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2023-2027

# EVALUATION REPORT

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION AT A DOCTORAL SCHOOL

Szkoła Doktorska Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego  
Uniwersytet Rzeszowski

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**Name of the doctoral school**

Szkoła Doktorska Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego

**Evaluation period**

4/30/19–9/10/25

**Name of the entity that is responsible for running the doctoral school**

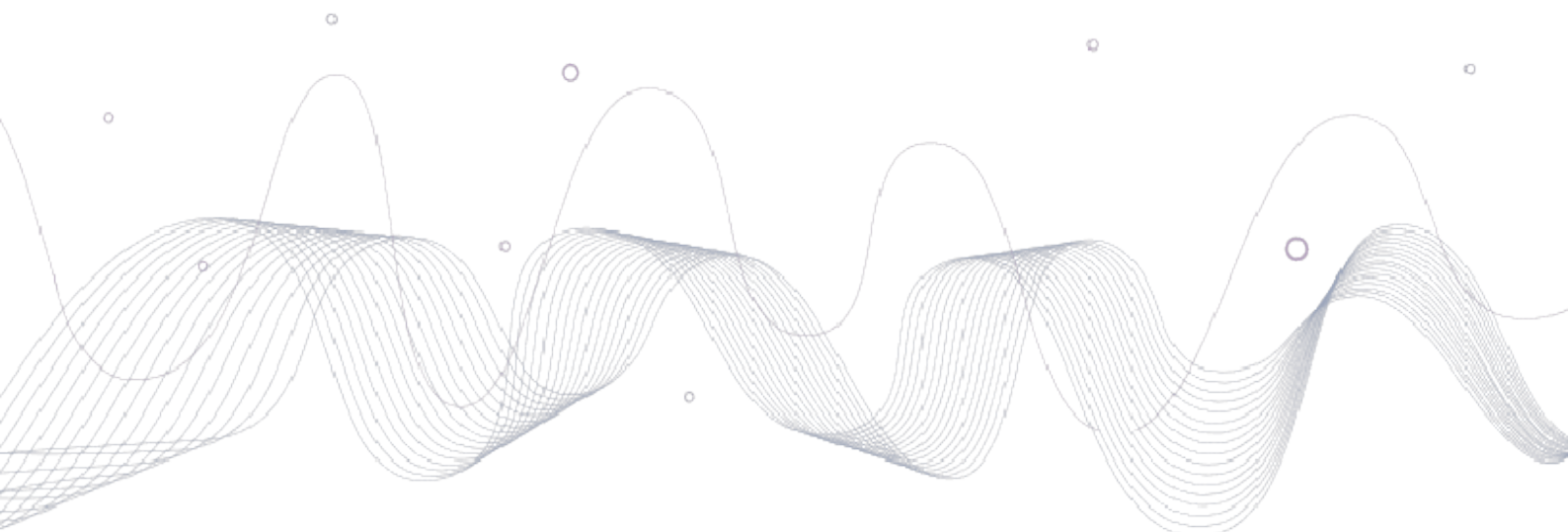
Uniwersytet Rzeszowski

**Entities that jointly run the doctoral school (when conducted jointly)**

-

**Date of submission of the self-assessment report by the Entity: DD.MM.YYYY**

12/1/25



Composition of the evaluation team:

**Chairman:**

Tomasz Szanciło

**Secretary:**

Igor Zgoliński

**Team members:**

Jolanta Małyszko

Krzysztof Piotr Okarma

Emilio Carrizosa

Aleksandra Wendorf

Waldemar Górski

**Developed: 5/24/26**

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# I. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE DOCTORAL SCHOOL

Name of doctoral school	Szkoła Doktorska Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego
Date of establishment	2019
Date of commencement of education at doctoral school	10/1/19
Entity cooperating in the conduct of education (this does not refer to entities co-founding a doctoral school)	-
Domains of study	Humanities (from: 01-01-2018) Engineering and technology (from: 01-01-2018) Medical and health sciences (from: 01-01-2018) Agricultural sciences (from: 01-01-2018) Social sciences (from: 01-01-2018) Natural sciences (from: 01-01-2018) The arts (from: 01-01-2018)
Discipline(s) of science or art in which training is provided	archaeology (from: 01-01-2018) philosophy (from: 01-01-2018) history (from: 01-01-2018) linguistics (from: 01-01-2018) literary studies (from: 01-01-2018) information and communication technology (from: 01-01-2018) materials engineering (from: 01-01-2018) physical culture science (from: 01-01-2018) health sciences (from: 01-01-2018) medical sciences (from: 01-01-2018) agriculture and horticulture (from: 01-01-2018) food and nutrition technology (from: 01-01-2018) economics and finance (from: 01-01-2018) political and administrative sciences (from: 01-01-2018) law (from: 01-01-2018) sociology (from: 01-01-2018) educational sciences (from: 01-01-2018) mathematics (from: 01-01-2018) biological sciences (from: 01-01-2018) physical sciences (from: 01-01-2018) biotechnology (from: 11-11-2022) music (from: 01-01-2018)

