

# **SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR PEOPLE WITH MILD, MODERATE AND SEVERE INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES**

## **AION PROJECT**

Iceland   
Liechtenstein  
Norway grants

The AION project benefits from a grant of € 195828 received from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway under the EEA Grants.

The aim of the project is to develop a comprehensive, systemic model of preparation for professional activity of people with deeper intellectual disabilities. Preparation of professional laboratories with training programs and methodology. Development of a coherent and systemic strategy for supporting the employment of people with intellectual disabilities on the labor market in cooperation with the District Labor Office in Sosnowiec. Working out a path of professional development and a strategy of inclusion in the open and / or protected labor market, taking into account the educational, legal, organizational housing for schools, people with disabilities, public institutions and entrepreneurs that can potentially employ people with disabilities.



**Iceland**  
**Liechtenstein**  
**Norway grants**  
**Contents**

<b>ENTRY.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>EDUCATION IN FIRST-CYCLE VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>EDUCATION IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS PREPARING FOR WORK.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>EDUCATION AT THE SPECIAL WORK TRAINING SCHOOL IN SPECIAL SCHOOL COMPLEX No. 4 IN SOSNOWIEC.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>AION PROJECT - SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES.....</b>	<b>20</b>
HOUSEKEEPING, HOTEL SERVICE AND JANITOR'S WORKSHOP.....	20
KITCHEN AND BAKING AIDS WORKSHOP.....	20
WORKSHOP OF A GENERAL CONSTRUCTION HELPER AND A HELPER IN SMALL PRODUCTION SERVICES.....	20
WORKSHOP OF A GARDENER'S ASSISTANT AND GREEN AREAS CARETAKER.....	21
WORKSHOP OF A PRODUCTION/ASSEMBLY LINE WORKER.....	21
A FARM WORKER'S WORKSHOP ON A FARM/AGRICULTURAL FARM.....	21
PET GUARDIAN'S WORKSHOP.....	21
<b>SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>22</b>

The Polish education system enables students with special educational needs, including intellectual disabilities, to receive education in three forms: segregated, integrated and inclusive.<sup>1</sup> The Act of December 14, 2016 - Education Law, states that special education, including: disabled children and young people, can be implemented in all types of kindergartens and types of schools,<sup>2</sup> and the decision about choosing a place of education is made by the student's parents<sup>3</sup>

Post-primary education of this group can also be provided in special schools and units in mainstream schools, in integrated units and in an inclusive form.<sup>4</sup> Based on such legal provisions, it can be assumed that in the Polish education system, people with intellectual disabilities can study in all types of schools at every educational stage, including post-primary school. However, these presumptions are wrong.

Currently, post-primary education includes: first- and second-cycle vocational schools, general secondary schools, technical schools, job training schools and post-secondary schools, but only some of them are available to young people with intellectual disabilities.<sup>5</sup> The situation is verified by the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of April 3, 2019 on framework teaching plans for public schools, which specifies for which group of students a given type of school is intended. This regulation, as part of post-primary education for people with intellectual disabilities, lists only two types of institutions: first-cycle vocational schools, which can be attended by people with mild intellectual disabilities, and work-training schools, which are intended for students with disabilities. moderate or severe intellectual disability and for students with multiple disabilities<sup>6</sup>

Students with mild intellectual disabilities follow the same core curriculum at every educational stage as their peers whose intellectual development is normal for their age. The applicable regulations allow for post-primary education for this group in special and public first-cycle vocational schools, but it is not possible to continue education in a second-cycle vocational school.<sup>7</sup> Annexes 10 and 11 of the above-mentioned regulation clearly show that second-cycle vocational schools are intended for students from the so-called "intellectual norm".<sup>8</sup> Teresa Serafin (2021) lists many factors that determine the limitations imposed on the further education of the discussed group, including: lower level of intellectual

---

<sup>1</sup> Zenon Gajdzica, A few comments on the theory of integrated education, *Niepełnosprawność*, 2010, , 3, pp. 32-40

<sup>2</sup> OJ of 2021, item 1082 as amended – Educational law

<sup>3</sup> Teresa Serafin, Special education in the education system, 2021

<sup>4</sup> Teresa Serafin, Special education in the education system, 2021

<sup>5</sup> Teresa Serafin, Special education in the education system, 2021

<sup>6</sup> OJ of 2019, item 639 - Regulation of the Minister of National Education of April 3, 2019 on framework teaching plans for public schools

<sup>7</sup> Teresa Serafin, Special education in the education system, 2021

<sup>8</sup> Dz.U. from 2019 pos. 639

development, difficulties in abstract thinking, disorders in the perception process, poorer orientation in the new environment and complex situations, problems in independently initiating and organizing their own tasks, difficulties in making independent decisions and using the acquired information in everyday life.

