



National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education

Quality Standards in Vocational Education

Warsaw 2013

1. INTRODUCTION

The quality of education, including vocational education – although much discussed and written about in the recent years – is not yet understood, verified, and assessed in a shared way.

In a general sense, quality is treated mainly as a set of activities of a given organisation oriented towards the fulfilment of requirements of a given customer. It may be assumed that the most important customer of a school/establishment, although not the only one, is its student/course participant, who has the right to expect from it high quality of education, regular assessment of his/her performance as well as guidance on further education and career choices. All these requirements are fulfilled with the involvement of the entire school community.

As far as vocational schools and establishments are concerned, due to the specificity of education provided by these institutions, they are also required to prepare their students/course participants for the rapidly changing labour market and, consequentially, to define separate guidelines which ensure high quality of educational activities. In order to meet these challenges, works were undertaken to develop a document supporting the managerial and teaching staff of vocational schools and establishments in achieving high quality of vocational education.

The “*Quality Standards in Vocational Education*” constitute a **voluntary** tool which may be used by headmasters and teachers at vocational schools and establishments when taking measures aimed at improving the quality of work, increasing the effectiveness of education provided, and enhancing the image of a given school or establishment.

These standards should facilitate the assessment of various areas of activity of vocational schools not only for the managerial and teaching staff, but also for students and their parents, representatives of local environment (including employers), and, in part, for the pedagogical supervision bodies.

For the purposes of this study, the *quality standards in vocational education* (Polish: *standardy jakości kształcenia zawodowego*, SJKZ) shall be understood as expectations in terms of the quality of education in various fields of vocational education in the education system, described with the use of detailed criteria and indicators.

The *criteria*, in turn, shall be understood as a set of itemized expectations ensuring the achievement of a specific standard. Whenever the *indicators* are mentioned, these shall be understood as measureable evidence of the fulfilment of specific criteria.

The specific expectations (standards) described through criteria and sample indicators should be helpful in effective works on the improvement of the quality of vocational education at schools/establishments. The expectations defined in such a way do not refer directly to the

requirements set for vocational schools and establishments in the appendix to the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 7 October 2009 on pedagogical supervision (Dz. U. [Journal of Laws] of 2009, No. 168, item 1324, as amended). The said regulation has contributed to the increased interest of headmasters in learning more about evaluation. Headmasters, including headmasters of vocational schools and establishments, are particularly interested in extending knowledge and exchange of experience as regards internal evaluation, since in accordance with the regulations on pedagogical supervision they are responsible for carrying out such assessments. The evaluation should largely contribute to the development of a given school or establishment and thus it is carried out with respect to issues considered essential in its activity. In the case of vocational schools/establishments, a number of aspects can be identified which are particularly closely linked to the process of vocational education and which can be important from the point view of the activity of such an institution.

The activity of an organisation such as school is oriented towards the attainment of the basic objectives in the educational process. Its main subjects are learners (students) and the teaching staff (teachers). The process should be properly organised, taking into consideration such aspects as *inter alia* teaching methods, principles of assessment, necessary equipment (schools' material resources) and, as a consequence, it should lead to the achievement of learning outcomes by students and their validation.

The condition for ensuring the proper quality of vocational education is the fulfilment of schools'/establishments' objectives while taking into consideration the external context, oriented towards the cooperation with partners in Poland and abroad, including: employers, labour market institutions, and higher education institutions. All these aspects have been considered when identifying the thematic areas for the purposes of determining the quality standards in vocational education.

The study entitled "Quality Standards in Vocational Education" can therefore offer significant support to headmasters and teachers at vocational schools and establishments in creating internal quality assurance systems, defining objectives, as well as in planning and preparing internal evaluation.

The standards have been determined in the following thematic areas comprising specific aspects of vocational education:

- I – EDUCATIONAL OFFER AND CURRICULA
- II – SCHOOL/ESTABLISHMENT STAFF
- III – MATERIAL RESOURCES OF SCHOOLS/ESTABLISHMENTS
- IV – ORGANISATION OF EDUCATION
- V – STUDENTS WITH INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
- VI – COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS/ESTABLISHMENTS AND EMPLOYERS
- VII – COOPERATION WITH PARTNERS IN POLAND AND ABROAD
- VIII – VALIDATION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES
- IX – EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL COUNSELLING
- X – STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS/ESTABLISHMENTS

Moreover, the *Standards* have been developed taking into consideration the recommendation of the European Parliament and Council of 18 June 2009 *on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQARF/ EQAVET)*. The said recommendation, constituting an appendix to the *Standards*, has proposed the quality assurance indicators and criteria which can be used by EU member countries on a national level. The member countries are recommended to develop their so-called national approaches aimed at the improvement of the quality assurance systems at a national level, as necessary. The present *Standards* are a proposal of the Polish approach towards the implementation of the EQARF/EQAVET initiative in vocational training and education.

