



eDoktorant 5.0

PhD STUDENT'S GUIDE



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I. Introduction

The new Act introduced a different model of doctoral education. Instead of the former doctoral studies, doctoral schools were established. The aim of this change was to ensure that doctoral students would no longer be regarded as “senior students” but as “early-stage researchers”. At the same time, in line with the overall direction of Act 2.0, doctoral education was to a large extent deregulated, leaving considerable autonomy to the entities educating doctoral students.

The Doctoral Student Guide aims to explain the most important aspects related to the situation of doctoral students in Poland. It has been divided into several main sections. The introductory part describes the legal aspects of the operation of doctoral schools. The authors address issues related to the rights and obligations of doctoral students as well as doctoral scholarships. The principles governing proceedings for the award of the doctoral degree are subject to detailed analysis. The guide also includes information on research grants, doctoral student self-governments and doctoral organisations, the National Representation of Doctoral Students, the Doctoral Student Ombudsman, local and sectoral doctoral agreements, and the Young Scientists Council. Interested readers will also find information on doctoral degrees pursued in the extramural mode and on implementation doctorates.

We encourage you to read the guide.

Founders of the eDoktorant portal

II. Doctoral Schools

Currently, doctoral education preparing candidates for the award of the doctoral degree is conducted within a doctoral school. This is an organised form of education in at least two disciplines. A doctoral school may be run by an academic university, an institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS), a research institute, an international institute, or the Medical Centre for Postgraduate Education (CMKP), provided that it holds:

1. a scientific category of A+, A, or B+ in at least two disciplines, or
2. a scientific category of A+, A, or B+ in at least one discipline and an authorisation granted in accordance with Article 226a(1) of the Act – *Law on Higher Education and Science* in at least one discipline, or
3. an authorisation granted in accordance with Article 226a(1) of that Act in at least two disciplines,
hereinafter referred to as the “entity running the doctoral school”.

A doctoral school may also be run by an academic university that conducts scientific activity exclusively in one discipline which is a discipline in the field of theology, physical culture, or an artistic discipline, and holds in that discipline a scientific category of A+, A, or B+, or an authorisation granted in accordance with Article 226a(1) of the Act.

A doctoral school may be run jointly by academic universities, PAS institutes, research institutes, international institutes, or the CMKP, each of which holds a scientific category of A+, A, or B+, or an authorisation granted in accordance with Article 226a(1) of the Act in at least one discipline. A detailed division of tasks related to running the doctoral school, as well as the method of their financing, is specified in a written agreement, which also designates the entity responsible for entering data into the POLON system and entitled to receive financial resources for joint education in the doctoral school.

Doctoral education may be conducted in cooperation with another entity, in particular an entrepreneur or a foreign university or research institution. An entity running a doctoral school may operate no more than three doctoral schools in a given discipline.

An entity running a doctoral school loses the right to:

1. conduct doctoral education within a discipline in which:
 - a) it has been awarded a scientific category of B or C,

b) it has lost the authorisation granted in accordance with Article 226a(1) of the Act;

2. run a doctoral school in the event that it ceases to meet the required conditions.
 - and discontinues education at the end of the academic year in which this circumstance occurred.

In the event of discontinuation of doctoral education in a given discipline, the entity running the doctoral school ensures that doctoral students preparing a doctoral dissertation in that discipline are given the opportunity to continue their education at another doctoral school in the same discipline. The transfer of a doctoral student from a doctoral school in which education in a given discipline has been discontinued to another doctoral school takes place with the consent of the doctoral student.

In the event of:

1. the lack of a possibility for the doctoral student to undertake education at another doctoral school in the given discipline, or
2. the doctoral student's failure to give consent,
 - the entity running the doctoral school in which education has been discontinued covers the costs incurred by that doctoral student in the proceedings for the award of the doctoral degree in the extramural mode.

An entity running a doctoral school in a discipline that has been incorporated into another discipline or into other disciplines, which as a result of a subsequent evaluation of the quality of scientific activity does not obtain a scientific category of at least B+ in that discipline or in any of the disciplines indicated by the Research Excellence Council (RDN), or is not covered by that evaluation in that discipline or in any of those disciplines, ensures that doctoral students preparing a doctoral dissertation in the incorporated discipline are given the opportunity to continue their education at another doctoral school. The provisions on the transfer of a doctoral student or on covering the costs of proceedings for the award of the doctoral degree in the extramural mode also apply in this situation.