Young people with mild intellectual disabilities may have difficulties in fully mastering the knowledge, skills and competences necessary for a given profession, but they are able to prepare to act as an employee in auxiliary professions or perform only specific, partial professional tasks included in the full qualification.<sup>9</sup>The factors mentioned by the author constitute certain limitations in the scope of acquiring knowledge and professional skills for young people with mild intellectual disabilities, but it seems important to pay attention to the aspects of emotional functioning of this group. People with mild intellectual disabilities may have problems with controlling their own emotions, difficulties in the processes of controlling affects and drives, which may constitute an additional difficulty in further general and vocational education and in performing the role of an employee.

Students with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities and with multiple disabilities after completing primary school can continue their education only in one type of school - a special school preparing for work.<sup>10</sup>These young people follow a separate core curriculum, adapted to their needs and abilities - the Core Curriculum of General Education for Special Schools preparing for work. Education in these schools is focused on preparation for work, i.e. preparing students to undertake work-related activities, and not on teaching a specific profession.

Unlike young people with more severe intellectual disabilities, students with mild intellectual disabilities can study in special schools - first stage special vocational schools - and in mainstream schools, as applicable law does not exclude such a possibility. Art. 134 section 1 of the Act of December 14, 2016 - Education Law clearly specifies that for grade I of a public secondary school referred to in Art. 18 section 1 point 2 letter a-c (including stage I vocational school), candidates are accepted who:

1. have a primary school leaving certificate;
2. in the case of candidates for a school providing vocational training - they have a medical certificate stating that there are no health contraindications to undertake practical vocational training.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Teresa Serafin, Special education in the education system, 2021

<sup>10</sup> Dz.U. from 2021, item 1082, as amended

<sup>11</sup> Dz.U. from 2021, item 1082, as amended

Art. 134 section 2 of the above-mentioned Act indicates that in the case of a larger number of candidates than the number of vacancies in the school, at the first stage of the recruitment procedure criteria are taken into account such as: results of the eighth-grade exam, grades in Polish language and mathematics and in two compulsory classes determined by the principal. school as taken into account in the recruitment procedure for a given branch of that school, a primary school leaving certificate with honors, special achievements listed on the primary school leaving certificate.<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, it should be considered that there are no contraindications for a student with mild intellectual disability to take up studies in a general first-cycle vocational school if he or she has completed primary school, has an appropriate medical certificate or has met the criteria required in the recruitment procedure (in a situation where the number of candidates exceeds the number of places in a given institution) and obtained the appropriate number of points.

Students with intellectual disabilities, both mild and moderate and severe, pursue post-primary education based on the Individual Educational and Therapeutic Program, on the basis of which the school curricula are adapted.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Dz.U. of 2021, item 1082, as amended

<sup>13</sup> Dz.U. from 2021, item 1082, as amended

## Education in first-cycle vocational schools.

Level I vocational schools provide for a three-year education period<sup>14</sup>, and teaching there is based on two core curricula - the core curriculum of general education and vocational education.<sup>15</sup> The educational activity of first-cycle vocational schools is determined by the school's set of curricula and the educational and preventive program.<sup>16</sup> All professions taught are single-qualification professions, and some of them share a qualification with professions taught at a later stage.

The core curriculum of general education for a first-cycle vocational school, including special first-cycle vocational schools, indicates that the main goal of education at this stage is to prepare students to obtain professional qualifications, as well as to take up work and everyday functioning in the conditions of the modern world. These schools are also intended to equip young people with an appropriate amount of general knowledge, which is the foundation of education.<sup>17</sup> The following subjects are covered as part of general education:

- Polish,
- modern foreign language,
- history and the present (replaced two separate subjects: history and social studies pursuant to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science of March 8, 2022 amending the regulation on the core curriculum, Journal of Laws of 2022, item 609),
- basics of entrepreneurship,
- geography,
- biology,
- chemistry,
- physics,
- mathematics,
- information technology,

---

<sup>14</sup> Dz.U. from 2021, item 1082, as amended

<sup>15</sup> Urszula Sztanderska Elżbieta Drogosz-Zabłocka, Vocational education. Perspective of the education system and labor market, 2019

<sup>16</sup> OJ pos. 356, as amended. - Regulation of the Minister of National Education of February 14, 2017 on the core curriculum for pre-school education and the core curriculum for general education for primary schools, including for students with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities, general education for first-cycle vocational schools, general education for a special school preparing for work and general education for a post-secondary school

<sup>17</sup> Dz.U. poz. 356 they zm.