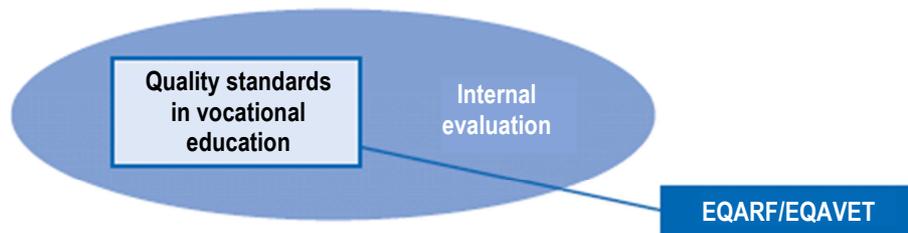


Fig. 1 Links between quality standards in vocational education, internal evaluation, and the EQARF/EQAVET initiative.

2. QUALITY STANDARDS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

I. EDUCATIONAL OFFER AND CURRICULA	
STANDARD	
EDUCATIONAL OFFER AND CURRICULA CORRESPOND TO LABOUR MARKET NEEDS AND LEARNERS' EXPECTATIONS	
CRITERIA	EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS
<p>At schools/establishments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ there are activities conducted, the aim of which is to identify regional and local educational needs of the labour market; ■ the educational offer is prepared with participation of employers, thereby ensuring that graduates will find their place on the labour market; ■ there are procedures prepared for the development and modification of vocational/qualification curricula; ■ there are curricula prepared for vocational education/qualification vocational courses (in the case of a vocational establishment – also for other out-of-school forms of continuing education), taking into consideration the expectations of employers and the development of key competencies³ of students/course participants; ■ there are didactic materials developed, taking into consideration <i>inter alia</i> solutions in the field of new techniques and technologies, which enable the achievement of the projected learning outcomes; ■ the correlations between the general and vocational education are considered in the didactic process; ■ curricula are monitored and evaluated; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the diagnosis of requirements of the regional and local labour market takes into account <i>inter alia</i> the data from County and Provincial Labour Offices ■ the opinions obtained from the county and provincial employment councils pertaining to the educational offer are positive; ■ schools/establishments provide education in occupations/qualifications corresponding to the needs of the local and regional labour market; ■ the career and employment surveys of graduates suggest that they work in the learned occupations/qualifications; ■ the procedure for the development/modification of curricula determines the stages of design/modification of the such programmes⁴; ■ the curricula approved for use at schools take into account the identification of the labour market needs; ■ the curricula approved for use at schools are developed and modified with participation of employers; ■ the curricula approved for use at schools take into account key competencies; ■ the didactic materials prepared for students/course participants are made available with the use of various forms of communication; ■ teaching plans, curricula, and teachers' work plans ensure correlations between general and vocational education⁵; ■ the tools developed are used to gather and use feedback on the implementation of curricula provided by learners and teachers; ■ findings of evaluation are used to modify the curricula;

¹ Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council of 18 December on key competencies for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC)

² See the guidebook *Programy nauczania dla zawodu – krok po kroku* [*Curricula for Occupations – Step by Step*], KOWEziU 2013

³ See: the guidebooks *Szkolne plany nauczania krok po kroku* [*School Teaching Plans – Step by Step*], KOWEziU 2013, and *Korelacje kształcenia ogólnego i zawodowego krok po kroku* [*Correlations between General and Vocational Education – Step by Step*], KOWEziU 2013

