Strategic context at European level

For more than 15 years a wider framework for mobility and internationalisation has been set by European initiatives and processes which Poland joined first as an EU candidate country and as from 2004 as a member state of the European Union (EU). Currently, the key ones are Education and Training 2020, the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training which supports the implementation of the comprehensive EU development strategy Europe 2020, and the Bologna and Copenhagen Processes, linked to the EU strategies, which focus on higher education and vocational education and training, respectively.

One of the common EU objectives set for education and training systems in Education and Training 2020 [1] concerns mobility. For this objective, the EU adopted in 2011 a benchmark whereby until 2020, on average, at least 20% of higher education graduates and at least 6% of 18-34-years-olds with an initial vocational qualification should have completed a period of study or training (including a practical placement) abroad.

For many years, mobility and internationalisation have been a key priority of the Bologna Process [2] launched in 1999; a benchmark where at least 20% of students graduating in the European Higher Education Area by 2020 should have completed a period of study or practical training abroad was set in the Process as early as in 2009. In the Copenhagen Process [3], implemented since 2002, mobility is a crucial element increasing the European dimension of vocational education and training.

Strategic context at national level

Poland does not have a separate strategy for mobility or internationalisation at early childhood and school education or higher education level, and there are no separate national benchmarks for mobility.

However, internationalisation of higher education and research is incorporated into development goals of the Government’s Strategy for Responsible Development (2016). The Strategy aims to provide conditions encouraging internationalisation of higher education, innovativeness and commercialisation of research findings; facilitate the employment of international scholars with research achievements at Polish higher education institutions (HEIs); and encourage non-EU students to take up studies in Poland. The Law on Higher Education and Science of 20 July 2018 places an emphasis on internationalisation of third-cycle / doctoral programmes and arrangements which facilitate the development and delivery of transnational joint programmes, with most aspects to be regulated by agreements between Polish HEIs and their foreign partners. Furthermore, internationalisation is currently one of the main areas addressed by mandatory programme evaluations / accreditation reviews conducted in higher education by the Polish Accreditation Committee; see Chapter 11 ‘Quality Assurance’.
The National Agency for Academic Exchange ([Narodowa Agencja Wymiany Akademickiej, NAWA](#)), established by the Act on the National Agency for Academic Exchange of 7 July 2017, has operated since autumn 2017. The overall aim of the Agency is to encourage internationalisation of Polish higher education and research. The Agency is modelled after the DAAD in Germany, the Dutch NUFFIC and Campus France in France. Its main responsibilities include:

- establishing a system of programmes which support outward and inward mobility of students, including doctoral students, and academic staff;
- implementing programmes which encourage the return of Polish researchers to the country;
- developing a financial mechanism for supporting mobility;
- launching projects supporting higher education institutions in improving the quality of education;
- undertaking information and promotion activities concerning Polish higher education;
- promoting the learning and knowledge of the Polish language abroad.

On 1 February 2018, the Agency took over from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education the responsibilities related to the recognition of higher education qualifications.

**Tools facilitating mobility**

There are a number of arrangements and tools directly or indirectly supporting mobility at European level. These include, in particular:

- the [European Qualifications Framework](#) (EQF) providing a reference system which helps to describe and compare internationally qualifications obtained as part of lifelong learning in individual countries;
- credit systems, the [European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System](#) (ECTS) and the [European credit system for vocational education and training](#) (ECVET), which enable accumulation, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes achieved as part of formal education in various institutions or non-formal education in different settings;
- a set of [Europass documents](#), including, in particular, a Diploma Supplement for higher education diplomas and a Certificate Supplement for vocational qualifications, which describe qualifications obtained by individuals in a standardised and transparent way.

>Details about European tools [5]

Poland has implemented the 8-level [Polish Qualifications Framework](#) (PQF) which presents qualifications awarded in the country as referenced to the EQF. Together with the Integrated Qualifications Register, the PQF is part of the Integrated Qualifications System which was launched in July 2016., based on the Act of 22 December 2015 on the Integrated Qualifications System. ([Basic information](#) in English, and [further details](#) in Polish). Based on national legislation, ECTS was introduced as mandatory for Polish HEIs in 2006 and HEIs have issued a [Diploma Supplement](#) since 2004. Pursuant to national legislation, the Regional Examination Boards, responsible for external examinations, issue [Certificate Supplements](#) at the request of a holder of a diploma confirming vocational qualifications.