No fees are charged for doctoral education. Doctoral education is conducted on the basis of a programme of education and an individual research plan and lasts from 6 to 8 semesters. The programme of education may provide for the completion of professional practice in the form of conducting classes or participating in their conduct, in a number not exceeding 60 teaching hours per year. The programme of education is established by the senate or the scientific council. The adoption of the programme requires obtaining the opinion of the doctoral students' self-government. In the event of the ineffective expiry of the deadline specified in the statute, the

requirement to obtain an opinion is deemed to have been fulfilled. The programme is subject to publication in the Public Information Bulletin within 14 days from the date of its adoption, under pain of an administrative financial penalty of up to PLN 50,000.

The individual research plan contains, in particular, a schedule for the preparation of the doctoral dissertation. It is prepared by the doctoral student in agreement with the supervisor or supervisors. The doctoral student submits it to the entity running the doctoral school within 12 months from the date of commencement of education. In the case of the appointment of an auxiliary supervisor, the plan is submitted after being reviewed by that supervisor. The implementation of the plan is subject to a mid-term evaluation carried out halfway through the period of education specified in the programme of education, and in the case of education lasting 6 semesters – during the fourth semester. This evaluation is carried out by a committee composed of three persons, including at least one person holding the degree of habilitated doctor or the title of professor in the discipline in which the doctoral dissertation is being prepared, employed outside the entity running the doctoral school. The supervisor and the auxiliary supervisor may not be members of the committee. The evaluation ends with a positive or negative result.

Doctoral education ends with the submission of the doctoral dissertation together with a positive opinion of the supervisor or supervisors. The individual research plan specifies the deadline for submission of the doctoral dissertation. This deadline may be extended, but by no more than two years, on the terms set out in the regulations of the doctoral school.

The organisation of education in matters not regulated by the Act is specified in the regulations of the doctoral school. These regulations govern, in particular:

1. the procedure for appointing and changing the supervisor, supervisors, or auxiliary supervisor;
2. the manner of documenting the course of education;
3. the manner of conducting the mid-term evaluation;
4. the conditions for extending the deadline for submission of the doctoral dissertation.

The regulations are adopted by the senate or the scientific council at least five months before the beginning of the academic year. The regulations are subject to publication in the Public Information Bulletin within 14 days from the date of their adoption, under pain of an administrative financial penalty of up to PLN 50,000. The regulations enter into force at the beginning of the academic year.

It should be noted that the new Act regulating the area of higher education and science abolished the division into modes of doctoral studies, i.e. full-time and part-time. Currently, education may be provided only in doctoral schools and is free of charge.

III. Rights and obligations of a doctoral student

It should be noted that university employees, doctoral students, and students constitute the academic community of the university. In connection with this, these persons have specific rights and obligations.

A doctoral student acquires rights and obligations at the moment of taking the oath (and not already at the moment of being entered on the list of doctoral students).

The fundamental right of a doctoral student is to conduct scientific research under the supervision of a supervisor. The entity running the doctoral school is obliged to appoint a supervisor or supervisors for the doctoral student within 3 months from the date of commencement of education.

A doctoral student also has the right, at their request, to suspend education for a period corresponding to the duration of maternity leave, supplementary maternity leave, leave on the terms of maternity leave, paternity leave, and parental leave as specified in the Labour Code. During the period of suspension of education, the provisions concerning the determination of maternity benefit apply accordingly to the determination of the amount of the doctoral scholarship, with the proviso that the basis for calculating the benefit is understood as the amount of the monthly doctoral scholarship due on the day of submission of the application for suspension.

Doctoral students have the right to evaluate academic teachers in terms of the performance by them of duties related to the education of doctoral students.

A doctoral student pursuing education in a doctoral school is entitled to vacation breaks of up to 8 weeks per year.

For a doctoral student who has obtained the doctoral degree as a result of completing a doctoral school, the period of education in that school, not longer than 4 years, is counted as a period of employment on which employee entitlements depend. For a doctoral student who did not complete education in a doctoral school due to taking up employment as an academic teacher or a research employee, or due to the discontinuation of doctoral education in a given discipline, the period of education in that school, not longer than 4 years, is counted as a period of employment on which employee entitlements depend, provided that the doctoral degree was obtained.