II. SCHOOL/ESTABLISHMENT STAFF	
STANDARD	
THE STAFF HAS QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES ENSURING HIGH LEVEL OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AT SCHOOLS/ESTABLISHMENTS	
CRITERIA	EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS
<p>At schools/establishments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ individual needs of vocational education teachers/ employees resulting from the development plans are identified and comprehensive support in their professional development is provided ■ the needs regarding the development of professional qualifications of teachers, resulting from the necessity of introducing changes into the educational process connected with the technical and technological progress, are identified ■ the personnel policy ensures optimum utilisation of staff for the fulfilment of tasks; ■ any staff shortage is identified and addressed by hiring new teachers; ■ any staff shortage is identified and new teachers are hired; ■ the effects of teachers' work are monitored; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ individual development plans of teachers and an incentive system for employees which encourages them to develop and improve their professional and pedagogical qualifications serve the achievement of the planned objectives and are compliant with the directions of activity of a given school/establishment; ■ the training plans for vocational education teachers correspond to the needs resulting from schools'/ establishments' development plans and take into account individual developmental and educational needs of students; ■ schools' internal development plans for vocational education teachers include the acquisition and development of competencies necessary for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the development and modification of curricula for a given occupation/qualification, – conducting qualification vocational courses, – conducting classes with the use of distance learning methods and techniques, – the introduction of changes in the educational process, resulting from the technical and technological progress; ■ professional qualifications and competencies of vocational education teachers, specialists, and instructors of practical vocational training allow them to perform the entrusted tasks; members of teachers' subject and problem-and-task focused teams have the competencies to perform the entrusted tasks; ■ the recruitment of vocational education teachers/ employees takes place in accordance with the existing requirements; ■ the vocational education teachers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – participate in specialist professional development activities (e.g. apprenticeship and/or internship at the employers' place at least once every 4 years); – are examiners authorised to conduct examinations confirming vocational qualifications; – apply various teaching methods to develop vocational skills and personal and social competencies; ■ the recruitment of vocational education teachers/ employees takes place in accordance with the existing requirements; ■ reports from the study of teachers' work outcomes are used for assessment and self-assessment of teachers' performance.

III. MATERIAL RESOURCES OF SCHOOLS/ESTABLISHMENTS	
STANDARD	
SCHOOLS/ESTABLISHMENTS PROVIDE THE PREMISES AND DIDACTIC EQUIPMENT NECESSARY FOR THE PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION UNDER SAFE AND HEALTHY CONDITIONS	
CRITERIA	EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS
<p>At schools/establishments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the safety of students and employees is ensured and the sanitary and epidemiological standards are observed; ■ school facilities are provided with equipment guaranteeing the high quality of vocational education and the development of students' interest; ■ the vocational education base for specific occupations/ qualifications is developed and modernised; ■ the conditions under which the education is provided are adjusted to students' individual needs; ■ the developed and modernised material resources contribute to the improvement of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the effectiveness of vocational education, – the attractiveness of a given school/establishment in the local environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ schools' documentation confirms the observance of the health and safety, fire protection, and environmental protection requirements; ■ the internal control systems of school premises, e.g. surveillance of the premises, control of entrances and exits, ensure the safety of students and employees; ■ a school's/establishment's base is compliant with the conditions for provision of vocational education specified in the vocational education curriculum; ■ students use the school's/establishment's base when participating in various forms of the development of interests (in particular, of the vocational interests); ■ the work plans include modernisation activities relating to the base; ■ schools' documentation confirms the participation in the projects ensuring the development and modernisation of the vocational education base; ■ the educational conditions enable disabled students to actively participate in the didactic process of vocational education; ■ the following can be observed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – increased interest in education at a given school (admission results) among lower secondary school graduates, – increased satisfaction among teachers, students, parents, employers, – higher pass rates in exams confirming vocational qualifications, – positive image of a given school/establishment in the local environment.

