
KEN

2023-2027

DOCTORAL SCHOOL

EDUCATION QUALITY REPORT

Szkoła Doktorska w Uniwersytecie Ekonomicznym w
Katowicach

Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny w Katowicach



Name and seat of the doctoral school

Szkoła Doktorska w Uniwersytecie Ekonomicznym w Katowicach

Evaluation period

3/7/19–9/23/25

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

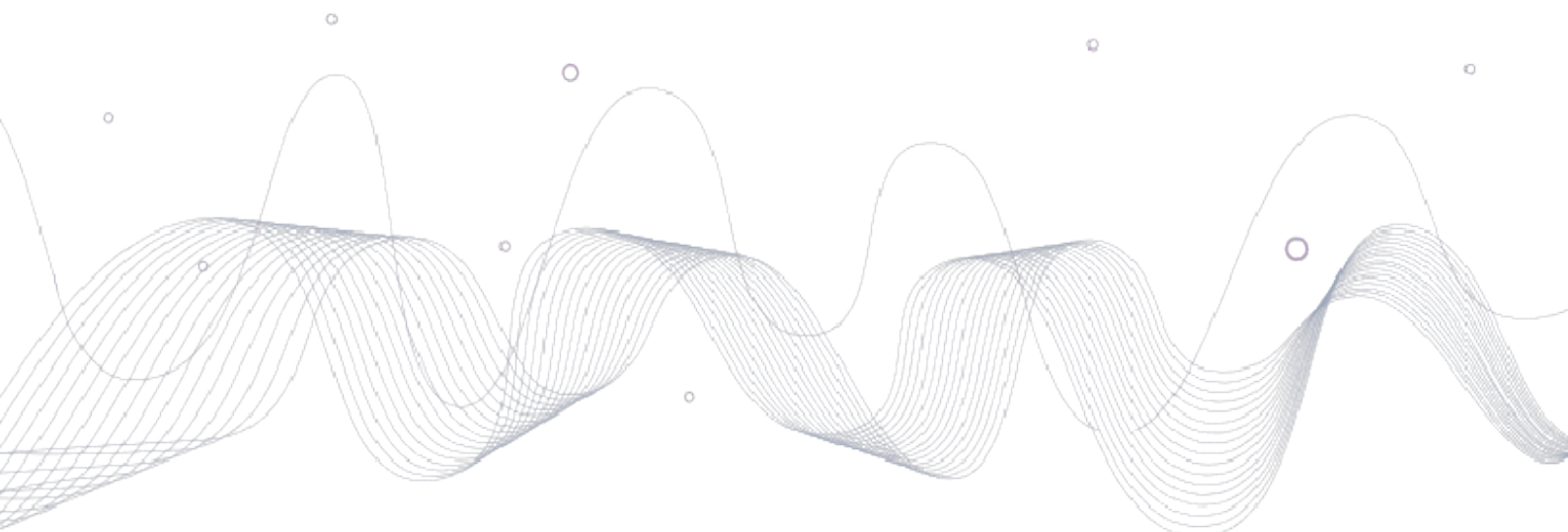
Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny w Katowicach

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

-

Date of report

12/15/25



Composition of the evaluation team:

