Since 1 October 2016, initial teacher training in Poland has been provided only within the higher education system.

National standards for initial teacher training programmes are laid down in a regulation by the minister responsible for higher education and science in consultation with the minister responsible for school education. The standards aim to ensure high quality of education and guide the selection of appropriate learning outcomes and, thus, prepare students properly for the teaching profession, while taking into consideration its specificity. Where initial teacher training is provided as part of a non-degree postgraduate programme, the standards should also take into account the duration of training and the selection of appropriate learning outcomes for the teaching profession.

The higher education sector provides several types of programmes for the initial training of teachers:

- **degree programmes**, including:
  - first-cycle programmes (leading to a Bachelor's degree /licencjat or inżynier/, depending on the field of study, or an equivalent degree);
  - second-cycle programmes (leading to a Master's degree /magister/ or an equivalent degree);
  - long-cycle programmes (like second-cycle programmes, leading to a Master's degree /magister/ or an equivalent degree);
- **non-degree postgraduate programmes** (leading to a certificate of completion of a non-degree postgraduate programme).

Degree and non-degree postgraduate programmes are offered by both university-type and non-university higher education institutions (HEIs). Both types of HEIs operate in both the public and non-public higher education sectors.

Initial teacher training can be provided only by HEIs which have been awarded at least the research grade / category B in the discipline to which a given field of study is assigned.

However, where an HEI is not authorised to award a doctoral degree in the discipline to which the field of study concerned is assigned, it can be granted a permit to establish an initial teacher training programme if it has concluded a cooperation agreement for the provision of the programme with an HEI which is authorised to award a doctoral degree in the discipline to which the field of study is assigned. An HEI authorised to award a doctoral degree may conclude such an agreement in a given discipline with only one HEI.

Initial training for:

- subject teachers,
- theoretical subject teachers,
• practical vocational training teachers,
• teachers conducting classes, and
• psychologists

is provided as part of first-cycle, second-cycle or long-cycle programmes in the field of study where the curriculum defines learning outcomes which cover knowledge and skills corresponding to all requirements set out by the national core curriculum for the subject to be taught or the national core curriculum for vocational education for a specific occupation, or the contents of classes to be conducted, respectively.

Initial training for prospective teachers-psychologists is provided as a programme in the field of Psychology.

As of 1 October 2019 (academic year 2019/2020), the only initial training option for prospective teachers of nursery schools and grades I to III of the primary school is a long-cycle programme in the field of Early Childhood and Early School Education. The new national standards for initial teacher training, which came into force on 3 August 2019, no longer provide for teacher training as part of non-degree postgraduate programmes in the field of Early Childhood and Early School Education.

As of 1 October 2019, initial training programmes for prospective special education teachers, teachers-speech therapists and teachers conducting early childhood development classes in the following areas:

• education and rehabilitation of people with a hearing disability;
• education and rehabilitation of people with a vision disability;
• education and rehabilitation of people with an intellectual disability;
• treatment and therapy education;
• education and therapy for people with autism spectrum disorders; and
• inclusive education

are provided as long-cycle programmes in the field of Special Education.

However, initial training programmes for prospective special education teachers, teachers-speech therapists and teachers conducting early childhood development classes in the following areas:

• education for resocialisation;
• speech therapy;
• remedial education (educational therapy); and
• early childhood development support

can be provided as long-cycle programmes in the field of Special Education or first- and second-cycle programmes in a field other than Special Education.

HEIs can continue to offer non-degree postgraduate programmes in the field of Special Education and enrol students wishing to obtain the related qualifications. However, non-degree programmes in the field of Special Education for prospective teachers may be offered only to applicants who:

• hold a qualification for teaching a subject or conducting classes, but have not completed a training programme in the field of Special Education; or
• have completed a training programme in the field of Special Education and wish to complete a training programme in an additional area of Special Education.

Currently, teachers who hold a higher education qualification (a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree)
represent 98% of all school education teachers.

Institutions, level and models of training

The concurrent model of teacher training is predominating in Poland. It is followed mainly in pedagogical higher education institutions (HEIs), but also in all types of other HEIs. As part of degree programmes in individual fields of study, students may choose a teacher specialisation track; this means that they can complete professional teacher training (and acquire a teaching / pedagogical qualification) as part of the degree programme chosen, in parallel to the subject-specific training.

