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2023-2027

DOCTORAL SCHOOL

EDUCATION QUALITY REPORT

Szkoła Doktorska w Politechnice Lubelskiej

Politechnika Lubelska

Name and seat of the doctoral school

Szkoła Doktorska w Politechnice Lubelskiej

Evaluation period

5/28/19–8/18/25

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

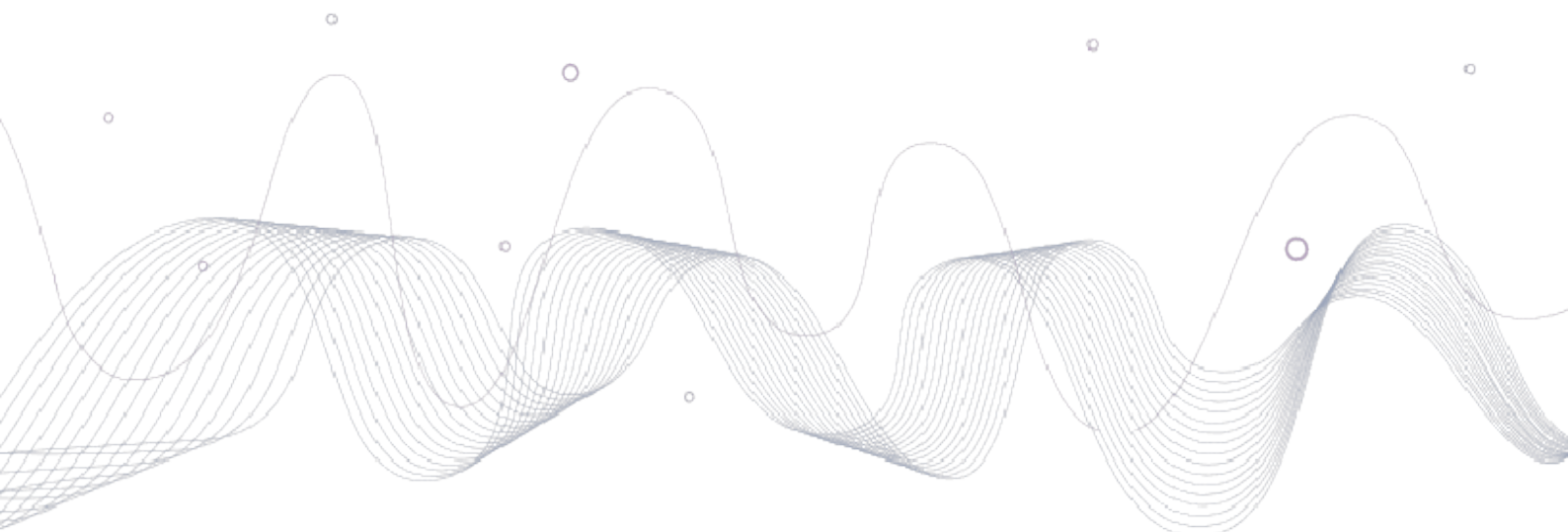
Politechnika Lubelska

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

-

Date of report

11/7/25



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I. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE DOCTORAL SCHOOL

Name of doctoral school	Szkoła Doktorska w Politechnice Lubelskiej
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)	<p>The Department of Civil and Industrial Engineering of the University of Pisa</p> <p>The Faculty of Civil Engineering of the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava</p> <p>Freshware Sp. z o.o.</p> <p>PGE Energia Ciepła S.A. Oddział Elektrociepłownia w Lublinie Wrotków</p> <p>Narodowe Centrum Badań Jądrowych</p> <p>Sieć Badawcza Łukasiewicz - Instytut Nowych Syntez Chemicznych</p> <p>Aviation Artur Trendak</p> <p>Sapienza University of Rome</p> <p>The Università Politecnica delle Marche</p> <p>The Faculty of Natural Sciences and Informatics of the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra</p>
Domains of study	<p>Engineering and technology (from: 01-01-2018)</p> <p>Social sciences (from: 01-01-2018)</p>
Discipline(s) of science or art in which training is provided	<p>architecture and urban planning (from: 01-01-2018)</p> <p>automation, electronics and electrical engineering (from: 01-01-2018 to: 10-11-2022)</p> <p>information and communication technology (from: 01-01-2018)</p> <p>civil engineering and transport (from: 01-01-2018 to: 10-11-2022)</p> <p>mechanical engineering (from: 01-01-2018)</p> <p>environmental engineering, mining and energy (from: 01-01-2018)</p> <p>civil engineering, geodesy and transport (from: 11-11-2022)</p> <p>automation, electronics, electrical engineering and space technologies (from: 11-11-2022)</p> <p>management and quality studies (from: 01-01-2018)</p>
Name/scope of the education programme	<p>Teaching programme of Lublin University of Technology Doctoral School</p> <p>Teaching programme of Lublin University of</p>

	Technology Doctoral School II Teaching programme of Lublin University of Technology Doctoral School III
Number of instructors	98
Number of doctoral students undergoing training at the doctoral school (as of 11/7/25)	109
Number of supervisors in terms of guidance in preparing doctoral dissertations (as of 11/7/25)	64
Number of auxiliary supervisors in terms of guidance in preparing doctoral dissertations (as of 11/7/25)	42

II. INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION AND ITS COURSE

The site visit of the Doctoral School proceeded smoothly and in a positive atmosphere. The entity provided the required documentation in a timely manner and demonstrated openness and readiness to cooperate with the team of experts. Opportunities were provided to meet with representatives of the Doctoral School management, supervisors, doctoral students, and administrative staff.