**Recognition of qualifications**

Recognition of qualifications (certificates, diplomas and degrees) is regulated in accordance with EU legislation and international conventions, including the Lisbon Convention (Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region) which was ratified by Poland in December 2003 and entered into force in 2004.
**School education**

Certificates and other documents at school education level are recognised on the basis of the 1991 School Education Act (as subsequently amended) and the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 25 March 2015 on the procedure for the recognition of certificates and other documents, and validation of a qualification or entitlement to continue education, obtained in a foreign system of school education (as subsequently amended). The following documents are recognised automatically, by virtue of law, without being validated by other institutions:

- maturity certificates / upper secondary school leaving certificates awarded in the member states of the [EU](#) and the [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development](#) (OECD), and member states of the [European Free Trade Agreement](#) (EFTA) – signatories of the [European Economic Area](#) (EEA) Agreement, which give access to higher education in the awarding country;
- International Baccalaureate (IB) diplomas awarded by the International Baccalaureate Organization in Geneva;
- European Baccalaureate (EB) diplomas awarded by the European Schools in accordance with the Convention laying down the statutes of the European schools, adopted in Luxembourg in 1994;
- certificates covered by international agreements signed by Poland (see the [database of treaties and agreements](#) in English, managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the [list of agreements](#) in Polish on the website of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education).

In other cases, certificates and other documents are recognised through an administrative process (nastrofikacja) conducted by the Head of the Regional Education Authorities (kurator oświaty). [Details about the procedure](#).

**Higher education**

**Academic recognition** (for admission to further studies)

A maturity certificate or a document recognised as equivalent in Poland (see above) is required for admission to first- and long-cycle programmes. To be admitted to a second-cycle programme, applicants should hold a higher education diploma (at least a first-cycle diploma / degree; licencjat or inżynier in Poland). Studies at doctoral / third-cycle level (doctoral programmes / studies until the year 2018/2019 or education at a doctoral school as from 2019/2020) may be taken up by a holder of a Master’s degree (magister or magister inżynier in Poland) or an equivalent degree; a Master’s degree is awarded in Poland upon completion of a second- or long-cycle programme. In exceptional cases, justified by highest-quality research achievements, doctoral studies may also be taken up by a first-cycle graduate or a student who has completed the third year of a long-cycle (Master’s degree) programme.

Recognition of higher education qualifications is governed by the Act of 20 July 2018, The Law on Higher Education and Science, and the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 28 September 2018 on the administrative process for recognition of higher education diplomas awarded abroad, and for validation of completion of degree programmes at specific levels (applicable to diplomas / degrees awarded upon completion of first-, second- and long-cycle programmes or equivalent programmes).

Specific provisions of the Law apply to diplomas awarded by authorised HEIs operating with the higher education system of a member state of the [EU](#), [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development](#) (OECD) and the [European Free Trade Agreement](#) (EFTA) - signatories of the
European Economic Area (EEA) Agreement. In this case, a diploma awarded upon completion of:

- a three-year programme or a first-cycle programme of at least 3-year duration is recognised in Poland as a first-cycle qualification;
- a second-cycle programme is recognised in Poland as a second-cycle qualification;
- a long-cycle programme of at least 4-year duration is recognised in Poland as a second-cycle qualification if the diploma concerned is considered equivalent to a diploma of completion of a second-cycle programme in the state where it has been awarded.

If a higher education diploma gives access to second-cycle programmes or a process leading to the award of a doctoral degree in the state where the awarding HEI operates, it carries a corresponding entitlement in Poland.

The above regulations are not applicable in case:

- the institution which awarded the diploma or provided the programme concerned does not operate within a higher education system of any state;
- in accordance with the legislation of the state where the institution operates as part of the higher education system, the institution was not an accredited HEI or provided a non-accredited programme on the date when the diploma was issued;
- the programme concerned or its part did not comply with the legislation of the state where it was provided.

A first-, second- or long-cycle diploma awarded in a state other than those mentioned above may be recognised as equivalent to a corresponding Polish diploma and degree based on an international agreement or – in the absence of an agreement – through an administrative process of recognition (nostryfikacja). Bilateral agreements can be found in the database of treaties and agreements operated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (in English), and information on bilateral agreements is available on the website of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (in Polish). The recognition process identifies a Polish qualification corresponding to a foreign diploma. The process is conducted by HEIs which hold an A+, A or B+ research category (ratings awarded based on an evaluation of the quality of research activities) in the discipline concerned.

Although this is directly related to research activity rather than further studies, similar regulations apply to the recognition of doctoral and post-doctoral degrees (doktor and doktor habilitowany in Poland). Degrees awarded in the EU, OECD, EFTA/EEA member states are recognised as equivalent to the corresponding ones awarded in Poland. A doctoral degree awarded by the European University Institute in Florence is, likewise, recognised as equivalent to a Polish doctoral degree. Degrees conferred in other countries and by other institutions may be recognised as equivalent to Polish ones based on an international agreement or – in the absence of an agreement – through an administrative process of recognition (nostryfikacja). The process is conducted by HEIs and other research institutions which hold an A+ or A research category in the discipline concerned. Recognition arrangements are laid down by the Law on Higher Education and Science and the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 28 September 2018 on the administrative process for recognition of research degrees awarded abroad (applicable to doctoral and doctoral degrees).