Graduates who have not taken a teacher specialisation track and choose the teaching profession later may obtain a teaching / pedagogical qualification upon completion of a non-degree postgraduate programme at an HEI. This option represents the consecutive model of teacher training.

HEIs train teachers for all levels of the school education system, including nursery, primary, post-primary and post-secondary schools, as part of degree programmes (first-, second- and long-cycle programmes) and non-degree postgraduate programmes.

To ensure adequate quality of training for prospective teaching staff, only HEIs which conduct research and use the latest research achievements in the field of education are authorised to provide initial teacher training. Prospective teachers are trained only by HEIs which have at least research grade B in the discipline to which a given field of study is assigned.

Transitional arrangements are in place for HEIs which have grade C or no grade in a given area (for example, public schools of higher vocational education which are not classified according to research grades). Such HEIs may continue to provide initial teacher training on condition that they conclude a cooperation agreement with HEIs which have grade B in a given discipline or have a higher number of students enrolled on full-time than part-time programmes (however, the final cohort of students will be enrolled on such programmes for the academic year 2021/2022).

As of 1 October 2019, HEIs may launch an initial training programme for prospective teachers of nursery schools and grades I to III of the primary school only as a long-cycle programme in the field of Preschool and Early School Education. New student enrolment on second-cycle programmes is limited to the field of Early Childhood and Early School Education only, and to the HEIs which trained prospective teachers for nursery schools and grades I to III of the primary school in the field of Early Childhood and Early School Education as part of first- and second-cycle programmes on 1 October 2018 (in this case, the final cohort of students may be enrolled on a second-cycle programme for the academic year 2021/2022, that is before 1 October 2022).

A teacher position in a nursery school and a primary school may be taken by candidates who have completed:

- a first-cycle programme in the field (specialisation area) corresponding to the subject to be taught or the type of classes to be conducted, and teacher / pedagogical training; or
- a first-cycle programme in the field of study where the learning outcomes (as referred to in the Act of 22 December 2015 on the Integrated Qualifications System) for knowledge and skills cover the contents of the subject to be taught or the classes to be conducted (as set out in the national core curriculum for the subject at the relevant education level), and teacher / pedagogical training; or
- a first-cycle programme in the field (specialisation area) other than those listed above and a non-degree postgraduate programme or a qualification course in the subject to be taught or the type of classes to be conducted, and teacher / pedagogical training; or
• a programme provided by an initial teacher training institution (institutions which existed earlier on) in the specialisation area corresponding to the subject to be taught or the classes to be conducted; or
• a programme provided by an initial teacher training institution in the specialisation area other than those listed above, and a qualification course in the subject to be taught or the type of classes to be conducted.

A teacher position in a nursery school and grades I to III of a primary school may also be taken by candidates who have completed:

• a first-, second- or long-cycle programme in the field of Education, the specialisation area preparing for work with children of the early childhood education preschool or early school age;
• a programme provided by an initial teacher training institution in the specialisation area preparing for work with children of the preschool or early school age.

For a teacher position in:

• general secondary schools,
• post-secondary schools,
• stage I and II sectoral vocational schools,
• technical secondary schools,
• care-and-education institutions,
• institutions providing care and education to pupils or students during a period of learning outside the place of their permanent residence,
• in-service teacher training institutions,
• counselling and guidance (so-called psychological and educational support) centres, including specialised centres,
• educational resources centres, and
• colleges of social work,

candidates are required to have completed:

• a second- or long-cycle programme in the field of study (specialisation area) corresponding to the subject to be taught or the type of classes to be conducted, and teacher / pedagogical training;
• a second- or long-cycle programme in the field of study where the learning outcomes (as referred to in the Act of 22 December 2015 on the Integrated Qualifications System) for knowledge and skills cover the contents of the subject to be taught or the classes to be conducted (as identified in the national core curriculum for the subject at the relevant education level), and teacher / pedagogical training; or
• a second- or long-cycle programme in the field of study (specialisation area) other than those listed above, and teacher / pedagogical training; or
• a non-degree postgraduate programme in the subject to be taught or the type of classes conducted, and teacher / pedagogical training.

