



Poland

This report describes the structure of the national higher education system in Poland, focusing on the institutional types as defined by national categories. It builds on the Eurydice report on the national higher education system but complements it with quantitative information on the role of higher education institution (HEI) types in national systems, based on data derived from the European Tertiary Education Register (<http://www.eter-project.eu>) for the period 2011-2019.

Types of Higher Education Institutions

According to Eurydice¹, the Polish higher education system comprises two main types of higher education institutions (HEIs):

- A university-type HEI is an institution that conducts research activity and has the A+, A or B+ research rating in at least one discipline of science or arts (ratings are awarded based on an external evaluation of the quality of research). It may provide first-cycle programmes leading to a Bachelor's degree (*licencjat* or *inżynier*) (ISCED 6), second-cycle and/or long-cycle programmes leading to a Master's degree (*magister*) (ISCED 7), and doctoral education/training (ISCED 8).
- A non-university HEI is an institution that offers programmes responding to the needs of the socio-economic environment and does not fulfil the criteria for a university-type HEI. It provides first-cycle programmes and may also offer second- and / or long-cycle programmes. This type of institution also includes HEIs earlier classified as schools of higher professional education (*wyższa szkoła zawodowa*), which are authorised to provide only first-cycle programmes. Non-university HEIs offer only practically oriented programmes.

HEIs can be divided into the following types:

- Universities (*Uniwersytety*)
- Technical HEIs (*Uczelnie Techniczne*)
- Agricultural HEIs (*Uczelnie Rolnicze*)
- HEIs Specialising in Economic Sciences/Schools of Economics (*Uczelnie Ekonomiczne*)
- Pedagogical HEIs (*Uczelnie Pedagogiczne*)
- Medical universities (*Uniwersytety Medyczne*)
- HEIs of Maritime Studies / Specialising in Maritime Studies (*uczelnie morskie*)

¹<https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/poland/types-higher-education-institutions>

- Academies of Physical Education (*akademie wychowania fizycznego*)
- HEIs of Art Studies / Specialising in Fine Arts (*Uczelnie Artystyczne*)
- Theological HEIs (*Uczelnie Teologiczne*)
- HEIs supervised by the minister responsible for national defence and the minister responsible for internal affairs and administration:
 - Military HEIs (*Uczelnie Wojskowe*)
 - Public/State Services HEIs (*Uczelnie Resortu Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji*)

Most public HEIs (around 70%) are university-type institutions, providing first- and second-cycle and doctoral education/training. The remaining ones (approximately 30%) are non-university HEIs offering only first- and second cycle programmes.

Main institutional characteristics. Legal status and the right to award a PhD

Table 1 below provides a quantitative overview of the main institutional characteristics by HEI type. Universities (*Uniwersytety*) are mostly public institutions and all of them award PhDs. While they remain to be the leading actor in the national higher education system, today universities account for less than 10% of all Polish HEIs.

Out of the 23 Technical HEIs (*Uczelnie Techniczne*), the majority also award PhDs; however, a higher share of private institutions can be observed in contrast to the Universities. Out of the 44 HEIs Specialising in Economic Sciences (*Wyższe Szkoły Ekonomiczne*), another major player in the Polish HE system, over 80% are private, and only a small fraction award PhD.

While the remaining institutional categories displayed in the table below combined account only for about 1/3 of total students enrolled, they outnumber the three main institutional types by far in the number of institutions and are a relevant part of the HE system. In particular, the majority of the private HEIs in Poland are part of the Other Higher Education Institutions (*Pozostałe Szkoły Wyższe*).

Table 1. Institutional type and legal status by HEI type, 2019

Category		N	Public	Private	PhD awarding
Academies of Physical Education	Akademie Wychowania Fizycznego	6	6	0	6
Agricultural HEIs	Uczelnie Rolnicze	7	6	1	6
HEIs of Art Studies	Uczelnie Artystyczne	19	18	1	16
HEIs of Maritime Studies	Uczelnie Morskie	2	2	0	2