The entity running the doctoral school issues a doctoral student identity card to the doctoral student. This card is a document certifying, among other things, the right to discounted travel on certain means of public collective transport.

A doctoral student may apply for accommodation in a university student dormitory or for meals at a university student canteen, as well as for accommodation of a spouse

or child in a university student dormitory, under the rules and in the procedure specified in the regulations on benefits for students.

A doctoral student's child has the right to use a workplace nursery and children's club.

A local government unit may grant doctoral students reductions in fees for travel by public urban transport.

Doctoral students up to the age of 35 are entitled to a 51% discount on travel by public collective rail transport on local, fast, and express trains.

Doctoral students also have the right to other discounts. Statutory discounts apply, among others, to admission to state museums. Many institutions and organisations prepare special offers for doctoral students, which are worth using.

Doctoral students also have the right to associate in doctoral student organisations. In the case of the establishment of a university doctoral student organisation, its governing body is only obliged to immediately inform the rector, and the activity of the organisation must comply with universally binding legal acts, the statute of the entity running the doctoral school, the regulations of the doctoral school, and the regulations of that organisation.

An employee who is not an academic teacher or a research employee is entitled to leave for the preparation of a doctoral dissertation or for preparation for the defence of a doctoral dissertation. This leave is granted upon request, at a time agreed with the employer. Its duration is 28 days, which, within the meaning of separate provisions, are working days for that employee, as well as release from work for the defence of the doctoral dissertation. For the period of leave and release from work, the employee is entitled to remuneration determined as for annual leave.

The basic obligations of doctoral students are: acting in accordance with the regulations of the doctoral school, implementing the programme of education and the individual research plan, including submitting the doctoral dissertation within the deadline specified in the individual research plan.

Doctoral students are subject to disciplinary liability for violations of the regulations in force at the entity running the doctoral school, as well as for acts undermining the dignity of a doctoral student. The provisions concerning the disciplinary liability of students apply accordingly.

A doctoral student is removed from the list of doctoral students in the cases indicated in the Act, which include:

1. a negative result of the mid-term evaluation;

2. failure to submit the doctoral dissertation within the deadline specified in the individual research plan;
3. resignation from education;
4. failure to commence education;
5. violation of the prohibition on undertaking education in more than one doctoral school;
6. imposition of the disciplinary penalty of expulsion from the doctoral school.

In proceedings concerning the removal of a doctoral student from the list of doctoral students in the case of violation of the prohibition on education in more than one doctoral school, the doctoral student is summoned to submit, within a period not shorter than 30 days from the date of delivery of the summons, a resignation from education in another doctoral school.

In addition, a doctoral student may be removed from the list of doctoral students in the event of:

1. unsatisfactory progress in the preparation of the doctoral dissertation;
2. failure to fulfil obligations, which include acting in accordance with the regulations of the doctoral school and implementing the programme of education and the individual research plan.

Removal from the list of doctoral students takes place by way of an administrative decision. An application for reconsideration of the case may be lodged against the decision.

In the event of discontinuation of doctoral education in a given discipline, the entity running the doctoral school ensures that doctoral students preparing a doctoral dissertation in that discipline are given the opportunity to continue education in another doctoral school in that discipline. In the absence of a doctoral school providing education in the given discipline, the entity running the doctoral school in which education has been discontinued covers, for persons who have lost the possibility of completing education, the costs of proceedings for the award of the doctoral degree in the extramural mode.

In the event of the liquidation of a public university, the liquidator should ensure that doctoral students are given the opportunity to continue their education.

IV. Scholarships for doctoral students

Doctoral students pursuing education in doctoral schools have the right to receive a doctoral scholarship. The scholarship is granted to persons who do not hold a doctoral degree.

A doctoral scholarship is not granted to a doctoral student whose education in a doctoral school is associated with the obligation of employment at the entity running the doctoral school:

1. on the basis of an employment contract;
2. with remuneration exceeding the amount of a professor's remuneration.

The total period of receiving a doctoral scholarship in doctoral schools may not exceed 4 years. The amount of the scholarship depends on the amount of a professor's remuneration specified in separate provisions (currently PLN 9,370 gross), bearing in mind that a doctoral scholarship – unlike a professor's remuneration – is not subject to personal income tax, and sickness insurance is optional.

The amount of the monthly doctoral scholarship is at least:

1. 37% of a professor's remuneration – until the month in which the mid-term evaluation was conducted;
2. 57% of a professor's remuneration – after the month in which the mid-term evaluation was conducted.