A position of vocational subject teacher in a school may also be taken by candidates who have completed:

• a first-cycle programme in the field of study (specialisation area) corresponding to the subject to be taught, and teacher / pedagogical training; or
• a first-cycle programme in the field of study where the learning outcomes (as referred to in the Act of 22 December 2015 on the Integrated Qualifications System) for knowledge and skills
cover the contents of the subject to be taught or the classes to be conducted (as identified in the national core curriculum for the subject at the relevant education level), and teacher / pedagogical training.

Non-degree postgraduate programmes last at least 2 semesters and lead to partial qualifications at Levels 6, 7 or 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework (PQF). Access to non-degree postgraduate programmes is open to applicants who hold a full qualification at least at Level 6 of the PQF, obtained within the higher education and science system. Non-degree postgraduate programme graduates are awarded a certificate of completion. A certificate template is laid down by the institution providing a given programme.

**New national standards for initial teacher training came into force on 3 August 2019. The standards** no longer provide for teacher training as part of non-degree postgraduate programmes in the field of Early Childhood and Early School Education. However, students enrolled on such a non-degree postgraduate programme in the academic year 2018/2019 and earlier continue education until they graduate.

The following types of HEIs train teachers for the school education system:

- **Universities and so-called pedagogical HEIs** (specialised in education sciences) train teachers of various specialisation areas for schools at all levels. They mainly train the following categories of teachers: teachers of general education subjects for primary and post-primary schools; preschool education and early school education teachers; teachers and tutors for educational and childcare establishments, career guidance and counselling services and other specialised institutions providing support to children and youth, school libraries and educational resources centres.

One of the pedagogical HEIs is the Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education in Warsaw which trains teachers for special schools and establishments for children and youth with special educational needs at various levels. It is the only HEI which provides programmes in the field of Special Education with all relevant specialisation tracks.

There are also other research and educational institutions or units (institutes, chairs, departments) working in the field of Special Education and training special education teachers.

- **Physical education HEIs** train physical education teachers and those who conduct remedial and compensatory activities in schools and other educational institutions of all types and at all education levels.
- **Technical universities** and other HEIs specialised in engineering and technology train vocational subject teachers for post-primary schools, teachers teaching technical skills and, on a limited scale, teachers of general subjects such as mathematics and natural sciences for schools of all levels and types.
- **Art HEIs** train teachers of visual arts and music for schools of various levels and types.
- **HEIs specialised in economics, agriculture and medicine** train vocational subject teachers for post-primary schools.

**Admission requirements**

Each higher education institution (HEI) lays down the conditions, procedure and the start and end dates of the admissions process. A resolution of the HEI senate should be published by 30 June of the year preceding the academic year for which students will be enrolled, or immediately in the case of a newly established HEI or programme.
A student is enrolled on a programme through:

- the admission process;
- the process of validation of learning outcomes (which can lead to the award of up to 50% of ECTS credits allocated to classes covered by the curriculum);
- a transfer from another Polish HEI or a foreign HEI.

Admission to first-cycle and long-cycle programmes is based on results of the maturity exam and an exam or exams confirming qualifications for an occupation. Each HEI determines the results of the exams which provide the basis for admission and publishes such information.

**First-, long- and second-cycle programmes**

**First- and long-cycle programmes** are open to applicants who hold:

- a maturity certificate or a maturity certificate and a certificate with results of the maturity exam in individual subjects;
- a maturity certificate and a Technician diploma confirming vocational qualifications for an occupation;
- a maturity certificate and a certificate with results of the maturity exam in individual subjects, and a Technician diploma confirming vocational qualifications for an occupation;
- a certificate or another document or diploma recognised in the Republic of Poland as a document providing access to higher education;
- a certificate or diploma recognised in the Republic of Poland as a document providing access to higher education in accordance with a bilateral agreement on the mutual recognition of qualifications;
- a certificate or another document recognised as equivalent to the Polish maturity certificate in accordance with the national legislation in force until 31 March 2015.

**Second-cycle programmes** are open to applicants who hold a degree / a diploma confirming completion of a degree programme.