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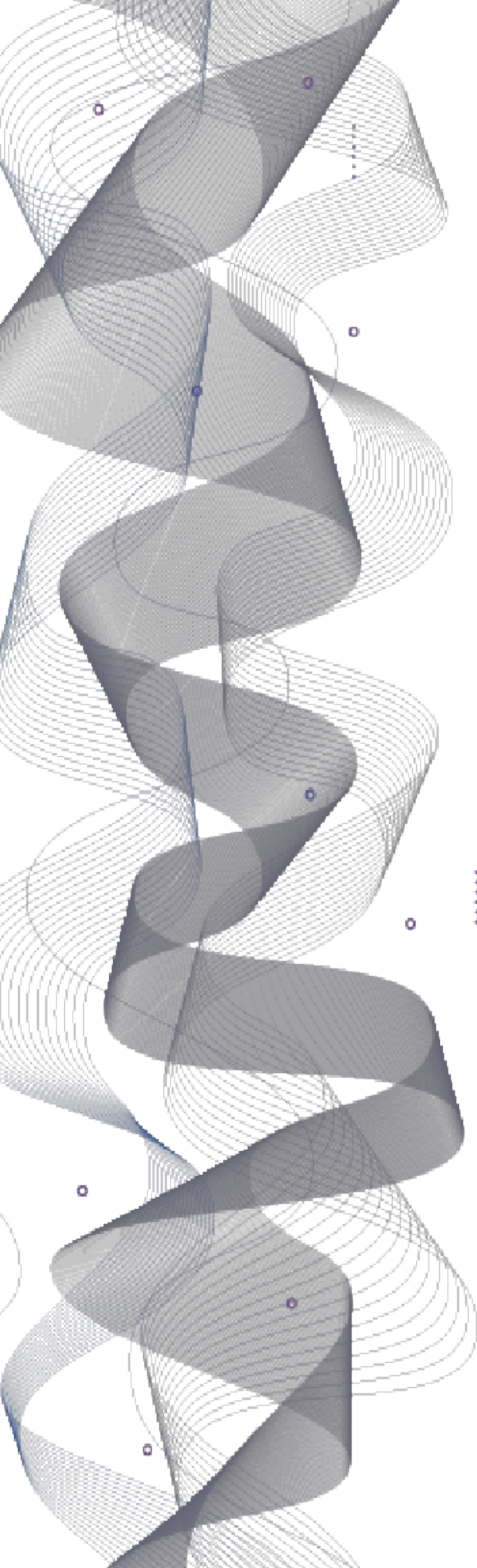


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I. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE DOCTORAL SCHOOL

Name of doctoral school	Szkoła Doktorska w Uniwersytecie Ekonomicznym w Katowicach
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	Social sciences (from: 01-01-2018)
Discipline(s) of science or art in which training is provided	economics and finance (from: 01-01-2018) management and quality studies (from: 01-01-2018)
Name/scope of the education programme	Management and Quality Studies Economics and Finance Management
Number of instructors	100
Number of doctoral students undergoing training at the doctoral school (as of 9/24/25)	104
Number of supervisors in terms of guidance in preparing doctoral dissertations (as of 9/24/25)	59
Number of auxiliary supervisors in terms of guidance in preparing doctoral dissertations (as of 9/24/25)	25

II. INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION AND ITS COURSE

I. Legal Basis and Purpose of the Evaluation Visit

The evaluation visit to the Doctoral School of the University of Economics in Katowice was conducted by the Commission for the Evaluation of Science (KEN) on the basis of Article 264(1) of the Act of 20 July 2018 – Law on Higher Education and Science (PSWiN) – and the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science of 22 February 2022 on the evaluation of education quality in doctoral schools. The purpose of the visit was to assess the quality of doctoral education at DS UEKat across eight criteria specified in the Regulation, encompassing: the curriculum and learning outcomes, the manner of verifying learning outcomes, the qualifications of teaching staff, the quality of the recruitment process, academic supervision and research support, the rigour of the mid-term evaluation, internationalisation, and the effectiveness of doctoral education.

II. Composition of the Evaluation Panel

The evaluation visit was conducted by a panel appointed by the Chairperson of KEN. The Evaluation Panel comprised:

- Panel Chairperson: a KEN expert, an independent researcher representing the social or economic sciences;
- Panel Members: KEN experts with experience in doctoral education, research methodology, and quality management in higher education;
- Doctoral Candidate Expert: a representative of the doctoral candidate community, appointed to the Panel in accordance with the requirements of the Regulation, providing a doctoral candidate perspective throughout the assessment process.

The composition of the Panel was approved by the Chairperson of KEN. All Panel members submitted declarations of impartiality and absence of conflict of interest with respect to the evaluated institution prior to commencing evaluation activities.

III. Conduct of the Evaluation Process

Preparatory stage. Prior to the visit, DS UEKat prepared and submitted to the Evaluation Panel a self-evaluation report covering documentation pertaining to all eight evaluation criteria. The self-evaluation report included in particular: the DS regulations, curricula with syllabi and learning outcome matrices, Senate resolutions governing recruitment and the operation of the DS, documentation of mid-term evaluations conducted during the assessed period, individual research plans selected for review, statistical data on recruitment and the progress of education, and documentation relating to internationalisation and research infrastructure. The Evaluation Panel conducted a detailed analysis of the documentation prior to the visit, formulating preliminary questions and identifying areas requiring further examination in the course of direct interviews.