The amount of the scholarship may depend on the doctoral student's achievements. However, the amount may not be lower than that indicated above.

A doctoral student holding a certificate of disability, a certificate of the degree of disability, or a certificate referred to in Article 5 and Article 62 of the Act of 27 August 1997 on vocational and social rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities, receives a doctoral scholarship increased by 30% of the amount indicated in point one (37% of a professor's remuneration $\times$ 1.30, noting again that, unlike a professor's remuneration, this increase is not subject to personal income tax and does not have to be subject to sickness insurance contributions).

It is worth noting that doctoral students pursuing education in doctoral schools are subject to mandatory insurance – pension, disability, and accident insurance. Sickness insurance is voluntary and coverage is provided upon the doctoral

student's application. These persons are covered by insurance during the period of receiving the doctoral scholarship.

All doctoral students receiving a doctoral scholarship are covered by health insurance. The exception applies to doctoral students who have another title for the indicated insurance or are registered for health insurance as family members. It is therefore a so-called emergency (backup) title for insurance. This is of great practical importance. In the event that another title arises (most often employment), the title for insurance as a doctoral student receiving a doctoral scholarship ceases to apply; therefore, if the doctoral student wishes to be covered again by insurance on the basis of doctoral education, they must submit a new declaration to the entity running the doctoral school. Although insurance arises by operation of law, access to publicly financed healthcare services is based on the so-called EWUŚ (electronic verification of entitlement to benefits), which will not confirm the doctoral student's entitlement if the university has not reported them for insurance, for example after the termination of casual employment.

In the event of submitting the doctoral dissertation earlier than the completion date of education provided for in the education programme, the doctoral student receives the doctoral scholarship until the date on which the education completion deadline expires, but for no longer than 6 months.

The doctoral scholarship is paid by the entity running the doctoral school.

Doctoral students may also receive scholarships from units of local government as well as from natural persons or legal persons that are neither state nor local government legal persons. Scholarships granted by units of local government are exempt from personal income tax (unlike scholarships granted to students, this exemption is not subject to a monetary limit), whereas scholarships granted by a natural person or a legal person that is neither a state nor a local government legal person are exempt provided that the rules for their award have been approved by the minister competent for higher education and science.

Student loans

A student loan – doctoral students who have not reached the age of 35 may apply for a loan. It is granted for the period of education in a doctoral school only once, for no longer than 4 years. The provisions on loans for students apply accordingly to doctoral students. These provisions specify the average monthly income per family member of the student from the year preceding the year of submitting the application that entitles one to receive the loan. The income threshold entitling one to receive a loan in a given academic year is announced by the minister in the Public Information Bulletin on their official website. In the academic year 2024/2025, this amount was PLN 4,000 net. It should be remembered, however, that the doctoral scholarship is included in this income (unlike material assistance benefits received by students).

The student loan is paid in monthly instalments for a period of up to 10 months of the academic year, excluding periods of leave from classes or other breaks.

Issues concerning loan repayment, suspension of repayment, and its possible remission are regulated in the Act – Law on Higher Education and Science. It is worth emphasising that a student loan may be partially remitted, inter alia, in the case of an outstanding result of completion of education by the borrower.

A student loan is granted by a bank or a cooperative savings and credit union that has concluded an agreement with Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego specifying the rules for the use of funds from the Student Loan Fund.

Detailed information on loans can be found at:

<https://www.gov.pl/web/nauka/informacja-o-kredytach-studenckich-doktoranckich>

V. Proceedings for the Award of the Doctoral Degree

The right to award the doctoral degree in a given discipline is vested in a university, an institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences, a research institute, or an international institute in a discipline in which it holds a scientific category of A+, A, or B+. The doctoral degree may also be awarded jointly in a given discipline by universities, institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences, research institutes, or international institutes, provided that each of them holds a scientific category of A+, A, or B+, including with the participation of foreign entities authorised to award the doctoral degree in the discipline in which the degree is awarded. The rules of cooperation are laid down in an agreement concluded in written form.

In proceedings for the award of an academic degree, in matters not regulated by the Act – Law on Higher Education and Science, the provisions of the Code of Administrative Procedure apply *mutatis mutandis*.