The friendly atmosphere and openness in providing explanations were assessed positively, in particular on the part of the Director of the Doctoral School and the administrative staff member. At the same time, it was noted that during the meetings the same individuals most often took the floor, which to some extent limited the diversity of perspectives.

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

The cooperation between the Doctoral School at the Lublin University of Technology and the University Doctoral Students' Council is based on formal statutory foundations as well as on the partnership-based model declared in the self-evaluation report. The University Doctoral Students' Council operates as an autonomous body, with its own budget and access to the University's premises and technical infrastructure. The formal status of the Doctoral Students' Council is reflected in its presence on the Doctoral School Council, where it holds one place and participates in issuing opinions on documents related to the organisation of education. According to internal documentation as well as the conducted interviews, relations between the management and the student council are characterised by openness, which is intended to serve the improvement of the quality of education and to strengthen the role of doctoral students within the academic community.

However, in light of the information presented in the self-evaluation report and the facts recognised during the visit, a picture emerges of certain inconsistencies between the declared standards and the practice of their implementation, which casts a shadow over the quality of cooperation in key areas. Particular doubts are raised by the lack of agreement with the Doctoral Students' Council regarding the candidacy of the person appointed to the position of Director of the Doctoral School. It should be emphasised at this point that both the doctoral students and the authorities of the Doctoral School are satisfied with the cooperation and can rely on one another. The Doctoral Students' Council is involved in the day-to-day functioning of the Doctoral School, remains in constant contact with the Doctoral School's management, and actively participates in resolving issues reported by doctoral students, including problematic and conflict situations. However, the failure to agree on the candidacy of the person appointed to the position of Director of the Doctoral School with the Doctoral Students' Council stands in direct contradiction to § 29 point 5 of the Statute of the Lublin University of Technology, which clearly stipulates that the appointment of the Director requires obtaining an agreement with the student council.

Another problem identified during the site visit and arising from discussions with representatives of doctoral students is the fact that the Doctoral Students' Council sporadically does not receive documents for opinion-giving in accordance with the adopted and legally regulated procedures. This applies in particular to draft study programmes, with respect to which the student council has a statutory right to express an opinion. Omitting this stage, even if incidental in nature, limits the possibility of verifying the adequacy of learning outcomes to the needs of doctoral students and to the specificity of education at Level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework (PRK). Effective cooperation in this area requires strict adherence to deadlines and transparency in document circulation, so that the student council can reliably represent the position of its community.

The unequal access of doctoral students to internal funding programmes also raises concerns, which is perceived as a significant obstacle to their scientific development. Although the University achieves success in acquiring external funding, for example within the NAWA STER projects (IDeaS of LUT), the stability and predictability of support from internal funds are crucial for the implementation of Individual Research Plans (IPB). Excessive dependence of research activity on external funding may lead to situations in which doctoral students abandon ambitious research tasks included in their Individual Research Plans due to concerns about the lack of funds for their implementation.

This state of affairs raises serious concern and may lead to far-reaching consequences in the relations between the Doctoral Students' Council and the University authorities. Even if the described situations constitute only isolated incidents, from the perspective of evaluation they represent a warning signal indicating an area requiring corrective action. Within this framework, the entity operating the Doctoral School should clearly identify the causes of these shortcomings, regardless of whether they result from administrative deficiencies or from a lack of appropriate communication at the decision-making level.

The development and implementation of preventive mechanisms are crucial to avoiding similar violations in the future and to building an authentic, rather than merely formal, partnership with the Doctoral Students' Council. The entirety of these actions will make it possible to restore full procedural compliance in the functioning of the Doctoral School and will strengthen its prestige as a unit that cares for the reliability and transparency of academic processes.

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:**
Based on the analysis of the documentation submitted by the Doctoral School and the information obtained during the site visit, it is concluded that the formally adopted learning outcomes have been formulated in a manner consistent with the descriptors of Level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework and cover knowledge, skills, and social competences. At the same time, significant problems have been identified with regard to their operationalisation and the systemic assurance of their implementation within the education programme and individual research plans.