In order to complete a degree programme and obtain a diploma, students should:

- achieve learning outcomes, as defined in a given curriculum, which are allocated at least:
  - 180 ECTS credits: for first-cycle programmes;
  - 90 ECTS credits: for second-cycle programmes;
  - 300 ECTS credits: for long-cycle programmes of 9 or 10 semesters;
  - 360 ECTS credits: for long-cycle programmes of 11 or 12 semesters;
- pass the final / diploma exam;
- receive a positive mark for the final thesis in the case of second- and long-cycle programmes, or where the final thesis is provided for in a given curriculum in the case of first-cycle programmes.

**Non-degree postgraduate programmes**

Non-degree postgraduate programmes may be taken by applicants who have at least a Bachelor’s degree (*licencjat or inżynier*).

The minimum duration of a non-degree postgraduate programme is 2 semesters. Graduates receive a certificate of completion of a non-degree postgraduate programme. A certificate template is laid down by the entity providing a given programme.
Curriculum, level of specialisation and learning outcomes

Initial teacher training is provided by higher education institutions (HEIs) as part of:

- first-cycle programmes (leading to a Bachelor’s degree: *licencjat* or *inżynier*),
- second-cycle programmes (leading to a Master’s degree: *magister*),
- long-cycle programmes (leading to a Master’s degree: *magister*),
- non-degree postgraduate programmes.

A curriculum for a programme specifies the number of semesters; the number of ECTS credits required for completion of the programme; the number of hours for classes, including internships; and science or art disciplines to which a given field of study is assigned, together with the leading / main discipline. HEIs are free to develop curricula and study / degree plans within their autonomy, but they are required to fulfil certain general requirements set out in the national legislation.

With respect to the mode of study, degree programmes are offered by HEIs as:

- **full-time programmes**: programmes where at least half of the ECTS credits covered by a curriculum are earned as part of classes / activities directly involving academic teachers or other staff conducting classes / activities and students;
- **part-time programmes**: programmes identified in a resolution of the HEI senate where less than half of the ECTS credits covered by a curriculum can be earned with direct involvement of academic teachers or other staff conducting classes / activities and students. Part-time programmes lead to the same learning outcomes as full-time programmes.

Prospective teachers most often take programmes in the fields of study where HEIs train specialists for various professions (for example, in the field of Chemistry, specialists for manufacturing plants, research institutions, laboratories, and chemistry teachers).

Within a given field of study, students can:

- choose a teaching specialisation track within a given field of study of a degree programme and complete teacher / pedagogical training as part of the chosen programme; or
- complete a degree programme in a given field of study without a teaching specialisation track and complete teacher / pedagogical training as part of a non-degree postgraduate programme provided by an HEI or a qualification course provided by an accredited in-service teacher training institution.

Teacher training as part of degree programmes and non-degree postgraduate programmes is based on the national standards for initial teacher training established by the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 25 July 2019.

The training process for prospective teachers is organised in the form of **classes / courses** or **groups of classes / courses**. Curriculum design is determined by the orientation (‘profile’) of a programme:

- **Academically oriented programmes**: a curriculum includes (groups of) classes / courses which are related to an HEI’s research activities in (a) discipline(s) of science or arts to which a given field of study is assigned, and which are allocated more than 50% of the total number of ECTS credits required to complete a programme. It includes classes / courses which prepare students to conduct or participate in research activity.
- **Practically oriented programmes**: a curriculum includes (groups of) classes / courses
developing practical skills which are allocated more than 50% of the total number of ECTS credits required to complete a programme.

The above-mentioned Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 25 July 2019 lays down the national standards for the initial training of the following categories of teachers:

- teachers;
- preschool and early school education teachers (early school education: grades I to III of the primary school);
- special education teachers, teachers-speech therapists and teachers conducting early childhood development classes.

**Initial training standards for subject teachers, theoretical vocational subject teachers, practical vocational training teachers, teachers conducting classes and teachers-psychologists**

Initial training of teachers is provided as part of the following types of programmes:

Degree programmes in a field of study, at a level of study and of an orientation (‘profile’) for which a curriculum defines the learning outcomes as referred to in the Act of 22 December 2015 on the Integrated Qualification System. Programmes are provided as **first, second- or long-cycle programmes** in a field of study where the curriculum defines the learning outcomes covering knowledge and skills which correspond to all requirements set out by the national core curriculum for the subject to be taught or for vocational education for a given occupation, or to the contents of classes to be conducted, respectively.

