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INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION COUNTRY REPORT: POLAND

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WELCOME TO PIETE!

To reach new horizons in pursuit of economic growth and innovation, European education institutions need to ignite an entrepreneurial spirit among learners of all age. As a matter of fact, entrepreneurial competences are no longer considered to be only relevant for starting new businesses. Rather, they are considered to be both, applicable in “all walks of life” (Entrepreneurship Education. A guide for Educators, 2014, p.7) and key for mastering the challenge of lifelong learning, as EU policy makers have repeatedly emphasized.

Our Erasmus+ funded project **“Partnership for Initial Entrepreneurship Teacher Education” (PIETE)** has been inspired by this new scope for Entrepreneurship Education. PIETE will foster entrepreneurial competence deliverance within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that are responsible for pre-service teacher training. It does so by relying on the European

Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp) as well as on institutional tandem constellations between experts of entrepreneurship and initial teacher training. These features make PIETE a unique pan-European pilot initiative with high impact potentials on pre-service teacher students who will soon become part of a new generation of entrepreneurial school teachers.

Univations strongly believes in the European idea and is very proud to be leading the PIETE partner consortium. We will do our best to make PIETE a source of inspiration for those who want to start equally minded initiatives and are keen to foster entrepreneurial thinking beyond known scopes.

*Yours,
Daniel Worch*



DANIEL WORCH
CEO OF UNIVATIONS GMBH

Univations is the Lead partner of the PIETE Project consortium

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INTRODUCTION

This country report about Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in Poland is generally based on the methodology of the general framework report, which attempts at coherent mapping of actors, artefacts, and practices involved in the ITE. Of course, due to the specificity of Polish system of education and ITE organization, it is not possible to make it 100% coherent with the general framework which was designed in a broad form, to allow various countries for using it to map their systems. It is rather a case description based on the general framework wherever the structure of Polish system allowed for it. Some chapters of the general framework were combined together in the same sections of the Polish case in order to better describe the system. The country case presented explains how the system of education in Poland is organized after the latest reform. Furthermore, it shows how Initial Teacher Education is organized, who are ITE providers, and what models and standards of teacher education exist in Poland. Finally, it endeavors to show the position of Entrepreneurship education in the system.

Section 1 briefly introduces the system of education in Poland and gives an overview of different levels and tracks of education. **Section 2** describes the main *actors* and *organisation* of the Polish ITE system as there are ITE providers, authorities, organisation, teacher educators etc. The actors described and their tasks strongly influence the organisation of ITE and for this reason the organisation was also described in the same section. **Section 3** looks at the *artefacts* of the Polish ITE system and desired *skills* and *qualifications* of teachers and, finally, the national strategies and initiatives of Entrepreneurship Education in the Polish system of education.



EDUCATION SYSTEM

Education system in Poland – an overview

The education system in Poland is managed by two institutions – the Ministry of National Education (general and vocational education) and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (higher education), however only the national educational policy is developed and carried out centrally, while the administration of education and the running of schools are decentralized (Smoczyńska, 2014). The education system in Poland has so far been transformed few times after the communist regime came to an end in 1989. The recent reform has been implemented between 1 September 2017 and the school year 2022/23 (based on the regulations issued by the Ministry of Education: *Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 1 sierpnia 2017 r. w sprawie szczegółowych kwalifikacji wymaganych od nauczycieli, Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Warszawa, 24 sierpnia 2017 r., poz. 1575.*) and it has changed the system significantly. After nearly twenty years of functioning of the older structure, according to which students after six years of primary school, attended gymnasium (junior high school) and then a three-year general secondary school, or a four-year technical secondary school (like in many other European systems), a structure functioning in Polish education system previously was proposed. According to the recent reform, the education in Poland is compulsory from the age of six. At this age children attend one-year pre-primary education (this education is financed from the general subvention from the State budget). After that children attend a compulsory, 8-year primary school, where most of textbooks are provided for free (excluding the subject religion). After graduating from a primary school, students decide to attend either a 4-year secondary school, a 5-year technical school, or a 3-year vocational school (to obtain a professional qualification, with a possibility to continue education for further 2 years at the second stage of sectoral vocational school in order to upgrade qualifications and to

prepare for the matriculation exam). Students graduating from secondary schools or technical schools, take the matriculation exam which, if passed with score high enough, is the university entrance (each university/ each programme specifies which subjects should be taken at the matriculation exam and how high the candidate should score to be enrolled). The system is illustrated by Figure 1.

