

# Description

## POLISH HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

A comprehensive description of the Polish education system is available in the publication

 [EDUCATION SYSTEM IN POLAND 2.14 MB](#)

[\(/images/users/623/Education\\_System\\_Poland\\_NAWA---2020-08-14\\_3.pdf\)](#)

### Access to higher education

Admission to first cycle and long-cycle programmes is based on the results of the maturity exams. Additional entrance examinations may be conducted by HEIs only in the following cases:

- for candidates with foreign certificates, where the grades from the required subjects are not indicated in the certificate;
- to assess knowledge and / or skills which are not assessed by the maturity exam (e.g. specific aptitudes, artistic skills or physical fitness).

Detailed information about the maturity (matriculation) examination is available on the website of the [Central Examination Commission \(https://cke.gov.pl/en/egzamin-maturalny/egzamin-w-nowej-formule/o-egzaminie/\)](https://cke.gov.pl/en/egzamin-maturalny/egzamin-w-nowej-formule/o-egzaminie/).

The maturity certificate – *świadectwo dojrzałości* – has a [state format \(/images/users/642/maturity-certificate.pdf\)](#).

### Short-cycle programmes

Short-cycle programmes were implemented in 2018. Education lasts at least 3 semesters. The curriculum has to ensure achievement of learning outcomes specific for level 5 and contain education and training activities aimed at development of practical skills. Upon completion of the programme a certificate: *świadectwo dyplomowanego specjalisty* or *świadectwo dyplomowanego specjalisty technologa* is issued. These certificates are considered full qualifications at level 5 of the Polish Qualification Framework.

Specialist education programmes may only be provided by professional HEIs (not academic ones).

### First cycle programmes

First-cycle studies last from 6 to 7 semesters (180-240 ECTS). The completion of studies requires passing the final examination and, if the curriculum provides for it, having received a positive opinion on the final thesis. Programmes with professional profile require also completion of at least 6-month-long vocational internships.

First-cycle programmes lead to one of the following degrees, specified in the national legislation:

- **licencjat**
- **licencjat pielęgniarstwa** - after achieving learning outcomes specified for nursing
- **licencjat położnictwa** - after achieving learning outcomes specified for midwifery
- **inżynier** - when learning outcomes allow for acquiring engineering competences
- **inżynier architekt** - after obtaining learning outcomes specified for studies in architecture
- **inżynier pożarnictwa** - after obtaining learning outcomes specified for security engineering at the Main School of Fire Safety

First-cycle degrees are considered full qualifications at level 6 of the Polish Qualification Framework and they give access to second-cycle programmes.

### Second-cycle programmes

Second-cycle studies last from 3 to 4 semesters (90-120 ECTS). The minimum access requirement is a first-cycle degree but HEIs may lay down additional requirements. The completion of second-cycle studies requires passing the final examination and preparing a final thesis. Studies with professional profile include obligatory vocational internships lasting at least 3 months.

Second-cycle programmes lead to one of the following degrees, specified in the national legislation:

- **magister**
- **magister pielęgniarstwa** - after achieving learning outcomes specified for nursing
- **magister położnictwa** - after achieving learning outcomes specified for midwifery
- **magister inżynier** - when learning outcomes allow for acquiring engineering competences
- **magister inżynier architekt** - after achieving learning outcomes specified for architecture
- **magister inżynier pożarnictwa** - after obtaining learning outcomes specified for security engineering at the Main School of Fire Safety

Second-cycle degrees are considered full qualifications at level 7 of the Polish Qualification Framework and they give access to doctoral programmes.

### Long-cycle programmes

Long-cycle programmes lasting from 9 to 12 semesters (300-360 ECTS). Just as in the case of second-cycle programmes, in order to complete long-cycle studies the student has to meet the requirement of passing the final examination (*egzamin dyplomowy*) after having received a positive opinion on the final thesis (*praca dyplomowa*).

Study programmes in the fields of studies listed below are provided only as long-cycle studies: medical studies, dentistry, medical analytics, pharmacy, physiotherapy, veterinary medicine, law, canon law, pre-school and early school education, special education. These programmes lead to one of the following degrees, specified in the national legislation:

- **magister**
- **lekarz** - after obtaining learning outcomes specified for medicine
- **lekarz dentysta** - after achieving learning outcomes specified for medicine and dentistry
- **lekarz weterynarii** - after achieving learning outcomes specified for veterinary studies
- **magister farmacji** - after achieving learning outcomes specified for pharmacy

Study programmes in the fields of study mentioned below may be offered either as two-cycle or long-cycle studies: architecture, theology, acting, puppet theatre acting, conservation and restoration of works of art, psychology, film and television image production and photography, directing, stage design, graphics, painting, sculpture and in the fields of study for professional soldiers. These programmes lead to degrees of *magister*, *magister inżynier* or *magister inżynier architekt*.

