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2023-2027

EVALUATION REPORT

QUALITY OF EDUCATION AT A DOCTORAL SCHOOL

Pierwsza Szkoła Doktorska Gdańskiego Uniwersytetu
Medycznego

Gdański Uniwersytet Medyczny



Name of the doctoral school

Pierwsza Szkoła Doktorska Gdańskiego Uniwersytetu Medycznego

Evaluation period

5/27/19–9/18/25

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

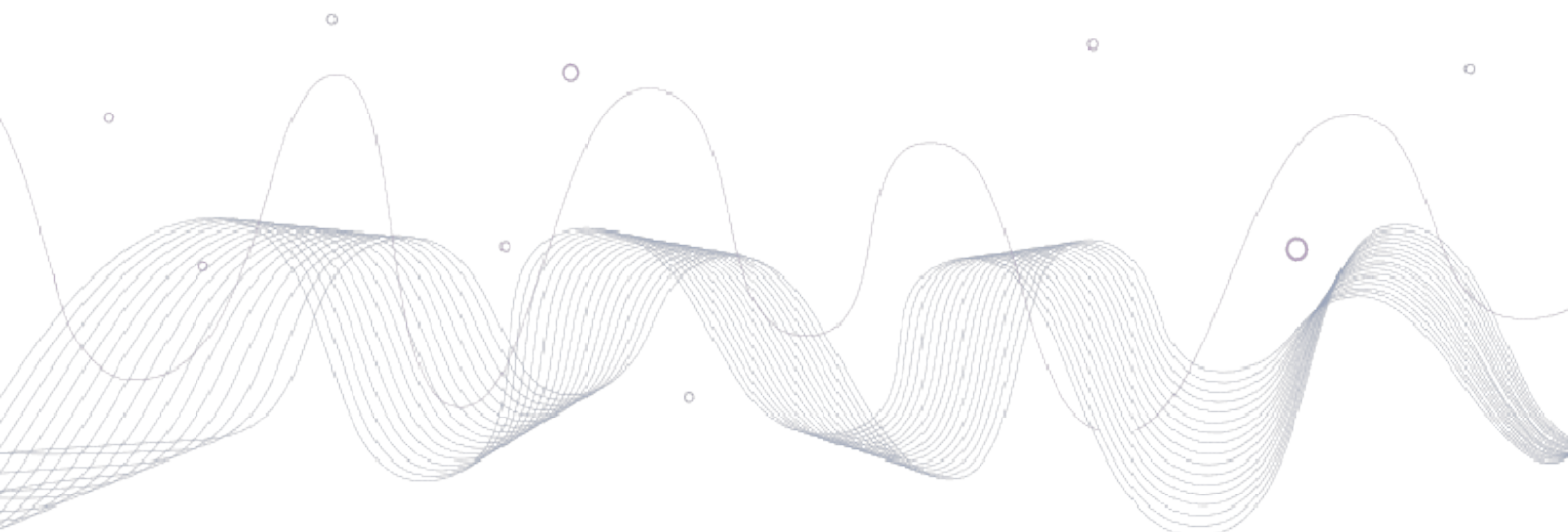
Gdański Uniwersytet Medyczny

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

-

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

12/11/25



Composition of the evaluation team:

Chairman:

Piotr Pruszczyk

Secretary:

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Team members:

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Developed: 8/18/26

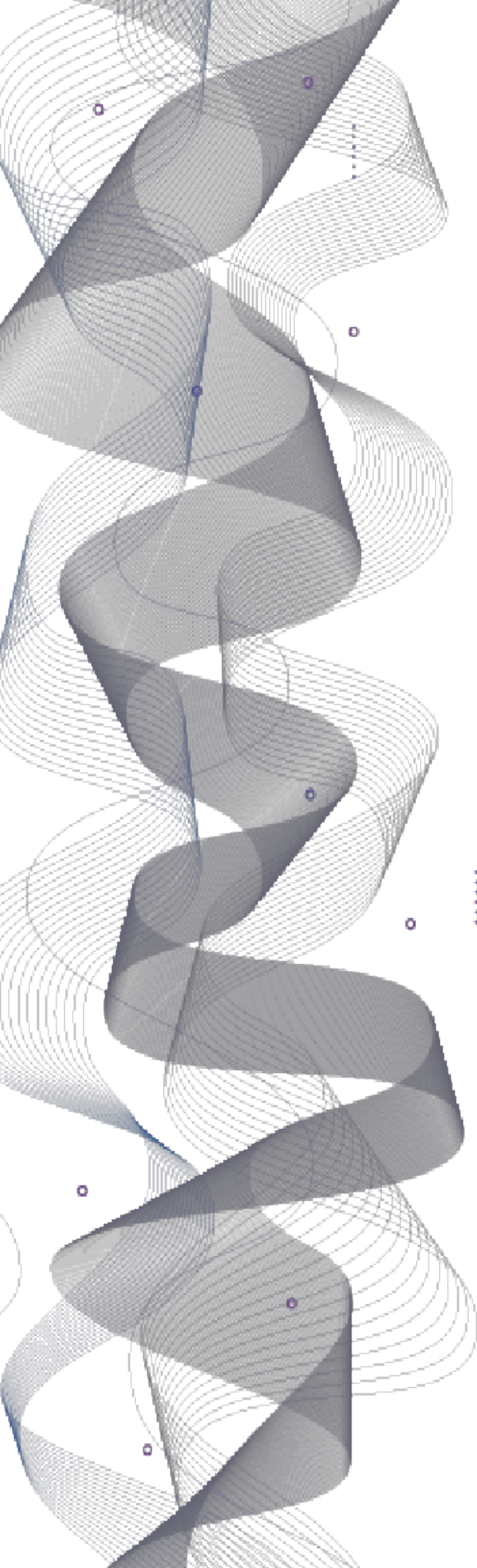


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I. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE DOCTORAL SCHOOL

Name of doctoral school	Pierwsza Szkoła Doktorska Gdańskiego Uniwersytetu Medycznego
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	Medical and health sciences
Discipline(s) of science or art in which training is provided	pharmacology and pharmacy health sciences medical sciences
Name/scope of the education programme	PROGRAMME OF THE FIRST DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF THE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF GDAŃSK Study cycle: 2022/23 to 2025/26 PROGRAMME OF THE MUG FIRST DOCTORAL SCHOOL Study cycle: 2021/22 to 2024/25 PROGRAMME OF THE MUG FIRST DOCTORAL SCHOOL Study cycle: 2020/21 to 2023/24 PROGRAMME OF THE MUG FIRST DOCTORAL SCHOOL Study cycle: 2019/20 to 2022/23
Number of instructors	47
Number of doctoral students undergoing training at the doctoral school (as of 12/10/25)	204
Number of supervisors in terms of guidance in preparing doctoral dissertations (as of 12/10/25)	133
Number of auxiliary supervisors in terms of guidance in preparing doctoral dissertations (as of 12/10/25)	85

II. INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION AND ITS COURSE

The visit to the First Doctoral School of the Medical University of Gdańsk (hereinafter: PSZD) took place on 3 March 2026. The purpose of the visit was to assess the quality of education at the Doctoral School and to analyse the compliance with the requirements described in Article 261 of the Law on Higher Education and Science and the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 1847).

The Evaluation Team was welcomed by the University authorities: the Vice-Rector for Science of the Medical University of Gdańsk, Prof. Michał Żmijewski, and the Director of the First Doctoral School, Prof. Jacek M. Witkowski. The meeting was also attended by the Vice-Rector for Student Affairs Prof. Aleksandra Gaworska-Krzemińska, the Chancellor of MUG Prof. Jacek Bigda, the Deputy Director for Pharmaceutical Sciences of the school Prof. Iwona Inkielewicz-Stępniak, the Deputy Director for Medical Sciences Prof. Michał Pikuła, the Deputy Director of the PSZD for Health Sciences Prof. Jędrzej Antosiewicz, Prof. Katarzyna Sikorska, MD, PhD and the Chairwoman of the Doctoral Students' Self-Government Council Agata Knabe, MSc, Eng.

The visit was one-day and took place according with the previously agreed schedule, including meetings and analysis of documentation.