The Doctoral School provides education in nine scientific disciplines within two fields: engineering and technology, and social sciences. The education programme is predominantly general-university and methodological in nature, comprising joint courses for all disciplines. During the site visit, it was confirmed that there is an insufficient number of specialist courses dedicated to individual disciplines, which limits the possibility of systemically achieving learning outcomes appropriate to Level 8 PRK within a given discipline.

The assumption that the achievement of learning outcomes at Level 8 PRK is based primarily on individual work with the supervisor does not constitute a sufficient or systemic solution within the Doctoral School's education programme. At the same time, it was demonstrated that the instructors teaching individual courses usually represent a single scientific discipline, which raises doubts as to their ability to convey specialist knowledge appropriate to other disciplines. Attention is also drawn to the lack of sufficient course optionality and the absence of mechanisms enabling Discipline Councils or supervisors to submit proposals for courses dedicated to specific disciplines.

The evaluation team confirms the formal correctness of the formulated learning outcomes, while at the same time pointing to the lack of their unambiguous assignment to individual scientific disciplines. In addition, inconsistencies were identified in the designation of learning outcomes: one scheme was used in the education plan approved by the Senate, another in the learning outcomes matrix, and yet another in course syllabi and the submitted education programme. These deficiencies make it difficult to analyse and monitor the implementation of learning outcomes.

The documentation also revealed deficiencies in syllabi. In most of the analysed syllabi no list of specialist literature was provided. Positively assessed, however, was the presence of courses conducted in English and the implementation of joint doctoral workshops, which support internationalisation and the exchange of experience.

The analysis of the Regulations of the Doctoral School demonstrated the need for their update in connection with changes in the applicable legal provisions, in particular the Act – Law on Higher Education and Science (including the repealed provision § 12 point 5). The absence of provisions concerning the monitoring of the quality of education and the lack of formal procedures in this area were also identified. It was also found that the Doctoral School is not

formally included in the university-wide system of quality assurance in education, or that there is no functioning quality assurance committee dedicated to the Doctoral School.

Doubts were also raised by the provision of § 9 point 4 of the Regulations, obliging doctoral students to keep records of working time and to remain for 30 hours per week in the unit where the supervisor or academic mentor is employed. In the opinion of the team, this provision is not directly related to achieving learning outcomes at Level 8 PRK, raises controversy among doctoral students, and may constitute a barrier to free scientific development, especially in the case of research work that does not require constant presence in the unit. Achieving learning outcomes for qualifications at Level 8 PRK does not depend on the number of hours spent in the unit employing the academic mentor or supervisor, but rather on good organisation and planning work together with the supervisor. In the case of research work at laboratory workstations, the doctoral student is present in the unit; in the case of other work (e.g. review of current literature, preparation of publications, or the drafting of the dissertation itself), physical absence from the unit may be allowed.

Some provisions (including § 11 point 6 concerning the requirement to publish at least one article from the MNiSW list with a high score in the second and third year of education, without clearly defined consequences of failing to meet this requirement) are overly restrictive and do not support the flexible scientific development of doctoral students.

In addition, the legitimacy of the provision (§ 17 point 7) excluding the possibility of appealing against the result of the mid-term evaluation appears to be incorrect. Attention is also drawn to the lack of requirements concerning the popularisation of science within IPBs, in the form of a separate point.

Organisational difficulties resulting from the overload of the Doctoral School's administrative office were also diagnosed, which affects the timeliness of administrative tasks. It is necessary to strengthen administrative support by at least one full-time position.

In summary, despite the formal compliance of the learning outcomes with Level 8 PRK, the manner of their implementation in the education programme and in individual research plans requires significant modification.

In particular, it is recommended to:

- update the Regulations of the Doctoral School in accordance with the applicable legal provisions (the applicable Act – in particular § 12 point 5 – and the Statute of the Lublin University of Technology, especially with regard to the opinion-giving of executive acts at LUT by the Doctoral Students' Council, e.g. during the appointment of the Director of the Doctoral School),
- organise and standardise the description of learning outcomes, including their unambiguous

assignment to individual scientific disciplines and the unification of learning outcome designations across the documents binding in the Doctoral School,

- introduce specialist and elective courses linked to scientific disciplines, completed with a pass with a grade awarded to the doctoral student,
- establish clear and transparent rules for submitting courses dedicated to disciplines, with the participation of Discipline Councils, accessible to a broad group of employees of the Lublin University of Technology,
- supplement and standardise syllabi,
- in connection with the requirement of PRK 8, supplementing Individual Research Plans with a separate point on the popularization of science,
- appoint a quality assurance committee within the Doctoral School or formally include the Doctoral School in the university-wide system for monitoring the quality of education, including representation of the Doctoral School on the University Quality Assurance Council (and the related amendment of relevant regulations),
- abandon § 9 point 4 of the Doctoral School Regulations, i.e. the obligation to record doctoral students' working time and to remain for 30 hours per week in the unit, and possibly replace it with other, more adequate forms of monitoring progress.