IV. ORGANISATION OF EDUCATION	
STANDARD	
THE ORGANISATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS AT A SCHOOL/ESTABLISHMENT ENSURES STUDENTS' PREPAREDNESS FOR PROFESSIONAL WORK, CONFIRMATION OF VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS, AND FURTHER EDUCATION	
CRITERIA	EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS
<p>At schools/establishments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the educational process is organised and improved in accordance with set directions and objectives of activities aimed at preparing students for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – confirmation of separate qualifications within a given occupation, – professional work, – continuation of education and career advancement; ■ principles of assessment of students' performance and their preparedness for confirmation of vocational qualifications are evaluated internally; ■ the conditions of work and education are monitored and the organisational solutions are evaluated; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the organisation of the vocational education process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – takes into consideration the diagnosis of educational needs and abilities of students, – ensures the fulfilment of the programme's requirements (taking into consideration the actual standards of the premises and staff availability); – ensures the organisation of remedial and specialist classes adjusted to students' needs and capabilities; ■ the organisation of practical vocational education ensures both the acquisition and utilisation of knowledge and skills under the actual conditions of professional work ■ the problem-and-task focused teams are involved in the improvement of the educational process; ■ agreements concluded by schools/establishments with other entities/institutions support the implementation of set directions and objectives of activities, including the preparation of students for professional work; ■ the majority of students attends additional classes, during which they prepare themselves for examinations confirming vocational qualifications; ■ the majority for students take mock examinations confirming vocational qualifications; ■ the majority of students take examinations confirming vocational qualifications; ■ students with special educational needs attending vocational education classes use adjustments to which they are entitled; ■ IT solutions streamline the organisation of the educational process. ■ documents pertaining to vocational education are made available to students and published e.g.: on schools' web pages (e.g.: the statute of a given school/ establishment, core curriculum for education in occupations taught at a given school, school teaching plans, vocational curricula, sets of textbooks); ■ didactic materials supporting the educational process are made available in various forms of communication; ■ students are provided with support in acquiring additional licences which improve their chances on the labour market; ■ students confirm that they are familiar with their further education and professional career paths. ■ findings from evaluation of the assessment principles are used to modify such principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ schools'/establishments' documentation contains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – reports from inspections performed by H&S services, – statistics on accidents suffered by students and teachers; ■ there is video surveillance on the premises ■ findings from evaluation of the assessment principles are used to modify these principles; ■ reports from inspections performed by H&S services at vocational schools; ■ statistics on accidents suffered by students and employees at vocational schools/ establishments; ■ there is video surveillance on the premises; ■ findings from evaluation of organisational solutions are used to improve the existing solutions and to introduce the new ones; ■ internal evaluation takes into consideration the quality standards in vocational education, and findings from the evaluation are used to improve the organisational solutions;

V. STUDENTS WITH INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS	
STANDARD	
IN THE COURSE OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS, SCHOOLS/ESTABLISHMENTS IDENTIFY INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENTAL AND EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS AND ENABLE THEIR FULFILMENT	
CRITERIA	EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS
<p>At schools/establishments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ needs and expectations of students receiving vocational education are diagnosed; ■ students receive support in addressing their individual needs; ■ students' performance throughout the educational cycle as well as the correct identification of their individual needs and the extent to which such needs are addressed are monitored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ students' motives behind the choice of a given school, occupation/qualification are identified; ■ findings from the analysis of results of studies investigating the motives behind decisions made by students and their expectations are used to address students' individual needs; ■ the programme of adaptation activities in a new school environment covers all students; ■ there is a team planning and coordinating the provision of psychological and pedagogical assistance to students holding a certificate proving that they are in need of special education; ■ a curriculum for a given occupation/qualification (in the case of establishments – also for other out-of-school forms of continuing education) is adjusted to individual educational needs of students/course participants; ■ there are classes conducted for particularly gifted students (including e.g. preparation for contests, competitions, and tournaments;) ■ additional classes organised at schools/establishments enable students to acquire and develop knowledge and vocational skills in accordance with their individual needs as well as to increase their chances for employment; ■ there are meetings organised, during which subsequent stages of students' professional career are planned; ■ team and long-term activities performed by students allow them to solve their professional problems on their own; ■ there are conditions provided, which enable students to work independently; ■ findings from the analysis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – of achievements and behaviour grades of students when they start their education at a given school and when the graduate from it; – of results of studies on students' satisfaction with their choice of a given occupation and school, – of individual career plans of graduates, ■ are used in evaluation of the activities taken.