- Meeting of the Evaluation Team with the authorities of the Doctoral School and representatives of the University authorities. The Director of the Faculty of Education, Prof. Jacek M. Witkowski, presented the history and mission of the Faculty of Education, the management structure, the key principles of operation and the directions of further development, including the changes adopted by the Senate in the Curriculum of the First Doctoral School of MUG in force from the 2026/2027-2029/2030 education cycle and the proposed changes in the Regulations of the First Doctoral School of MUG.

- Meeting with the team responsible for preparing the self-assessment report and the School administration. The discussion covered all eight areas of evaluation: the adequacy of the curriculum to the learning outcomes at level 8 of the PRK, the method of verifying the results, staff qualifications, recruitment, scientific supervision, mid-term evaluation, internationalization and the effectiveness of education. The Evaluation Team assessed individual research plans, minutes of meetings of the Council of the Doctoral Students, minutes of the mid-term evaluation and documentation related to the activities of the Doctoral Students' Self-Government.

- Meeting with academic teachers conducting classes and supervisors representing three disciplines.

- Meeting with doctoral students, including members of the Council of Doctoral Students' Self-Government.

- The visit ended with an internal summary meeting of the Evaluation Team, followed by the final meeting with the Authorities of the Evaluation Team and MUG, during which general conclusions were presented and further stages of the evaluation procedure were informed. The PSZD provided the Evaluation Team with appropriate conditions to work and conduct all scheduled meetings. The atmosphere of the visit was characterized by openness and readiness for constructive dialogue on the part of all interlocutors.

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

The cooperation of the First Doctoral School of the Medical University of Gdańsk (PSZD) with the Doctoral Students' Self-Government meets the statutory requirements and is of a systemic nature.

The University provides doctoral students with the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes and participate in academic life. The Council of the First Doctoral School consists of the Chairperson of the Doctoral Students' Self-Government and a representative of the Doctoral Students' Self-Government Council (hereinafter: RSD). In addition, the Representatives of the Doctoral Students' Self-Government are members of the MUG Senate, Faculty Councils and Senate Committees (Disciplinary Committee for Doctoral Students, Senate Disciplinary Appeal Committee for Doctoral Students, Senate Committee on Study Programmes and Quality of Education, Senate Committee on University Development, Senate Statutory Committee) representing the interests of doctoral students as full members of these bodies.

Cooperation with the Doctoral Students' Self-Government is permanent and includes: providing opinions on the most important legal acts important for the functioning of the PSZD. During the visit, the doctoral students confirmed that their opinions and postulates are treated with due attention by the School Management. The direct availability of the Director and his Deputies for doctoral students and regular e-mail communication regarding changes in documents and regulations were particularly positively evaluated. PhD students indicated that they feel well taken care of by both the School's administration and supervisors. In the period covered by the evaluation, thanks to the support of the University, the RSD organized a number of initiatives, including the National Conference of the National Representation of Doctoral Students (25-28 April 2024) and the Congress of the Doctoral Forum of Medical Universities (10-12 October 2025). The area of communication between the local government and doctoral students, in particular with foreign doctoral students, also deserves praise.

The Evaluation Team positively assesses the cooperation between the PSZD and the Doctoral Students' Self-Government, but draws attention to the need for consistent application of the appropriate legal nomenclature in internal documents, with a clear distinction between the mode of giving opinions and agreeing, in accordance with the wording of the Act. It is worth for the RSD to take care of easier access from the Internet browser to the Regulations of the Doctoral Students' Self-Government of MUG.

The Evaluating Team also pointed out the legitimacy of strengthening the mechanisms for collecting feedback from doctoral students, including considering the implementation of an "exit survey" for people graduating or dropping out of education. The School's Regulations do not contain unambiguous provisions regarding the deadlines for considering appeals of doctoral students against decisions, nor the deadline within which the University Authorities are obliged to consider such an appeal. It is worth making sure that the participation of a representative of doctoral students as an observer in recruitment interviews is carried out. The Team recommends more active involvement of RSD in this process.

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

- **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 MUG Doctoral School conducts the education of doctoral students in accordance with the applicable legal regulations and the requirements of the characteristics of learning outcomes for level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework, specified in the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 14 November 2018.