The doctoral degree is awarded to a person who: 1) holds a professional title of Master, Master of Engineering, or an equivalent title, or holds a diploma referred to in Article 326(2)(2) or Article 327(2) of the Act – Law on Higher Education and Science, entitling them to apply for the award of the doctoral degree in the state whose higher education system includes the university that issued the diploma; it should be noted, however, that in exceptional cases justified by the highest quality of scientific achievements, the doctoral degree may be awarded to a person who does not meet these requirements and who is a graduate of first-cycle studies or a student who has completed the third year of long-cycle Master's studies—upon being awarded the doctoral degree, such a person simultaneously obtains higher education; 2) has achieved learning outcomes for qualifications at level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework, whereby learning outcomes in the scope of knowledge of a modern foreign language are confirmed by a certificate or a diploma of completion of studies certifying knowledge of that language at a proficiency level of at least B2; 3) has in their academic output at least: a) one scientific article published in a scientific journal or in peer-reviewed materials from an international conference which, in the year of publication of the article in its final form, were included in the list drawn up in accordance with regulations issued on the basis of Article 267(2)(2)(b) of the Act – Law on Higher Education and Science, or b) one scientific monograph published by a publishing house which, in the year of publication of the monograph in its final form, was included in the list drawn up in accordance with regulations issued on the basis of Article 267(2)(2)(a) of the Act – Law on Higher Education and Science, or a chapter in such a monograph, or c) an artistic work of significant importance; d) has submitted and defended a doctoral dissertation; e) has met other requirements specified by the degree-awarding entity.

Scientific supervision over the preparation of the doctoral dissertation is exercised by a supervisor or supervisors, or by a supervisor and an auxiliary supervisor. By definition, a doctoral dissertation presents the candidate's general theoretical

knowledge in the discipline or disciplines as well as the ability to conduct independent scientific or artistic work. The subject of a doctoral dissertation is understood as an original solution to a scientific problem, an original solution in the scope of applying the results of one's own scientific research in the economic or social sphere, or an original artistic achievement. It should also be noted that a doctoral dissertation may take the form of a written work, including a scientific monograph, a collection of published and thematically related scientific articles, a design, constructional, technological, implementation, or artistic work, as well as an independent and distinct part of a collective work. An abstract in English is attached to the doctoral dissertation, and in the case of a doctoral dissertation prepared in a foreign language, an abstract in Polish is also attached. Where the doctoral dissertation is not a written work, a description in Polish and English is attached.

The degree-awarding entity is obliged to make available, in the Public Information Bulletin on its official website, the doctoral dissertation constituting a written work together with its abstract, or a description of a doctoral dissertation that is not a written work, as well as the reviews, no later than 30 days before the designated date of the doctoral dissertation defence. In the case of a doctoral dissertation whose subject is covered by legally protected secrecy, only the reviews are made available, excluding the content covered by such secrecy. A doctoral dissertation that is a written work is checked by the degree-awarding entity using the Uniform Anti-Plagiarism System.

Proceedings for the award of the doctoral degree are initiated at the request of a person who meets the requirements indicated above in points 1–3. The application must be accompanied by the doctoral dissertation together with a positive opinion of the supervisor or supervisors.

In the proceedings for the award of the doctoral degree, three reviewers are appointed from among persons who are not employees of the degree-awarding entity or of the university, institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences, research institute, international institute, the Łukasiewicz Centre, or a Łukasiewicz Research Network institute employing the person applying for the doctoral degree. The reviewers are obliged to prepare reviews of the doctoral dissertation within two months from the date of its delivery. Detailed requirements concerning supervisors and reviewers are laid down in the Act. A person who has obtained positive reviews from at least two reviewers may be admitted to the defence of the doctoral dissertation. A complaint to the Scientific Excellence Council may be lodged against a decision refusing admission to the defence.

Activities in the proceedings for the award of the doctoral degree may be carried out by a committee appointed by the body indicated in the Act – Law on Higher Education and Science.

The senate or the scientific council determines the procedure for proceedings for the award of the doctoral degree, in particular: 1) the method of appointing and changing the supervisor, supervisors, or auxiliary supervisor; 2) the principles for determining the amount of the fee for proceedings for the award of the doctoral degree in the extramural mode and for exemption from this fee; 3) the procedure for submitting the doctoral dissertation; 4) the procedure for appointing and the scope of activities of the committee appointed to perform certain activities in the proceedings for the award of the doctoral degree; 5) the method of appointing reviewers; 6) the method of verifying learning outcomes for qualifications at level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework in the case of persons applying for the award of the doctoral degree in the extramural mode; 7) the method of verifying compliance with the requirement concerning academic output in the case of multi-author publications.

