

Adult education in 2022

 **8.1 pp.**

An increase in percentage of adults participating in various forms of learning compared to 2016.

In 2022, 54.0% of people in Poland aged 18-69 declared that they acquired knowledge in various ways. 48.3% of them (11.4 million people) learned informally from co-workers, friends, family members or on their own. Education in the school system or in higher education (formal education) covered 2.3 million people, i.e. 9.2% of the surveyed population. One in five persons aged 18-69 (5.6 million people) participated in courses,

training and other forms of organised learning. Relatively more women than men and urban residents compared to rural population participated in all forms of educational activity. The exception was formal education which concentrated more rural than urban residents.

31.01.2024

The international Adult Education Survey (AES) was conducted between 1 February and 31 March 2023 using the representative sampling method on a randomly selected sample of 26,148 dwellings

Table 1. People aged 18-69 participating in formal and non-formal education and informal learning by sex and place of residence

Specification	Total		Men		Women		Urban areas		Rural areas	
	2016	2022	2016	2022	2016	2022	2016	2022	2016	2022
People aged 18-69 total in thous.	26960	24833	13323	12224	13637	12609	16393	14795	10567	10038
in % of total:										
who participated in:										
any form of learning ^a	45.9	54.0	45.3	52.6	46.4	55.3	49.9	56.9	39.5	49.7
formal education	11.3	9.2	10.4	7.9	12.2	10.5	11.7	9.1	10.7	9.4
non-formal education	21.4	19.8	21.7	18.7	21.1	20.8	25.4	21.4	15.2	17.4
informal learning	31.4	48.3	30.8	46.7	32.0	49.8	34.3	51.1	27.0	44.0
who did not participate in any form of learning	54.1	46.0	54.7	47.4	53.6	44.7	50.1	43.1	60.5	50.3

^a One person could participate in several forms of learning at the same time.

Participation in formal education

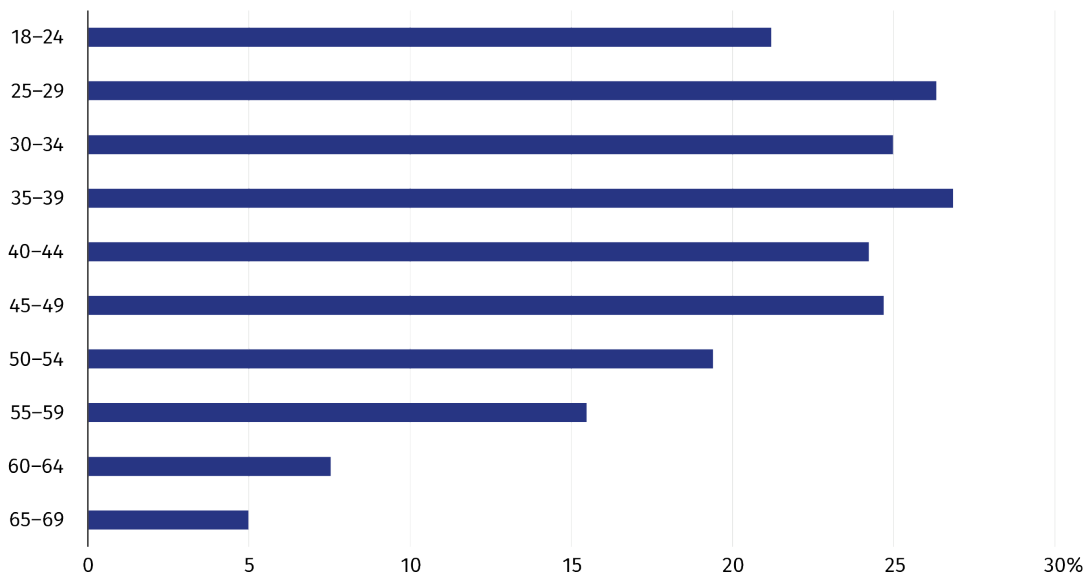
9.2% of people aged 18-69 participated in formal education during the 12 months prior to the survey (the survey was conducted in February-March 2023). A larger percentage of women (10.5%) than men (7.9%) and rural residents (9.4%) than urban inhabitants (9.1%) pursued this form of learning. The vast majority of formal education participants in the surveyed population were the youngest persons – aged 18-24 (65.6%) and those aged 25-29 (10.8%). Among the younger participants of formal education (aged 18-24), the most people had completed general secondary education (42.0%) and lower secondary, primary education or had no formal education (27.4%), while people with a tertiary level of educational attainment prevailed in the group of respondents aged 25-69 (71.1%).