Category		N	Public	Private	PhD awarding
HEIs Specialising in Economic Sciences	Uczelnie Ekonomiczne	34	5	29	9
Medical Universities	Uniwersytety Medyczne	9	9	0	9
Military HEIs	Uczelnie Wojskowe	5	5	0	3
Other Higher Education Institutions	Pozostałe Szkoły Wyższe	101	33	68	2
Pedagogical HEIs	Uczelnie Pedagogiczne	10	5	5	7
Public/State Services HEIs	Uczelnie Resortu Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji	2	2	0	0
Technical HEIs	Uczelnie Techniczne	22	18	4	19
Theological HEIs	Uczelnie Teologiczne	7	0	7	4
Universities	Uniwersytety	19	18	1	19
Total		243	127	116	102

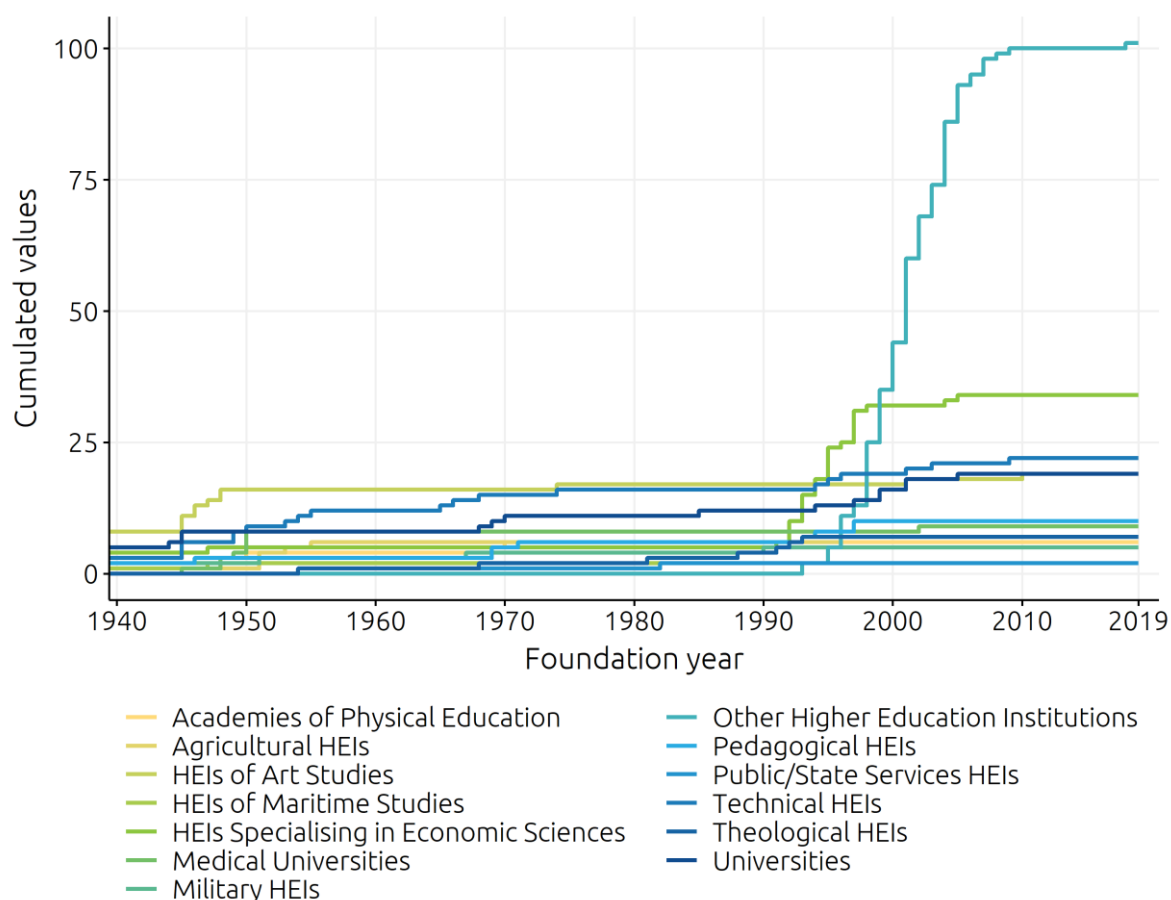
Institutional history. Older and younger institutional types

Data on the HEI foundation year provide information on the history of 'Poland's higher education and its evolution over time.