**Full-time first-cycle programmes** last for at least 6 semesters (at least 180 ECTS credits).

**Full-time second-cycle programmes** last for at least 3 semesters (at least 90 ECTS credits).

**Full-time long-cycle programmes** last for at least 9 semesters (at least 300 ECTS credits) (360 ECTS credits for programmes lasting longer than 10 semesters).

**Part-time programmes** may last longer than the corresponding full-time programmes. The number of ECTS credits required for a degree / the completion of a programme may not be lower than for the corresponding full-time first-, second- or long-cycle programme.

Non-degree postgraduate programmes for which a curriculum defines (1) the learning outcomes for partial qualifications, based on the ‘second-stage’ descriptors (that is, detailed characteristics of the ‘first-stage’ / universal descriptors) for Levels 6, 7 or 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework (as referred to in the Act of 22 December 2015 on the Integrated Qualifications System), and (2) the learning outcomes defined in the national standards.

**Non-degree postgraduate programmes** for prospective teachers last for at least 3 semesters.

The training process is organised in the form of **classes / courses or groups of classes / courses.**

The training of prospective teachers comprises:

- subject-area training; and
- teacher / pedagogical training, which covers:
  - psychology and pedagogy; and
  - training on teaching and learning processes, including:
    - basics of teaching and learning, and voice production;
● training for the teaching of the first / main subject or for conducting the first / main type of classes, or for the teaching of an additional subject or conducting an additional type of classes.

Non-degree postgraduate programmes for prospective teachers can cover:

1. psychology and pedagogy / teacher training, and teaching and learning processes for the teaching of a subject or for conducting classes;
2. psychology and pedagogy / teacher training, and teaching and learning processes for the teaching of theoretical vocational subjects or for practical vocational training;
3. subject-area training, psychology and pedagogy / teacher training, and teaching and learning processes;
4. subject-area training, and teaching and learning processes for the teaching of an additional subject or conducting an additional type of classes;
5. pedagogy / teacher training for teachers-psychologists;
6. psychology and pedagogy / teacher training, and teaching and learning processes for the teaching of a foreign language.

Initial training of teachers-psychologists is provided in the field of Psychology. It covers:

1. subject-area training;
2. teaching and learning processes, including the basics of teaching and learning and voice production; and
3. teacher / pedagogical training.
4. Initial training standards for preschool and early school education teachers (early school education: grades I to III of the primary school)

Training is provided as part of long-cycle programmes (at least 9 semesters and at least 300 ECTS credits).

Part-time programmes can last longer than full-time programmes.

The number of hours for classes, including internships, may not be lower than 2,860.

Curricula for part-time programmes may include a lower number of hours for classes if they ensure that students will achieve the same learning outcomes as in full-time programmes (at least 300 ECTS credits).

Training covers:

• subject-area training; and
• teacher / pedagogical training, including:
  ○ psychology and pedagogy; and
  ○ teaching and learning processes.

Training for prospective preschool and early school education teachers is provided by academic staff and other staff who have competence and experience in the area(s) corresponding to the type of classes to be conducted by prospective teachers, including academic staff with research achievements in the two disciplines of sciences concerned, education science / pedagogy and psychology.

1. Initial training standards for special education teachers, teachers-speech therapists and teachers conducting early childhood development support classes
The national standards cover training in the following areas:

1. education and rehabilitation of people with a hearing disability;
2. education and rehabilitation of people with a vision disability;
3. education and rehabilitation of people with an intellectual disability;
4. treatment and therapy education;
5. education and therapy for people with autism spectrum disorders; and
6. inclusive education

Training is provided as part of long-cycle programmes in the field of Special Education.

Training may also be provided as part of non-degree postgraduate programmes. Non-degree postgraduate programmes last for at least 3 semesters.

Non-degree postgraduate programmes in the field of Special Education for prospective teachers are open to applicants who:

1. hold a qualification for teaching a subject or conducting classes but have not completed training in special education; or
2. have completed training in special education and wish to complete training in an additional area of special education.