**Iceland**  
**Liechtenstein**  
**Norway grants**

- physical education,
- education for safety,
- education for family life,
- ethics,
- the language of a national or ethnic minority, but only in schools (branches) teaching the language of national or ethnic minorities,
- regional language – Kashubian, but only in schools (branches) where the regional language is taught <sup>18</sup>

The detailed number of hours of educational classes in a first-cycle vocational school is included in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of April 3, 2019 on framework teaching plans for public schools.<sup>19</sup> Religion/ethics and education for family life are not considered compulsory educational activities among the above-mentioned subjects, but they do include classes within the framework of vocational education and classes with a tutor.<sup>20</sup> Educational classes in the field of vocational education must be carried out at least 60% in the form of practical classes. The framework teaching plan for a first-cycle vocational school also provides for career counseling classes of at least 10 hours during the three-year teaching period.<sup>21</sup> The number of hours allocated for career counseling is definitely insufficient. After all, it plays an important role in post-primary education, and in the case of young people with mild intellectual disabilities, it is an extremely important element of teaching.

Career counseling in first-cycle vocational schools is provided in accordance with Art. 26a of the Act of December 14, 2016 - Education Law in the form of compulsory educational classes in the field of general education or vocational education, career counseling classes, classes related to the choice of the field of education and profession conducted as part of psychological and pedagogical assistance, and classes in supervising teacher.<sup>22</sup> The curriculum content in the field of career counseling for this type of schools is included in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of February 12, 2019 on career counseling and covers areas such as: getting to know one's own resources, the world of professions and the labor market, the educational market and learning through whole life, planning your own development and making educational and professional decisions.<sup>23</sup> The school, including a

---

<sup>18</sup> Dz.U. poz. 356 they zm.

<sup>19</sup> Dz.U. poz. 639 ze zm.

<sup>20</sup> Dz.U. poz. 639 ze zm.

<sup>21</sup> Dz.U. poz. 639 ze zm.

<sup>22</sup> Dz.U. from 2021, item 1082, as amended

<sup>23</sup> OJ 2019 item 325 - Regulation of the Minister of National Education of February 12, 2019 on career counseling



first-cycle vocational school, is obliged to provide each student with a certificate of special education need, including due to mild intellectual disability, with the implementation of the recommendations contained in this certificate and appropriate learning conditions, specialized equipment and teaching resources. Its task is also to provide these students with rehabilitation classes that will be appropriately adapted to their individual developmental and educational needs and psychophysical capabilities.<sup>24</sup> According to the framework teaching plans for a stage I vocational school, the minimum weekly number of hours of revalidation classes in each school year is: in a special class - 10 hours per class and in a general or integration class - 2 hours per student.<sup>25</sup> The Regulation of the Minister of National Education of August 9, 2017 on the principles of organizing and providing psychological and pedagogical assistance in public kindergartens, schools and institutions also clearly specifies that due to the student's disability, he or she should be provided with psychological and pedagogical assistance, which in 1st stage vocational schools may be implemented in the form of classes related to the choice of education and profession.<sup>26</sup>

According to the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of February 15, 2019, the aim of education in vocational education is to prepare students to perform professional work and actively function on the labor market. The approach to vocational education is gradually changing, and a dual education system is currently being introduced that responds to the needs of the economy, including through the joint development by employers and schools of such curricula for professions that will be useful to enterprises in the school's economic environment. Schools providing vocational education, including first-cycle vocational schools, should provide this education based on close cooperation with employers, and practical vocational training should take place to the greatest extent possible in real working conditions (at employers' premises) as well as in vocational education centers, workshops and school studios as well as continuing education institutions.<sup>27</sup> The Regulation of the Minister of National Education of February 22, 2019 on practical vocational training also specifies that in first-cycle vocational schools, practical vocational training is organized by the school in the form of practical classes (not in the form of apprenticeships, which only cover second-cycle vocational schools). and technique). Practical classes at employers, including those based on the dual education system, are carried out on the basis of: a contract for practical vocational training concluded between the school principal and the employer accepting students for practical vocational training. Practical classes are

---

<sup>24</sup> OJ of 2020, item 1309 - Announcement of the Minister of National Education of July 9, 2020 on the announcement of the consolidated text of the regulation of the Minister of National Education on the conditions for organizing education, upbringing and care for disabled children and youth, socially maladjusted and at risk of social maladjustment

<sup>25</sup> Dz.U. poz. 639 ze zm.

