

## Country Profile - Poland

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### Job market

#### What are my chances of getting a job?

Poland is the gateway between Western and Eastern Europe and is part of an evolving region with a growing economy. You will have a better chance of securing a job if you can speak Polish and while it may be relatively easy to find part-time or temporary work, securing a full-time role may be more difficult, particularly with the high unemployment rate that Poland faces.

- **Typical problems encountered:** unemployment amongst young people is a serious problem in Polish society. Finding a job directly after graduation is not easy. A lot of graduates, even from the best universities, have difficulties in finding a good job. Graduates have to work part-time or temporarily and do not have a strong chance to start a career in finance, banking or accountancy sectors. While wages are increasing, a lot of Polish graduates come to the UK to work as they get a better salary.
- **How to improve your chances:** Polish graduates are usually a bit older than those in the UK and are 24 or 25 when they begin to work as many undertake a Masters after completing an initial degree. To improve your chances of getting a good job, try to gain extra qualifications and work experience. Knowledge and practical skills in a certain sector will help and foreign language and IT skills are popular with employers.
- **Language requirements:** Polish is spoken by around 98% of the population. English and German are the most commonly spoken foreign languages, although neither is by any means commonly spoken or understood. English is spoken more among business, professional and academic communities and the younger generation. German is spoken more by the older generation. Your chances of employment are significantly increased if you can speak Polish. There are opportunities to learn the language through universities in Poland on intensive courses or through self-study courses such as [Eurotalk Interactive](#) and [Routledge Language Learning](#).

#### Where can I work?

- **Major industries:** machine building, food processing and beverages, chemicals, iron and steel, shipbuilding, glass, textiles.
- **Industries in decline:** agriculture, mining and metalwork.
- **Shortage occupations:** sales representatives and industrial, construction and technical workers.
- **Major companies:** PGE Polska Grupa (electric utilities), PKO Bank Polski (regional banks), PKN Orlen (oil and gas operations), KGHM Polska Miedz (diversified metals and mining), Grupa PZU (property and casualty insurance), Pgnig Group (oil and gas operations), JSW Group (diversified metals and mining).
- **Search for more companies:** [Kompas](#) is a worldwide business directory searchable by country and product/service. The list of members on the [British Polish Chamber of Commerce](#) website is useful for speculative applications. Also try the [Polish Yellow Pages](#).

- **Major cities:** Warsaw (capital and largest), Krakow (second largest), Lodz, Wrocław Gdansk and Poznan.

## What's it like working in Poland?

- **Average working hours:** working hours should not exceed eight hours per day, or an average of 40 hours per five-day working week. Working on Sundays or public holidays is permitted in some sectors. An additional work-free day should be provided to the employee in these conditions. Overtime hours are possible, as is night-time work (classed as between 9pm and 7am).
  - **Holidays:** annual leave is accrued after the first month of work. Employees who have worked for a year or more are entitled to at least 20 days paid annual leave; 26 days if they have worked for more than 10 years.
  - **Tax rates:** Poland's tax system is progressive; the higher the income, the higher the rate of tax. The rate of income tax paid is 18% if you earn between 3,091 PLN and 85,258 PLN. If you earn over 85,259 PLN you pay 32% in income tax.
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## Applying for jobs

Both foreign and Polish jobseekers can use the services of the Polish District Labour Offices to help find employment. These can be found in many of the major towns and you will need to register by taking in your education certificates, any work-related certificates and personal ID. Opportunities through the District Labour Offices may be limited however and you may find better results with private recruitment agencies.

You can also apply for jobs online through recruitment websites, which can be done from outside of Poland. However, you may need to visit the country for some of the interview stages.

Applications are typically made with a CV and covering letter that are similar to those used in the UK. CVs should be one to two pages long with personal details, education, employment history and additional skills included. The covering letter should be tailored for the individual company stating why you would like to work in Poland and for that employer and how your skills and interests match the job advertised.

Most recruiters will expect applications in Polish and you should write in this language unless the company has said they will accept applications in English (or another language).