Compulsory education

Full-time compulsory education lasts for 9 years (the last year of pre-school education and 8 years of primary school education). In the Polish education system full-time compulsory education and part-time compulsory education are, according to Eurydice 2018/19 report, understood as:

Full-time compulsory education (obligation to attend 8- year primary school) that applies to pupils aged 7-15 years

Part-time compulsory education (obligation to be in education) that concerns pupils aged 15-18 and it may take place either in school settings (a student attends upper secondary school) or in non-school settings (e.g. a student follows vocational training offered by employers).

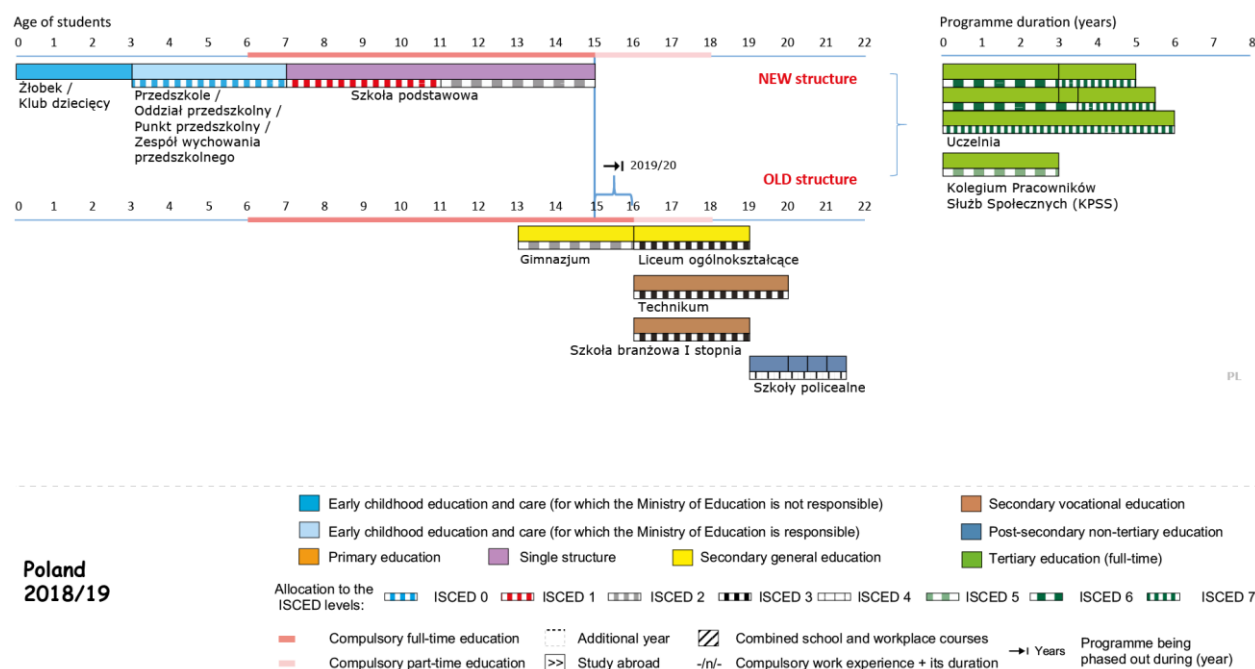


Figure 1: The Polish Education System (Eurydice, 2018/19)

Initial Teacher Education

In Poland, candidates for ITE generally have to graduate from a secondary (general or technical) school before starting ITE study programs. These ITE programs usually contain 3 years for Bachelor and 2 years for Master programmes. Depending on the school level and the subject area, the responsible institution for ITE is either the University or a State Vocational School/College. These institutions have different organizational structures and cultures. Universities are mainly research-oriented and the staff employed there is academic and teaching staff, whereas employees of State Vocational Schools are rather teaching-oriented (based on OECD Education Policy Outlook: Poland, 2015).



2. ACTORS:

Providers, Authorities and Organisation

ITE Providers

The teaching profession is regulated by separate legislation (the Teacher's Charter, *Pl: Karta nauczyciela*) which defines rules of admission, duties, remuneration and dismissal of teachers and their career path. The domination of the public education sector over private is significant in Poland. In higher education system the majority of students are also enrolled in public Higher Education Institutions.

