise an in-school vocational guidance system, except art schools. The in-school career guidance system should be included in the school statute. The guidance system comprises all activities that are undertaken by the school to prepare learners to choose an occupation, level and direction of education. The system should define the role and tasks of the school as part of the annual action plan, the time and place of the implementation of those activities, the expected outcomes and the working methods. However, the legislator does not regulate the shape and scope of an in-school vocational guidance system. All types of schools and educational institutions must develop annual career guidance programmes based on the in-school career guidance system. The annual programme career guidance should – at least – include:

1. career guidance activities, including:
 1. topics of activities;
 2. classes to be involved in activities;
 3. implementation methods and forms of activities, including those which involve parents, except in stage II sectoral vocational schools, post-secondary schools and schools for adults;
 4. outline timetable;
 5. person(s) responsible for each activity;
2. entities with which a given school collaborates in implementing activities while considering the needs of learners and parents and local and regional activities related to career guidance.

The programme could be either developed by a career counsellor, teacher or group of teachers responsible for career guidance nominated by the school director (only in cases where there are no careers counsellor at school). The school director should approve the programme by 30 September for each school year, after consultation with the school's teaching council. Based on the outline timetables, the school director establishes a weekly timetable for each grade and class or, in the case of schools for adults offering part-time programmes, a semester timetable.

The statutes of a school lay down organisational arrangements for additional classes for learners to boost their employability. As part of psychological and education support classes/activities, primary and secondary schools conduct education and career planning classes. Such classes could be performed by teachers, class or group tutors, and specialists, particularly by careers counsellors. The responsibilities of school careers counsellors include:

1. regularly assessing pupils' / learners' needs for career guidance activities;

2. conducting career guidance classes;
3. developing a career guidance programme in collaboration with other teachers and specialists, and coordinating its implementation;
4. supporting teachers and specialist in achieving activities included in the programme;
5. coordinating information and guidance activities conducted in the school.

If there is no career counsellor in a school, the responsibilities are taken on by a teacher or a class tutor, a pedagogue or psychologist, appointed by the school director.

The outline timetable for public schools in Poland, below, specifies the minimum number of hours allocated to [career guidance](#):

No.	Outline timetable for a public programme	The minimum annual number of hours for a school grade		Minimum number of CG hours for an education cycle
		Grade/number of hours	Grade/number of hours	
1	Primary schools, including special schools; except special primary schools for pupils with a moderate or severe intellectual disability	VII/10	VIII/10	20 in a 2-year cycle
2	Classes preparing for employment: grades VII and VIII of primary schools, including special schools; except special primary schools for pupils with a moderate or severe intellectual disability	VII/10	VIII/10	20 in a 2-year cycle
3	General secondary programme, including special secondary programme for pupils with SEN	-	-	10 in a 4-year cycle
4	Vocational upper secondary programme, including special technical secondary programme for pupils with SEN	-	-	10 in a 5-year cycle
5	Stage I sectoral vocational programme, including special stage I sectoral vocational programme for disabled and socially maladjusted pupils and pupils at risk of social maladjustment; for pupils who have finished the eight-year primary school	-	-	10 in a 3-year cycle

Guidance services could be supported by psycho-pedagogical centres, including specialist centres, which support schools, teachers and specialists in planning and implementing education and career counselling and guidance tasks. Centres provide support in the following forms:

1. workshops;
2. individual consultations;
3. participation in meetings between teachers and specialists, and meetings of the school's teaching council;
4. cooperation with self-study networks for teachers, class or group tutors, and specialists to exchange information and experience.

Centres also offer support and training on career guidance to pupils, parents, teachers and

Guidance for VET participants

On Guidance for VET participants see here: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidance-systems-and-practices-poland#career-guidance-for-school-pupils>

Guidance for higher education students

The Law on Higher Education and Science (Ustawa z dnia 20 lipca 2018 r. Prawo o szkolnictwie wyższym i nauce ([text in Polish](#)) / Act of 20 July 2018, The Law on Higher Education and Science; Journal of Law 2020, item 85, as subsequently amended) does not prescribe or regulate academic psychological support, counselling and guidance in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Poland. Nevertheless, many HEIs provide this type of support.