The interview process is similar to that in the UK and varies depending on the employer. Some may hold just one round of interviews while others (usually large or international companies) may have several rounds of interviews including psychometric or in-tray tests and possibly assessment centres. You may be asked to take your certificates or references along to the interview – if you do make sure you find out if they should be translated into Polish.

## Will my UK qualifications be recognised?

UK qualifications will typically be recognised by Polish employers as the European education system has been standardised through the [Bologna Process](#). This allows qualifications to be easily compared.

If you would like help with comparing your professional, vocational or technical qualifications with those in Poland you can consult [ENIC-NARIC](#). [Europass](#) is also a key resource for helping with the comparison of your qualifications. It provides five documents that enable international employers to understand your subjects of study, training and work experience. It also records non-formal learning and language skills.

## **Do I still need to pay UK tax and National Insurance?**

If you are planning to live and work in Poland, check your UK tax and National Insurance position with [HM Revenue & Customs \(HMRC\)](#) to ensure that you are not losing any UK pension rights.

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## **Vacancy sources**

### **Job websites**

- [Careerjet.pl](#)
- [EURES - European Job Mobility Portal](#)
- [Info Praca](#)
- [Job Pilot Poland](#)
- [Kariera](#)
- [Praca.pl](#)
- [Pracuj](#)
- [Szybkopraca.pl](#)
- [Tiptopjob.com](#)

### **Recruitment agencies**

[Euro-CIETT](#) - the European section of the [International Confederation of Private Employment Agencies \(CIETT\)](#) provides a list of member recruitment agencies. Also try the [Polish Yellow Pages](#) for contact details.

### **Newspapers**

- [Gazeta Wyborcza](#) - features a job supplement 'praca' on Mondays
- [Rzeczpospolita](#) - job supplement on Wednesdays
- [Warsaw Business Journal](#)
- [Zycie Warszawy](#) - job supplement on Wednesdays

For a full list of newspapers in Poland see [Kidon Media-Link](#).

### **Hidden vacancies**

Speculative applications are acceptable across the job market and are particularly effective for jobs in science. Details on where to find lists of companies can be found in the Job Market section of this guide.

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## **Work experience**

## Work placements and internships

Course-related placements starting in the summer, lasting from four weeks up to one year for undergraduates of science, engineering, technology and applied arts courses are available with [IAESTE \(International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience\)](#).

Professional internships in management, technology, education and development are available from 6 weeks – 18 months through [AIESEC \(Association Internationale des Etudiants en Sciences Economiques et Commerciales\)](#).

You can search for various placements in Poland on [Europlacement](#). Many international companies may also offer internships and it is worth looking at their individual websites.

## Exchange programmes

Vocational training exchanges and work placements with partner organisations in other countries are offered by the [Leonardo da Vinci Programme](#). Contact your institution's international office or careers service for more information.

## Teaching schemes

English native speakers are often needed for teaching English as a foreign language in state and private schools. Opportunities may be available through [ELS-Bell School of English, Masterschool](#) and [Promar - International](#).

## Volunteering

There are various opportunities for volunteering in Poland. They include:

- [Polish Work Camps](#) has 20 camps throughout the country including various activities.
- [Volunteer Abroad](#) offers a list of volunteer programmes around the globe, including Poland.
- [Polish Humanitarian Organisation](#) helps communities in crisis, both in Poland (e.g. flooded regions) and abroad (some of the projects were carried out in Somalia and Syria).
- [The European Voluntary Service \(EVS\)](#) offers young people the opportunity to volunteer in another country, for a period of two to twelve months. A wide variety of placements can be found in the social, cultural, environmental and sports sector.

## Casual work and short-term opportunities

Casual work is most often found in bars, restaurants, shops, childcare or cleaning. Seasonal work is also possible. Recruitment agencies and Polish District Labour Offices can help with finding short-term vacancies. Also try searching in employment sections in various newspapers. See the vacancy sources section for contact details.