From October 2016, teacher education may be organised only by Higher Education Institutions – universities (offering all cycles of education and all types of degrees – BA and MA) or State Vocational Schools/Colleges (offering first-cycle studies and giving opportunities to obtain a BA degree after the studies).

(1) Teacher educators

In Higher Education Institutions students (also at teacher's programmes) are taught by academic teachers who are academics (professors, associate professors, assistant professors, research assistants) or teaching staff (lecturers, senior lecturers, etc.) and other staff, like, for instance librarians, but only academics and teaching staff are obliged by law to teach students.

There are no regulations for academic teachers. General expectations towards university ranks and academic ranks are specified by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, but each HEI may specify some additional requirements for prospective employees. Teacher educators are usually those academics whose research interests revolve around the methodology of teaching a given subject, pedagogy, or psychology for teachers. If these people hold PhD, their dissertation topic in majority of cases concerned teaching and they also usually supervise diploma theses writing by pre-service teachers.

(2) ITE programmes

In Higher Education System, there are few types of institutions where pre-service teachers can study – a university, or a state vocational school/college (*Wyższa szkoła zawodowa*), offering different types of study programmes/cycles (based on Eurydice 2018/2019 report):

- **Full-time studies:**
 - **First-cycle studies** (graduates of such studies obtain Bachelor's degree, engineer degree, or equal). Studies take at least three years, during which students can get at least 180 ECTS points. In case of obtaining an engineer degree, studies take 3.5 years and students get at least 210 ECTS points.
 - **Second-cycle studies** (graduates of such studies obtain Master's degree, or equal). Studies take between 1,5 to 2 years and students can get between 90 and 120 ECTS points.
 - **Long-cycle studies** (graduates of such studies obtain Master's degree or equal). The studies take between 4,5 and 6 years and students can get between 300 and 360 ECTS points. In case of teacher's programmes, the studies take between 4,5 and 5 years.
- **Postgraduate studies** (graduates of such studies obtain a certificate testifying graduating from postgraduate studies). The studies take at least one academic year (two semesters) and students get at least 60 ECTS points.

Studies are organised by State Vocational Schools /Colleges and by universities. Both types of Higher Education institutions can be public or private.

Institutional settings: Teacher education should always be organised as long-cycle studies or first- and second-cycle studies (but in case of first- and second cycle studies, the education needs to be organised in the same field for both cycles, to become a teacher of a given subject)

Pre-school and early-school teacher education, however, should be organised in the form of long-cycle studies, similarly as **special needs teacher education**. Furthermore, pre-school and early school teacher education should be organised together, so that teachers graduating from such field, are entitled to teach in early education grades in primary school and in the kindergarten.

Postgraduate studies aimed at teachers to be should be organised only by Higher Education Institutions entitled to educate pre-service teachers in a given field e.g. biology, history, mathematics, etc.)

The following Higher Education Institutions educate pre-service teachers:

- Universities and pedagogical academies
- Physical Education academies (educating future PE teachers);

- technical universities (i.e. educating future vocational teachers);
- artistic universities (i.e. educating future arts teachers).;
- medical, economic and agricultural universities (i.e. educating future entrepreneurship teachers or teachers teaching at medical schools for nurses, etc.).

Pre-service teachers are educated at full-time studies, part-time studies, extramural studies or evening studies. All types of studies lead to similar effects, however students of regular studies have more contact hours with teachers (university staff).

In the past, Higher Education Institutions in Poland educated pre-service teachers in one field only (e.g. to become a biology teacher, a maths teacher, etc.), now, however, they offer two fields, most often combining connected fields like, for instance, biology and environment protection; pre-school education with early school education, etc.

Teachers can also gain qualifications to teach another subject at postgraduate studies (e.g. biology teacher gaining qualifications at postgraduate studies to teach geography, etc.).

(3) Authorities and organisation

Authorities: Higher Education Institutions are given autonomy to prepare and develop their own study plans and course curricula, but they are obliged to meet some general standards described by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (*Pl: rozporządzeniu Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego z dnia 17 stycznia 2012 roku*).

Organisation: Higher Education Institutions offer education for teachers in the form of teaching modules, where usually:

- **Module 1: *preparation to teach the first subject (teaching)***

There are no standards setting the minimal number of ECTS points, because it depends on the specificity of the subject taught and cycle of studies.