The curriculum has been developed by the Management of the Doctoral School in consultation with the Board of the Doctoral School, reviewed by the Doctoral Students' Self-Government and approved by the Senate of the University. The Board of the Doctoral School periodically evaluates and updates the programme, taking into account the changing needs and results of consultations with doctoral students. The internal documentation confirms multiple revisions of the curriculum assumptions, which proves a systemic approach to ensuring that education is up-to-date. The key change was a significant reduction in the number of hours of compulsory classes in order to increase the time allocated to independent research work of doctoral students.

The curriculum includes both compulsory and optional components, implemented in the form of lectures, seminars and workshops. The four-year cycle of education includes about 160 hours of compulsory classes.

During the evaluation period, the educational programmes were conducted in Polish and English. The education of doctoral students admitted in the education cycle: 2019/20 to 2022/23, 2020/21 to 2023/24, 2021/22 to 2024/25 was conducted in Polish, while from the 2022-23 - 2025-26 education cycle in English. During the visit, it was emphasized that the decision to launch the English-language educational path required a significant organizational effort, m.in. training of academic teachers, translation of documentation and regulations, but this decision is one of the most important steps towards the internationalization of the School.

An important element of the program are compulsory teaching practices carried out by doctoral students. The PSzD recommends that in the first year, doctoral students co-conduct classes together with experienced academic teachers (60 hours), and from the second year onwards, they carry out teaching practice independently (a total of 180 hours for three consecutive years).

The recommendations of the Evaluation Team include: (1) considering the introduction of a mandatory module educating the ability to write grant applications, independent of the competences of individual supervisors; (2) further digitalisation of the tools for monitoring the implementation of the IPB; (3) taking into account the opinions of PhD students when creating the offer of optional classes.

- The method of assessing the learning outcomes for qualifications at level 8 of the PQF:**

The First Doctoral School of MUG carries out verification of learning outcomes in a multi-level and systemic manner. Verification takes place both at the level of individual subjects and within the framework of broader mechanisms for monitoring the quality of education. At the subject level, each course ends with an exam, credit or grading, according to the appropriate grading scale. The syllabi specify the assigned learning outcomes, methods of their verification and assessment criteria. The results of education are monitored by the annual reports of doctoral students, which are sent to the School Management. The management verifies the reports on the merits and, if necessary, sends them back to the doctoral student with a request for supplements.

The implementation of the IPB in relation to the requirements of the 8th PRK is monitored by annual reports of doctoral students and the mid-term evaluation required by the provisions of the Act. The results are presented during annual reporting sessions, which are an important event for the entire academic community of the School. These sessions are organized in the form of open public conferences, which are attended by PhD students of all years and their supervisors.

An important instrument of verification are observations of didactic classes conducted by doctoral students – the results of observations are analysed and form the basis for corrective or improvement actions. PhD students also express their opinions about academic teachers in cyclical anonymous surveys. PSzD uses the Learning Outcomes Coverage Matrix as a tool to systematically monitor the implementation of outcomes at the program level.

During the mobility, the doctoral student is required to present a certificate confirming that the learning outcomes at level 8 of the PRK were achieved during the internship.

The final recommendation of the Team is to continue pro-quality activities while developing digital tools to support the ongoing self-assessment of doctoral students' progress. It is recommended to consider the implementation of a platform to track the implementation of individual IPB elements in real time.