It should also be noted that the senate or the scientific council may lay down its own requirements or additional conditions for admission to the defence.

The defence of the doctoral dissertation may be conducted outside the premises of the degree-awarding entity using electronic communication means ensuring, in particular: 1) real-time transmission of the defence between its participants; 2) real-time multilateral communication in which the participants of the defence may speak during its course, while observing the necessary security rules.

With regard to the costs of proceedings for the award of the doctoral degree, it should be indicated that no fee is charged to a person applying for the doctoral degree who has completed education in a doctoral school or completed doctoral studies.

A person who has been awarded the doctoral degree receives the doctoral diploma and a copy thereof. At the request of that person, a copy of the diploma is issued in English, French, Spanish, German, Russian, or Latin. Where necessary, doctoral diplomas and their duplicates and copies intended for legal circulation abroad are authenticated at the request of the interested party by the Director of the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA) in the case of degrees awarded by universities, by the President of the Polish Academy of Sciences in the case of degrees awarded by PAN institutes and international institutes, or by the minister supervising a research institute in the case of degrees awarded by research institutes. An authentication fee is charged.

An appeal against a decision refusing to award the doctoral degree may be lodged with the Scientific Excellence Council within 30 days from the date of delivery of the decision.

VI. Grant programmes and calls for proposals

Doctoral candidates are entitled to apply for scientific and research grants. Particular attention should be drawn to the calls organised by the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange, the National Science Centre, and the National Centre for Research and Development.

From the offer of the National Science Centre, doctoral candidates may apply for the “PRELUDIUM” grants (a call for research projects carried out by persons who do not hold a doctoral degree) and for “OPUS” grants (a call for research projects open to all researchers, which, however, doctoral candidates obtain very rarely). In the annually announced “PRELUDIUM” call, it is possible to obtain a grant of up to PLN 70,000, 140,000, or 210,000 to finance a project lasting respectively 12, 24, or 36 months. The research team may consist of a maximum of three persons, including the project leader, a scientific supervisor (without remuneration), and a contractor. The maximum remuneration for all team members (the project leader and any contractor) amounts in total to PLN 1,500 gross–gross per month.

By contrast, the most typical project of the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange used by doctoral candidates is the programme “Bekker NAWA – Mieczysław Bekker Programme”. Its aim is to enable scientific development in foreign research and academic centres worldwide through stays lasting from 3 to 24 months. The programme provides funding for a scholarship, funds to cover accommodation and living costs of the scholarship holder at the host foreign institution, as well as a one-off mobility allowance. The amount of the scholarship may even be increased if minor children of the scholarship holder participate in the stay, as well as for a scholarship holder with a certified severe or moderate disability. The call is launched annually in the spring.

More information on scientific and research grants can be found in the GRANTS section.

VII. Doctoral students' self-government and doctoral organisations

The doctoral students' self-government is formed by all doctoral candidates in the entity running the doctoral school. It operates through its bodies, including the chairperson and a decision-making body. The doctoral students' self-government is the exclusive representative of all doctoral candidates of the entity running the doctoral school. The doctoral students' self-government issues opinions on many acts related to the functioning of the university. In particular, this concerns the criteria for periodic evaluation for individual groups of employees and types of positions, as well as the procedure and body carrying out the periodic evaluation, as well as the education programme in the doctoral school.

The regulations of the doctoral school require agreement with the doctoral students' self-government. If, within 3 months from the adoption of the regulations, the senate or the scientific council and the doctoral students' self-government do not reach an agreement on their content, the regulations enter into force by virtue of a resolution of the senate or the scientific council adopted by a majority of at least two-thirds of the statutory composition of those bodies.

Doctoral candidates are members of the collegial bodies of the university. In the senate of a public academic university, students and doctoral candidates constitute not less than 20% of the composition of this body. The number of students and doctoral candidates is determined proportionally to the size of both groups at the university, with the reservation that each of these groups is represented by at least one representative, which guarantees representation by at least one doctoral candidate. The procedure for election and the duration of membership in the senate are specified in the regulations of the doctoral students' self-government. Having their own representatives is very important, given that the tasks of the senate include, inter alia, determining education programmes in doctoral schools.