All degrees obtained upon completion of long-cycle programmes are considered full qualifications at level 7 of the Polish Qualification Framework and they give access to doctoral programmes.

### ***Studia podyplomowe – non-academic post-diploma studies***

Non-academic post-diploma studies are destined for persons who have the full qualification at least at level 6 of PQF obtained within the higher education system, i.e. by those who completed at least first-cycle studies. This is a fully professional education. Upon completion a ***Świadectwo ukończenia studiów podyplomowych*** (certificate confirming completion of non-academic post-diploma studies) is issued. The certificate is issued only in Polish.

*Świadectwo ukończenia studiów podyplomowych* (certificate confirming completion of non-academic post-diploma studies) is a partial qualification taking into account the second stage characteristics of the Polish Qualification Framework (PQF) at levels 6, 7 or 8 of the PQF. It does not give access to further education and cannot be recognized towards a second cycle programme.

### **Third cycle programmes**

Third-cycle programmes are – since 1 October 2019 – provided by interdisciplinary doctoral schools. Admission to doctoral schools is open to holders of a degree of *magister* or equivalent second-cycle degree. In exceptional cases, justified by the highest quality of scientific achievements, graduates of first-cycle studies or a students who completed the third year of long-cycle studies can be admitted. Doctoral education lasts from 6 to 8 semesters and consists of educational programme established for the school and Personal Research Plan that provides a clear schedule for each doctoral student's progress in their own scientific work. Candidates who prepare and defend doctoral thesis as well as fulfil all other requirements specified in the legislation are awarded a degree of ***doktor***.

The Law on higher education and science allows for awarding a degree of ***doktor*** also to candidates who meet all the formal conditions but acquired their knowledge, conducted their research, presented their scientific achievements in publications and prepared their dissertation outside the structure of a doctoral school.

The degree of ***doktor*** is considered full qualification at level 8 of the Polish Qualification Framework.

### **The degree of *doktor habilitowany***

A holder of doctoral degree who continues their academic activity in scientific research or art and has achieved results that constitute a significant contribution to the development of a scientific or art discipline may apply for the academic degree of *doktor habilitowany*, which is seen as next step in scientific career.

## Diplomas and Diploma Supplement

Since 2011 the higher education institutions are free to design their diplomas. However, the legislation specifies the necessary elements of [diplomas of graduation of first-, second-, or long-cycle studies](/images/users/642/Necessary-elements-of-a-diploma.pdf) (</images/users/642/Necessary-elements-of-a-diploma.pdf>), as well as the necessary elements of the [diplomas awarding the degree of doktor](/images/users/642/Necessary-elements-of-a-doctoral-diploma.pdf) (</images/users/642/Necessary-elements-of-a-doctoral-diploma.pdf>) and [doktor habilitowany](/images/users/642/Necessary-elements-of-habilitation-diploma.pdf) (</images/users/642/Necessary-elements-of-habilitation-diploma.pdf>). Graduates obtain an original in Polish and copies (ODPIS) in Polish and in a foreign language.

Since 1 January 2005 the Diploma Supplement is issued obligatorily to graduates of first-, second-, and long-cycle studies. It is issued in Polish and a copy (ODPIS) in a foreign language. The Diploma Supplement has a [state format](/images/users/642/diploma-supplement.pdf) (</images/users/642/diploma-supplement.pdf>).



(<https://facebook.com/nawa.narodowaagencjawymianyakademickiej>)



(<https://www.linkedin.com/company/27162556/>)



(<https://twitter.com/nawapoland>)



(<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxhgUAgyVxqMDQNpb7sbyw>)



([https://www.instagram.com/ready\\_study\\_go\\_poland/](https://www.instagram.com/ready_study_go_poland/))

# Dane adresowe

ul. Polna 40  
00-635 Warszawa

NIP 5272820369  
REGON 368205180

## Contact us (<mailto:biuro@nawa.gov.pl>)

✉ [biuro@nawa.gov.pl](mailto:biuro@nawa.gov.pl) (<mailto:biuro@nawa.gov.pl>)

📍 [Visit us \(/en/contact#mapa\)](/en/contact#mapa)

© 2023 NAWA

[Deklaracja dostępności \(/deklaracja-dostepnosci\)](/deklaracja-dostepnosci)