- **Module 2: *psychology and pedagogy***

This module comprises three compulsory components that together equal 180 hours and 10 ECTS points: general psychology and psychology (90 hours), psychology and pedagogy dedicated to certain age group teaching (60 hours) and teaching practice (30 hours).

- **Module 3: *didactics***

This module comprises fundamentals of general didactics (30 hours), didactics of a given subject and level/levels (90 hours), teaching practice (120 hours). In total, in module three students have 240 contact hours which equals 15 ECTS points.

- **Module 4: *preparation to teach another subject (teaching)***

This module comprises preparation in the area of the second subject (with no fixed number of ECTS points as it depends on the specificity of the subject chosen), didactics of a given subject (60 hours), teaching practice (60 hours). In most cases this module comprises between 10 and 15 ECTS points.

- **Module 5: *special needs pedagogy***

This module comprises psychology and pedagogy of teaching students with special needs (140 hours), special needs didactics (90 hours), teaching practice (120 hours). In total it equals 350 hours and 25 ECTS points.

For students who want to become teachers, modules 1, 2 and 3 are compulsory, whereas modules 4 and 5 are non-obligatory and may depend either on students, or on a given university, offered programme, etc.

Postgraduate studies for pre-service teachers - offer:

- **Preparation to teach another subject – module 4**
- **Psychology and pedagogy and didactics of a given subjects for University graduates who didn't study on teacher's programmes – modules 2 and 3.** It should be noted, however, that in case of graduates of first-cycle studies, after the postgraduate studies they can only teach in primary school or in a kindergarten.
- **Special needs pedagogy for in service teachers.**

School authorities

Responsibility for the administration of the school education system rests with the Minister of National Education - the Minister co-ordinates the national education policy, cooperating with regional authorities and other organisational units responsible for the school education system. Governance of school education reflects the territorial organisation of the Poland (16 provinces or regions, 379 districts 12, and 2 478 communes). The **head of the province** (*wojewoda*) represents the Council of Ministers in a given region, whereas **the regional education authorities** (*kuratorium oświaty*) are included in the regional administration and are responsible for pedagogical supervision over schools. The regional authorities in Poland are located at province level (Smoczyńska, 2014).

Other institutions and agents responsible for educational matters at the regional level (based on Smoczyńska, 2014):


Education superintendents (*kurator oświaty*) - responsible for general administration of education in particular provinces.

Provincial government - responsible for administering the following types of educational institutions: teacher training, colleges of social work, in-service teacher training institutions, educational resource centres, schools and other related educational institutions operating at regional and supra-regional levels.

The school head - exercises pedagogical supervision over the school, supervises care of pupils, implements resolutions of the school council and the teachers' council.

Teachers' council - a collective body concerned with the performance of the school's statutory tasks related to education and care, consists of all teachers employed in the school, and staff employed in other institutions which provide practical vocational training to pupils of the school, or in boarding schools provide education and care to pupils. The teachers' council is chaired by the head of school. The decision-making powers of the teachers' council include, among other things, approving school action plans, adopting resolutions on the results of pupils' assessment and promotion, adopting resolutions on teaching innovations and experiments in the school, and adopting organizational arrangements for in-service training of teachers in the school.

Parents' council - represents all the parents of the pupils in the school. It can submit motions related to all school matters to the school head and other school bodies, to the school managing body or the body responsible for pedagogical supervision.



3. ARTEFACTS:

Models, Standards and Qualifications

Models of teacher education

In the system of Polish higher education, a concurrent model of teacher education can be observed as a dominant one (Smoczyńska, 2014). This means that pre-service teachers are educated at pedagogical universities and at all other universities that offer teacher's programmes (in the second case, students are offered at their university, at their field of study, teacher's programme and after graduation they can teach biology, maths, history, etc.). While studying their field, parallelly they learn about pedagogy, psychology and didactics of their subject.

Those students who haven't chosen teacher's programme at University, but want to work as a teacher afterwards, can enrol at postgraduate studies dedicated to teachers or at courses dedicated to future teachers. This model of teacher education is a consecutive model.

Higher Education Institutions educate all level pre-service teachers – from pre-school education to academic teachers.

Graduates of long-cycle or secondary-cycle studies are entitled to teach at all types of schools. Graduates of first-cycle studies can teach at primary schools and kindergartens only.