Doctoral candidates are also members of the electoral college at a public university. Similarly to representation in the senate, students and doctoral candidates constitute not less than 20% of the composition of this body. The number of students and doctoral candidates is determined proportionally to the size of both groups at the university, with the reservation that each of these groups is represented by at least one representative. The procedure for appointing doctoral candidates to the electoral college and the duration of their membership in the college are specified in the regulations of the doctoral students' self-government.

Doctoral candidates also play a very important role in the appointment of a person to a managerial function whose scope of duties includes matters concerning doctoral candidates (usually this is the director of the doctoral school, sometimes also one of the vice-rectors). The appointment of such a person requires agreement with the doctoral students' self-government. Failure of the self-government to take a position within the time limit indicated in the statute is deemed to constitute consent.

The doctoral students' self-government also decides on matters concerning the allocation of financial resources designated by the entity running the doctoral school for doctoral matters. The self-government prepares a report on the allocation of these funds no less frequently than once per academic year and makes it available in the Public Information Bulletin on the website of the entity running the doctoral school. The entity running the doctoral school also ensures that the self-government is provided with the conditions necessary for its operation, including infrastructure and financial resources at the disposal of the self-government within the scope of its activities.

With regard to the activities of organisations associating doctoral candidates, an important issue is the possession of financial resources enabling the implementation of scientific, research, and integration projects for the academic community. Pursuant to the act regulating the area of higher education and science, a university may allocate funds for the implementation of activities of university student and doctoral organisations, associations operating at the university that associate exclusively students or students, doctoral candidates, and university employees, as well as the Academic Sports Association and its university clubs established at the university with the consent of the rector. These entities allocate the received funds exclusively to activities involving students, doctoral candidates, or university employees. These entities submit to the university a report on the use of the funds received in a given academic year.

VIII. National Representation of Doctoral Candidates

The National Representation of Doctoral Candidates is a representative body of the higher education sector that represents all doctoral candidates in the Republic of Poland. It is formed by representatives of doctoral students' self-governments. This organisation has the right to express opinions and submit proposals in matters concerning all doctoral candidates, including the right to give opinions on draft normative acts concerning them.

Within its statutory activity, the National Representation of Doctoral Candidates has, in particular, the right to:

- represent and promote the doctoral community as well as its educational, social, economic, and cultural needs,
- express opinions and submit proposals in matters concerning all doctoral candidates, including giving opinions on draft normative acts, protect the rights and interests of doctoral candidates in Poland and Polish doctoral candidates abroad,
- strive to improve the quality of doctoral education,
- support and promote doctoral self-government,
- create and promote attitudes oriented towards active cooperation in the development of civil society within the doctoral community,
- identify and eliminate barriers to scientific, cultural, and sports development of doctoral candidates,
- enhance knowledge, skills, and social competences among doctoral candidates through informational, scientific, and cultural activities in the field of higher education and science, education, schooling, upbringing, and physical culture, support the mobility of doctoral candidates,
- conduct activities promoting science.

The current activities of the National Representation of Doctoral Candidates are managed by the Board headed by the Chairperson. Both the Chairperson and the other members of the Board are elected by delegates—one from each doctoral students' self-government in Poland—for a one-year term of office. The National Representation of Doctoral Candidates also carries out its activities through board plenipotentiaries, representatives in other bodies, commissions, or teams.

Detailed information can be found on the website – www.krd.edu.pl.

IX. Doctoral Student Rights Ombudsman

At the National Representation of Doctoral Students, there operates the Doctoral Student Rights Ombudsman. According to the information provided by this organization, this person safeguards the rights of doctoral students, investigates signals of suspected violations of doctoral students' rights, and takes interventions when violations of doctoral students' rights are found.

The Ombudsman's activities include, among others:

- undertaking mediation and explanatory actions in individual cases,
- monitoring and supporting the observance of doctoral students' rights,
- preparing and issuing reports and recommendations regarding problems with respecting doctoral students' rights,
- organizing information campaigns.

It should be noted that legal assistance provided by the Doctoral Student Rights Ombudsman is free of charge.

Contact – rzecznik@krd.edu.pl

X. Sectoral and Local Doctoral Student Agreements

In Poland, there are local and sectoral agreements for doctoral students.