	fine arts and art conservation (from: 01-01-2018)
Name/scope of the education programme	<p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of philosophy XIX-XX</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of food and nutrition technology XIX-XX</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of history XIX-XX</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of medical sciences XIX-XX</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of law XIX-XX</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of fine arts and art conservation XIX-XX</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of literary studies XIX-XX</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of sociology XIX-XX</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of linguistics XIX-XX</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of physical sciences XIX-XX</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of archaeology XIX-XX</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of history XX-XXI</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of medical sciences XX-XXI</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of health sciences XX-XXI</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of law XX-XXI</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of fine arts and art conservation XX-XXI</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of sociology XX-XXI</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of food and nutrition technology XX-XXI</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of archaeology XX-XXI</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of literary studies XX-XXI</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of</p>

education in the discipline of linguistics XX-XXI

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of agriculture and horticulture XX-XXI

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of physical sciences XX-XXI

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of political and administrative sciences XX-XXI

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of philosophy XX-XXI

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of literary studies XXI-XXII

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of political and administrative sciences XXI-XXII

General education programme with the scope of education in economics and finance XXI-XXII

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of philosophy XXI-XXII

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of food and nutrition technology XXI-XXII

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of sociology XXI-XXII

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of linguistics XXI-XXII

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of music XXI-XXII

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of agriculture and horticulture XXI-XXII

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of health sciences XXI-XXII

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of educational sciences XXI-XXII

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of law XXI-XXII

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of history XXI-XXII

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of archaeology XXI-XXII

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of fine arts and art conservation XXI-XXII

	<p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of biological sciences XXI-XXII</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of medical sciences XXI-XXII</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of physical sciences XXI-XXII</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of physical sciences XXII-XXIII</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of food and nutrition technology XXII-XXIII</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of archaeology XXII-XXIII</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of educational sciences XXII-XXIII</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of philosophy XXII-XXIII</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of law XXII-XXIII</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of history XXII-XXIII</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of music XXII-XXIII</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of agriculture and horticulture XXII-XXIII</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in economics and finance XXII-XXIII</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of biological sciences XXII-XXIII</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of linguistics XXII-XXIII</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of literary studies XXII-XXIII</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of health sciences XXII-XXIII</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in medical sciences XXII-XXIII</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of fine arts and art conservation XXII-XXIII</p> <p>General education programme with the scope of</p>
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education in the discipline of physical culture XXII-XXIII

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of literary studies XXIII-XXIV

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of music XXIII-XXIV

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of fine arts and art conservation XXIII-XXIV

General education programme with the scope of education in mathematics XXIII-XXIV

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of medical sciences XXIII-XXIV

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of biological sciences XXIII-XXIV

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of food and nutrition technology XXIV-XXV

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of fine arts and art conservation XXIV-XXV

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of medical sciences XXIV-XXV

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of biotechnology XXIV-XXV

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of materials engineering XXIV-XXV

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of law XXIV-XXV

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of political and administrative sciences XXIV-XXV

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of philosophy XXIV-XXV

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of linguistics XXIV-XXV

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of physical sciences XXIV-XXV

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of history XXIV-XXV

General education programme with the scope of education in the discipline of archaeology XXIV-XXV

Number of instructors	220
Number of doctoral students undergoing training at the doctoral school (as of 11/25/25)	137
Number of supervisors in terms of guidance in preparing doctoral dissertations (as of 11/25/25)	112
Number of auxiliary supervisors in terms of guidance in preparing doctoral dissertations (as of 11/25/25)	38

## II. INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION AND ITS COURSE

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The visitation at the Doctoral School of the University of Rzeszów (hereinafter: SD UR) in Rzeszów took place on April 13-15, 2026. It was carried out based on the following schedule:

April 13, 2026:

- meeting with the University authorities and the SD UR authorities,
- meeting with the team preparing the self-assessment report and the SD UR Council, including persons responsible for the evaluated criteria,
- visiting of the SD UR infrastructure;

April 14, 2026:

- evaluation of Individual Research Plans (hereinafter: IPB), mid-term assessment documentation, other relevant documents,
- meeting with course instructors, research supervisors, representatives of scientific councils of disciplines represented in the SD UR,
- meeting with doctoral students and the doctoral student council;

April 15, 2026:

- concluding team meeting,
- final meeting with the University authorities, including presentation of the course of further stages of the evaluation procedure.

The team familiarized itself with the SD UR documentation, including IPB, mid-term assessments, evaluation surveys, lesson plans and programs, recruitment reports. The SD UR provided the members of the evaluation team with appropriate working conditions, making available the Senate meeting room where all meetings took place. It is worth emphasizing the support of the University authorities and the SD UR in the activities of PhD students, which was highlighted by the PhD students, as well as the support in the external (outside the university) activities of PhD students.

### III. COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE ENTITY AND THE DOCTORAL STUDENT SELF-GOVERNMENT

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The Doctoral Candidates Council of the University of Rzeszów (hereinafter: the Council) operates as a fully integrated body within the formal structure of the University, and its cooperation with the SD UR merits a highly positive assessment. The Council is represented at the highest decision-making levels – its chairperson holds membership in both the Senate of the University of Rzeszów and the Council of the SD UR, thereby ensuring that the voice of doctoral candidates is systematically considered by the University's authorities. Representatives of the Council participate as observers in recruitment interviews with prospective the SD UR candidates and in the proceedings of the mid-term evaluation committee and are actively involved in competitive selection processes for research grants and research placement visits under the NAWA STER – Internationalization of Doctoral Schools programme. The Council regularly issues opinions on changes to curricula and evaluates the quality of the teaching process, making a tangible contribution to the internal quality assurance system.

The Review Team noted with appreciation the atmosphere that characterizes the relationship between the Council and the authorities of the SD UR. The evident readiness to engage in open dialogue, the mutual respect displayed by both parties, and the genuine willingness to listen to and accommodate the needs of doctoral candidates are values that the Team assessed in an exceptionally positive light and that distinguish this institution from its peers. The Council's involvement in the life of the doctoral community is real and substantive; the opinions it expresses carry genuine weight in institutional decision-making, and the spirit of collaboration that the Team had the opportunity to observe is deserving of both recognition and continuation. Particularly worthy of praise is the separation of the Council's budget from the general student budget, a measure that has conferred genuine financial autonomy upon the body. This change has had a direct and measurable impact on the Council's operations. It is well established that, without dedicated financial resources, a self-governing body is unable to fulfil its mission effectively. The increased funding has strengthened the Council's capacity to act and enhanced its visibility within the academic community.

The Council's activity extends beyond the structures of the University of Rzeszów. It holds membership in three national organizations: the Polish National Association of Doctoral Candidates (KRD), the Doctoral Forum of Polish Universities (DFUP), and the Consortium of Doctoral Candidates of Life Sciences Universities. Engagement at the national level is an indicator of the Council's maturity and ambition. In 2023, the Council received the prestigious ProDok 2023 Award, conferred by the Polish National Association of Doctoral Candidates in the Event category, for its series of meetings and workshops entitled “Zdrowy Senior” (Healthy Senior), further attesting to its effectiveness and recognition within the academic community. Nonetheless, the Review Team encourages the Council to broaden its outreach to English-speaking doctoral candidates. Although the number of international doctoral students enrolled at the SD UR is currently modest, such an approach will become indispensable as the school continues to develop its international profile. Adapting selected initiatives and communication channels to English-language standards will strengthen the integration of existing international doctoral candidates, contribute to enhancing the overall attractiveness of the University, and support the internationalization of the SD UR.