## Gap year opportunities

Poland occupies a central location in Europe with good railway connections making it a gateway to both Western and Eastern European countries. [iGapyear](#) lists gap year projects available in Poland.

## Postgraduate study

### How does the higher education system work?

Poland's higher education system consists of state (public) and non-state institutions. All universities are public schools but other institutions include polytechnics, higher schools of pedagogy, medical schools, music academies, higher schools of physical education, and academies of fine art, film or theatre.

The Polish higher education system is regulated by the State Accreditation Committee which monitors all higher education institutions. According to its results, over 80% of Polish universities have an outstanding or good ranking. See [Study in Poland](#) for further information.

### What courses are available?

Poland has joined the [Bologna Process](#) along with 29 other countries. This is an agreement which aims to standardise the higher education systems across Europe so that qualifications are easily comparable. This means that the structure in the UK of Bachelors, Masters and Doctorate is also followed in Poland. Course lengths are similar to those in the UK although Masters may take around two years to complete.

Courses are available in the subjects that can also be found in the UK and many institutions offer courses in English. You may need to prove your proficiency of the language during the application process. If you wish to study in Polish you typically need to pass the State Certificate in Polish as a Foreign Language.

### Where can I study?

A full list of universities and other higher education institutions with contact details can be found at the [Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education](#). The [Jagiellonian University](#) in Krakow is the second oldest university in Central Europe and was founded in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

### Applying for postgraduate study

Typically you will need to have completed a Bachelors degree for entry on to a Masters course and will need a Masters qualification, or equivalent, for study on a Doctorate degree. A transcript of your results will have to be sent to the university along with a completed application form. Some institutions may require further documentation such as letters of recommendation and personal statements, while others may set up aptitude tests as part of the application process.

Entry requirements and application procedures can vary between universities so you should contact the institutions directly to find out further information. The academic year starts in October and ends in June. You should apply as early as possible and contact the university to find out about any specific closing dates.

### Fees and scholarships

Tuition fees may vary between universities so you should contact the institution directly for specific details. However, in general the minimum fees that will have to be paid are as follows:

- €2,000 per year for professional higher study and Masters courses;
- €3,000 per year for doctoral, postgraduate, vocational and specialist courses;
- €2,000 per year for a language course.

Living expenses in Poland are low and you should allow approximately €300 - €600 per month for accommodation, food and transport. See [Study in Poland](#) for further information.

Students from the European Union can apply for funding support through [Erasmus Mundus](#) which offers scholarships for joint Masters and Doctorates. You may also be able to apply for a Polish Government Scholarship. More information is available at the [Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange](#) (information is in Polish).

Individual universities may also offer their own scholarships for those who show academic excellence. Contact institutions directly to find out more.

### **Are there any exchange programmes?**

UK students on undergraduate degree programmes or postgraduate Masters and some PhD programmes may be interested in spending time studying in Poland through [Erasmus](#). This programme is open to all subject areas, but check with your institution's Erasmus coordinator first (usually based in the international office) to see which countries they have links with and in what subject areas.

### **Will my qualification be recognised in the UK?**

Poland is part of the Bologna Process, along with 29 other countries (including the UK) which aims to create the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Higher education institutions within this have adopted the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), which means certain credits are given to subjects and courses to make them easily comparable across the EU. This means your Polish qualification will be recognised in the UK. If you want further help with comparing international qualifications, contact [UK NARIC \(National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom\)](#), which gives information and advice on vocational, academic and professional qualifications from over 180 countries.

## **Visa and travel information**

### **Visa requirements and applications**

Citizens from EU countries do not need a visa to enter or work in Poland. If you plan to stay for longer than three months you will need to register with the local 'voivodship' office which will issue you with a temporary residence card. These are usually issued for up to two years and you may be able to apply for an extension at the end of it. You will usually have to prove you have health insurance – or a [European Health Insurance Card \(EHIC\)](#) – and sufficient money or funds to cover the cost of your stay. Further information can be found at the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland](#).