Figure 1 shows that, despite ancient historical roots, the expansion of the system in terms of the number of HEIs is relatively recent. While the *Jagiellonian University* in Cracow, the oldest Polish university, dates back to 1364, only eight HEIs were founded before the XIX century, including one Theological HEI (Warsaw), one Agricultural HEI (Warsaw) and three HEIs of Art Studies. Overall, however, Polish HEIs are much younger; only about a tenth of the HEIs was founded before WWII.

The figure shows two distinct patterns of expansion. First, the number (and size) of the different kinds of universities has increased after the second world war with the foundation of 59 HEIs until 1989, including 13 Technical HEIs. The second wave of expansion started in 1990 with the foundation of 170 HEIs, the majority of all HEIs, between 1993 and 2005. This expansion included the foundation of 36 HEIs Specialising in Economic Sciences in the 1990s and all the 123, mostly private, Other Higher Education Institutions. This expansion slowed down from 2006 onwards, and only one HEI was founded since 2010.

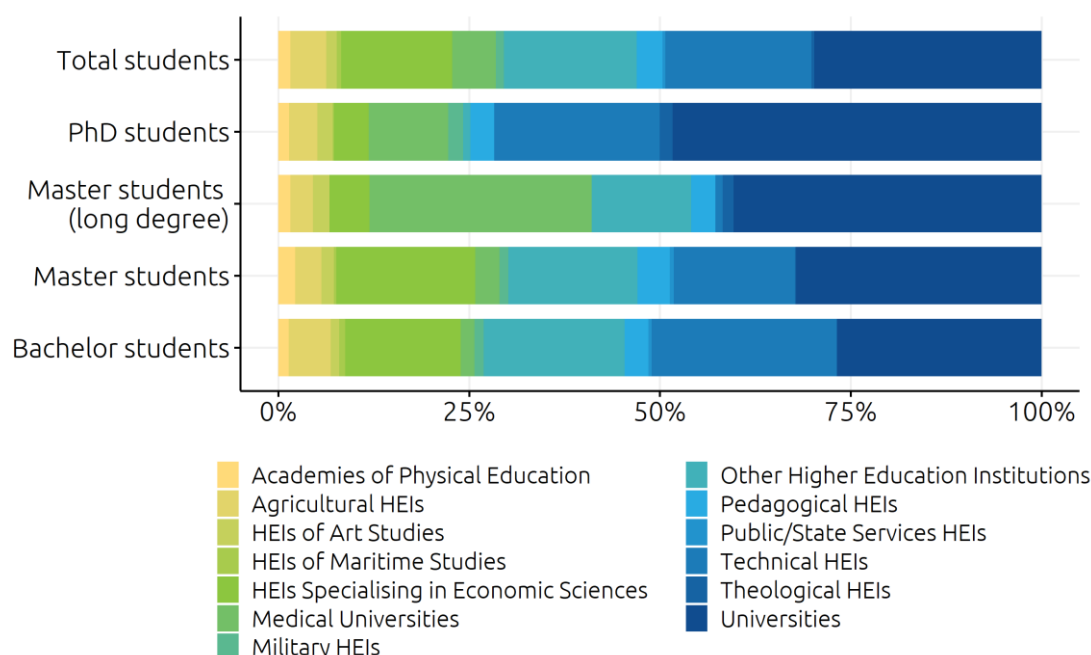
Figure 1. Foundation year of HEIs by type



How are students distributed?

In contrast to the number of institutions, in terms of the number of students enrolled, Universities still account for 30% of all students, followed by Technical HEIs with a share of 19% and HEIs Specialising in Economic Sciences with 15% (see **Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.**). All other categories combined account for about one-third of total students. While most HE institutions in Poland are private, the public institutions still account for the majority of students.

Figure 2. Students by level and type of HEI, 2019



Note: Total students includes ISCED 6-7

According to different institutional mandates, we also observe systematic differences between educational levels. Universities account for only 27% of the bachelor's students and 32% of the master's students, but for doctorates (48%) and long master's degrees enrolments (without an intermediate bachelor's degree) universities are of much higher importance. Other institutions accounting for a significant number of doctorates include Technical HEIs (22% of all PhD students) and Medical universities (10%). In contrast, HEIs specialising in economic sciences account for 15% of the bachelor's students and 18% of the master's students but only 5% of doctorates.