- **Qualification of academic teachers and academic staff employed at the doctoral school:**
The MUG Doctoral School provides education based on activities of academic staff with high scientific, didactic and organizational qualifications. Among the lecturers there are professors and habilitated doctors with significant scientific achievements, actively participating in national and international research projects, serving in the editorial boards of scientific journals and involved in the organization of scientific conferences.
The Evaluation Team noted that the change of supervisor in the School's documentation occurs more often than in most comparable doctoral schools in Poland. The most common reasons are: obtaining habilitation by an assistant supervisor and changing his/her role, the supervisor's departure or departure from the university, interpersonal conflict or substantive inconsistency, as well as the transfer of a doctoral student to a younger team member by a senior professor. A change of supervisor may entail a change in the topic of the doctorate. This issue requires monitoring and additional regulation.
Each supervisor is required to have at least 15 hours of direct contact with the doctoral student per year. In practice, this number is often much higher and depends on the individual needs of the doctoral student. The PSzD conducts anonymous surveys in which doctoral students evaluate their supervisors, and the results of the surveys are the basis for possible decisions regarding the improvement of supervisor care.
The recommendations of the Evaluation Team include: (1) the introduction of systematic monitoring of changes in supervisors along with an analysis of their causes; (2) formalization of the agreement between the PhD student and the supervisor, specifying the rights and obligations of both parties, access to infrastructure and minimum frequency of meetings;
To sum up, the qualifications of the staff of the MUG Doctoral School and the procedures used for the selection and training of academic teachers ensure a high level of quality education for doctoral students.

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

The MUG Doctoral School conducts recruitment in an open competition, available to domestic and foreign candidates. All information regarding the recruitment process (schedule, composition of the committee, required documents, course of the process) is published on the PSzD website at least 5 months before the recruitment. The recruitment regulations are accepted by the University Senate. Both the regulations and the recruitment documentation are available in Polish and English. Information about the recruitment offer is publicly available on the PSzD website, and research topics proposed by supervisors are published well in advance. The recruitment process is two-stage. Stage I consists in assessing the candidate's scientific achievements and activities: scientific publications (including review papers), participation in scientific clubs and conferences, grants and awards. For each of the two main criteria (achievements and interview), a candidate can obtain a maximum of 50 points. The requirement for passing the interview is to obtain at least 60% of the possible score in this part. The Team notices that such a mechanism for evaluating achievements prefers representatives of large medical specialties with high publication potential over more niche ones. The evaluation team positively assessed the award of an additional place to an exceptionally outstanding candidate who was not included in the standard ranking list. PSzD plans to regulate this mechanism in the regulations. Among the recruitment challenges identified by the Faculty of Pharmacy should be mentioned: a small number of candidates from the Faculty of Pharmacy (the specificity of 5.5-year studies with obligatory professional practice after graduation), the difficulty of assessing the feasibility of financing projects at the recruitment stage and the lack of a formal mechanism for excluding supervisors with a history of "difficult" relations with PhD students from the list of potential supervisors. In addition, during the visit, a systemic problem was identified - the possibility of admitting a doctoral student with the number of free teaching hours in the supervisor's unit: according to the applicable rules, the supervisor is obliged to have a minimum of 60 teaching hours in his unit in order to be able to accept the candidate. This implies that even a supervisor with financial resources for the support of a doctoral project cannot accept a candidate if the unit has not sufficient hours, which also discriminates units with a small number of classes and is a potential barrier unrelated to the scientific quality of the research project. The Team's recommendations: (1) incorporating into the regulations the procedure for awarding an additional place for outstanding candidates; (2) taking into account – when assessing the publication achievements, percentile or quartile position of the journal (e.g. according to Web of Science) instead of the Impact Factor itself, which will avoid preferencing selected medical specialties; (3) promoting the School among pharmacy students; (4) consideration of changing the rules limiting admitting a doctoral student according to the number of excessing teaching hours in the supervisor's unit, as the current mechanism may be a systemic barrier unrelated to the scientific quality of the project and in practice limit the access of talented candidates to the doctoral school.

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

PSzD has implemented multi-level mechanisms to ensure high quality scientific support for doctoral students. These include verification of supervisors' competencies, ongoing monitoring of research progress, a system of supervisor training and extensive substantive, organizational and financial support instruments.

The list of supervisors is created on the basis of an announcement addressed annually to all independent researchers of the University who declare willingness and potential to accept a doctoral student and a proposal for a research topic. The criteria for acceptance of the supervisor include current scientific achievements, possession of external funding for the support of the doctoral project and a history of supervision. Research topics are published on the School's website well in advance of admission.

Scientific supervision is provided throughout the entire duration of education. Each supervisor is required to have at least 15 hours of direct contact with the doctoral student per year. The PSzD plans to introduce a formalized written agreement between the doctoral student and the supervisor, specifying, m.in, access to research infrastructure, minimum frequency of meetings and mutual expectations of the parties. It is planned to implement a tool in the form of a doctoral student meeting card, documenting cooperation with the supervisor and the implementation of IPB.

