

3.4 Career guidance and counselling

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Career guidance and counselling services

Education and career guidance services for pupils and career counselling for students and adults are provided by several institutions: schools, advisory centres, Voluntary Labour Corps, academic career offices, employment offices or non-governmental organisations.

Career guidance in schools

Career guidance in schools is available for all pupils. In the 2017/2018 school year, career guidance classes are organised for students in grade 7 and 8 of primary school, lower secondary trade school, general upper secondary school, and technical upper secondary school. The classes are based on a curriculum prepared by a relevant teacher and approved by the headmaster, after consulting the pedagogical council. The curriculum contains information about professions, qualifications, and jobs, as well as opportunities to obtain qualifications that match the needs of the labour market and one's occupational skills.

The career guidance staff within the education system are provided with support from the Centre for Education Development ([O?rodek Rozwoju Edukacji - ORE](#)) (until 1 July 2016, the National Centre for the Promotion of Vocational and Continuing Education - [Krajowy O?rodek Wsparcia Edukacji Zawodowej i Ustawicznej KOWEŻiU](#)).

The Centre for Education Development is a central public institution for teacher training with nationwide coverage. The body responsible for the Centre is the Minister of National Education. ORE is carrying out a project under the Knowledge Development Education Operational Programme (*Program Operacyjny Wiedza Edukacja Rozwój 2014-2020 (PO WER)*) The project is called "Effective Educational and Vocational Guidance for Children, Adolescents and Adults" ([Efektywne doradztwo edukacyjno-zawodowe dla dzieci, m?dzie?y i doros?ych](#)).

The main goal of the project is: to create a framework for the effective functioning of educational and vocational guidance in the education system.

Psychological and pedagogical counselling centres for school youth

The activities of schools in the field of educational and vocational guidance are supported by public psychological and pedagogical counselling centres, including specialist counselling clinics.

According to data from the Educational Information System ([System Informacji O?wiatowej](#)) as of 30 September 2015 there were 949 psychological and pedagogical counselling centres in Poland (of which 561 were public), including 48 specialist counselling clinics (of which 19 were public).

The operation of public psychological and pedagogical counselling centres falls under the remit of the educational tasks of districts. There is at least one public psychological and pedagogical counselling centre in each district in Poland, which provides free psychological and pedagogical assistance.

Those counselling centres provide support to children and adolescents who require psychological and pedagogical help or assistance in choosing the direction of their education and their occupation, and in planning their education and career. This assistance is particularly important for students with special educational needs, particularly those with disabilities and illnesses. Help is provided in the form of advice and consultations, workshops, lectures and speeches.

Public psychological and pedagogical counselling centres also provide support to schools, teachers and other professionals in the planning and implementation of educational and vocational guidance (by organising workshops, meetings with teachers, participating in consultations and sitting on teachers' councils).

In addition, the counselling centres provide information and training services regarding educational and vocational guidance aimed at [students, parents and teachers](#).

Career guidance at Voluntary Labour Corps ([Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy](#))

Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP) are government-financed entities supervised by the Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy.

The target audience of the actions undertaken by OHP are:

- Minors (aged 15 to 17) from educationally malfunctioning backgrounds who are not fulfilling their schooling and educational obligations, have problems with graduating, and need to acquire vocational qualifications.
- Persons aged 18 to 25, including those who are looking for a job or want to be retrained, unemployed, school graduates, and students.

OHP, as labour market institutions, provide free services to young people, including job placement and career guidance and information services; conduct workshops on active job searching; organise training; and implement labour market schemes (e.g. under the Youth Guarantee Initiative).

Career guidance at OHP is generally provided to people aged 15 to 25, but is also available to those older if they contact OHP.

Career counsellors provide in-house counselling at Youth Career Centres and mobile counselling by visiting the interested institutions (e.g. schools) with Mobile Career Information Centres.

Career counsellors help choose a future career, plan one's career and education, as well as offer assistance with changing jobs, self-employment or job seeking.

They take into account local employment opportunities as well as the individual professional and personal predispositions of the young person. Their task is also to familiarise their clients with the local labour market and how to look for work.

Student Career Centres ([Akademickie Biura Karier](#))

Student Career Centres are entities whose mission is the professional activation of students and graduates of higher education, run by a higher education institution or a student organisation, whose duties include:

1. providing students and graduates with information on the labour market and opportunities for improving professional qualifications,
2. collection, classification and dissemination of job, internship and work placement offers,
3. maintaining a database of students and higher education institution graduates interested in finding a job,
4. assisting employers in obtaining suitable candidates for job vacancies and internships,
5. helping with active job seeking.

In 2014, it was estimated that 346 Student Career Centres were in operation at 442 Polish higher education institutions. However, it should be emphasised that this is an indicative figure only.

Career guidance at public Employment Offices ([Urząd Pracy](#))

Career guidance is a labour market service provided by Public Employment Services (district Employment Offices at district level, and career information and planning centres at provincial level).

Career guidance consists of an employee of the Employment Office providing assistance in the form of face to face contact with the person in need of assistance, or via telephone or the Internet.

As part of the career guidance service, Employment Office workers also conduct group

meetings in the form of workshops with the people in need of aid.

Career guidance services include assistance with:

- choosing or changing one's profession,
- career planning,
- supplementing professional qualifications,
- defining one's competences and interests,
- planning of professional development.

Career guidance at district Employment Offices and at career information and planning centres is free of charge and is provided in accordance with the following principles:

- accessibility,
- voluntariness,
- equality regardless of sex, age, disability, race, ethnic origin, nationality, sexual orientation, political beliefs, religious affiliation or trade union membership,
- freedom to choose one's profession and place of employment,
- data confidentiality and protection.

Career guidance provided by non-governmental organisations

NGOs specialise in educational and/or vocational guidance for selected categories of beneficiaries, such as disabled people (e.g. [The Fuga Mundi Foundation in Lublin](#)), children and adults with autism ([The Synapsis Foundation](#)), young homeless people requiring various forms of support ([The Monar Association](#)), and young people leaving orphanages or foster families ([The Robinson Crusoe Foundation](#)).

NGOs are complementary to public sector services. Their activities are funded by public, private and European funds.

Funding

Educational and vocational counselling for pupils, and career guidance for students and adults are free of charge and are financed from public funds.

Quality assurance

Poland has an institutional support system for pupils in the field of educational and vocational counselling as well as institutions providing career guidance services for students and adults.

There is, however, no reliable system for assessing the quality of their performance and evaluation. This results in a particularly vulnerable position of disabled young people who have problems in accessing professional career guidance.

Work is ongoing on developing best practice solutions for the functioning of in-school educational and vocational counselling systems at different stages of education in the reformed school system: primary school, lower and upper secondary trade school, upper secondary technical school, general secondary school, and post-secondary school.

The works are carried out under the project [Effective Educational and Vocational Guidance for Children, Adolescents and Adults](#) within the framework of the 2014-2020 Knowledge Education Development Operational Programme.