Typically, HEIs run an academic career office (ACO) to facilitate student and graduate entry into, and activity on, the labour market (Ustawa z dnia 20 kwietnia 2004 r. o promocji zatrudnienia i instytucjach rynku pracy ([text in Polish](#)) / Act of 20 April 2004 on the Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions; Journal of Law 2020, items 1409 and 1068). Most ACOs act as autonomous units of universities, established by the decision of the university. ACOs are financed mainly from university funds or State/EU funds. The responsibilities of ACOs usually include:

1. providing students and graduates with information about the labour market and opportunities for upgrading professional qualifications and skills;
2. collecting and sorting job and apprenticeship offers;
3. keeping a database of jobseeking students and graduates;
4. assisting employers in recruiting suitable candidates;
5. assisting students in active search for work;
6. collaborating with the information and career planning centres (Centrum Informacji i Planowania Kariery Zawodowej) to update and disseminate career-related information.

The Executive of the powiat may cooperate with the higher education institution or student organisation, providing financing from the Labour Fund for part of the costs of equipping the newly opened academic career office.

Guidance for adult learners

Adults, including those with disabilities, may acquire and broaden their knowledge and skills and obtain and upgrade vocational/professional qualifications in lifelong learning. They can do so in public and non-public schools for adults and [non-school settings](#). Entities offering continuing education courses in non-school settings must provide organisational and technical conditions for people with disabilities to participate in education (Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 19 marca 2019 r. w sprawie kształcenia ustawicznego w formach pozaszkolnych ([text in Polish](#)) / Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 19 March 2019 on continuing education in non-school settings; Journal of Law, item 652). Adults can obtain information on education and training opportunities from:

1. the VLC (Voluntary Labour Corps);
2. employment agencies;
3. Higher Education Institutions;
4. associations, NGOs and professional organisations, and other organisations whose statutory aims include such services.

Learners in public schools for adults, continuing education centres, practical training centres and further and in-service training centres may benefit from counselling services offered by psychologists in their schools as part of psycho-pedagogical support. Such services are also provided by non-governmental organisations using central, LGU and EU funds. As part of the psycho-pedagogical support for learners in public schools, adults can take education and career planning courses/classes, participate in individual counselling and guidance sessions, and attend career guidance workshops and courses. These services usually include:

1. help in finding a job;
2. the organisation of on-the-job training, apprenticeship or voluntary service;
3. access to up-to-date information about occupations and opportunities to improve or acquire knowledge and vocational skills;
4. help in developing clients' self-knowledge and knowledge about their capacities and expectations, and in boosting their self-esteem and motivation;
5. development of skills needed for planning education and career paths, job search and preparing for a job interview;
6. development of soft skills, including effective communication and negotiation skills, and self-assertiveness;
7. support in entering the labour market, including the transition from school and [adaptation to the work environment](#).

Employment support programmes for people with disabilities are carried out by the National Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled People ([Państwowy Fundusz Rehabilitacji Osób Niepełnosprawnych, PFRON](#)) or by PES. To gain sufficient independence in the labour market, graduates who need support to start on-the-job training or who have already been employed may apply for additional assistance from careers counsellors working in a district labour office. Other responsibilities are defined in writing by the district labour office in consultation with persons with a disability or their statutory representative. Additional responsibilities include cooperation with employers as part of an internship and support offered to people undertaking training in:

1. adaptation to the new environment;
2. full understanding of an employer's requirements;
3. gaining colleagues' acceptance;
4. coping with emergencies/crises.

Information and career planning centres (ICPCs) are specialised institutions working as part of the Voivodship labour offices and PES. ICPCs offer free access to information learning opportunities and about the labour market. They offer a variety of support: individual consultations, workshops, training, collecting and sharing job offers. ICPCs cooperate with various bodies, institutions and social partners, like employers' organisations, and the Chamber of Crafts ([Rozporządzenie Ministra Pracy i Polityki Społecznej z dnia 14 maja 2014 r. w sprawie szczegółowych warunków realizacji oraz trybu i sposobów prowadzenia usług rynku pracy \(text in Polish\)](#) / Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 14 May 2014 on the detailed conditions, procedures and methods for providing labour market services: Journal of Law, item 667). ICPCs target groups include:

1. the unemployed;
2. the employed;
3. jobseekers;
4. early school leavers;
5. young and adult learners;
6. employers.