Academic personnel and financial resources

As illustrated by Figure 3, in 2019, universities (including Technical HEI and Medical Universities) account for about three-quarters of financial revenues and two-thirds of the academic personnel of the whole HEI system, i.e. substantially more than their share of students. This broadly corresponds to the fact that universities also have an important research function.

This difference is, to some extent, also reflected in the composition of revenues, as Universities and Technical HEIs receive a larger proportion of revenues (by about 10%) from (research-related) third-

party funds compared to other types of HEIs. Overall, state allocation remains dominant for all institutional types in Poland, while student fees play a minor role.

Figure 3. Resources, academic personnel and total students enrolled by type of HEI, 2019

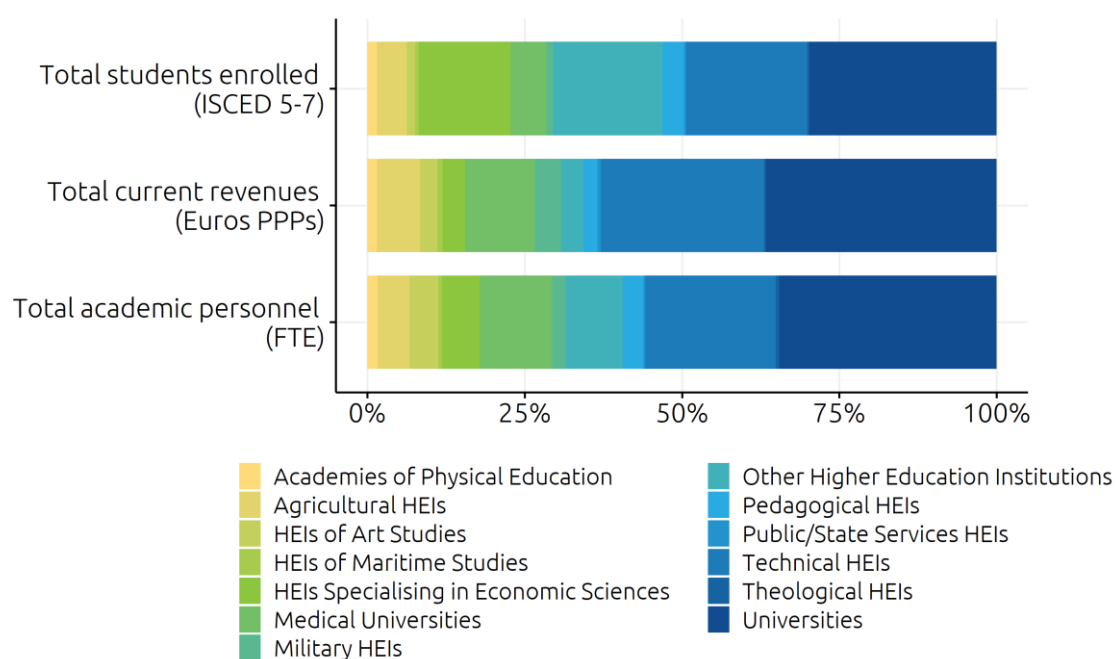
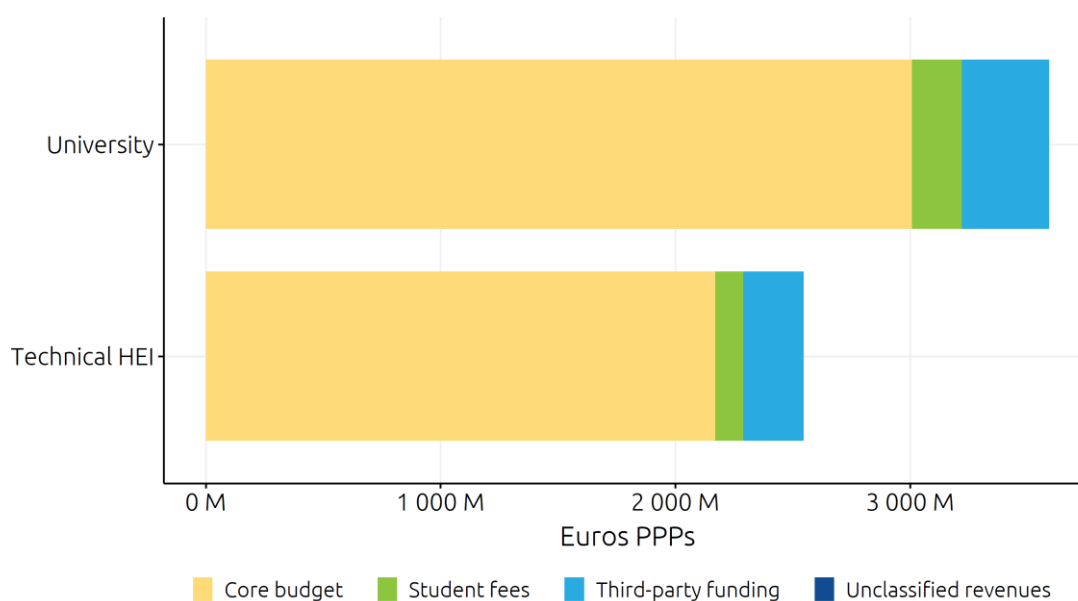