<sup>26</sup> Dz.U. of 2020, item 1280, as amended

<sup>27</sup> OJ pos. 316, as amended. - Regulation of the Minister of National Education of February 15, 2019 on the general objectives and tasks of education in vocational education professions and the classification of vocational education professions

organized during teaching and educational classes, but in cases justified by the specificity of a given profession, these classes may also be organized during summer breaks.<sup>28</sup>

According to the classification of vocational education professions, vocational education in first-cycle vocational schools can be implemented in the following industries: audiovisual, construction, ceramics and glass, chemical, wood and furniture, electrical energy, electronics and mechatronics, hairdressing and cosmetics, mining and drilling, commercial, hotel - catering and tourism, forestry, mechanical, precision mechanics, metallurgy, automotive, horticultural, printing, fashion industry, agri-commercial, fishing, forwarding and logistics, food, ICT, road transport, rail transport, water transport.<sup>29</sup> A separate core curriculum for vocational education has been established for each industry. Vocational qualifications identified within specific professions are described in the core curriculum for vocational education as a set of expected learning outcomes: knowledge, professional skills, as well as personal and social competencies allowing for independent performance of professional tasks.<sup>30</sup>

The regulations specifying the classification of education in professions include seven auxiliary professions, intended only for students with mild intellectual disabilities, including: carpenter's auxiliary worker, hairdresser's auxiliary worker, catering auxiliary worker, hotel service auxiliary worker, auxiliary worker mechanic, locksmith's assistant, tailor's assistant.<sup>31</sup> Introduction to vocational education of the so-called auxiliary professions was intended to enable people with mild intellectual disabilities to obtain a real profession that would allow them to find employment on the labor market and gain financial independence and life autonomy.<sup>32</sup>

The provisions of the Education System Act in force as of September 1, 2019 specify that, in addition to obtaining a positive final classification grade in all compulsory educational activities, the condition for completing a first-cycle vocational school is to take a vocational examination.<sup>33</sup> The vocational exam is a form of assessing the student's level of knowledge and skills related to one qualification distinguished in a profession. It is carried out on the basis of the requirements specified in the core curriculum for vocational education and, in accordance with applicable regulations, consists of a written and practical part.<sup>34</sup> The condition for passing the professional examination and thus obtaining a professional qualification certificate issued by the District Examination Commission is to obtain at least

---

<sup>28</sup> OJ 2019 item 391- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of February 22, 2019 on practical vocational training

<sup>29</sup> Dz.U. poz. 316 they zm.

<sup>30</sup> Dz.U. poz. 316 they zm.

<sup>31</sup> Dz.U. poz. 316 they zm.

<sup>32</sup> Teresa Serafin, Special education in the education system, 2021

<sup>33</sup> OJ of 2021, item 1915 as amended - Announcement of the Speaker of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland of September 16, 2021 on the announcement of the uniform text of the Act on the education system

<sup>34</sup> Dz.U. from 2021, born in 1915, died

50% of the possible points in the written part and at least 75% of the possible points in the practical part.<sup>35</sup>

It is worth citing an example based on the experience of schools, included in Teresa Serafin's publication <sup>36</sup>, which indicates that in the case of preparing students with mild intellectual disabilities for the profession of locksmith or gardener, which are not of an auxiliary nature, the exam pass rate varies ("in some years it was 68%, in some years 0%"), in contrast to the exam pass rate of students who trained as a hotel service assistant, as the pass rate was 100%. Analyzing the above example, it can be concluded that people with mild intellectual disabilities, despite adapting the conditions and forms, are unable to meet the requirements set during exams in non-auxiliary professions. Failure to pass a vocational exam, and thus not obtain a professional qualification certificate, has a direct impact on an individual's life. The lack of professional qualifications reduces the "attractiveness" of a person on the labor market and, consequently, reduces the chance of employment.

The pass rate results for exams in auxiliary professions (which, in accordance with the law, were only open to people with mild intellectual disabilities) in the new formula, included in the Report on the achievements of candidates passing the vocational exam and the exam confirming qualifications in the profession in 2022, published by the Central Examination Commission, are presented in table below.