The national standards cover training in the following areas:

3. education for resocialisation;
4. speech therapy;
5. remedial education (educational therapy); and
6. early childhood development support.

Training may be provided as part of long-cycle programmes in the field of Special Education or first- and second-cycle programmes in a field other than Special Education.

Full-time first-cycle programmes last for at least 6 semesters (at least 180 ECTS credits).

Full-time second-cycle programmes last for at least 3 semesters (at least 90 ECTS credits).

Full-time long-cycle programmes last for at least 9 semesters (at least 300 ECTS credits) (360 ECTS credits for programmes lasting longer than 10 semesters).

Part-time programmes may last longer than the corresponding full-time programmes.

Training covers:

- subject-area training; and
- teacher / pedagogical training, including:
  - psychology and pedagogy; and
  - teaching and learning processes.

The standards also specify the aims, rules and locations for internships. Internships should be undertaken mainly in parallel with regular classes taught at an HEI and comprise the following activities: visits to nursery schools, schools and other educational institutions; class observation; assisting teachers in conducting classes; teaching classes; and planning and discussing classes taught by others (teachers, interns and learners).

Upon completion of initial training for teachers, graduates:
• have knowledge of psychology and pedagogy which enables them to understand processes of development, socialisation, education, and teaching and learning;
• have knowledge of teaching and learning processes and detailed teaching methodology, supported by experience of using it in practice;
• have skills and competences necessary to perform complex teaching, educational and care-related tasks of the school, including the development and adaptation of curricula to the needs and abilities of pupils / students;
• demonstrate the ability to learn and improve their own teaching techniques and methods, while using modern resources and methods to search for, structure and process information and materials;
• communicate successfully through various techniques with both learners and other people contributing to the education process and specialists supporting the process;
• demonstrate ethical sensitivity, empathy, openness, ability to reflect and prosocial attitudes and a sense of responsibility;
• are prepared in practical terms to perform professional (teaching, educational and care-related) tasks which are part of a teacher’s role.

Teacher educators

Teachers are trained at higher education institutions (HEIs) by academic teachers who are divided into research-and-teaching staff, research staff and teaching staff (see the chapter on ‘Academic Teachers’). Only research-and-teaching staff and teaching staff are required by law to train students.

The legislation does not lay down any special requirements for academic staff who train teachers. General requirements for research-and-teaching staff, research staff and teaching staff concerning the level of qualifications, including academic degrees and titles, are defined by law. The statutes of an HEI can define additional requirements and professional qualifications to be held by academic teachers.

Teachers working in in-service teacher training institutions are considered as school education teachers in the national legislation and are covered by separate regulations (Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 28 May 2019 on in-service teacher training institutions).

Qualifications, evaluation and certificates

Qualifications

Teachers are required to have a qualification (degree or diploma) at a relevant level and a teaching qualification (or, in other words, are required to have completed teacher / pedagogical training).

The Regulation of the Minister of National Education on the detailed qualification requirements for teachers specifies:

• detailed qualifications required of teachers, and in particular, the level of educational attainment / qualification and the scope of a qualification for the individual types of schools and other educational institutions;
• conditions for acquiring qualifications to teach foreign languages;
• examinations which lead to qualifications for teaching foreign languages;
• schools and cases in which it is possible to employ teachers without a higher education qualification or a diploma of an initial teacher training institution (a type of institution existing
earlier).

Graduates who have completed a long-cycle programme (leading to a Master’s degree) hold a qualification required for the position of teacher in nursery schools and grades I to III of the primary school, and for the position of special education teacher.

Graduates who have completed a second- or long-cycle programme (both leading to a Master’s degree) are qualified to take up the position of teacher in all types of schools.

As new types of schools have been established in the school system as part of the ongoing reform since the school year 2017/2018:

- teachers working in the 8-year primary school are required to have at least a Bachelor’s degree (licencjat or inżynier) (awarded upon completion of a first-cycle programme);
- teachers working in stage I and stage II sectoral vocational schools (general education subjects) are required to have a Master’s (magister) degree (awarded upon completion of a second- or long-cycle programme).

Assessment and diplomas

Student performance during a programme in a higher education institution (HEI) is assessed by academic teachers through coursework, tests and examinations.