- **The method of assessing the learning outcomes for qualifications at level 8 of the PQF:**
Based on the analysis of documentation and the information obtained during the site visit, it is concluded that formal elements of a system for verifying learning outcomes for qualifications at Level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework operate within the Doctoral School; however, this system is neither coherent, unambiguous, nor systematic in nature. The principles for verifying learning outcomes are largely described in the syllabi of individual courses; however, they are formulated in an alternative manner and do not constitute a uniform, transparent model for the verification of learning outcomes, either at the level of the entire Doctoral School or with respect to individual scientific disciplines.

A lack of unambiguous principles for verifying learning outcomes for qualifications at Level 8 PRK was identified. This deficiency results in the dispersion and inconsistency of the applied solutions, which hinders the assessment of the comparability and adequacy of learning outcome verification tools across different disciplines and at different stages of education.

The analysis of the presented evidence of learning outcome verification indicates that the scope and form of the applied tools do not always allow for a reliable assessment of the achievement of learning outcomes appropriate to Level 8 PRK. For example, pass reports for the course “Methodology of Preparing Research Projects” were in most cases limited to one-page papers, while pass presentations for the course “Preparation of Scientific Presentations” were restricted to only a few slides. Such forms of assessment do not constitute a sufficient basis for verifying advanced research and communication competences required at Level 8 PRK.

The verification of learning outcomes within doctoral workshops, organised once a year in a joint format for all cohorts and disciplines, may be assessed as a valuable initiative with an integrative and internationalising character. At the same time, the short and condensed nature of these activities makes it difficult to unambiguously assess their role in the systematic and in-depth verification of learning outcomes, in particular those assigned to scientific disciplines.

During the site visit, a lack of systemic monitoring of the learning outcome verification process and the absence of dedicated mechanisms for its improvement were also identified. In particular, there is no quality assurance committee operating within the Doctoral School, and the analysis of reports from meetings of the Doctoral School Council indicates that issues related to the quality of education and the verification of learning outcomes do not constitute a permanent item on its agenda. Moreover, it was found that the Doctoral School Council did not meet with the frequency stipulated in the regulations - during the previous academic year, meetings were held on 31 October 2024, 21 November 2024, and 5 June 2025.

The functioning of surveys concerning cooperation between doctoral students and supervisors, as well as the undertaking of remedial actions in the event of identified problems, was assessed positively, although this procedure is not formalised and is not incorporated into

a coherent system of quality assurance in education.

In summary, the method of verifying learning outcomes for qualifications at Level 8 PRK in the Doctoral School requires clarification, standardisation, and strengthening at the systemic level.

In particular, it is recommended to:

- develop uniform and transparent principles for verifying learning outcomes at Level 8 PRK, linked to scientific disciplines,
- align learning outcome verification tools with the level of advancement of doctoral students' research and communication competences,
- implement systemic mechanisms for monitoring and improving the learning outcome verification process,
- include issues related to the quality of education and the verification of learning outcomes as a permanent element on the agenda of the Doctoral School Council.

- **Qualification of academic teachers and academic staff employed at the doctoral school:**
Based on the information obtained during the site visit, it was found that the qualifications of academic teachers and research staff providing education in the Doctoral School are verified mainly within university-wide and unit-level periodic evaluation procedures. However, no clear, formalised principles for verifying the qualifications of persons conducting classes in the Doctoral School and performing the functions of supervisor and auxiliary supervisor at the level of the Doctoral School itself were presented. This applies in particular to the lack of clearly defined criteria for staff selection, the procedure for assessing qualifications, and the scope of responsibility of the Doctoral School bodies in this process.

Doubts are raised by the fact that classes - particularly methodological courses - are conducted jointly for all disciplines by persons representing a single scientific discipline. Such a solution may limit the adequacy of didactic support with regard to the specificity of research conducted by doctoral students in different fields and scientific disciplines, especially in the context of diverse research methods, scientific paradigms, and publication standards. At the same time, those conducting such classes should demonstrate significant experience in conducting scientific research, preparing grant applications, and in the publication process. In the current state, however, no clear, formalised criteria for the selection of lecturers to deliver these classes have been identified.

In summary, the manner of selecting and verifying the qualifications of staff providing education in the Doctoral School requires clarification and systematisation.

In particular, it is recommended to:

- clarify, standardise, and make public the principles for selecting and verifying the qualifications of academic teachers and research staff providing education in the Doctoral School, including persons performing the functions of supervisor and auxiliary supervisor.

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

Based on the analysis of documentation and the information obtained during the site visit, it was concluded that the recruitment process to the Doctoral School is formally described in a clear and detailed manner. Basic information concerning recruitment rules, the Regulations of the Doctoral School, and its functioning is available to candidates. Recruitment is conducted in a competitive mode, using a formalised evaluation sheet that includes an analysis of the candidate's academic achievements, an assessment of the research project, and an interview, which supports the substantive and transparent nature of the recruitment procedure.