The Faculty of Social Sciences has extensive mechanisms of financial support for the research activities of doctoral students. PhD students can apply for intra-university grants (the Young Researcher programme up to 50 kPLN in a competition process a grant from the Vice-Rector for Science up to 10 k PLN per year for reagents and small equipment). PSzD actively informs doctoral students about the possibilities of applying for NCN grants (Preludium), NCBR and European grants. As part of the IDUB (Excellence Initiative – Research University), doctoral students can receive funding for mobility or research. An important condition is to ensure a high level of presentation of research results.

PSzD does not have a separate budget, it operates within the central financial management of the university. The Faculty of Social Sciences has developed a procedure for resolving conflicts between the doctoral student and the supervisor. Guidelines for resolving conflict situations are available on the university platform, discussed at meetings with supervisors and the School Council, and sent by reminder mailing. The School Management acts as a mediator, while in the history of the School there have been individual cases requiring intervention and none of them required the launch of a disciplinary committee.

In the analyzed documents, the change of supervisor occurs much more often than in most doctoral schools. The reasons are related to the change of workplace by the Supervisor, obtaining, interpersonal conflict or substantive incompatibility between the PhD student and the supervisor. A change of supervisor may involve a change in the topic of the doctoral dissertation or the topic is partially taken over with the consent of the previous supervisor. The PSzD is considering introducing additional regulations regarding resignations and changes. Recommendations: (1) urgent introduction of a mandatory module on writing grant applications; (2) considering the mechanism of granting the PSzD its own budget, enabling direct co-financing of doctoral students' research activities (internships, conferences, reagents), which currently depends on each decision of the University authorities.

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

The mid-term evaluation system at the MUG Doctoral School has been designed and is implemented in a way that guarantees transparency, repeatability and compliance with applicable law. The mid-term evaluation is a key moment in the process of education of a doctoral student and has a verification function in relation to the progress of the implementation of the Individual Research Plan.

During the visit, the transparency of the procedure was positively assessed: doctoral students are informed about the evaluation criteria from the beginning of their education, and the committee's protocols are available to them. The appeal procedure is specified in the regulations, although the Evaluation Team noted the need to clarify it (the deadline for filing an appeal by the doctoral student, the deadline for consideration by the Rector).

- **Internationalisation:**

Internationalization is a declared and implemented priority of the MUG Doctoral School.

Activities in this area include both education in English, mobility of doctoral students, as well as the acquisition of foreign doctoral students and lecturers.

Since the 2022/2023 academic year, the curriculum has been conducted in English, which required the training of academic teachers, the translation of regulations and documents, and the adaptation of the IT infrastructure. PSzD participates in the ACE2-EU network and obtains horizontal grants (Horizon Europe), through which it invites foreign doctoral students. The first cotutelle agreement (with an Italian university) is being implemented, and PSzD plans to develop this formula of cooperation. PhD students benefit from the Erasmus+ programme, NAWA-STER and mobility programmes implemented under IDUB

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

The effectiveness of the education of doctoral students at the MUG Doctoral School is assessed positively by the Team, with the proviso that the PSzD has been operating since 2019 and the first years have only just completed the full cycle of education.

According to the data presented by the School in the self-assessment report: a total of 202 doctoral students were recruited in the evaluation period (in six calls 2019/2020–2024/2025); 18 PhD students were removed from the list (approx. 8.9%); 38 doctoral students completed their education at the doctoral school. Of the graduates, 35 people initiated the procedure for awarding a doctoral degree (92% graduated), and 29 obtained a doctoral degree (76% graduated). No graduate was denied a degree. The ratio of drop outs to the total accepted (approx. 9%) is quite low and confirms the effective selection at the recruitment stage and effective scientific care.

Monitoring of graduates' professional careers has so far been carried out mainly on the basis of data from the National ELA System. From the new academic year, PSzD plans to implement an anonymous electronic alumni survey, developed in cooperation with an alumni promotion specialist, which will ensure consistency with the solutions applied to master's graduates and enable systematic career monitoring. PSzD conducts active monitoring of the fate of graduates through the University's database, social platforms (LinkedIn, ResearchGate) and other tools.