A higher percentage of women (10.5%) than men (7.9%) and rural (9.4%) than urban residents (9.1%) pursued formal education

Participation in non-formal education

19.8% of people aged 18-69 participated in non-formal education in the survey period. A larger percentage of women (20.8%) than men (18.7%) and urban (21.4%) than rural residents (17.4%) participated in this form of learning.

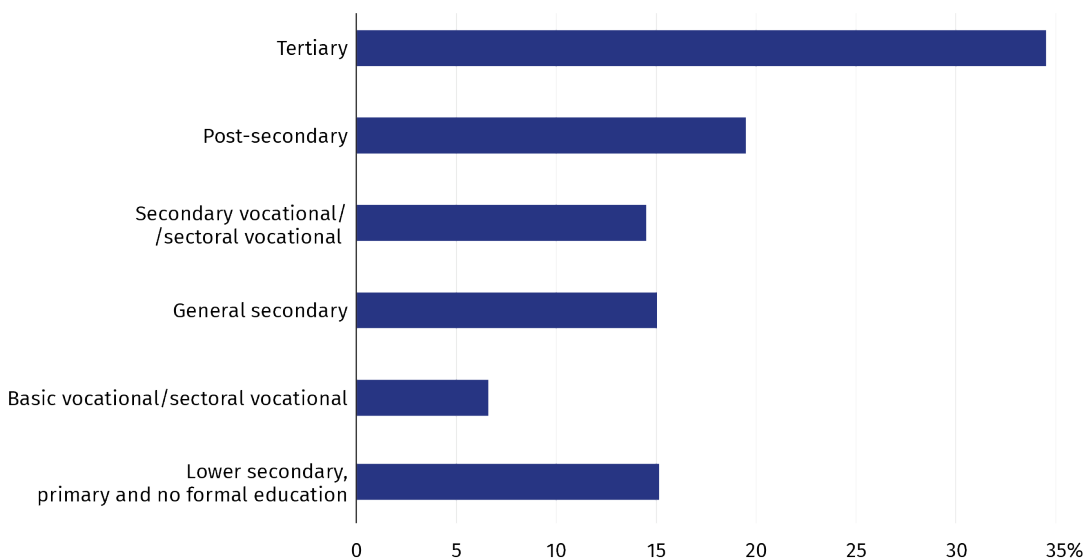
Chart 1. People aged 18-69 participating in non-formal education by age groups



People aged 25 to 49 demonstrated the greatest activity in the field of non-formal education. Over a quarter of them reported participation in this form of education. The participation of the youngest respondents (aged 18-24) in non-formal education stood at 21.2%. An age-related downward trend has been observed in educational activity of respondents participating in non-formal education (from 19.4% of people aged 50-54 to 5.0% of those aged 65-69).