Postgraduate studies can be a solution of obtaining teacher qualifications only for people who at least have bachelor's or engineer degree and who intend to obtain pedagogical qualifications, prepare to teach another subject, teach special needs students.

Teaching standards

There are teaching standards that give general characteristics of the content of all modules, content to be learnt by students and objectives and rules of organising teaching practice. All those standards take into consideration levels of education.

Teaching practice is usually organised along with classes (in majority of cases one day per week is assigned to teaching practice) and it comprises visits in kindergartens, schools, etc. Students at first observe how in-service teachers conduct classes and then they assist those teachers, and, finally, teach themselves under the supervision of those in-service teachers. Such teaching practice entails preparing lesson plans, setting teaching objectives and discussing classes conducted by other trainee teachers.

Teaching standards (based on Somoczyńska, 2014) define the same teaching and learning effects for educating pre-service teachers at regular and postgraduate studies.

After graduating from teacher's programme, the graduate should:

- Have knowledge in the area of psychology and pedagogy allowing them to understand processes of development, socialisation, upbringing, teaching and learning,
- have knowledge and experience in the area of didactics, pedagogy and methodology of a given subject teaching;
- have competence and skills to teach and take care of students, to prepare lessons and modify programmes to adjust them to the needs of students;
- have abilities of learning in order to develop in professional context and have skills necessary to perfect their own teaching and organise resources and process information;
- have good communication skills comprising varied communication techniques and communication along with all the students and colleagues;
- be empathetic, open, reflective, ethical and responsible;
- be prepared to perform teacher's roles and all tasks associated with being a teacher.

Teacher qualifications

HEIs don't grant „teaching qualifications” as such. Diplomas of teacher's programmes and postgraduate studies' certificates testify that a given person is prepared to work as a teacher.

In the **higher education** sector and in ITE, no specific qualifications are required for teaching students. Recruitment decisions on teaching personnel formally are made by university authorities. To teach in Master and PhD programs, lecturers in general should hold an academic degree, as well as the supervision of Master and PhD thesis requires a doctoral grade.

Other teacher's programmes and related qualifications:

There are some differences to be observed in a way that foreign language teachers and vocational teachers are educated (based on regulations by Ministry of national Education and Eurydice 2018/19).

(1) Teaching foreign languages

From 1st September 2017 (after new regulations came into life), to be entitled to work as a foreign language teacher in the kindergarden and/or at school, one must:

- graduate from second-cycle studies or long-cycle studies at a department of philology (of a given language) and be a graduate of teacher's programme (and not e.g. translation programme, literary studies, etc.);
- graduate from second-cycle studies or long-cycle studies in a country where a certain language is the first or second official language and be a graduate of teacher's programme;
- graduate from any second-cycle or long-cycle studies and have:
 - a. a certificate testifying the knowledge of a given language at an advanced or proficient level and pedagogical training
 - b. a certificate testifying National Second-degree Teaching Exam (concerning a given language)
- graduated from a Teacher Training College of a given foreign language.

A person entitled to teach a foreign language in the kindergarden, pre-school and primary school must at least:

- have a degree in a given foreign language at first-cycle studies and have pedagogical training
- have a degree in a given foreign language or applied linguistics in the field of a given language at first-cycle studies and have pedagogical training
- graduate from any first-cycle or long-cycle studies and have:
 - a. a certificate testifying the knowledge of a given language at an advanced or proficient level and pedagogical training, or
 - b. a certificate testifying National Second-degree Teaching Exam (concerning a given language)

A person entitled to teach a foreign language in the kindergarden or in primary school at early education levels (1-3 grades) must:

- have a degree in pedagogy (speciality of pre-school and early school education and second speciality a given foreign language)
- graduate from first-cycle, or second-cycle studies or long-cycle studies in the field of pedagogy, in speciality of foreign language teaching at the level of pre-school and early school education

- be qualified to work in the kindergarten, pre-school or early-school level of primary school and have a certificate of a given foreign language at of a basic level at least and is a graduate of postgraduate studies or a course in the field of a given foreign language teaching
- be qualified to work in the kindergarten, pre-school or early-school level of primary school and have a certificate of a given foreign language at of a basic level at least and is a graduate of first-cycle, second-cycle, or long-cycle studies in a field of philology and have pedagogical training to teach a foreign language.