Academic teachers use various assessment methods, including oral exams, written exams, tests, etc.. It is normally either a numerical mark or credit that is recorded in the student book (academic transcript). HEIs use a four-grade scale (very good, fair, satisfactory and unsatisfactory).

Courses / classes included in a curriculum are allocated ECTS credits.

In order to be awarded a diploma / degree, students should earn the following numbers of credits:

- for first-cycle programmes: at least 180 ECTS credits;
- for second-cycle programmes: at least 90 ECTS credits;
- for long-cycle programmes: at least 300 ECTS credits for 5-year programmes, and 360 credits for 6-year programmes.

First-, second- and long-cycle graduates obtain a diploma of an HEI (based on the template approved by the senate of a given HEI), confirming the award of a degree, and a Diploma Supplement. Graduates who have finished a non-degree postgraduate programme receive a certificate of completion.

A student may take the final (‘diploma’) examination if his/her final thesis has received a positive mark. The final thesis is a paper / study prepared independently by the student and devoted to a selected academic or artistic topic or a piece of artistic work presenting the student’s general knowledge and skills, related to a given field and level of study and orientation (‘profile’) of a programme, and his/her analytical and reasoning skills.

HEIs are required to assess written final theses before the final exam using the so-called Unified Plagiarism Detection System (Jednolity System Antyplagiatowy).

First-cycle programmes

In order to complete a programme, students are required to:
1. achieve the learning outcomes specified in the curriculum and earn a required number of ECTS credits (see the chapter on ‘Curriculum, level of specialisation and learning outcomes’);
2. pass the final (‘diploma’) examination; and
3. receive a positive mark for the final (‘diploma’) thesis (if the final thesis is provided for in the curriculum).

Graduates are awarded a higher education diploma (a diploma of completion of a degree programme) which includes details such as: the mode of study; field of study; orientation (‘profile’); the discipline to which the field of study concerned is assigned (or the leading / main discipline if the field of study is assigned to more than one discipline); the final mark for the overall programme (in words); the degree awarded; and the award date.

Together with a diploma, graduates receive a Diploma Supplement, based on the model developed by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES. It includes information about the diploma itself, the level of the qualification obtained, contents of the programme completed, results achieved (together with ECTS credits and the final mark), and the function of the qualification.

Second-cycle and long-cycle programmes

In order to complete a programme, students are required to:

1. achieve the learning outcomes specified in the curriculum and earn a required number of ECTS credits (see the chapter on ‘Curriculum, level of specialisation and learning outcomes’);
2. pass the final (‘diploma’) examination; and
3. receive a positive mark for the final (‘diploma’) thesis.

Although a Master’s degree is classified as a ‘professional title’, Master’s theses usually are research-type papers.

Graduates are awarded a higher education diploma (a diploma of completion of a degree programme) which includes details such as: the mode of study; field of study; orientation (‘profile’); the discipline to which the field of study concerned is assigned (or the leading / main discipline if the field of study is assigned to more than one discipline); the final mark for the overall programme (in words); the degree awarded; and the award date.

Graduates also receive a Diploma Supplement (see the details above).

Non-degree postgraduate programmes

In order to complete a non-degree postgraduate programme, students are required to achieve the intended learning outcomes, earn at least 30 ECTS credits, pass examinations, and submit the final thesis or pass the final exam where this is included in the curriculum.

Graduates are awarded a certificate of completion of a non-degree postgraduate programme. It includes, among other things, information about the scope of the programme, the number of semesters, the final mark and a list of theoretical and practical training classes / courses together with the corresponding numbers of ECTS credits.

Teaching qualifications

There are no specific ‘teaching qualifications’ as such awarded in higher education. Higher education diplomas for degree programmes with a teaching specialisation track, and certificates of completion of non-degree postgraduate programmes for prospective
teachers confirm the completion of teacher / pedagogical training, and thus are recognised as a ‘teaching qualification’.

Alternative training pathways

Alternative training pathways are intended for prospective foreign language teachers and practical vocational training teachers.