Among the sectoral agreements, the following should be noted:

- Doctoral Forum of Polish Universities – DFUP,
- Agreement of Doctoral Students of Technical Universities – PDUT,
- Doctoral Forum of Medical Universities – DFUM,
- Agreement of Doctoral Students of Life Sciences Universities – PDUP,
- Agreement of Doctoral Students of PAN Institutes – PDIPAN.

Local agreements of doctoral students include:

- Lublin Agreement of Doctoral Students,
- Krakow Agreement of Doctoral Students – PDK,
- Wroclaw-Opole Agreement of Doctoral Students – WrOPD,
- Poznan Agreement of Doctoral Students – PPD,
- Warsaw Forum of Doctoral Students – WFD,
- West Pomeranian Agreement of Doctoral Students – ZPD.

More information – <https://krd.edu.pl/o-nas/porozumienia/>

XI. Council of Young Scientists

The Council of Young Scientists is an advisory body to the Minister of Science and Higher Education, promoting solutions that support the career development of young researchers in Poland. A member of the Council may be a person who has not reached the age of 35 and has significant scientific achievements.

The tasks of this body include, among others:

- identifying existing and future barriers to the development of young scientists' careers,
- preparing recommendations concerning instruments supporting young scientists' careers,
- familiarizing young scientists with the mechanisms of science funding,
- supporting contacts between young scientists and representatives of business environments and institutions implementing innovative solutions in science,
- implementing the provisions of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers in research units.

More information – <http://rmn.org.pl/>

XII. External Doctorate (Free-standing Doctorate)

According to the Act – Law on Higher Education and Science, it is also possible to prepare a doctoral dissertation in an external (free-standing) mode.

A person applying for the award of the doctoral degree in the external mode pays a fee for conducting the procedure. However, the amount of the fee cannot exceed the costs of the procedure, including in particular the costs of the remuneration of the supervisor or auxiliary supervisor and reviewers.

In the case of a university teacher or a scientific employee, the costs of the procedure are borne by the employing university, PAN institute, research institute, or international institute. Furthermore, in justified cases, the rector, director of a PAN institute, director of a research institute, or director of an international institute may waive the fee in whole or in part.

The requirements for persons applying for the award of a doctoral degree in the external mode are the same as for persons studying at doctoral schools.

XIII. Implementation Doctorate

An alternative path that allows obtaining the academic degree of Doctor is the Implementation Doctorate program established by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

The program's objective is to create conditions for developing cooperation between higher education and science institutions and the socio-economic environment, conducted within doctoral schools, and involving the education of doctoral students in collaboration with the companies that employ them or other entities.

The benefits for the doctoral student participating in the program include:

- double compensation – a scholarship from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (higher than the standard amount) and a salary for work in the given company,
- higher future earnings,
- greater substantive support.

This program is also highly beneficial for entities from the socio-economic environment as well as for universities.

More information:

<https://studia.gov.pl/doktoranci/doktoraty-wdrozeniowe/>

<https://www.bip.nauka.gov.pl/doktorat-wdrozeniowy/>

XIV. Summary

The Doctoral Student Guide explains the most important issues concerning doctoral students studying in doctoral schools. We also encourage you to use the information available in the following sections:

- News, where you can find information related to doctoral students, both regarding scientific development and personal matters.
- Grants, where current grant competitions are published, aimed at individuals beginning their scientific careers as well as those with more experience in conducting research projects.
- Conferences, where a clearly organized list of conferences held in Poland, sorted by scientific disciplines, is presented.
- Internship Offers, where the current recruitment opportunities for internships are listed and organized by scientific disciplines.
- Future Doctoral Student, with information for students in their final years of study planning to begin a scientific career in doctoral schools.
- Announcements, where important content for doctoral students and students in their final years is published.
- FAQ, where frequently asked questions and answers are published.

With doctoral greetings,
The founders of the eDoktorant portal

The Doctoral Student Guide was prepared based on:

- Act – Law on Higher Education and Science
- Act of July 3, 2018 – Provisions introducing the Law on Higher Education and Science
- Social and health insurance for doctoral students – guide by the Social Insurance Institution
- <https://studia.gov.pl/doktoranci/doktoraty-wdrozeniowe/>
- <https://www.bip.nauka.gov.pl/doktorat-wdrozeniowy/>
- www.krd.edu.pl
- www.nauka.gov.pl
- <http://rmn.org.pl/>



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