On-site visit. The on-site visit was conducted at the premises of the University of Economics in Katowice. The visit programme comprised:

- An opening meeting with the university and DS leadership, including the Rector of UEKat, the Dean of the DS, and members of the DS Council, dedicated to discussing the organisational structure of the university, the DS development strategy, and the principal achievements and challenges identified by the leadership;
- A meeting with teaching staff and supervisors, encompassing discussion of the organisation and quality of supervisory mentorship, conditions for delivering courses, staff selection procedures, and quality assurance mechanisms in doctoral education;
- A meeting with doctoral candidates, conducted without the presence of university leadership representatives, providing doctoral candidates with the opportunity to express their views freely on the quality of education, supervisory mentorship, access to research infrastructure, the conduct of the mid-term evaluation, and administrative support;
- On-site review and verification of documentation, including a sample analysis of selected individual research plans, mid-term evaluation documentation, and course syllabi;
- A closing meeting with the university and DS leadership, during which the Evaluation Panel presented preliminary observations and areas requiring clarification or supplementation.

Post-visit analysis. Following the conclusion of the on-site visit, the Evaluation Panel conducted internal deliberations, synthesising the information gathered and formulating assessments with respect to each of the eight evaluation criteria. At this stage, both the written documentation and the information obtained in the course of direct interviews were taken into account, with particular attention given to any discrepancies between the content of the self-evaluation report and the observations made during the visit.

IV. Subject Matter Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation encompassed education delivered by DS UEKat in two scientific disciplines – Economics and Finance (EF) and Management and Quality Sciences (MQS) – across six doctoral programmes (four in Polish and two in English), across seven recruitment cycles covering the academic years 2019/2020 through 2024/2025. The evaluation examined the entirety of DS activities in the areas of doctoral education, academic supervision, verification of learning outcomes, recruitment, internationalisation, and the effectiveness of education as measured by available quantitative and qualitative indicators.

From the documentation submitted, the Panel selected 5 individual research plans for detailed quality review – with representation from both disciplines and both language variants – and conducted a sample review of mid-term evaluation documentation from the assessed period.

V. Institutional Cooperation with the Evaluation Panel

The cooperation of DS UEKat with the Evaluation Panel throughout the entire evaluation process is assessed as full and constructive. The documentation provided by the DS was complete, transparently organised, and submitted within timeframes enabling the Panel to conduct a thorough analysis prior to the visit. The university and DS leadership, teaching staff, and doctoral candidates demonstrated willingness to engage in open and substantively detailed discussion, not limiting themselves to the presentation of positive aspects but also identifying areas requiring improvement. Doctoral candidates, participating in their meeting without the presence of leadership representatives, expressed internally consistent views that provided valuable

information complementing the written documentation. All additional questions and requests for supplementary documentation directed by the Panel to the DS during the visit were addressed promptly and without undue delay.

VI. Methodological Qualifications

The Evaluation Panel adopted as a critical interpretative qualification the fact that DS UEKat has been in operation since 2019 and that the full doctoral education cycle lasts four years. At the time of the evaluation, only the first two cohorts had a genuine opportunity to complete their education within the standard timeframe, which substantially limits the data available for the assessment of effectiveness indicators. Assessments under Criterion VIII – the effectiveness of doctoral education – take this circumstance into account as a necessary condition for the rigorous interpretation of quantitative data. A full assessment of educational effectiveness will be possible in the next evaluation cycle, when at least four complete cohorts of doctoral candidates will have passed through DS UEKat.

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

Findings

Cooperation between the UEKat Doctoral School and the Doctoral Students' Union is conducted on the basis of the Law on Higher Education and Science, the UEKat Statute, the Doctoral School Regulations, and the Doctoral Students' Union Regulations. The scope of institutional cooperation exceeds the minimum requirements set out in Article 208(5) of the Law.