In the area of scientific activity of PhD students, the Faculty of Economics and Technology has recorded a growing number of publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals, participation in national and international conferences, as well as successes in obtaining grants (m.in. NCN Prelude). Among doctoral students and graduates, there are people awarded by scientific societies and doing internships in renowned foreign centers.

V. FINAL OPINION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Evaluation Team formulated the following comments and recommendations regarding the organization and functioning of the PSZD:

1. The Evaluation Team identifies the disproportion in the number of doctoral students representing different scientific disciplines. The Team indicated need for activities increasing interest and recruitment to the PSZD of students representing pharmaceutical sciences and the discipline of health sciences. Personalization of the didactic offer can support such purpose. The Team recommends a clear designation of subjects addressed to specific disciplines, especially pharmaceutical sciences.
2. Consideration of changing current rules limiting admitting a doctoral student according to the number of excessive teaching hours in the supervisor's unit, as the current mechanism may constitute a systemic barrier unrelated to the scientific quality of the project and in practice limit the access of talented candidates to the doctoral school
3. Recruitment process – while assessing publication record of candidates taking into account the percentile or quartile position of the journal (e.g. according to Web of Science) instead currently applied of the Impact Factor itself, which will avoid preference for selected medical specialties
4. It is strongly advised to formalize the bilateral agreement between the doctoral student and the supervisor, specifying the rights and obligations of both parties, access to infrastructure and the minimum frequency of meetings;
5. Consideration of the mechanism of granting the PSzD its own budget, allowing direct or partial co-financing of doctoral students' research activities (internships, conferences, reagents), which currently depends on each decision of the University authorities.
6. Consider including in the regulations the procedure for awarding additional places for outstanding candidates;
7. Consideration of introducing a mandatory education module improving the ability to write grant applications, independent of the competences of individual supervisors;
8. Further digitization of the tools for monitoring the implementation of the IPB is advisable;
9. Taking into account the opinions of doctoral students when creating the offer of optional classes, especially for people representing pharmaceutical sciences and the discipline of health sciences.
10. Introduction of systematic monitoring of changes in promoters along with an analysis of their causes;
11. Regulation of the system of financial awards for outstanding doctoral students;
12. Considering developing a formal procedure to support PhD students in the event of the expiry of the scholarship before submitting the dissertation;
13. However, the Evaluation Team draws attention to the need for consistent application of the appropriate legal nomenclature in internal documents, with a clear distinction between the mode of giving opinions and agreeing, in accordance with the wording of the Act. It is worth introducing a system that encourages more active participation of doctoral students in surveys and collecting feedback, ensuring anonymity and a sense of security. This also applies to the so-called EXIT questionnaire, which would be placed at the end of the education process or when resigning from the PSZD in the form of an anonymous form – as is the case in other institutions.

Participation in it would be completely voluntary.

14. It is worth for the RSzD to take care of easier access from the position of a web browser to the Regulations of the Doctoral Students' Self-Government of MUG.

15. It is advisable to improve the monitoring of the fate of graduates, especially women (changing the name after marriage makes identification difficult);

It should be strongly emphasized that the above remarks contained in the report, concerning the organization, procedures and solutions applied by the First Doctoral School of the Medical University of Gdańsk, are only guidelines of the Evaluation Team aimed at improving the already good functioning of the Medical University of Gdańsk. We hope that the Doctoral School will consider the legitimacy of their application, recognizing that they will improve the process of educating young scientific staff.

In summary, we assess the Institution, the recruitment processes and the education of doctoral students in a positive way, recommending that the next evaluation of the First Doctoral School of the Medical University of Gdańsk be carried out in 6 years, in accordance with Article 259, point 2 of the Law on Higher Education and Science of 20 July 2018 (Journal of Laws of 2024, item 1571, as amended).

VI. ASSESSMENT AND REASON

Final assessment
positive

Reason:

The System of Evaluation of Doctoral Schools is financed by
the Minister of Science and Higher Education.

KEN

2023-2027



Minister of Science and Higher Education
Republic of Poland



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