People aged 25 to 49 demonstrated the greatest activity in the field of non-formal education

Chart 2. People aged 18-69 participating in non-formal education by level of educational attainment

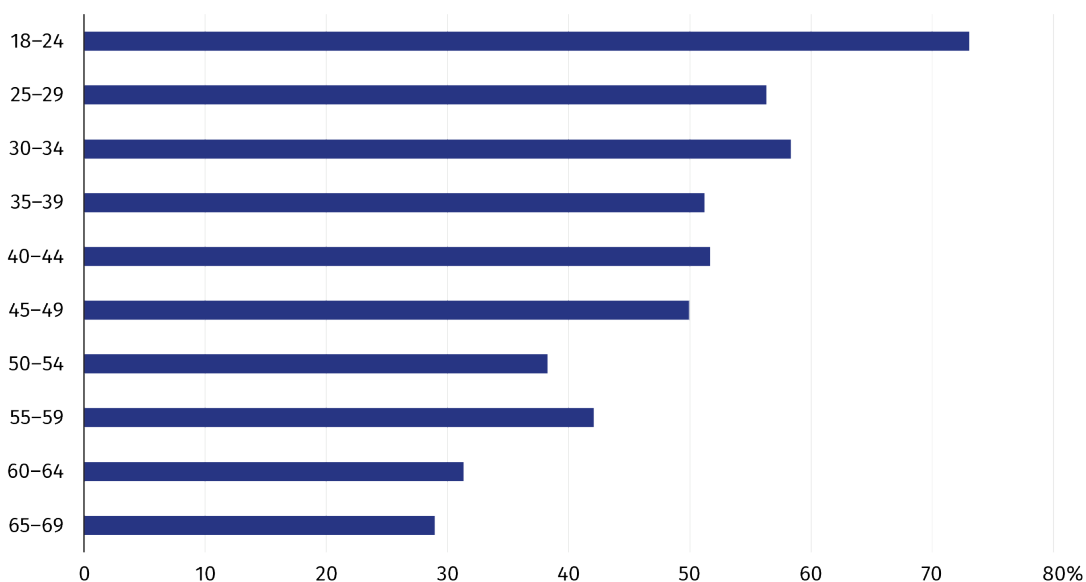


In the group of people aged 18-69, people with a tertiary level of educational attainment (34.5%) and post-secondary (19.5%) participated in non-formal education most often, while people with basic vocational or sectoral education (6.6%) were the least numerous participants in this form of education).

Participation in informal learning

48.3% of people aged 18-69 participated in informal learning during the analysed period. Relatively more women (49.8%) than men (46.7%) and city dwellers (51.1%) than rural residents (44.0%) supplemented their knowledge informally with the help of co-workers, friends, family members or on their own.

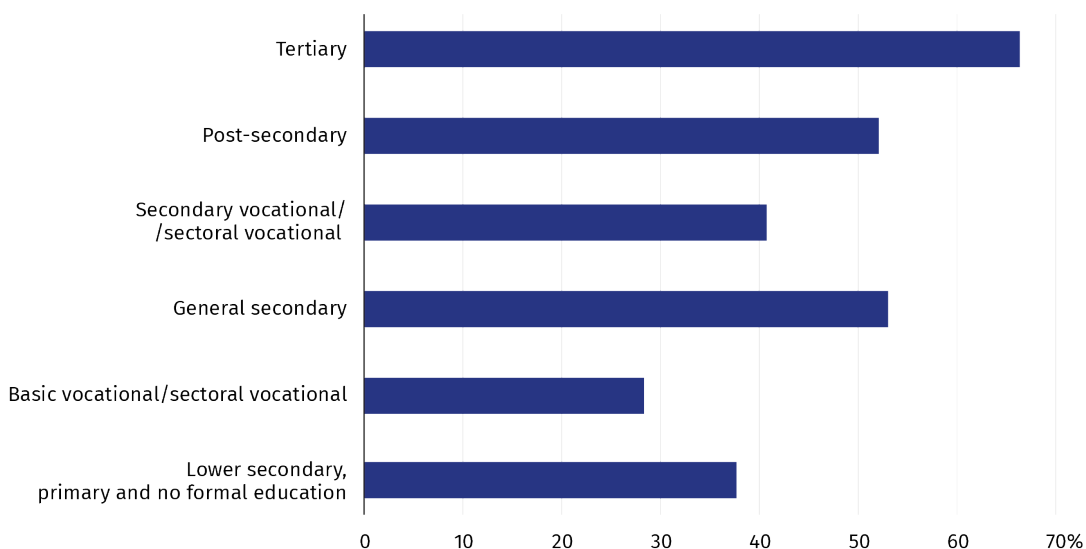
Chart 3. People aged 18-69 participating in informal learning by age group