VI. COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS/ESTABLISHMENTS AND EMPLOYERS	
STANDARD	
EMPLOYERS ARE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND ASSESSMENT OF THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES	
CRITERIA	EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS
<p>At schools/establishments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ information is collected from employers on the needs of the regional and local labour market as well as employers' expectations, the aim of which is to prepare the educational offer; ■ employers are involved in preparing the curricula; <p>■ employers are involved in the preparation and modernisation of the didactic equipment and base;</p> <p>■ employers are involved in the implementation of the didactic process;</p> <p>■ employers are involved in the professional development of vocational education teachers and practical vocational training instructors</p> <p>■ employers are involved in the system of examinations confirming vocational qualifications;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the diagnosis of needs of the regional and local labour market in terms of a need for further education in specific occupations/qualifications as well as the planning of education in new occupations/qualifications are made in cooperation with employers (employers' organisations); ■ the opinion obtained from employers regarding the adjustment of the educational offer to the local and regional labour market is positive; ■ graduates find jobs – information from County Labour Offices, graduates or employers; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ a curriculum for education in a given occupation/qualification, and – in the case of establishments – also a curriculum for other out-of-school forms of continuing education takes into account the expectations of employers; ■ the opinion obtained from employers on a curriculum for a given occupation/ qualification is positive ■ the opinion obtained from employers confirms that the curriculum takes into account the development of necessary personal and social competencies of students; ■ a list of employers with whom a given school cooperates proves their involvement in the process of modernisation of equipment of premises where vocational education is provided ■ schools'/establishments' documentation contains a list of occupations/qualifications, in the case of which the didactic equipment and base are systematically modernised in cooperation with employers; ■ projects implemented by a given school/establishment aimed at upgrade and modernisation of the didactic equipment and base are implemented in cooperation with employers; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ practical classes and apprenticeships are organised in cooperation with employers; ■ open classes are conducted with (active and passive) participation of employers; ■ additional classes for students on new technical and technological solutions are organised in cooperation with employers; ■ specialist courses which improve students' chances for employment are organised in cooperation with employers; ■ schools'/establishments' documentation contains a list of employers who co-organise additional classes or courses for students; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ training events/courses/internships and apprenticeships for teachers on new technical and technological solutions in the field, in which a given school/ establishment provides vocational education, are organised in cooperation with employers; ■ informational materials/publications on new technical and technological solutions in the field, in which the school/establishment provides vocational education, are provided by employers; ■ schools'/establishment's documentation contains a list of teachers taking part in training events/courses/internships and apprenticeships on new technical and technological solutions organised and conducted in cooperation with employers; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ employers are involved in preparing students for confirmation of separate qualifications within a given occupation; ■ employers who cooperate with a given school/establishment become authorised examiners conducting examinations confirming vocational qualifications; ■ employers participate in examinations confirming vocational qualifications, during which they perform the role of examiners; ■ employers support schools/establishments in organising the examination centres for specific occupations/qualifications; ■ a list of employers cooperating with a given school/establishment contains the following information: authorisations of a given examiner, their participation in organising the examination centres, as well as information on support provided in preparing students for examinations confirming vocational qualifications.

VII. COOPERATION WITH PARTNERS IN POLAND AND ABROAD	
STANDARD	
SCHOOLS/ESTABLISHMENTS COOPERATE WITH PARTNERS IN POLAND AND ABROAD IN PREPARING GRADUATES FOR FUNCTIONING ON NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN LABOUR MARKETS	
CRITERIA	EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS
<p>At schools/establishments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ there are cooperation programmes implemented within the framework of strategic partnerships of institutions acting at a regional and/or local level ■ there are partnership programmes implemented, involving direct cooperation with the social and economic environment ■ opportunities to start a partnership with vocational schools/establishments abroad are seized ■ cooperation with partners in Poland and abroad contributes to the improvement of quality and attractiveness of vocational education ■ students use the opportunity to participate in apprenticeships and internships abroad under EU programmes ■ the managerial and teaching staff of schools/establishments use the opportunity to participate in the professional development projects for vocational education teachers implemented abroad under EU programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ schools' documentation contains letters of intent pertaining to cooperation with institutions at a regional and/or local level, including <i>inter alia</i> associations of employers, labour offices and other labour market institutions and higher education institutions, as well as minutes from such meetings ■ agreements entered into with employers indicate the cooperation in areas specified under item VI ■ agreements entered into with higher education institutions indicate the cooperation <i>inter alia</i> in the field of professional development of teachers, access of students and ■ teachers to modern techniques and technologies, joint activities relating to educational and vocational counselling, including further education in a given field. ■ schools' documentation contains letters of intent pertaining to cooperation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ with vocational schools/vocational education institutions abroad; ■ strategic cooperation at a regional and local level contribute to the development and modification of the educational offer in accordance with the needs of the labour market and expectations of employers; ■ direct cooperation with partners in Poland contributes to a noticeable increase in credits earned by students; ■ learning outcomes which should be achieved during the European student exchange programmes have been determined; ■ agreements pertaining to programmes of classes conducted abroad, used in cooperation with foreign partners, are based on the European credit transfer system in vocational education and training ECVET⁶; ■ credits earned by students in the course of the European student exchange programmes are documented and gathered in the form of an individual credit list <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ on the basis of the ECVET system; ■ information on the results of cooperation with partners in Poland and abroad is published in various media ■ an increase in the average scores of graduates of lower secondary schools admitted to a given school in subsequent admissions; ■ schools' documentation contains copies of documents certifying students' participation in apprenticeships and internships abroad, especially within the framework of the Europass-mobility⁷; ■ graduates are informed of an opportunity to participate in vocational internship projects under EU programmes; ■ the schools'/establishments' documentation contains certificates confirming the participation of the managerial and teaching staff in projects of exchange of experiences relating to professional development which are implemented under EU programmes;