## **IV. INFORMATION ON THE DOCTORAL SCHOOL TO WHICH THE STATUTORY CRITERIA APPLY**

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- **The adequacy of the education programmes and individual research plans with respect to the learning outcomes for qualifications at level 8 of the PQF and their implementation:**

The report provides a detailed description of the structure of the IPB, which consists of 13 elements and fully complies with the standards of Polish Qualifications Framework (PRK) level 8. The curriculum, which implements 10 learning objectives, is assigned to 84 ECTS credits together with the professional internship (90 hours, 12 ECTS). The program is divided into an interdisciplinary module, a monodisciplinary module, and a module in higher-education didactics. The interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum, which covers 23 disciplines, has been effectively implemented as evidenced particularly by the shared courses: *Ethics in science*, *Commercialization of Scientific Research*, *Writing Scientific Texts*. The curriculum is very well balanced and is not overloaded with content that has little relevance to the specific disciplines. It includes essential general courses, several interdisciplinary electives, and a significant number of specialized courses, taught primarily by the doctoral student's supervisor. This allows doctoral students to focus on their dissertation, especially after the mid-term evaluation. An interesting idea are *Workshops with an Expert* allowing for independent verification of research hypotheses and results obtained during classes taught individually by a researcher from outside the University, mainly from abroad, specializing in the topic of the doctoral candidate's dissertation. The introduction of this course has been recognized and published as a good practice in the professional literature (Kiełbasiński, Koli, Pietrzyk-Tobiasz). The *Scientific conference* course taught by the supervisors is helpful for doctoral students in preparing publications and conference presentations, also by the joint analysis of feedback and comments following their active participation in the conference. The supplement is the *Public speaking* course.

The curriculum is monitored and modified based on results of surveys filled by doctoral students, as well as in response to changing needs (a course on artificial intelligence was recently introduced). Changes to the curriculum and the selection of staff are coordinated with the authorities of the faculties. An effective communication and cooperation in shaping the curriculum is supported by the selected formula of the Doctoral School Council whose members include deans or their designated representatives, as well as the chairman of the Council.

The curricula effective for each academic year are available on the website of the Doctoral School, since the academic year 2022/2023 also in English. The duration of the programme cycle ranges from 6 to 8 semesters, although it generally lasts 8 semesters. Doctoral students do not take advantage of the option to complete their studies earlier, due to the conditions for receiving a doctoral scholarship and the need to complete the learning outcomes for the last two semesters in advance. Learning outcomes are assigned both to courses in the curriculum and to specific elements of the individual research plan.

Courses may be conducted remotely in a synchronous format for up to 40% of the ECTS credits. Course syllabi are available on the website of the Doctoral School, although those for the current academic year and subsequent years are missing. For example, for the academic cycle beginning in 2025/2026, only the first-year syllabi are available, and for the previous cycle, only those for the first and second years. For specialized elective courses, syllabi are available for a single course in each discipline; therefore, it should be concluded that the available information refers only to the courses currently offered and not to the full range of available courses.

- **The method of assessing the learning outcomes for qualifications at level 8 of the PQF:**  
Learning outcomes at Level 8 PRK in the SD UR have been developed in a comprehensive manner, such that the diversity of fields of science and art education (7 fields and 23 disciplines) makes it possible to establish a clear and concrete reference to the intended and described areas of knowledge, skills, and social competencies within a broad spectrum of multidisciplinary. The method of verification is transparent and effective from the very beginning of education – through reference to the Level 8 PRK descriptors in the IPB for each doctoral student, with the support of a supervisor. Similarly, all course descriptions/syllabi, whether compulsory, core, elective, or discipline-specific, meet the criteria for properly aligning the intended learning outcomes with the program content. They are verified throughout the entire doctoral education cycle through the implementation of the IPB, annual reports including achieved outcomes, assessment sheets and course/practice evaluation forms, as well as mid-term evaluation with the participation of external experts – scientists and artists from outside UR. This significantly contributes to the objectivity of the verification process and its alignment with nationwide trends in individual disciplines.  
In accordance with the study regulations, the entire education program is verified annually within the framework of an internal periodic evaluation system. This allows for a continuous process that, on the one hand, monitors correctness and identifies deficiencies, and on the other, enables ongoing modifications of the program and the methods used to verify doctoral students' achievements at Level 8 PRK. The system is characterized by transparency, reliability, and the involvement of the entire the SD UR community. Both internal regulations, documents, and forms designed to support and organize the process of achieving the intended learning outcomes, as well as the randomly verified and thoroughly analyzed documentation of individual doctoral students during the site visit, raise no concerns.  
It is worth considering the introduction, within the already functioning system, of a document confirming the achievement of the intended Level 8 PRK learning outcomes (e.g., in the form of a certificate issued by the Director of the SD UR according to a specified template, with an attached questionnaire documenting these achievements). Such a document, issued prior to the submission of the doctoral dissertation, would serve as confirmation of completion of education. This is necessary to complete the subsequent stage—the doctoral procedure – which takes place outside the SD UR. The discipline councils responsible for this stage, although required under the SD UR regulations to recognize that a graduate has achieved Level 8 PRK, may currently apply separate requirements and additional administrative expectations. This extends the overall process of awarding the doctoral degree, regardless of the internal organizational coherence and efficiency within the SD itself. This, in an obvious way, reduces the statistical effectiveness of education and unnecessarily prolongs the process.