*Table 1. Pass rates for exams in auxiliary professions in the new formula in 2022.*

Name of the profession and qualification symbol	Exam time	Number of people taking the exam			Pass rate		
		Written part	Practical part	The entire exam	Written part	Practical part	The entire exam
Carpenter's auxiliary worker – DRM.03	June-July session	20	20	20	80,00%	95,00%	75,00%
Hairdresser's auxiliary worker - FRK.02	June-July session	17	17	17	70,59%	94,12%	70,59%

<sup>35</sup> Dz.U. from 2021, born in 1915, died

<sup>36</sup> Teresa Serafin, Special education in the education system, 2021, p. 202

Catering support worker -HGT.04	June-July session	163	163	162	88,34%	99,39%	88,27%
Hotel service auxiliary employee – HGT.05	June-July session	538	536	535	92,75%	99,25%	92,52%
Mechanic's support worker - MEC.06	June-July session	9	9	9	66,67%	100,00%	66,67%
Locksmith's auxiliary worker – MEC.07	June-July session	18	18	18	94,44%	100,00%	94,44%
Tailor's assistant - MOD.07	June-July session	3	3	3	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%

Source: Prepared on the basis of the Report on the achievements of candidates passing the professional examination and the examination confirming professional qualifications in 2022, prepared by the Central Examination Commission, available on the website: <https://cke.gov.pl/wyniki-egzaminow/egzamin-zdrowie-2/>

No reliable data has been found on the exam pass rates of people with mild intellectual disabilities in professions outside the auxiliary professions, so it is not possible to compare them with the results presented above.

Level I vocational schools play a key role in educating young people with mild intellectual disabilities, offering the opportunity to acquire professional qualifications and prepare for activity on the labor market. The primary goal of education at this stage is to equip students with the skills necessary to perform simple professions and function in everyday life. The vocational education system, based on cooperation with employers and practical vocational training, aims to best prepare young people to take up work.

Despite many regulations and support programs, students with mild intellectual disabilities still encounter numerous barriers in education and on the labor market. Auxiliary



**Iceland**  
**Liechtenstein**  
**Norway grants**

professions, specially tailored to their capabilities, are intended to help them find employment and achieve financial independence. However, as data contained in research studies show, the pass rates for professional exams vary, which affects the employment opportunities of these people.

The transition of students with intellectual disabilities from education to the labor market is a complicated process in which parents play a key role. Family support and cooperation with educational institutions and employers are necessary for the effective integration of these people in the labor market. The authors write that "parents often act as their children's main advisors and motivators, helping them overcome difficulties related to taking up work."<sup>37</sup>

Parents of children with intellectual disabilities often face challenges related to preparing them for independent professional life. Otrębski and Mariańczyk note that parents may feel an additional burden, especially when there is a lack of support from institutions. Despite this, the active participation of parents in the professional life of their children is crucial, and their involvement can significantly influence the success of young people with disabilities in employment.

When analyzing the situation on the labor market, it should also be noted that despite various initiatives, people with mild intellectual disabilities often have difficulties in finding appropriate employment. In Poland, according to PFRON reports, people with intellectual disabilities are the least professionally active group among all disabled people. However, professional work has a key rehabilitation and social impact, enabling these people to lead more independent and satisfying lives.

---

<sup>37</sup> Wojciech Otrębski, Katarzyna Mariańczyk, Transition of students with intellectual disabilities from education to the labor market - a parent's perspective

## Education in special schools preparing for work.

Special schools preparing for work are three-year post-primary schools, intended only for students with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities and for students with multiple disabilities.<sup>38</sup> In these schools, education is based on curricula taking into account the applicable core curriculum for general education, i.e. the core curriculum for general education for special schools preparing for work.<sup>39</sup> Curricula for individual educational classes are developed by a teacher or a team of teachers and approved by the institution's director.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, in accordance with applicable law, an Individual Educational and Therapeutic Program is developed for each student.<sup>41</sup> The Regulation of the Minister of National Education of August 9, 2017 on the conditions for organizing education, upbringing and care for children and youth with disabilities, socially maladjusted and at risk of social maladjustment specifies that this program is developed by a team of teachers and specialists after a multi-disciplinary assessment of the student's level of functioning, taking into account the conclusions formulated on its basis and the recommendations contained in the decision on the need for special education.<sup>42</sup>