At the same time, significant concerns regarding the composition of recruitment committees were identified during the site visit. In particular, it was found that a given scientific discipline is represented on the recruitment committee by a single person. In case that this person is excluded from the procedure, for example due to a potential conflict of interest resulting from the role of supervisor, the committee lacks a representative of the given discipline. Such a situation undermines the objectivity and reliability of the substantive assessment of candidates and does not ensure full adequacy in the evaluation of research projects, which requires urgent modification of the principles for appointing recruitment committees. It was also found that the current composition of the committees does not guarantee sufficient resilience of the recruitment process to the risk of subjectivity in assessments.

Concerns are also raised by the lack of the possibility for a potential supervisor to participate in the interview with the candidate. Therefore, it is recommended to consider the participation of potential supervisors in recruitment interviews with candidates, while maintaining the principles of impartiality of the process (no participation in the closed session and no possibility of asking questions).

A lack of explicit regulatory provisions concerning procedures in cases where a candidate has obtained a final degree grade lower than "good" was also identified, despite the fact that such cases have occurred and were considered under an appeal procedure. The absence of precise regulations in this regard reduces the transparency of recruitment rules and requires clarification.

The use of an electronic recruitment system and the provision of architectural accessibility of university buildings for persons with disabilities were assessed positively. At the same time, low visibility of the English-language pages of the Doctoral School and difficulties in accessing them were identified. The English version of the website does not ensure full availability of recruitment information for international candidates. In particular, the list of documents required in the recruitment process, comprising several items, is available exclusively in Polish. It is therefore necessary to standardise and supplement the content published in the Polish and English versions of the website.

In summary, the recruitment process to the Doctoral School meets basic formal and organisational requirements; however, it requires clarification and adjustments in order to strengthen its reliability, transparency, and accessibility.

In particular, it is recommended to:

- modify the principles for appointing recruitment committees in such a way as to ensure representation of the relevant scientific discipline in each recruitment procedure, also in cases where a committee member is excluded due to a conflict of interest,
- clarify regulatory provisions concerning candidate evaluation criteria, including procedures in cases where a candidate has obtained a final degree grade lower than “good,”
- standardise, supplement, and improve the visibility of recruitment information published on the Polish and English versions of the Doctoral School’s website in order to ensure equal access to information for all candidates, including international candidates.

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

Based on the documentation and information obtained during the site visit, it was found that the quality of scientific supervision and ongoing support provided to doctoral students in conducting scientific activity generally raises no objections. Doctoral students pointed to the availability of supervisors, the engagement of the Director of the Doctoral School, and good cooperation with the Doctoral Students' Council, particularly in situations requiring intervention.

The analysis of the quality of scientific supervision and support for conducting research activity allows for conclusions indicating the existence of reliable mechanisms supporting early-career researchers. In accordance with the adopted regulations, the Doctoral School provides doctoral students with scientific supervision by supervisors holding the title of professor or the degree of habilitated doctor. This system is based on limits on supervisory workload (a maximum of five doctoral students per supervisor), which is intended to guarantee an appropriate allocation of time for individual cooperation and substantive support in the preparation of the doctoral dissertation.

The procedure for appointing supervisors is formalised and involves both the Director of the Doctoral School and the relevant Discipline Councils, which ensures multi-level verification of supervisors' competences. Scientific supervision is evaluated by doctoral students in the form of semester surveys, the results of which are submitted to the Doctoral School management in order to monitor the quality of cooperation.

The existence of organisational and financial support mechanisms was also confirmed, enabling the funding of publications, participation in conferences and training, as well as the obligation to prepare a grant application in the third year of education. A particular element of support is the active involvement of doctoral students in international cooperation, implemented, among others, through the NAWA STER programmes (IDeaS of LUT projects), offering mobility scholarships, micro-grants for international cooperation, and participation in lectures by visiting professors from foreign research institutions.

At the same time, no explicit procedures for handling conflicts between a doctoral student and a supervisor or auxiliary supervisor were identified in the documentation of the Doctoral School. Although in practice conflict situations were resolved with the support of the Director of the Doctoral School and the Doctoral Students' Council, the lack of formalised procedures may lead to unequal treatment of doctoral students in analogous situations.

Significant concerns of the Committee were raised by the method of recording doctoral students' working time, based on attendance lists obliging physical presence on university premises. This solution was assessed as excessively formalised, difficult to enforce, and inadequate to the specificity of research work, and in practice leading to fictitious compliance with requirements. Attention was drawn to the limited possibility of remote work for doctoral

students, and it was indicated that task-based forms of accounting for research progress would constitute a more adequate solution.

Isolated conflict cases resulting in the restriction of a doctoral student's access to research infrastructure were also indicated, which reveals the need for better safeguarding of the continuity of research implementation regardless of personal relations.