- **Qualification of academic teachers and academic staff employed at the doctoral school:**  
The teaching staff of the Doctoral School is highly qualified. The report notes the presence of researchers from the global list of the top 2% most-cited scientists (Bartosz, Reich, Szczurek, Sokół, Sybirnyy, Sadowska-Bartosz, Aebisher) among the supervisors who teach doctoral students. The appointment of doctoral supervisors, which takes place within three months of the start of the doctoral programme, is preceded by an opinion from the appropriate scientific discipline council. This allows for a substantive review of whether their academic achievements align with the doctoral students' research topics. Candidates for assistant supervisors are also evaluated. The regulations of the doctoral school specify the circumstances under which a change of the supervisor or the assistant supervisor is permitted, which is also subject to review by the appropriate scientific discipline council. The Doctoral School Council appoints and removes the supervisors. The acceptance of the supervisor's responsibilities as specified in the regulations of the doctoral school is confirmed by a written statement (this does not apply to the assistant supervisor). Interdisciplinary courses are taught by scientists with extensive experience and high levels of expertise. Proposals for course teaching staff are consulted with the university's faculties, and doctoral students' suggestions regarding potential changes to the teaching staff are also taken into account.

The curriculum indicates that courses are taught by instructors whose competence and experience are demonstrated by their academic or artistic achievements. With the exception of specialized modern languages and Polish for foreigners, courses are taught by academic teachers who hold at least a doctoral degree. However, the Doctoral School Director may assign teaching duties to a specialist without an academic degree or title, provided that the specialist's qualifications in the subject matter are confirmed by certificates, diplomas, or other documents (which are not, however, specified in the regulations). Such situations occur, as confirmed by the academic record of a randomly selected doctoral student in the field of medical sciences (first-year courses in the subjects *Copyright* and *Commercialization of scientific research*), although they are of occasional nature.

The high qualifications of the staff are further demonstrated by the implementation of the *Workshops with an expert* course, which is taught by external experts, primarily from abroad, proposed by the doctoral student in accordance with the supervisor. They are selected on the basis of the significance of their academic achievements and the alignment of their academic output with the research topics conducted by doctoral students. An important aspect regarding external specialists is the evaluation of their qualifications in terms of the suitability of their achievements for the courses they are scheduled to teach to doctoral students, by the councils of the respective scientific/artistic disciplines.

The high evaluation of the teaching staff is reflected in the education quality assessment reports. It was also confirmed during a meeting with doctoral students. A key strength is the ratio of teaching staff (220) to the number of doctoral students (137), which is very high and contributes to the quality of the guidance. The staff selection process is formalized, and the procedure for addressing negative survey results is clearly outlined. The existence of the Internal Quality Assurance System for Education (WSZJK – Rector's Order 75/2025), which includes four types of surveys to assess staff quality, should be considered a positive aspect. This is a best-practice solution that helps to maintain a high level of qualifications among the teaching staff.

- **The quality of the admission process:**

The section on the SD UR Admissions process is located in a single, constantly updated location on the PhD School Admissions website, in Polish and English, in the "Doctoral School Admissions" section. This allows candidates to complete the entire admissions process based on these documents posted on the website. The quality of the documents is demonstrated by the bilingual nature of the documents, the clarity of the website, and the inclusion of legal acts regulating the admissions rules to the SD UR (these regulations are also available in the University's Public Information Bulletin). An annual Senate Resolution (published at least five months before admission) governs the admissions process. Currently, there are two admissions paths: general admission, grants/research projects, and an open competition for both paths. Starting in 2021/22, the university changed the registration process from paper to electronic registration to meet candidate expectations and also introduced bilingual registration (Polish/English). The number of disciplines during the evaluation period increased from 15 scientific disciplines and 1 artistic discipline to 21 scientific disciplines and 2 artistic disciplines. Documents are reviewed by the Admissions Committee, appointed annually by the Director of the SD UR. To improve the quality of admissions, from the 2022/2023 academic year onward, requirements have been standardized for all disciplines to maintain transparency and clarity in the admissions process, in accordance with the principle of "one doctoral school = equal requirements." The SD UR also supports candidates with disabilities.