Guidance for the employed

Career counselling for all interested persons age 18 and over, who do not have the status of the unemployed or jobseeker, is offered by information and career planning centres (ICPC) described at in the section Career guidance for adult learners. Employed adults may access career counselling from different private bodies (commercial access) or dedicated EU projects.

Guidance for unemployed adults

Career guidance services are provided by the Poviats labour offices (PLO), acting within the PES. From 2014, vocational guidance has been implemented in a more widely available manner. Some vocational advisors currently perform the tasks associated with current, comprehensive care of the customer, by acting as customer advisors. According to Article 91(2) of the Act on the promotion of employment and labour market institutions, referred to in paragraph 1 point 1-4, labour agents, career counsellors, EURES counsellors and assistants, experts for professional development and experts for programmes employed in PLOs may act as customer counsellor.

Unemployed people or jobseekers (including disabled people) who are registered in the Poviats labour office may take advantage of:

1. career counselling;
2. scholarship for a person undertaking education;
3. training: extracurricular activities aimed at obtaining, supplementing or improving professional or general skills and qualifications necessary to perform work, including the ability to search for employment;
4. on-the-job training, enabling the acquisition of practical skills to perform work by performing tasks at the workplace;
5. vocational training at the workplace, allowing the acquisition of new qualifications or professional skills through practical performance of professional tasks.

Career counselling services include:

1. individual counselling;
2. facilitating the choice of an occupation, acquiring qualifications and professional skills;
3. psychological tests or specialist medical examinations enabling the issue of an opinion on professional suitability for work;
4. group counselling that allows self-assessment and the development of skills for job search and career advancement;
5. professional information on occupation, the labour market and training and education opportunities.

Guidance for older adults

Older adults can have access to career guidance from sources mentioned under Career guidance for the employed : information and career planning centres (ICPC), specific projects founded from different grants, University of the Third Age, and other private bodies (commercial access).

Guidance for early leavers

According to the EUROSTAT, [early leavers from education and training](#) (age 18-24) were 5.4% in December of 2020. Historically, [early leavers from education and training](#), age group 18-24, reached a record high of 5.7% in December of 2012 and a record low of 4.80% in December of 2018. The issue has not been so significant a policy problem as in other countries.

Education and career guidance became part of national curricula during 2017/18. ELET have access to guidance services described in the section Career guidance for the employed and offers multi-competence and holistic approaches to provide individualised guidance when required. The main actor is the Voluntary Labour Corps (VLC); this offers help to young people after primary school or those who dropped out of school because of educational neglect. They can complete general education and also participate in training (more information under Career guidance for young people at risk).

Main activities focus on modernisation and systemic reform of GE and the VET system (gradual implementation since September 2012) and developing a general guidance system at schools and other educational institutions. The most crucial reason behind the changes was the need to improve the effectiveness and relevance of the VET system and to better adjust to the needs of the labour market.

Guidance for NEET

Career counselling for NEETs is undertaken by The Voluntary Labour Corps (VLC) (Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy, OHP), see section on [Career guidance for young people at risk](#).

Guidance for young people at risk

Target groups:

1. people with diverse educational needs, including people with disabilities;
2. young people at risk of social maladjustment;
3. unemployed people who are seeking a job or wish to change their occupation/job;
4. people who are in a difficult financial situation, including unemployed people and jobseekers, particularly those aged up to 25;
5. [non-Polish nationals](#).

The Voluntary Labour Corps (VLC) (Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy, OHP) is the main actor in this area and carries out tasks of the State related to the employment and prevention of marginalisation and exclusion, young people at risk of social exclusion as a result of social difficulties and unemployed people aged up to 25 years, and to the education and training, of young people. The VLC is a State institution, supervised by the Ministry of Development, Labour and Technology. The VLC's activities aim to enable young people:

1. to acquire vocational qualifications
2. to supplement a primary education programme for persons who either have not completed primary school or who ended their education upon completing primary;
3. complete a general and VET programme at the secondary level.