In view of the doubts regarding the full fulfilment of Criterion 5, it is recommended to undertake actions in the area of legal and organisational frameworks. In particular, attention was drawn to the necessity of including the Doctoral School in the Strategy for the Development of Research and Research-and-Teaching Staff Careers at the Lublin University of Technology (Rector's Ordinance No. R-18/2023 of 13 March 2023). The absence of the Doctoral School from this strategy results in its functioning to a significant extent in organisational isolation, which may hinder fuller use of the creative and research potential of academic staff in the process of educating doctoral students. It also fails to indicate a development pathway for assistants leading to undertaking education in the Doctoral School and does not reward such a decision.

Furthermore, the need to organise the issue of the scope of duties and the line of authority of the person employed in the Doctoral School Secretariat was indicated. The single-person staffing of the Secretariat, combined with the growing number of formal matters related to education and the administration of programmes financed from external funds (including NAWA STER), creates the need to designate a substitute in the event of the employee's absence. The Doctoral School Secretariat constitutes an important link connecting doctoral students with the University, also in terms of support for conducting scientific activity, and should be available without limitations.

In summary, despite the generally positive assessment of the quality of scientific supervision and support for conducting research activity, **it is recommended to:**

- develop and implement formal procedures for resolving conflict situations,
- analyse the evaluation of the work of supervisors and auxiliary supervisors,
- modify the principles for monitoring doctoral students' work in the direction of solutions more adequate to the nature of doctoral education,
- include the Doctoral School in the Strategy for the Development of Research and Research-and-Teaching Staff Careers at the Lublin University of Technology,
- strengthen the administrative support of the Doctoral School Secretariat.

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

Based on the analysis of documentation and the information obtained during the site visit, it was found that the mid-term evaluation in the Doctoral School is conducted in accordance with the applicable legal regulations and internal rules. The principles, criteria, and procedures of the evaluation are clearly defined, and doctoral students are informed well in advance about the date and course of the evaluation. Mid-term evaluations are carried out on time, at the midpoint of the education period, and their course is assessed by doctoral students as reliable and transparent.

The individual nature of the mid-term evaluation was assessed positively. For each doctoral student, a separate three-member committee is appointed, selected with regard to the subject of the doctoral dissertation, while meeting the statutory requirements concerning its composition, including the participation of an external expert. The evaluation forms used are clear and unambiguous, and their modifications over the years demonstrate continuous improvement of the mid-term evaluation process. The evaluation is based on the implementation of the Individual Research Plan, the presentation of the doctoral student's progress, and the supervisor's opinion, which ensures the substantive and objective nature of the procedure.

The selection of mid-term evaluation criteria, as well as their availability and clarity, does not raise objections, except for situations in which attention is not paid during the evaluation to the requirement included in the Regulations of the Doctoral School concerning publication in the second year of education. During the evaluation, it was found that the Regulations of the Doctoral School include a provision requiring the inclusion in the Individual Research Plan of a plan to publish a scientific article in the second and third year of education in a journal assigned at least 70 points. The requirement to publish such an article prior to the mid-term evaluation raises doubts, including those related to publication timelines, the required quality of the work, and publication pressure.

Concerns are raised by the lack of the possibility to appeal against the result of the mid-term evaluation. The explanations presented during the site visit, indicating the absence of statutory regulation in this regard, do not eliminate the need to introduce an appeal procedure. The lack of an appeal mechanism against the result of the mid-term evaluation was assessed as an unjustified practice, and it was indicated that an appeal procedure constitutes a standard solution in other doctoral schools and strengthens the sense of procedural fairness.

The evaluators also experienced difficulty in locating the evaluation results on the website; therefore, it is recommended to add a link on the Doctoral School's website to the mid-term evaluation results published in the Public Information Bulletin.

In summary, the reliability of conducting the mid-term evaluation is assessed positively. At the same time, **it is recommended to:**

- introduce a formal appeal procedure against the result of the mid-term evaluation,
- change the publication requirement for doctoral students for a minimum of 70 points before the midterm evaluation to the requirement of publication from the list of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

- **Internationalisation:**

Based on the documentation and information obtained during the site visit, it was found that the internationalisation of the Doctoral School is present and generally raises no objections; however, it is uneven and largely dependent on the individual activity of supervisors and doctoral students. The degree of internationalisation of the education process in the Doctoral School, including doctoral students' academic mobility, is assessed positively.

The participation of the Doctoral School in programmes supporting international mobility was confirmed, in particular in successive editions of the STER–NAWA programme, under which two grants were obtained. These programmes enabled the implementation of international research stays for doctoral students. The presence of courses conducted in English was also assessed positively, including a series of lectures in English delivered by invited foreign speakers and the education of international doctoral students, which demonstrates a commitment to the internationalisation of the Doctoral School's activities.

At the same time, it was indicated that activities described as international, including conferences included in Individual Research Plans, are often carried out domestically, which limits doctoral students' actual contact with the international scientific community. Participation of doctoral students in international research projects and scientific cooperation networks is also limited. Attention was also drawn to the need to increase doctoral students' participation in international conferences and thematic schools organised outside the country.