Besides the completeness of submitted documents, the Committee also verifies the candidate's scientific/artistic achievements (the candidate must demonstrate at least one scientific/artistic achievement in the discipline to which they are applying). To substantively improve the quality of the admissions process, the number of Admissions Committee members has been increased to at least five, appointed by the Deans of the University's Faculties representing a given scientific/artistic discipline, after receiving advice from the Disciplinary Council(s).

Besides the University's website, the SD UR offer is also disseminated through social media to reach as many potential candidates as possible. Additionally, information regarding the project path is available on the National Science Centre website and for individual disciplines at the University. Results are public and posted on the University website, and candidates have the right to submit a request to the Rector for reconsideration. Most of these requests were rejected due to a lack of grounds for reconsideration (e.g., lack of documented scientific achievement). Recruitment for the 2025/2026 academic year has introduced the option of participating in an interview with the candidate as an observer, a potential supervisor, and a representative of the doctoral students designated by the Council.

Documents related to the recruitment process, including internal regulations, documents, forms, and the randomly verified and thoroughly analyzed recruitment documentation during the visit, raise no objections. The reasons for admission denials were also analyzed; these primarily concerned formal deficiencies, such as a lack of documented scientific achievement or failure to meet the criteria.

It is worth emphasizing that recruitment is conducted not for a single discipline, but for a group to select the optimal candidates within the available space. Recommendations: Broader opportunities to meet potential supervisors/co-supervisors could result in more realistic projects and fewer project changes or modifications. The lack of recruitment for the implementation doctorate track may make it worthwhile to consider an international track.

- **The quality of scientific or artistic guidance, and support in research:**

The selection of a supervisor/assistant supervisor is conducted in accordance with the applicable SD UR Regulations and the PSWiN Act, based on an application submitted by the candidate, including a proposal for a potential supervisor, their statement, and their scientific profile. The potential supervisor must obtain a positive opinion from the Disciplinary Council. The documents detail any changes to the supervisor/assistant supervisor.

The supervisor has specific obligations towards the doctoral student, detailed in the report. On the other hand, the SD UR is obligated to provide doctoral students with access to the UR infrastructure: research, library, sports facilities, university mail, mobility programs, grants, etc., as well as numerous opportunities, such as access to student housing (including for spouses and children), participation in domestic and international internships, conferences, seminars and symposia, summer and winter schools, research projects, and other research trips, as well as free courses to enhance qualifications. Additionally, doctoral students complete subjects common to all disciplines that substantively prepare them for scientific activity, such as copyright law, fundraising, project writing, and project management. This is not easy given the large number and diversity of disciplines within the Council. Workshops with experts (depending on availability, availability, willingness, and, of course, expertise) from both domestic and international teams are also worth highlighting. This is a valuable initiative.

For research trips, the SD UR provides administrative support and assistance with organization and settlement, but also supports doctoral students with disabilities and their parents.

Mechanisms for resolving conflicts between supervisors and doctoral students have also been described, with particular emphasis on mediation. An internal procedure for reporting and resolving academic disputes has been developed (Rector's Order No. 150/2023). Data on the quality of supervision is analyzed through periodic assessments, anonymous surveys among doctoral students, and analysis of extensions and supervisor changes.

The evaluation committee positively assessed the scientific/artistic supervision provided by the SD UR. to support the conduct of scientific activities. Efforts should be made to increase the number of foreign supervisors/foreign co-supervisors, co-supervisors from outside the UR, and assistant supervisors from outside the UR. Additionally, a formal agreement between the supervisor and the doctoral student could be considered, covering not only the supervisor's responsibilities but also the doctoral student's. A thorough evaluation of extensions will allow for earlier changes or modifications to topics.