Young people demonstrated the highest educational activity in the informal system. 73.1% of people aged 18-24 participated in this form of learning. The lowest level of participation was recorded in the oldest age groups, i.e. people aged 65-69 (28.9%) and 60-64 (31.3%).

Young people demonstrated the highest educational activity in the informal system. Over 70% of people aged 18-24 participated in this form of learning

Chart 4. People aged 18-69 participating in informal learning by level of educational attainment



Informal learning participants with a tertiary level of educational attainment (66.4%) and general secondary and post-secondary educational attainment (53.0% and 52.1%, respectively) prevailed among respondents aged 18-69. People with basic vocational and sectoral educational attainment were the least active in this form of learning (28.3%).

Access to information on formal and non-formal learning possibilities and provision of educational guidance

22.9% of the respondents aged 18-69 who answered the question were looking for information regarding both formal and non-formal learning possibilities. The survey also provided data on information or assistance (paid or free of charge) in choice and decision making about education or training. Only guidance provided by institutions and organisations was covered. The basic feature of such counselling was mutual communication and interaction which had to occur between the respondent and another person (including contact via ICT systems), or involving the use of Internet bots, network robots or automatic Internet applications operating on the basis of human interaction. Personal contact (declared by 9.8% of adults) was more common than the use of automatic Internet tools (2.7%). The most common form of institutional guidance provided to respondents in the field of education was advice or information on various education or training possibilities (received by 8.5% of people aged 18-69). 2.2% of adults received advice or assistance regarding procedures for validation or recognition of skills, competences and prior learning outcomes, while 1.4% of respondents declared that their educational and training needs were assessed by means of professional tests, audits or interviews developed by professional advisors. Assistance in the field of educational counselling was most often provided by institutions such as schools, higher education institutions, vocational education and training centres, institutions for adult education and validation centres (for 6.5% of the surveyed population). Employers or prospective employers (indicated by 3.5% of people) were also an important source of information and assistance regarding education and training.

Obstacles to participation in formal and non-formal education

The results of the Adult Education Survey allow for the division of respondents into four groups, taking into account their participation in formal or non-formal education and their willingness to participate in these forms of education. These are people who participated in education and wanted to participate more, persons who did not participate in education but wanted to participate, those who participated in education but did not want to participate more, and people who neither participated nor wanted to participate in formal or non-formal education. People who declared lack of willingness for (further) education could indicate whether this was due to lack of need to participate in formal or non-formal education, or whether objective factors and external obstacles discouraged respondents from undertaking (further) education and training. 80.2% of people who participated in education and 79.4% of those who did not participate indicated no need for education as the main reason for (further) non-participation in education and training. All respondents who felt the need to participate in education or training could point to obstacles that limited or prevented them from participating. For people who participated in education and wanted to participate more, the main obstacles were inconvenient study and training time (for 25.3%) and family responsibilities (20.2%). Respondents who did not participate in education but wanted to indicated family responsibilities (23.5%), inconvenient study time (20.0%) and too high costs of education (15.6 %) as the greatest obstacles to their education and training. For people participating in education but not willing to learn more (despite the declared need to increase the scope of their education and training), the most important reasons limiting their educational activity were family responsibilities (31.8%) or other personal reasons (28.1%). Other personal reasons (29.5%), family responsibilities (22.9%) and age-related problems and limitations (13.9%) were the biggest obstacles for respondents who neither participated in education nor wanted to (despite the declared need for education and training).