The core curriculum of general education for special schools preparing for work distinguishes two forms of classes: educational classes and rehabilitation classes. Educational activities include:

- personal and social functioning,
- classes that develop communication,
- creativity-building activities,
- preparation for work,
- physical education,
- ethics.<sup>43</sup>

Personal and social functioning classes at this stage of education are intended to improve and enrich the knowledge and skills acquired at earlier stages of education, including: reading, writing, understanding mathematical concepts, as well as to prepare students to

---

<sup>38</sup> Dz.U. from 2021, item 1082, as amended

<sup>39</sup> Dz.U. from 2021, item 1082, as amended

<sup>40</sup> Dz.U. from 2021, born 1915, died

<sup>41</sup> Dz.U. from 2021, item 1082, as amended

<sup>42</sup> Dz.U. from 2020 pos. 1309

<sup>43</sup> Dz.U. poz. 356 they zm.



**Iceland**  
**Liechtenstein**  
**Norway grants**

fulfill various social roles, including the employee role, and to develop competences necessary in adulthood.<sup>44</sup>

Classes that develop communication are designed to support the further development of language and communication competences, including the ability to communicate using augmentative and alternative communication methods (AAC). During these classes, the student should have the opportunity to gain experience in communicating with a wide range of recipients, including institutions, service points and possible workplaces.<sup>45</sup>

Creativity-shaping classes are intended to provide students with opportunities to act creatively, establish positive relationships with people, and motivate them to engage in creative activity. During these classes, special attention should be paid to shaping students' interests and revealing their artistic abilities, building a positive self-image, strengthening faith in their own abilities, and also developing students' attitude of curiosity, openness and developing competences related to organizing and spending free time.<sup>46</sup>

Preparation for work aims to prepare students for activity through work, as well as to enable them to acquire practical skills necessary in various fields of work and to develop competences in the area of functioning in social and professional life.<sup>47</sup>

The detailed number of hours of educational classes and revalidation classes is included in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of April 3, 2019 on framework teaching plans for public schools<sup>48</sup> and it looks like this:

1. Weekly number of hours in the first grade regarding compulsory educational activities:
  - o Personal and social functioning – 6h,
  - o Activities developing communication – 2 hours,
  - o Creativity-shaping classes – 4 hours,
  - o Preparation for work – 18 hours,
  - o Physical education – 3 hours.

---

<sup>44</sup> Dz.U. poz. 356 they zm.

<sup>45</sup> Dz.U. poz. 356 they zm.

<sup>46</sup> Dz.U. poz. 356 they zm.

<sup>47</sup> Dz.U. poz. 356 they zm.

<sup>48</sup> Dz.U. poz. 639 ze zm.

2. Weekly number of hours in the second grade regarding compulsory educational activities:
  - o Personal and social functioning – 6h,
  - o Activities developing communication – 2 hours,
  - o Creativity-shaping classes – 4 hours,
  - o Preparation for work – 19h,
  - o Physical education – 3 hours.
3. Weekly number of hours in the third grade regarding compulsory educational activities:
  - o Personal and social functioning – 5 hours,
  - o Activities developing communication – 2 hours,
  - o Creativity-shaping classes – 4 hours,
  - o Preparation for work – 20 hours,
  - o Physical education – 3 hours.
4. The weekly number of hours of revalidation classes for a class in grades one to three is the same - 10 hours.<sup>49</sup>

According to the framework teaching plan for a school preparing for work, optional educational classes, apart from revalidation classes, also include religion/ethics and classes in the field of psychological and pedagogical assistance, the duration of which has not been specified.<sup>50</sup> However, these schools do not offer career counseling classes.

Career counseling is extremely important for students with intellectual disabilities because it helps them identify their strengths, interests and career opportunities. The lack of such classes in schools preparing for work constitutes a significant gap in the education system, because these young people often need additional support in planning their future professional career. Career counseling could also support parents in preparing their children to enter the labor market, offering specific information on employment opportunities and

---

<sup>49</sup> Dz.U. poz. 639 ze zm.

<sup>50</sup> Dz.U. poz. 639 ze zm.



help in establishing contacts with potential employers. These activities are crucial for young people with intellectual disabilities to achieve independence and integrate into society.