- **The reliability of the midterm evaluation:**

The mid-term evaluation is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Act – Law on Higher Education and Science, as well as the regulations of the SD UR. Documentation randomly selected and verified during the site visit indicates the thoroughness and comprehensiveness of the mid-term evaluation, as well as the involvement of external specialists in the composition of committees appointed in line with research areas, achievements, and relevant disciplines. A model has been adopted – in three-person committees – where two members are appointed from outside UR and one from the home institution. The evaluation criteria, covering the degree of implementation of research and creative objectives, scientific or artistic publications, participation in conferences and artistic events, teaching activity, as well as the development of other doctoral competencies, are appropriate. The evaluation is conducted reliably, and the substantive, well-justified opinions provided by both committee members and supervisors indicate a sufficiently deep specialist scientific/artistic context. The questions posed to doctoral students, along with recommendations and reservations recorded in the verified mid-term evaluation documents, confirm the proper nature and effectiveness of the assessment methods.

The evaluation of the implementation of the IPB takes place at the midpoint of the education period and is conducted in accordance with a detailed procedure, including the rules for appointing evaluation committees, the timeline of proceedings, methods for documenting results, and templates of forms and reports. Evaluation committees are appointed by the Director of the SD UR from among academic staff indicated by the chairs of scientific/artistic councils and disciplines. During the evaluation period, all conducted mid-term evaluations resulted in a positive outcome. In the case of a negative evaluation, a doctoral student has the right to appeal (no such case has occurred to date). The results of mid-term evaluations are collected and analyzed by the authorities of the SD UR. Aggregate summaries are used to monitor the quality of education, and conclusions drawn from the evaluations serve to improve supervisory support and modify elements of the study program.

The team positively assessed the process of conducting mid-term evaluations of doctoral students carried out by the SD UR. A strong point is the appointment of two committee members from outside UR. It may be worth considering including (in addition to the represented disciplines) additional information in the declarations of external committee members regarding the discipline in which they obtained their habilitated doctor degree or academic title, which would facilitate formal verification of their compliance with the requirements of the SD UR regulations.

- **Internationalisation:**

The SD UR pursues consistent and multidimensional efforts to internationalize its educational provision, achieving results that are satisfactory in the context of the institution's available resources. The most measurable indicator of progress is mobility data under the Erasmus+ Key Action 1 programme: no outgoing mobilities were recorded in the academic years 2019/2020 and 2020/2021; one mobility took place in each of the years 2021/2022 and 2022/2023; and the academic year 2023/2024 marked a clear breakthrough, with eight mobilities completed to partner institutions in Slovakia, Greece, the United States (on two occasions), Hungary, Moldova, and Germany. This upward trend has continued beyond the evaluation period, with four mobilities recorded in 2024/2025 and at least two already completed in 2025/2026.

During the period under evaluation, 18 doctoral candidates undertook international placements of between two weeks and one month in duration under the PROM–NAWA programme. A significant reinforcement of the DS UR's internationalization efforts has been its participation, since 2024, in the NAWA STER – Internationalization of Doctoral Schools programme. Within this framework, 14 doctoral candidates completed one-month research placements abroad, three undertook artistic residencies, and two received funding for joint publications with foreign researchers. Four international specialists were also invited to deliver workshops and lectures. Under the Expert Workshops course, introduced in the academic year 2022/2023, a total of 22 foreign experts have led sessions, a practice that has been recognized in the literature as an example of good practice. Four additional international experts delivered classes as part of the Interdisciplinary Elective Course.

Among the 108 doctoral candidates currently enrolled, five are foreign nationals. Following the conclusion of the evaluation period, an English-language study track has been launched, in which three international doctoral candidates are already participating, with a further individual in the process of obtaining a residence visa for the academic year 2025/2026. The school has developed appropriate support infrastructure for international applicants, including English-language recruitment materials, a guide for foreign nationals, promotional videos, and access to the University's Welcome Centre services. The school's website is well prepared for prospective international candidates.

Despite the progress noted above, intensification of efforts in several areas remains necessary. The number of doctoral candidates benefiting from mobility programmes remains limited and should be systematically increased; supervisors should more actively encourage their candidates to apply. Joint doctoral degrees, enabling candidates to obtain degrees from two universities simultaneously, remain incidental and require decisive organizational support along with active promotion among both supervisors and doctoral candidates. The engagement of academic staff in international research and training consortia, such as Horizon Europe Doctoral Networks, MSCA Staff Exchanges, and COST Actions, remains insufficient, even though participation in such initiatives could yield additional mobility funding and significantly enhance the attractiveness of the DS UR to prospective international candidates.