In summary, the internationalisation of the Doctoral School is assessed positively; however, the need for its further development is indicated, in particular through increasing doctoral students' participation in genuine international forms of scientific cooperation.

It is recommended to:

- undertake actions aimed at obtaining grants under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Doctoral Networks (MSCA DN) programme, including through the establishment of a consortium with international partners and the submission of research proposals in upcoming calls,
- standardise the Polish and English versions of the Doctoral School's website.

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

Based on the data presented in the self-evaluation report and the findings from the site visit, it was found that the effectiveness of doctoral education in the Doctoral School is limited. In particular, the proportion of doctoral students who, after completing their education, proceeded to initiate proceedings for the doctoral degree is low. The entity presented numerical data in this area; however, their analysis and the explanatory commentary on the reasons for the existing situation are limited in scope.

The analysis of the effectiveness of education in the Doctoral School at the Lublin University of Technology indicates significant challenges with regard to the timeliness of advancement processes. Although the entity forecasts achieving a target level of actual effectiveness of no less than 90%, the current indicators - particularly with respect to the total number of individuals completing the Doctoral School - require an in-depth analysis of the causes of the low defence rate and constitute an area for improvement actions.

The policy of extending the deadline for the submission of the doctoral dissertation is applied in a relatively liberal manner in the case of the first extension, while subsequent decisions are taken on an individual basis. At the same time, there is no clearly formulated catalogue of premises justifying an extension of the deadline, which makes it difficult to assess the rationality and uniformity of the applied solutions. In accordance with internal regulations, it is possible to extend the deadline for submitting the doctoral dissertation by a maximum of two years in justified cases, such as illness, childcare responsibilities, or technical difficulties in conducting research. The Regulations also provide for the possibility of extra-statutory suspension of education (up to a total of two years) due to the need to implement research projects, undertake academic mobility, or for other reasons.

The level of doctoral students' scientific achievements is assessed as varied. The indicated achievements are most often of a publication nature, with frequent publication in fee-based journals being noted, which may be indirectly related to publication pressure rather than to a natural process of scientific development. At the same time, significant publication activity and successes of doctoral students in obtaining external grants, such as PRELUDIUM or LIDER, were recorded. Progress in the implementation of Individual Research Plans is monitored, including through the mandatory mid-term evaluation, which verifies achievements, the quality of research methods, and the innovativeness of results.

Insufficient use of the results of quality-of-education evaluations conducted by doctoral students in the process of improving education was also identified. There is a lack of a coherent and clear linkage between the feedback obtained and modifications to education programmes and the development policy of the Doctoral School. Quality assurance mechanisms implemented through semester surveys evaluating supervisory support and course evaluations could be more closely integrated with management processes.

The area of monitoring graduates' career paths remains one requiring completion, as the available sources do not provide detailed information on the systemic use of data.

In summary, the effectiveness of doctoral education is assessed as an area requiring improvement actions. In particular, **it is recommended to:**

- implement measures aimed at increasing the number of doctoral students who defend their theses,
- create a catalogue of premises justifying the extension of education in the Doctoral School, with the possibility for the Director of the Doctoral School to consider situations not covered by the catalogue,
- systemically use the results of quality-of-education evaluations conducted by doctoral students to improve education.

V. FINAL OPINION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Taking into account the comprehensive analysis of the functioning of the Doctoral School, carried out in light of the requirements specified in the applicable legal regulations and in the Regulation, the Evaluation Team concludes that the quality of education in the Doctoral School is assessed **positively**, while at the same time indicating the necessity to conduct another evaluation within **3 years** from the date on which the resolution of the Evaluation Committee concerning this assessment becomes final.

The opinion of the evaluation team results from the identified irregularities and systemic inconsistencies, which require the implementation of corrective actions. The implementation of the recommendations formulated in the report will allow for fuller compliance with the detailed evaluation criteria specified in the Regulation and for improving the effectiveness of doctoral education. The recommendations of the evaluation team are presented collectively below, together with an indication of the evaluation criterion to which they relate.

Recommendations concerning cooperation with the Doctoral Students' Council:

KS_1 ensuring a written form of issuing opinions by the Doctoral Students' Council on changes to education programmes and other significant modifications concerning the functioning of the Doctoral School.

KS_2 involving the Doctoral Students' Council in the process of consulting and issuing opinions on regulatory changes concerning doctoral education.

Recommendations concerning Criterion 1. *Adequacy of the education programme and individual research plans to the learning outcomes for qualifications at Level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework (PRK) and their implementation*

K1_1 updating the Regulations of the Doctoral School in accordance with the applicable legal provisions.

K1_2 organising and standardising the description of learning outcomes, including their unambiguous assignment to individual scientific disciplines and the unification of learning outcome designations in the documents binding in the Doctoral School.

K1_3 introducing specialist and elective courses linked to scientific disciplines, completed with a graded pass obtained by the doctoral student, and increasing the optionality of courses.