(2) Qualifications to become a vocational school teacher

From 1st September 2017 (after new regulations came into life), to be entitled to work as a vocational school teacher at first-degree and second-degree vocational schools, technical schools or post-secondary schools, one must:

- graduate from second-cycle studies in a given field (depending on a given subject taught) and have pedagogical training
- graduate from second-cycle studies or long-cycle studies in a given field or in a field whose teaching effects are similar as teaching objectives of a given subject to be taught and have pedagogical training
- graduate from any studies and postgraduate studies connected with the subject taught and have pedagogical training
- have maturation exam certificate and a certificate testifying professional qualifications in the field of a given profession to be taught, have pedagogical training and at least two-year experience in a given

have a title of master in a given profession and have pedagogical training.

National Strategies and Initiatives of Entrepreneurship Education

In Poland, there has been a visible growth in promoting entrepreneurship development of young people over recent years – i.e. there are more entrepreneurship-related initiatives aimed at young people and more programmes in the field that Poland joins every year. Still, in the school context there is only one subject taught that is directly and overtly connected with entrepreneurship. The subject is called *Introduction to Entrepreneurship* and has been taught in secondary school since 2002. The content and objectives of the subject core curriculum have slightly changed since its first implementation and according to its most recent version which is National Core Curriculum 2018, it contains elements of knowledge in economics, management and finances, enriched with elements of socio-economic geography, political science, sociology, psychology and law (Kilar & Rachwał, 2019). During the lessons students learn about basic economic categories, mechanisms and processes and their institutional, behavioural and cultural conditions. In the educational

process, students learn how to be entrepreneurial and socially responsible in their own efforts and activities (Kilar & Rachwał, 2019). The subject Introduction to Entrepreneurship entails either two hours per week for 1st grade secondary school students, or 1 hour per week during grades 1 and 2 at secondary school. Of course, as a result of implementation of Lifelong Learning Perspective policy in 2013 in Poland, entrepreneurship education and skills are incorporated into teaching at all levels. According to research done by *schooleducationgateway.eu*, Entrepreneurship education is included in compulsory subjects at all levels of school education – at a primary level, entrepreneurial competences are developed in the subjects *History and Society* and *Mathematics* and at secondary schools in the subjects *Civic education*, *Geography*, *Mathematics*, *History and Society* and *IT*, and, of course, in the overt form of the already mentioned subject *Introduction to Entrepreneurship* and another, optional, subject *Economics in Practice*.

There are also programmes and other initiatives aimed at entrepreneurship-related development of people, starting from very young children – e.g. *Kids' University of Economics* proposed by University of Economics in Katowice, where experienced scholars explain some economic phenomena and terms to young kids. Older children and teachers may benefit from various programmes of National Bank of Poland that jointly with selected universities proposes postgraduate studies for teachers, projects for children and schools, etc. Finally, university graduates and young entrepreneurs may benefit from such programmes as for instance *Young Enterprising*, *My Business in My Municipality*, etc.

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Regulations

Teacher's Charter:

Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 1 sierpnia 2017 r. w sprawie szczegółowych kwalifikacji wymaganych od nauczycieli, Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Warszawa, 24 sierpnia 2017 r., poz. 1575.

Regulations of the Ministry of Education:

Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 1 sierpnia 2017 r. w sprawie szczegółowych kwalifikacji wymaganych od nauczycieli, Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Warszawa, 24 sierpnia 2017 r., poz. 1575.

Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 1 marca 2019 r. zmieniające rozporządzenie w sprawie szczegółowych kwalifikacji wymaganych od nauczycieli, Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Warszawa, 11 marca 201 r., poz. 465.

Regulations of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education:

Konstytucja dla nauki (Ministry's document „Constitution for the Science”, describing i.e. how teachers should be educated and how Higher Education Institutions are organised):<https://konstytucjadlanauki.gov.pl/ksztalcenie-nauczycieli-przedszkola-i-klas-i-iii-szkoly-podstawowej-od-2019-2020-wazne-informacje>

<https://konstytucjadlanauki.gov.pl/ksztalcenie-nauczycieli-przedszkola-i-klas-i-iii-szkoly-podstawowej-od-2019-2020-wazne-informacje>

Websites:

www.schooleducationgateway.eu

Tables

Fig. 1: The Polish Education System (Eurydice, 2018/19)



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