To achieve these aims, the VLC:

1. conducts educational and training activities;

2. makes arrangements for young people to attend a school or a school-education institution in consultation with the head of the regional education authorities and the bodies administering schools.

VLC activities are targeted at:

1. young people aged 15 to 17 from families with parental incapacity issues, who do not participate in full-time or part-time compulsory education, have problems with finishing school and need to acquire vocational qualifications;
2. young people aged 18-25 years, including those who seek a job or wish to change a job or occupation;
3. the unemployed;
4. school graduates;

Young people under the age of 18 can continue general education and attain vocational qualifications at the VLC. The VLC organises education while providing opportunities to acquire vocational skills and qualifications as part of on-the-job training. Employment and vocational training are based on individual employment contracts concluded in accordance with the rules applicable to young workers: they are entitled to social security benefits, and the period of vocational training is counted towards the overall employment period.

The VLC provides continuous educational support to participants and encourages them to develop their artistic and athletic abilities. It also organises tourism activities. Its interventions aim to prepare young people for an independent life when they leave the VLC. Around 30,000 young people benefit from this kind of support each year. People in a difficult financial situation are provided with free accommodation, meals and 24-hour educational care during their stay in residential VLC units.

Depending on age and educational attainment, learning takes place in:

1. a primary school for adults (grades VII and VIII);
2. a primary school with classes preparing for employment (grades VII and VIII);
3. a stage I sectoral vocational school;
4. vocational training courses.

The VLC provides the following services on a fee-free basis:

1. career counselling;
2. job placement;
3. workshops and training.

Career counselling is provided as:

1. individual sessions;
2. group sessions;
3. career information.

These services are offered via:

1. mobile career information centres (on-site and off-site sessions);
2. youth career centres (on-site sessions).

As part of its job placement services, the VLC supports its participants by:

1. helping them with job search:
 1. initiating collaboration on youth employment or finding places for young people to undertake vocational training;
 2. job exchange platforms or fairs;
 3. the website (in Polish only) with permanent and temporary jobs in Poland;
 4. European job placement via EURES (services provided in 16 regional VLC stations);
2. monitoring employment contracts for vocational training concluded by young people;
3. monitoring practical vocational training undertaken by VLC participants.

Job placement services are offered by VLC youth education and employment centres

through:

1. youth labour offices;
2. youth careers services.

The VLC carries out projects targeted at young people at risk of social marginalisation. As part of projects jointly funded by the European Social Fund, young people can acquire the vocational qualifications necessary to find employment. The VLC has an information and consultancy centre, which offers services to young people and their parents, employers and other people interested in the activities of the VLC units.

The ECYM offers an info-line, an online portal (<https://dokariery.pl/strona-glowna>) and social media profiles. The VLC also operates a national telephone info-line (telephone number: 19524) which provides information on support offered by labour offices and the VLC; and a website <https://zielonalinia.gov.pl>, Information and Consultancy Centre of the Employment Services.

In the education system, public schools for adults, continuing education centres, practical training centres and further and in-service training centres provide psycho-pedagogical support for learners, including classes related to the choice of on-the-job training and career and education and career planning, individual and group career counselling. Some central and LGUs, and NGOs, also organise one-off, periodic or occasional consultancy meetings on issues related to the national legislation or social problem prevention.

Guidance for persons with disabilities

Individual educational-and-therapeutic programmes are developed for learners in special education who have a disability, are socially maladjusted or are at risk of social maladjustment. Educational-and-therapeutic programmes for such learners in grades VII and VIII of the primary school or a post-primary school should specify the type of education and career planning classes conducted as part of psycho-pedagogical support.

For the disabled or learners with health conditions, it is crucial to consider possible limitations imposed by their health condition when planning educational paths and choosing a career. If learners have health problems and their choice of a training area is limited, as confirmed by a statement from a counselling and guidance centre, they may apply for priority admission to a post-primary school at the second stage of the admission procedure.

Guidance for immigrants

Guidance for immigrants from non-EU countries is carried out using EU funds and different projects implemented in NGOs.

The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) is an EU financial mechanism with the general objective to contribute to the effective management of migration flows. It seeks the implementation, strengthening and development of a common asylum, subsidiary and temporary protection policy and a common immigration policy in the EU. Various public administration entities and NGOs have implemented activities under the fund (a full list of the projects is available [here](#)).