⁴ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) (2009/C 155/02)

⁵ Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competencies (Europass) (2241/2004/EC)

VIII. VALIDATION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES	
STANDARD	
SCHOOLS/ESTABLISHMENTS ASSESS THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF STUDENTS AND PREPARE THEM FOR CONFIRMATION OF VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS	
CRITERIA	EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS
<p>At schools/establishments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the principles of internal school assessment are precisely developed and followed; ■ the manner of assessment is monitored and analysed by teams of teachers; ■ the preparedness of students for confirmation of vocational qualifications is systematically diagnosed and assessed; ■ students' behaviours are diagnosed and educational measures are taken in order to eliminate risks and reinforce the appropriate behaviour; ■ the results of schools' internal assessment and examinations confirming vocational qualifications are analysed and findings from such analyses are implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ students are familiar with projected learning outcomes and principles of their assessment; ■ students are familiar with the scope, dates, and manner of verifying their educational achievements; ■ findings from the analysis allow for early identification of learning difficulties and introduction of action plans effectively preventing school failures; ■ findings from the analysis are used to individualise the educational process; ■ both students and their parents are provided with up-to-date and reliable information on educational achievements or deficiencies; ■ results of mock examinations confirming vocational qualifications are analysed by teachers; ■ findings from the analyses of mock examinations confirming vocational qualifications are used in the process of preparing students for confirmation of qualifications; ■ an action plan is implemented to support the development of personal and social competencies, along with the procedures in the case of a violation of social standards; ■ the implemented findings from the analysis of results of schools' internal and external assessment contribute to the increase of students' achievements; ■ students receive a school-leaving certificate within the required deadline; ■ more and more students receive promotion certificates with honours; ■ more and more students take examinations confirming vocational qualifications; ■ more and more students take examinations confirming separate qualifications within a given occupation and receive diplomas confirming vocational qualifications; ■ the average scores of students taking examinations confirming vocational qualifications are increasing; ■ summary tables of results of schools' internal and external assessment are prepared and analysed; ■ grades earned by students in the course of education correlate with scores of exams confirming vocational qualifications.

IX. EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL COUNSELLING	
STANDARD	
SCHOOLS SUPPORT STUDENTS IN THEIR ASSESSMENT OF THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE OCCUPATION CHOSEN, IN MAKING DECISIONS ON FURTHER EDUCATION OR POSSIBLE RETRAINING AS WELL AS PREPARE STUDENTS TO FIND THEIR PLACE ON THE LABOUR MARKET	
CRITERIA	EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS
<p>At schools/establishments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ students are provided with access to comprehensive counselling services; ■ a person providing counselling services actively participates in the admission process; ■ vocational counselling services are provided in cooperation with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – psychological and pedagogical counselling centres, – teacher excellence centres, – employers on the local labour market, – external institutions (local partnership); ■ vocational counselling services performed by vocational advisors or other persons performing such services are monitored and evaluated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ there is a vocational advisor employed or his/her responsibilities are entrusted to a tutor, teacher, or another specialist; or ■ there is a contact organised with a vocational advisor at a psychological and pedagogical counselling centre; ■ there are schools' internal systems of vocational counselling in place; ■ the range of counselling services includes individual and group counselling on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – educational and vocational information, – the provision of diagnostic tools, supporting the cognitive and decision-making process, – opportunities for the acquisition of additional vocational qualifications within the same field of education, planning of the next steps on the career path, or a change of the educational path, if any, – support in educational and vocational decision-making by students with special educational needs, – informing students of an opportunity to take part in additional apprenticeships and internships as well as other activities which improve their chances for employment. ■ from the documentation of the person providing counselling services it results that the person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – actively participates in informational meetings organised by a given school for candidates by providing them with support in the decision-making process; talks to candidates to a given vocational school/establishment in order to verify and confirm that they have made an informed choice of their educational path as well as to verify and confirm the motives behind choosing a particular occupation by a student/course participant, and to exclude any possible counter indication to his/her working in a given occupation, – organises visits of students of lower secondary schools at a given school/establishment, including the occupation-related classes, meetings with parents of students of lower secondary schools; – is involved in the organisation of open days at a given school, educational fairs; ■ from the documentation of a given school it results that the school/ establishment cooperates with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – a psychological and pedagogical counselling centre, – a teacher excellence centre, – employers on the local labour market, – institutions (Labour Office, Career Centres, Youth Career Centres, Mobile Vocational Information Centres, Handicraft Guilds, Voluntary Labour Corps, etc.), and the effects of cooperation prove the comprehensiveness of counselling services; ■ findings from evaluation are used to plan changes aimed at improving the quality of counselling services; ■ the quality of counselling services is assessed as well as measures are taken to obtain information on graduates' career and employment, including <i>inter alia</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – graduates' further career paths, – employment after graduation (including: difficulties in finding the first job, compliance of the first job with the learned occupation, employment by employers with whom they served apprenticeships when they were students of the vocational school).

X. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS/ESTABLISHMENTS	
STANDARD	
STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT ENSURES EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF SCHOOLS/ESTABLISHMENTS	
CRITERIA	EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS
<p>At schools/establishments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the directions of strategic activity are determined <i>inter alia</i> in the following scope: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – adjusting the educational offer to the needs of the labour market; – human resources management; – financial resources management; – adjusting the conditions of vocational education to e.g. technological changes; – cooperation with other entities; – promotion; – innovation and pedagogical experiments; ■ an internal quality assurance system is developed using the quality standards in vocational education; ■ the managerial staff sets the objectives and directions of activities in cooperation with all stakeholders; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the concept of a given school/establishment (e.g. a perspective plan, a development plan) takes into account the needs and expectations of the labour market; ■ the strategic plan takes into account the shaping of the employment level at a given school/establishment in a long-term perspective; ■ the documentation of a given school contains the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the plan of needs and possible sources of didactic aids; – the plan of cooperation with partners in Poland and abroad; – professional development plans for teachers, practical vocational training instructors; ■ the long-term promotion plan specifies <i>inter alia</i> the forms and scope of the planned promotional activities, their completion dates, etc.; ■ the perspective plan specifies pedagogical innovations/experiments; ■ the plan of internal evaluation covers the thematic areas identified within the quality standards in vocational education ■ the objectives and directions of a given school/establishment are set jointly with participation of the managerial staff, students, parents, as well as representatives of local environments and employers.

3. GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

The following terminology has been used in this study.

The term “**vocational education**” is used in two senses. In a general sense, the term “vocational education” covers pre-vocational education, the proper vocational education, as well as all other forms of further education and professional development. Vocational education may be therefore defined as a set of purposefully organised activities and processes which enable preparation for a given occupation, including vocational orientation and, in particular, preparation for professional work in a given sector of the national economy and on a given position – which is the more narrow meaning of this term.

[Source: *Nowy słownik pedagogiki pracy*, ed. Nowacki W.T., Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej TWP, Warsaw 1999]

Quality of vocational education (referred to in SJKZ) – the extent to which the capabilities of students, teachers and instructors as well as the material and organisational conditions ensuring students’ preparedness for work in a given occupation as expected by employers are utilised in the organisational, didactic, and educational activities.

Quality Standards in Vocational Education (Polish: Standardy Jakości Kształcenia Zawodowego, SJKZ) – standards defining the expectations in terms of quality in various fields of vocational education in the education system, described with the use of detailed criteria and indicators.

Criteria – a set of expectations ensuring the achievement of a specific standard.

Indicators – measureable evidence of the fulfilment of specific criteria.

Qualifications – learning outcomes ascertained and certified (by means of a certificate) by competent entities, corresponding to the expectations. Qualifications are subject to formal assessment and constitute a confirmation of effective learning.

Competencies – skills, knowledge, and motivation that arise simultaneously and result in a specific behaviour⁶.

⁶ M. Kubat; http://www.wup.lodz.pl/files/ciz/ciz_Kompetencje_zawodowe.pdf