In the case of students with a certificate of need for special education due to moderate or severe intellectual disability, mid-year and annual classification is made taking into account the individual educational and therapeutic program (IPET). Final grades for educational activities and behavior are determined in accordance with the provisions specified in Art. 44 collections Current, mid-year, annual and final classification grades for compulsory and additional educational classes, as well as classes listed in the provisions of Art. 13 section 3, and behavior assessment for:

1. students with a certificate of need for special education due to moderate or severe intellectual disability,
2. students with a certificate confirming the need for special education due to multiple disabilities, attending schools referred to in Art. 18 section 1 point 2 letter d of the Education Law Act, are descriptive assessments. The decision on promotion to a higher class for students with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities is made by the teaching council, taking into account the arrangements contained in the IEP, in accordance with Art. 127 section 3 of the Act - Education Law <sup>51</sup>

The core curriculum of general education for special schools preparing students with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities and students with multiple disabilities for work indicates that the primary goal of education for this group of students is "effective preparation of students for adulthood, including practical preparation for employment in open/ protected labor market."<sup>52</sup> It is also crucial to expand their personal, social and communication competences, enabling them to experience and understand situations related to adult life. The programs are designed to prepare students for supported employment or other forms of employment, or to function effectively in adult day activity centers, integrating them as much as possible with other members of the local community. It is also important to prepare students for independent or group housing, including in supported and sheltered housing.

According to the framework teaching plan for a school preparing for work, optional educational classes, apart from revalidation classes, also include religion/ethics and classes in the field of psychological and pedagogical assistance, the duration of which has not been specified.<sup>53</sup> However, these schools do not offer career counseling classes.

---

<sup>51</sup> Dz.U. from 2021, born 1915, died

<sup>52</sup> Dz.U. 2017 poz. 356 ze zm., s. 293

<sup>53</sup> Dz.U. 2019 poz. 639 ze zm.



**Iceland**  
**Liechtenstein**  
**Norway** grants

Career counseling is extremely important for students with intellectual disabilities because it helps them identify their strengths, interests and career opportunities. The lack of such classes in schools preparing for work constitutes a significant gap in the education system, because these young people often need additional support in planning their future professional career. Career counseling could also support parents in preparing their children to enter the labor market, offering specific information on employment opportunities and help in establishing contacts with potential employers. These activities are crucial for young people with intellectual disabilities to achieve independence and integrate into society.

## Education at the Special Work Training School in Special School Complex No. 4 in Sosnowiec

The Special Work Training School operating in the Special School Complex No. 4 in Sosnowiec is a public secondary school educating young people with moderate, severe and multiple disabilities. The school has two premises: at ul. Franciszkańska 5a and at ul. Wojska Polskiego 86 in Sosnowiec. The educational activity of this school is determined by Individual Educational and Therapeutic Programs, the School's Educational and Preventive Program and Work Training Programs developed for individual departments.

Individual Educational and Therapeutic Programs (IPET) are a key element of education at this school, adapting the teaching process to the specific needs and capabilities of each student. These programs are developed by teachers and specialists who create educational and therapeutic plans based on a multi-disciplinary assessment of the student's level of functioning.

The School's Educational and Preventive Program integrates various activities aimed at supporting the emotional, social and moral development of students. These activities are focused on developing interpersonal skills, independence and responsibility for one's own behavior.

Work training programs at the Special School Complex No. 4 in Sosnowiec are tailored to the individual needs and capabilities of students. They include both theoretical and practical classes that prepare young people to take up professional work. Practical classes are conducted in various workshops, such as a tailoring workshop, a gardening workshop, a culinary workshop, and in technical workshops, which allows students to acquire specific professional skills.

## **AION project - supporting the development of professional competences**

As part of the AION project, financed by the EEA Funds, modern workshops supporting the development of students' professional competences were created in the Special School Complex No. 4 in Sosnowiec. These studios have been designed to realistically reflect working conditions, which is crucial for the effective learning of people with intellectual disabilities, who often need to be taught in spaces that correspond to real professional conditions.

### **Housekeeping, hotel service and janitor's workshop**

One of the studios simulates a hotel room with full equipment, such as a bed, bedding, wardrobe and carpet, as well as the building's caretaker's station, equipped with professional equipment for indoor and outdoor cleaning. This includes maintaining cleanliness in industrial spaces, parking lots and a manual car wash with facilities. Thanks to such a workshop, students can acquire practical skills in an environment similar to the real workplace.