**Professional recognition** (for employment)

Recognition procedures vary depending on whether a given profession is regulated in Poland.

For non-regulated professions, pursuant to the Code of Labour of 26 June 1974 (as subsequently
amended), a decision to recognise a foreign professional qualification is taken by the employer. The employer may require confirmation of the equivalence of a foreign qualification (see the information about academic recognition above).

**Regulated professions** in Poland include the so-called sectoral professions (doctor, dentist, pharmacist, nurse, midwife, veterinary surgeon and architect) and professions such as lawyer and teacher (working in the school education sector).

Qualifications in regulated professions obtained in **EU member states, EFTA/EEA member states** and **Switzerland** are recognised in Poland in accordance with the Act of 22 December 2015 on the rules for the recognition of professional qualifications acquired in Member States of the European Union (as subsequently amended), based on EU directives 2005/36/EC and 2013/55/EU and national implementing regulations. Qualifications in professions such as teacher are recognised as part of the so-called general recognition system within the EU. The competent body assesses a given qualification in terms of the level of education / study and professional status / rights to practice a given profession which it confers on the holder in the state where it was awarded. Where the scope of education or the profession varies significantly between the home and host countries, the holder may be required to undertake an adaptation placement or take an aptitude test. Since higher education programmes for the sectoral professions are based on the EU legislation, qualifications may be automatically recognised if the applicant submits supporting documents (a diploma or certificate) to the competent Polish body. Recognition of qualifications for legal and other professions is governed by separate regulations.

For qualifications obtained in **other countries**, the applicant should first apply for the recognition of a qualification (diploma / certificate) in academic terms (see above), and, subsequently, for an authorisation to practice a given profession in accordance with the legislation applicable to a given profession.

A list of professions which are regulated in Poland is available in the [EU database of regulated professions](https://europa.eu/). For detailed information on the recognition of professional qualifications, see the website of the [National Agency for Academic Exchange](https://www.naau.pl/).

**Programmes and initiatives supporting mobility**

Learning mobility at different levels of lifelong learning takes place primarily within the EU Erasmus+ Programme (2014-2020). However, there are also multilateral, bilateral and national programmes (co-)funded by the Polish Government and / or other countries, or international organisations. The Ministries of National Education, Science and Higher Education, Culture and National Heritage and the National Agency for Academic Exchange award funding for various initiatives supporting internationalisation and mobility. For details, see the next sections.

The National Agency for Academic Exchange operates a multilingual portal „[Ready, Steady, Go Poland](https://www.naau.pl/)”. The portal provides information on the higher education system, including tuition fees and scholarships, practical information on entering and living in Poland, publications and promotional materials, etc. It also has a search engine for programmes by field and level of study and language of instruction. Interested students may choose from over 5 000 programmes in Polish and over 800 programmes in English.

**Institutions responsible for various aspects of internationalisation and mobility:**

- [Ministry of National Education](https://www.narodneobrady.pl/)
- [Ministry of Science and Higher Education](https://www.ministerstwo-nauki.gov.pl/)


- **National Agency for Academic Exchange** [4]: an institution which manages programmes supporting internationalisation of higher education and research and is responsible for recognition of qualifications.
- **Foundation for the Development of the Education System** [22]: an institution which manages EU programmes in education and training, including Erasmus+ and eTwinning, and other programmes and projects supporting international learning mobility.

**DID YOU FIND WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR?**

- YES
- NO

**Contact** *

**Message** *

Leave this field blank.

---

**Source URL:** https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/mobility-and-internationalisation-50_en

**Links**

2. [http://www.ehea.info/](http://www.ehea.info/)
8. [https://www.kwalifikacje.gov.pl/](https://www.kwalifikacje.gov.pl/)
10. [https://www.oecd.org/about/members-and-partners/](https://www.oecd.org/about/members-and-partners/)
11. [https://www.efta.int/about-efta/the-efta-states](https://www.efta.int/about-efta/the-efta-states)
18. [http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regprof/index.cfm?action=regprofs&amp;id_country=23&amp;quid=1&amp;mode=asc&amp;maxRows=*#top](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regprof/index.cfm?action=regprofs&amp;id_country=23&amp;quid=1&amp;mode=asc&amp;maxRows=*#top)