K1_4 establishing clear and transparent rules for submitting courses dedicated to doctoral students representing different disciplines, with the participation of Discipline Councils, accessible to a broad group of employees of the Lublin University of Technology.

K1_5 supplementing and standardising course syllabi.

K1_6 in connection with the requirement of PRK 8, supplementing Individual Research Plans with a separate point on the popularization of science.

K1_7 appointing a quality assurance committee in the Doctoral School or formally including the Doctoral School in the university-wide system for monitoring the quality of education, together with representation of the Doctoral School on the University Quality Assurance Council (and the

related amendment of relevant regulations).

K1_8 abandoning § 9 point 4 of the Doctoral School Regulations, i.e. the obligation to record doctoral students' working time and to remain for 30 hours per week in the unit, and possibly replacing it with other, more adequate forms of monitoring progress.

Recommendations concerning Criterion 2. *Method of verification of learning outcomes for qualifications at Level 8 PRK*

K2_1 developing uniform and transparent principles for verifying learning outcomes at Level 8 PRK, linked to scientific disciplines.

K2_2 aligning learning outcome verification tools with the level of advancement of doctoral students' research and communication competences.

K2_3 implementing systemic mechanisms for monitoring and improving the learning outcome verification process.

K2_4 including issues related to the quality of education and the verification of learning outcomes as a permanent item on the agenda of the Doctoral School Council.

Recommendations concerning Criterion 3. *Qualifications of academic teachers or research staff providing education in the Doctoral School*

K3_1 clarifying, standardising, and making public the principles for selecting and verifying the qualifications of staff providing education in the Doctoral School, including supervisors and auxiliary supervisors.

Recommendations concerning Criterion 4. *Quality of the recruitment process*

K4_1 modifying the principles for appointing recruitment committees in order to ensure representation of the relevant scientific discipline in each recruitment procedure.

K4_2 clarifying regulatory provisions concerning candidate evaluation criteria, including procedures in cases where a candidate has obtained a final degree grade lower than "good."

K4_3 standardising, supplementing, and improving the accessibility of recruitment information published on the Polish and English versions of the Doctoral School's website.

Recommendations concerning Criterion 5. *Quality of scientific supervision and support for conducting scientific activity*

K5_1 developing and implementing formal procedures for resolving conflict situations between a doctoral student and a supervisor or auxiliary supervisor.

K5_2 defining the principles for evaluating the work of supervisors and auxiliary supervisors.

K5_3 modifying the principles for recording doctoral students' work in the direction of solutions more adequate to the nature of doctoral education.

K5_4 including the Doctoral School in the Strategy for the Development of Research and Research-and-Teaching Staff Careers of the University.

K5_5 strengthening the administrative support of the Doctoral School Secretariat.

Recommendations concerning Criterion 6. *Reliability of conducting the mid-term evaluation*

K6_1 introducing a formal appeal procedure against the result of the mid-term evaluation.
K6_2 changing the publication requirement for doctoral students for a minimum of 70 points before the midterm evaluation to the requirement of publication from the list of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

Recommendations concerning Criterion 7. *Internationalisation*

K7_1 undertaking actions aimed at obtaining grants under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Doctoral Networks (MSCA DN) programme.
K7_2 standardising the Polish and English versions of the Doctoral School's website.

Recommendations concerning Criterion 8. *Effectiveness of doctoral education*

K8_1 implementing measures aimed at increasing the number of doctoral students who defend their theses.
K8_2 creating a catalogue of premises justifying the extension of education in the Doctoral School.
K8_3 systemically using the results of doctoral students' evaluations to improve education.

VI. ASSESSMENT AND REASON

Final assessment
positive

Reason:

After reviewing the self-assessment report, the documentation submitted by the Doctoral School, the findings from the visit, and the comments on preliminary report, the Evaluation Team concluded that the doctoral education process during evaluation period was conducted in accordance with the requirements of Level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework. Doctoral School provided doctoral candidates with opportunities to develop their research competences, while the degree of internationalisation of the unit, the engagement of academic staff, and access to research infrastructure created conditions conducive to the implementation of individual research plans and scientific activity.

The evaluation identified areas requiring corrective actions, in particular with regard to the organisation of education process in individual disciplines, including the provision of specialised courses, as well as the clarification and harmonisation of selected procedures related to the organisation and monitoring of education process, including quality assurance mechanisms and certain elements of documentation and organisational practices. In the opinion of the Evaluation Team, the identified shortcomings did not undermine the overall quality of education process; however, addressing them is important for further improving the standards of operation of Doctoral School and ensuring full transparency and consistency of the solutions applied.

Taking into account the university's scientific potential, the commitment of academic staff, and the declared readiness to implement the recommended changes, the Evaluation Team concluded that the Doctoral School of Lublin University of Technology meets the quality requirements for education at Level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework. At the same time, considering the need to implement the indicated corrective and improvement measures, a re-evaluation after three years is recommended.

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