22.9% of the respondents aged 18-69 were looking for information regarding both formal and non-formal learning possibilities

The main reason for limited participation or non-participation in education was having no such a need. The greatest obstacles to participation for people who wanted to participate in education were: family responsibilities, other personal reasons and inconvenient study time

Foreign language skills

Almost three quarters of people aged 18-69 (72.8%) who answered questions about the knowledge of foreign languages reported having foreign language skills at various levels of advancement. The largest group were respondents who could use only one language (45.8%), 62.0% of whom had basic level skills, sometimes only allowing them to understand and use a few words and expressions. Respondents able to use more than one foreign language represented 27.0% of the surveyed population. A relatively higher level of language competence was recorded among respondents who used two or more languages than among people who spoke only one foreign language. 33.2% of people with the knowledge of two or more languages indicated that they could communicate freely in at least one of them. Among respondents with only one foreign language skills, 14.8% declared proficiency in that language. In addition to a significant percentage of people aged 18-69 declaring inability to use even a few words and expressions in a foreign language (over a quarter of respondents), approximately 38% of all respondents described their language skills as only basic. Less than 35% of the surveyed population assessed their language competences as at least intermediate.

Almost three quarters of respondents aged 18-69 (72.8%) reported having foreign language skills at various levels of advancement

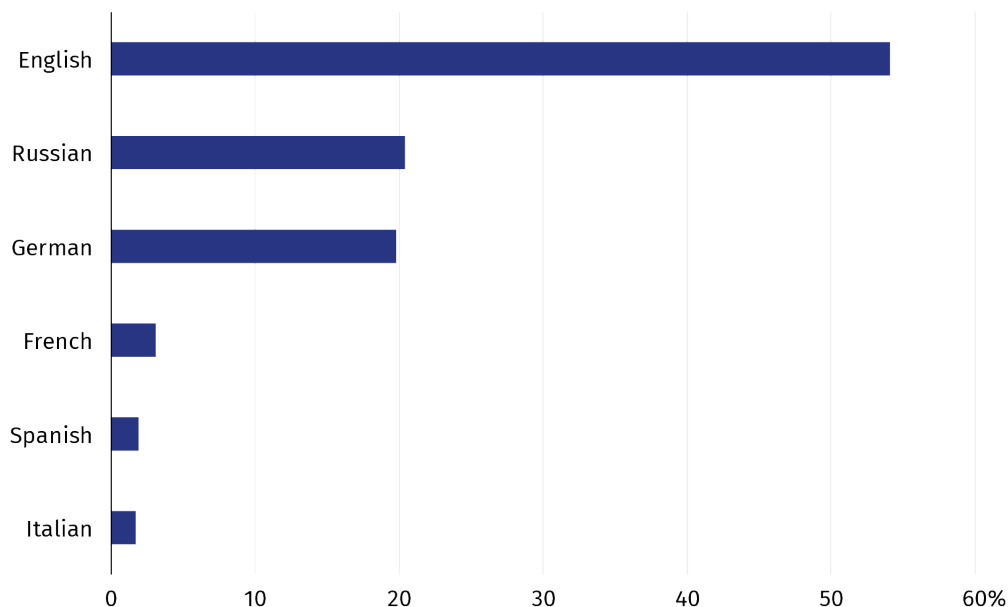
Table 2. Foreign language skills among people aged 18-69

SPECIFICATION	Total	Men	Women	Urban areas	Rural areas
	in %				
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
People using foreign languages	72.8	71.8	73.9	76.8	67.1
people using one foreign language	45.8	45.6	46.1	45.8	45.9
of which self-reporting their level of foreign language as:					
basic	62.0	61.1	62.9	56.0	71.0
intermediate	23.2	23.3	23.0	26.2	18.7
advanced	14.8	15.6	14.1	17.8	10.3
people using two or more foreign languages	27.0	26.2	27.8	31.0	21.1
of which self-reporting their level of the first foreign language as:					
basic	37.0	36.2	37.8	34.3	42.8
intermediate	29.8	29.9	29.7	29.1	31.2
advanced	33.2	33.9	32.5	36.6	26.0
of which self-reporting their level of the second foreign language as:					
basic	68.8	68.7	68.9	66.3	74.4
intermediate	23.5	24.0	23.0	25.6	18.7
advanced	7.7	7.3	8.1	8.1	6.9
People not using any foreign languages	27.2	28.2	26.1	23.2	32.9