If you are from a non-EU country, contact the Polish embassy in the country where you are currently residing for information on whether you require a visa or work permit. If you are living in the UK, go to the [Embassy of the Republic of Poland in London](#). You might also find it helpful to contact your ministry of foreign affairs (or your own embassy if you

are not living in your home country) to ask whether there are any issues to be taken into account when considering working in Poland.

## Permanent residency

A person is eligible to apply for citizenship of Poland if they have resided in the country as a lawful permanent resident for at least five years. For further information see the [Embassy of the Republic of Poland in London – Consular Section](#).

## Help in an emergency

UK citizens can get help in an emergency from the [British Embassy Poland](#). It offers a range of services including issuing emergency travel documents, help if you've been the victim of a crime and details of local services.

The European emergency number 112 can be used in Poland for ambulances, fire brigade and police. Poland also has its own set of emergency numbers. If calling from a mobile the city code must be entered before the below numbers:

- 999 - ambulance
- 998 - fire brigade
- 997 - police
- 981 - road assistance
- 986 - municipal police

## Travel advice

You should always check whether there are any travel restrictions or warnings in place for the country you wish to visit. Find the latest travel advice and a traveller's checklist on the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office \(FCO\)](#) website.

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## Country overview

### Geography

- **Full country name:** Republic of Poland.
- **Population:** 38.3 million.
- **Border countries:** Germany to the west, the Czech Republic and Slovakia to the south, Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania to the east, and the Baltic Sea and Russia (Kaliningrad Oblast) to the north.
- **Climate:** temperate with cold and moderately severe winters and mild summers with frequent showers.
- **Terrain:** a lowland country with the mountains along the southern border, flat plains in the centre, lakes to the northeast and coastal land to the northwest.
- **Natural hazards:** flooding.

### Living in Poland

- **Cost of living:** it is less expensive in Poland than in other EU member states, although income also tends to be lower. Products are cheaper in supermarkets or large grocery stores and local markets. Students can typically get 50% discount on public transport with a valid student ID card.

- **Internet domain:** .pl
- **Health:** the Polish healthcare system is state-financed through the National Health Fund (NFZ) and everyone who is working in Poland is required to contribute to it. People who contribute and who are covered by the national health insurance system receive free primary health care. All EU nationals visiting Poland who hold a [European Health Insurance Card \(EHIC\)](#) are also provided with free healthcare. Non-EU nationals who are studying in Poland can choose to make contributions to the National Health Fund and will then receive the same level of care as residents and EU nationals.
- **Laws and customs:** avoid public drunkenness as if found by the police to be drunk in a public place you may be taken to a drying out clinic and will not be released until you are sober. You will be required to pay for the stay at the clinic. Always cross roads at designated crossing points as jay-walking is an offence and results in a fine.

## Economy and finance

- **Currency:** Zloty (PLN).
- **Type of economy:** Western, capitalist.
- **Health of economy:** Poland avoided recession during the 2008-09 economic downturn, but its GDP per capita is still below the EU average. Poland's economic performance could be improved if deficiencies in road and rail infrastructure and its business environment are addressed. The government has proposed deficit-reducing reforms as well as business-friendly reforms.
- **Unemployment rate:** 12.4% (2011)
- **Main exports:** machinery and transport equipment, manufactured goods, food and agricultural products.

## Culture

- **People:** Polish (97%), German, Ukrainian, Belarusian.
- **Major religion:** Roman Catholic (90%), Christian Eastern Orthodox (1.3%) and Protestant (0.3%)
- **History:** see [BBC Timeline: Poland](#)

## Politics

- **Type of government:** parliamentary republic.
- **Major political parties:** Civic Platform (liberal conservative), Law and Justice (conservative), Democratic left-alliance (social democratic), Polish People's Party (agrarian, centrist).

## More information

- [Embassy of the Republic of Poland in London](#)
- [BBC Country Profile - Poland](#)
- [The World Factbook](#)
- [XE Universal Currency Converter](#)

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