An example of these activities is the Information and guidance point for non-nationals, in the Silesian Voivodeship. On 1 October 2018, the Silesian Voivode instituted the project Support for the integration of non-nationals in the Silesian Voivodeship. Activities under the project are carried out by the Silesian Voivode and the School of Polish Language and

Culture of the University of Silesia in Katowice. Supervision of the information and guidance point is provided by the Department of Citizens' Affairs and Non-nationals of the Voivodship office in Katowice ([Department for Non-nationals](#)). Selected [guidance and assistance](#) activities include:

1. creating an information and guidance point for non-EU citizens;
2. preparing school employees to work with non-national learners;
3. supporting non-EU citizens adapting to Polish realities;
4. conducting adaptation courses for foreigners;
5. conducting Polish language courses for non-nationals;
6. counselling and integration assistance provided by a cultural assistant;
7. psychological support;
8. providing advice on solving life difficulties and achieving a better quality of life;
9. support in raising self-esteem, consciously managing career, or effectively building image on the labour market.

Another project example is [Career counselling for non-nationals living in Mazovia](#), realised by Foundation for Somalia. Career counselling services offered under the project include:

1. help in understanding the realities of the Polish labour market, including individual industries;
2. assistance in defining and finding the optimal workplace, taking into account previous experience and identified competences and skills;
3. assistance in determining an individual career path and suggestions on retraining or acquiring new skills;
4. help in finding the right job offers: where to look for them, how to participate effectively in recruitment processes;
5. help in writing a CV and a cover letter in Polish;
6. support in preparing for an interview;
7. information on the possibilities of nostrification of documents and certificates, as well as legal matters.

Guidance for other groups

Armed Forces

The Ministry of National Defence is responsible for reconversion in the Polish Armed Forces. The essence of the activities is to prepare soldiers dismissed from professional military service to take up employment or start a business on their own. The reconversion system operates based on eight vocational activation centres and the military retirement offices. The [Central Vocational Activation Centre coordinates their activities](#).

The objectives of the reconversion assistance system are:

- a. assisting all soldiers leaving the army;
- b. helping particularly affected families of soldiers;
- c. career counselling;
- d. building awareness of shaping a professional career;
- e. enable the use of assistance to supplement possessed qualifications required by civil employers or to acquire such qualifications two years before the planned dismissal from military service (while maintaining the specified minimum number of years in service) as well as during the two years after dismissal from the military,
- f. making the limit of funds allocated to a soldier for the purpose of supplementing qualifications to practice a profession in the civil labour market conditional on the number of years in service (incentive to remain in service) ([incentive to remain in service](#)).

Repatriation

Guidance services are also offered to those who repatriate. PES offers them based on the [Act of 9 November 2000 on repatriation](#). Those concerned are supported mainly by the PES, especially VLC Green Line. Employment Services Information and Consultation Centre and the online portal <https://powroty.gov.pl>.

Prison Inmates

Vocational counselling for those in prison is provided by the Prison Service (Służba Więzienna) as part of the Vocational Activation Fund for Inmates and the [Development of Prison Work Establishments](#). Consulting is financed by State or EU funds. Following Order No/S/16 Of The Director-General Of The Prison Service of 14 April 2016 on the detailed rules for the conduct and organisation of penitentiary work and the scope of activities of officers and employees of the penitentiary and [therapeutic departments and penitentiary departments](#), various activities are undertaken to support professional development, including:

- a. workshops and consultations about developing interests;
- b. consultations before deciding whether to refer to teaching or training and before withdrawal from education or training or deprivation of education;
- c. consultations before making a decision on the placement of an inmate and the withdrawal of an inmate from employment.

The employment officer or employee presents the inmate with an employment offer, taking into account:

- a. professional training of the inmate;
- b. professional interests;
- c. needs arising from the course of education.

Assisting inmates' penitentiary interactions through work takes into account the needs of acquiring qualifications, improving professional skills, and professional activation. To perform its tasks, the Prison Service may cooperate with PES, VLC and NGOs. Inmates also receive psychological and therapeutic help.