- **The effectiveness of the doctoral education:**

Doctoral education at the SD UR is conducted based on an approved program. The learning outcomes achieved by a doctoral student are verified by academic teachers during the courses based on: written assignments, tests, coursework, projects, as well as presentations and reports, and at the end of the course cycle in the form of: exams, graded credits, and ungraded credits. An important element in verifying the learning outcomes achieved by the doctoral student are seminars, during which the progress in preparing the doctoral dissertation is assessed, based on the IPB, which includes, in particular, the schedule for preparing the doctoral dissertation. The doctoral student submits reports (semester, annual) on the fulfillment of obligations according to the IPB, along with attachments confirming achievements, including: excerpts from the doctoral dissertation, photocopies of pages from a scientific monograph or scientific journal (containing publication data), certificates of participation in conferences, conference programs, etc. During the fourth semester, verification of the doctoral student's research plan implementation is carried out. This is done by a committee consisting of three people, including two individuals holding a habilitated doctor degree or a professor title in the discipline in which the doctoral dissertation is being prepared, employed outside UR.

According to the self-assessment report and document review, during the period covered by the evaluation, 29 doctoral students completed their education at the SD UR. No doctoral student has been removed from the list due to late submission of their doctoral dissertation. However, the level of extensions for preparing doctoral dissertations is relatively high. Currently, 31 doctoral students have an extended period, which represents just under 40% of those admitted to the SD UR up to and including the 2021/2022 academic year. During the period covered by the evaluation, 61% of the total number of doctoral students who completed their education at the SD UR submitted a request to initiate proceedings for the award of a doctoral degree, and 49% were awarded the doctoral degree. The assessment of the quality of education is carried out through an anonymous survey regarding the quality of education at the SD UR, which was confirmed during a meeting with student government representatives. Based on the results of the SD UR surveys, in agreement with the student government, changes to the educational program are implemented. The system for monitoring the implementation of IPB at the SD UR is multi-stage, transparent, and allows for quick response. It should be noted, however, that it focuses primarily on the first four semesters; in the subsequent ones, this varies in practice, as evidenced by the significant percentage of doctoral students who do not submit their dissertations within the standard period of 8 semesters. Doctoral students achieve the intended learning outcomes, the program supports obtaining a doctoral degree, and graduates find their place in the academic or professional environment. Data regarding scientific activity include: publications by doctoral students, including highly rated ones, participation in acquired research projects, national and international conference presentations, participation in exchanges, and cooperation of doctoral students with the socio-economic environment (a valuable initiative is 'reaching out to society,' meaning presentations by doctoral students open to everyone).

Qualitative indicators in assessing the effectiveness of education at the SD UR are the opinions and satisfaction of doctoral students, who rate the course offerings highly and positively, emphasize the positive relationships with supervisors and lecturers, as well as engagement, clarity of communication, and substantive support, which was expressed by the doctoral students during the meeting. They also rate administrative support very highly.

## V. FINAL OPINION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Verification of the self-assessment report, review of documents, and information obtained during the visits to the SD UR confirm that the education process meets the criteria provided for level 8 of the PRK. Other criteria are similarly presented in detail by the Team in this report.

The report has outlined certain recommendations. In particular, attention should be paid to:

- increasing the participation of doctoral students in implementation programs and EU programs, in order to strengthen the potential for cooperation with the economic and social sector;
- increasing cooperation with the economic environment regarding implementation doctorates, which are currently not conducted at the SD UR;
- increasing oversight of the updating of course syllabi on the SD UR website;
- intensifying supervisor–doctoral student cooperation after the mid-term evaluation, in order to ensure a smaller number of extensions; a thorough assessment of extensions will allow for earlier changes or modifications of topics in connection with conclusions from mid-term evaluations;
- promoting recruitment on a global scale, efforts to increase the number of foreign supervisors/ foreign co-supervisors, co-supervisors from outside UR, and auxiliary supervisors from outside UR;
- inclusion of additional information in the statement of commission members from outside the university regarding the discipline in which the habilitated doctor degree or academic title was obtained.

## VI. ASSESSMENT AND REASON

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Final assessment  
positive

**Reason:**

As the report indicates, no significant deficiencies were found in the functioning of the evaluated Doctoral School. The report describes the course of the visit, as well as the individual criteria affecting the final assessment. Certain recommendations are presented, which - according to the Evaluation Team - should be taken into account during the next evaluation period, which should take place within the statutory timeframe.

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