### **Kitchen and baking aids workshop**

People with intellectual disabilities often need learning in realistic environments to learn skills effectively. Therefore, two workshops were created simulating a bakery and a catering kitchen/fruit and vegetable processing. The bakery is equipped with an industrial bread oven, a planetary mixer and basic catering equipment, including oil pressing equipment, a vacuum packaging machine and a cheese impression set. Such workshops enable students to acquire practical skills in food preparation and processing.

### **Workshop of a general construction helper and a helper in small production services**

The general construction workshop was equipped for skills training for the position of construction/workshop assistant. The equipment is divided into two categories: the first includes external works, such as paving, bricklaying, plastering, earthworks, carpentry and insulation. The second one focuses on interior work, such as finishing, carpentry, locksmithing and mechanical work. Additionally, a CO2 plotter was purchased, which allows precise production of custom-made elements.

### Workshop of a gardener's assistant and green areas caretaker

The gardening aid and green areas caretaker's workshop is equipped with equipment for maintaining green areas and a gardener's house. The organization of this space has been designed to best suit the real working conditions of a gardener and green areas caretaker. It is equipped with all the necessary tools, such as rakes, brushes, wheelbarrows, secateurs, leaf blowers and others.

### Workshop of a production/assembly line worker

A workshop corresponding to the production line of simple items, such as twisting pens, assembling packaging and elements of simple machines. The studio is equipped with appropriate training materials and equipment, which enables students, especially those with the lowest functioning, to learn repeated simple sequences of activities.

### A farm worker's workshop on a farm/agricultural farm

A workshop was also created to recreate working conditions on a farm. It uses a large green area within the city's polysensory garden. The workshop is equipped with tools for small agricultural and greenhouse production, including a tractor with accessories. At school at ul. A greenhouse with pots in which plants are grown from seeds was built at the Polish Army.

### Pet guardian's workshop

This workshop is equipped to train pet care skills, which is particularly important in the context of supporting older people in everyday duties related to their pets. This is another job position adapted to the predispositions and capabilities of people with intellectual disabilities, which is in growing demand on the labor market.

The creation of these specialized workshops in the Special School Complex No. 4 in Sosnowiec is a milestone in the professional education of people with intellectual disabilities. Realistic job simulations allow students to acquire practical skills in conditions close to real ones, which significantly increases their chances of successfully entering the labor market. Thanks to the AION project, students gain not only theoretical knowledge, but above all, practical experience, which is crucial in the process of their professional and social integration.

Vocational education for people with intellectual disabilities in Poland is an area that requires special attention and support. Despite existing regulations and educational programs, there are still many challenges that limit the access and opportunities of students with intellectual disabilities to fully participate in professional life.

The AION project at the Special School Complex No. 4 in Sosnowiec is an example of an effective approach to vocational education of students with intellectual disabilities. Creating specialized laboratories that realistically reflect working conditions allows students to gain practical skills in a safe and supportive environment. These workshops, covering various professional fields, such as hotel service, catering kitchen, construction work, gardening, production line and animal care, are a key element in preparing young people for independent living and work.

Career counseling, although not included in the program of schools preparing for work, is an extremely important element of supporting students with intellectual disabilities in planning and implementing their career path. The lack of such classes is a serious gap that needs to be filled to provide young people with better preparation for the labor market. Support from careers advisors who can help students identify their strengths, interests and career opportunities is essential.

Parents play a key role in the transition from education to the labor market. Their commitment and support are invaluable, especially in the context of helping their children overcome the barriers and difficulties they encounter. Cooperation of parents with educational institutions and employers can significantly contribute to the professional success of young people with intellectual disabilities.

It is also worth noting that despite various initiatives and support programs, people with intellectual disabilities in Poland still encounter difficulties in finding appropriate employment. Statistics show that they are one of the least professionally active groups of disabled people. Therefore, there is a need for further actions to promote the professional integration of these people, including the development of vocational training programs and increasing employers' awareness of the benefits of employing people with intellectual disabilities.

The AION project and other similar initiatives show that it is possible to create an effective vocational education system for people with intellectual disabilities, which enables them to acquire real professional competences and increases their chances on the labor market. Systemic support, parental involvement and cooperation with employers are key elements

**Iceland**   
**Liechtenstein**  
**Norway** grants

that can contribute to improving the professional situation of people with intellectual disabilities in Poland.

The conclusions drawn from the analysis of vocational education for people with intellectual disabilities indicate the need for further reforms and support. Providing appropriate learning conditions, developing practical skills in realistic conditions, and systematic career counseling are essential for young people with intellectual disabilities to achieve their full professional and social potential.