The greatest number of people self-reported the knowledge of one of the three foreign languages: English, Russian and German. English was the most widespread language with 54.1% of adult Poles using it at various levels of advancement. French, Spanish and Italian were also relatively popular (their knowledge was declared by respectively 3.1%, 1.9% and 1.7% of the respondents). The highest skills were achieved by people speaking English (54.1% of respondents achieved at least an intermediate level of competence) and Spanish (46.5%). An intermediate and advanced level was self-reported by people speaking Italian (40.7%), French (38.7%) and German (31.8%). Low linguistic competences of people declaring the knowledge of Russian, the second most popular language, are noteworthy - only 19.2% of people in this group of respondents assessed the level of their skills as at least intermediate.

The greatest number of people self-reported the knowledge of one of the three foreign languages: English, Russian and German

Chart 5. The most popular foreign languages used by people aged 18-69



Methodological notes

This news release is based on the generalised results of the representative survey Adult Education Survey (AES), conducted in February and March 2023, in accordance with the Programme of Statistical Surveys of Official Statistics for 2023. The survey was conducted on a random sample of 26148 dwellings and covered all persons aged 18-69 years.

The main objective of the Adult Education Survey was to provide adult education data comparable for EU countries. The set of variables adopted in the survey encompassed people aged 18-69 years participating in formal, non-formal and informal education, in connection with socio-demographic characteristics. Another purpose of the survey was to supply data on access to information regarding learning possibilities and provision of educational guidance, difficulties preventing or hindering participation in education, as well as foreign language skills.

It is an international survey based on EU regulations: Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 2021/861 of 21 May 2021 specifying the technical items of the dataset and establishing the technical formats for the transmission of information in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2019/1700 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 2021/859 of 4 February 2021 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1700 of the European Parliament and of the Council by specifying the number and names of variables for the dataset in the field of education and training. This was its fourth edition conducted in Poland. The first pilot survey was carried out in 2006 on the basis of a voluntary agreement with Eurostat.

A broader range of data from the Adult Learning Survey, together with analytical commentary and result tables, will be presented in the Statistics Poland's publication "Adult Education 2022", scheduled for release in May 2024.

When citing data from Statistics Poland please provide the following information: "Source of data: Statistics Poland". When publishing calculations made on data published by Statistics Poland, provide the following information: "Own study based on the Statistics Poland's data".

Prepared by:
Statistical Office in Gdańsk
Director Jerzy Auksztol
Phone: (+48 58) 768 31 31

Issued by:
**Spokesperson for the President
of Statistics Poland**
Karolina Banaszek
Mobile: (+48) 695 255 011

Press Office

Phone: (+48 22) 608 38 04

e-mail: obslugaprasowa@stat.gov.pl

-  stat.gov.pl/en/
-  [@StatPoland](https://twitter.com/StatPoland)
-  [@GlownyUrzadStatystyczny](https://www.facebook.com/GlownyUrzadStatystyczny)
-  [gus_stat](https://www.instagram.com/gus_stat)
-  [glownyurządstatystycznygus](https://www.youtube.com/glownyurządstatystycznygus)
-  [glownyurządstatystyczny](https://www.linkedin.com/company/glownyurządstatystyczny)

Related publications

[Adult education 2016](#)

Major terms available in the Glossary

[Formal education](#)

[Non-formal education](#)

[Informal learning](#)