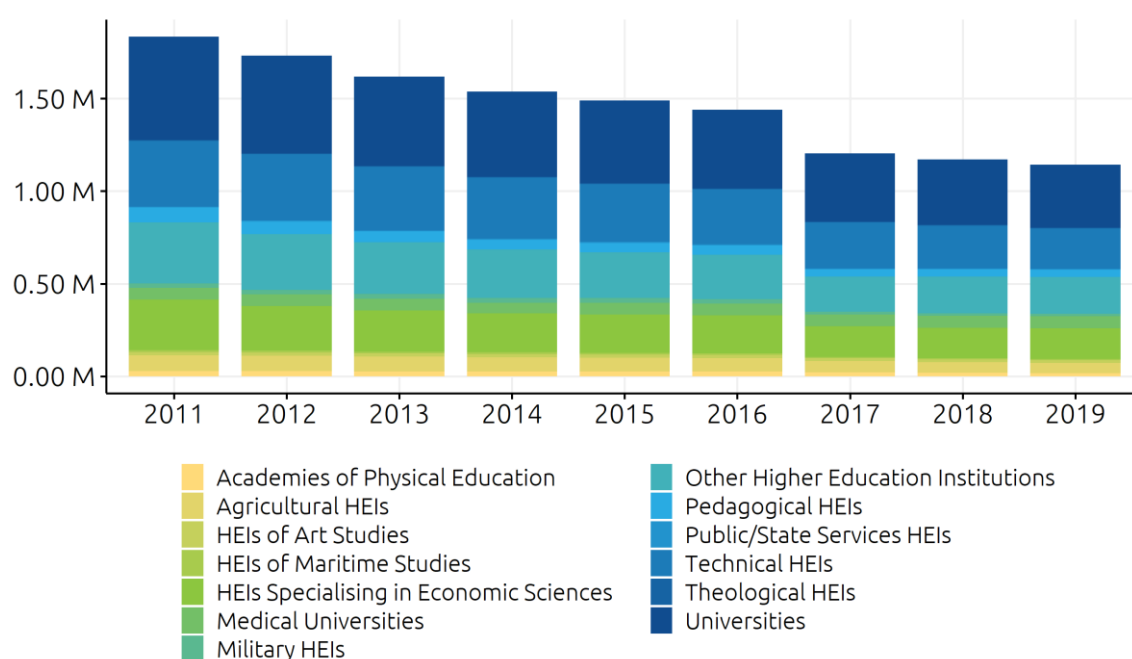
Figure 4. Composition of resources. Universities (Uniwersytety) and Technical HEIs (Uczelnie Techniczne)



Changing roles over time

When observed through the lens of the number of students, data show a pattern of decrease, with the number of enrolled students decreasing by 38% from 2011 to 2019. While only Medical Universities (+3%) and HEIs of Art Studies (-8%) kept their enrollment somewhat stable, the Pedagogical HEIs (-51%) and Military HEIs (-49%) experienced an even steeper decline. The decrease in students was similar across the remaining institutional categories, with values between 30% and 40%.

Figure 5. Share of students enrolled by institutional type



Note: Break in series from 2016 to 2017 due to changes in data collection



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