Qualifications for teaching foreign languages

As of 1 September 2017, teachers of foreign languages in nursery schools and schools are required to have completed:

- a second- or long-cycle (Master’s degree) programme in the field of Philology (Language and Literature Studies) or Applied Linguistics, with the specialisation track in a given language, and teacher / pedagogical training;
- a second- or long-cycle (Master’s degree) programme in the country where a given foreign language is an / the official language, and teacher / pedagogical training;
- a second- or long-cycle (Master’s degree) programme in any field of study (specialisation track), and:
  1. hold a certificate awarded upon passing an exam in a given foreign language at the advanced or proficiency level, and have completed teacher / pedagogical training; or
  2. hold a certificate awarded upon passing the second-degree state examination in a given foreign language for teachers;
- a programme in a foreign language teacher training college, with the specialisation track in a given foreign language.

Foreign languages may also be taught in nursery schools and primary schools by teachers who:

- have completed a first-cycle (Bachelor’s degree) programme in the field of Philology (Language and Literature Studies), with the specialisation track corresponding to the language taught, and teacher / pedagogical training;
- have completed a first-cycle (Bachelor’s degree) programme with the specialisation track in a given foreign language or in the field of Applied Linguistics with the specialisation track in a given foreign language, and teacher / pedagogical training;
- have completed a first-cycle (Bachelor’s degree) programme in any field of study (specialisation track), and:
  1. hold a certificate awarded upon passing an exam in a given foreign language at the advanced or proficiency level, and have completed teacher / pedagogical training; or
  2. hold a certificate awarded upon passing the second-degree state examination in a given foreign language for teachers;
- have completed a programme in a teacher training college (a type of institution existing earlier) in any specialisation track, and:
  1. hold a certificate awarded upon passing an exam in a given foreign language at the advanced or proficiency level, and have completed teaching / pedagogical training; or
  2. hold a certificate awarded upon passing a state 2nd degree examination in a given foreign language for teachers;
- have a maturity certificate and a certificate awarded upon passing the first- or second-degree state examination in a given foreign language for teachers.
Furthermore, **foreign languages** may be taught in **nursery schools and grades I to III of primary schools** by teachers who:

- have completed a degree programme in the field of Education / Pedagogy which trains for teaching in nursery schools and grades I to III of primary schools, and where a given foreign language was the additional specialisation track;
- have completed a first-cycle (Bachelor’s degree) or second- or long-cycle (Master’s degree) programme in the field of Education / Pedagogy which trains for teaching a foreign language in nursery schools or grades I to III of primary schools;
- hold qualifications required to work in nursery schools or grades I to III of primary schools, and a certificate awarded upon passing an exam in a given foreign language at least at the basic level, and have completed a non-degree postgraduate programme or a qualification course in teaching a given foreign language;
- hold qualifications required to work in nursery schools or grades I to III of primary schools, and a certificate awarded upon passing an exam in a given foreign language at least at the basic level, and have completed a first-cycle (Bachelor’s degree), second- or long-cycle (Master’s degree) programme in the field of Philology (Language and Literature Studies) and teacher / pedagogical training for teaching a foreign language.

**Qualifications for practical vocational training**

As of 1 September 2017, practical vocational training in stage I and stage II sectoral vocational schools, technical (upper) secondary schools and post-secondary schools, including those hosted in youth detention centres and young offenders’ centres, may be provided by teachers who:

- have completed a second- or long-cycle (Master’s degree) programme in the field of study (specialisation track) corresponding to the subject taught or the type of classes conducted, and teacher / pedagogical training;
- have completed a second- or long-cycle (Master’s degree) programme in the field of study where the learning outcomes cover the contents of the subject taught or the type of classes conducted, as identified in the national core curriculum for the subject at the relevant education stage, and teacher / pedagogical training;
- have completed a second- or long-cycle (Master’s degree) programme in a field of study not corresponding to the subject taught or the type of classes conducted, and a non-degree postgraduate programme corresponding to the subject taught or the type of classes conducted, and teacher / pedagogical training;
- hold a diploma of a technical teacher training institution (a type of institution existing earlier);
- have a maturity certificate and a document confirming vocational qualifications in the occupation for which they intend to train students; have completed teacher / pedagogical training; and have at least 2-year experience in the occupation for which they intend to train students;
- Hold the title of Master Craftsman in the occupation for which they intend to train students, and have completed teacher / pedagogical training.