The Doctoral Students' Union participates in:

- providing opinions on the Doctoral School regulations and admission rules;
- the work of admission committees;
- the Senate Committee for Science;
- the University Committee for Quality of Education;
- committees concerning increases in doctoral scholarships;
- working groups of the Doctoral School Council responsible for drafting new regulations.

Particular emphasis should be placed on the participation of Doctoral Students' Union representatives in the University Committee for Quality of Education, which ensures doctoral candidates' effective influence on quality enhancement processes, as well as their involvement in the legislative work of the Doctoral School Council—co-creating regulations rather than merely providing opinions on completed drafts.

Assessment

Cooperation between the UEKat Doctoral School and the Doctoral Students' Union is well-developed, institutionalised, and exceeds statutory requirements. The scope of engagement demonstrates that the Union functions not only as a consultative body but as an active co-

governance actor within the Doctoral School.

Participation in key decision-making and advisory bodies—particularly the University Committee for Quality of Education—constitutes a strong mechanism for integrating doctoral candidates' perspectives into institutional quality assurance processes. This ensures that quality enhancement is informed by direct user experience rather than solely by administrative or academic viewpoints.

The involvement of Doctoral Students' Union representatives in the legislative work of the Doctoral School Council represents a higher-order form of participation. Moving beyond consultation, it reflects co-creation of regulatory frameworks, which is indicative of a mature institutional culture of partnership and shared responsibility.

Overall, the cooperation model can be assessed as a model practice, demonstrating effective implementation of participatory governance in doctoral education.

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:

I. Factual Findings

The Doctoral School of the University of Economics in Katowice (DS UEKat) offers six doctoral programmes – four in Polish and two in English – spanning two scientific disciplines: Economics and Finance (EF) and Management and Quality Sciences (MQS). The architecture of all programmes rests on a coherent, three-phase didactic logic:

- Phase I (semesters 1–2): a shared methodological phase, common to both disciplines and both language variants, covering research methodology, quantitative and qualitative methods, and academic writing;
- Phase II (semesters 3–4): a discipline-specific phase comprising advanced subject-matter courses, distinct for each discipline;
- Phase III (semesters 5–6): elective courses delivered exclusively in English, open to doctoral candidates from both disciplines and both language variants, performing an integrative function across disciplinary boundaries.

Semesters 7–8 are devoted exclusively to the doctoral seminar.

The revised curricula, applicable from the 2024/2025 recruitment cycle, explicitly articulate the three-phase structure described above – a qualitative improvement over the previous version, initiated by doctoral candidates and supervisors and subsequently formalised by resolution of the Senate. The substantive change consisted in relocating methodology courses to the first year of study.

Individual Research Plans (IRPs) are prepared within 12 months of commencing doctoral education. Their required structure exceeds the statutory minimum set out in Articles 201–202 of the Law on Higher Education and Science (PSWiN): an IRP must include the aim of the dissertation, research hypotheses or questions, research methods, the dissertation's structure, and a semester-by-semester schedule with a planned submission date. A mandatory presentation of the IRP at a meeting of the supervisor's department – standardly held in semester four – constitutes a verification mechanism operating outside the formal doctoral seminar.

II. Assessment of Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes defined in the curricula are fully consistent with the requirements of Level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework (PRK). The sets of outcomes cover the complete catalogue of PRK requirements, assigned to three categories: Knowledge, Skills, and Social Competences. Outcomes are formulated with direct reference to the scientific discipline in which the doctoral candidate may obtain the degree of doctor.

Representative formulations illustrate the precision and appropriateness of the wording. Under Knowledge: the doctoral graduate knows and understands the methodology and conditions – economic, legal, and ethical – of conducting scientific research in the discipline of Economics and Finance. Under Skills: the doctoral graduate is able to critically analyse and evaluate the findings of scientific research, expert activity, and other creative works, and their contribution to the advancement of knowledge. Under Social Competences: the doctoral graduate is

prepared to critically assess the achievements of the discipline and their own contribution to its development.

Verification and measurability criteria have been specified for all learning outcomes, satisfying the requirements of rigorous operationalisation of educational quality. The Panel assesses this element as fully met.

III. Assessment of Curricula

The three-phase programme architecture demonstrates a considered, internally coherent didactic logic, fully adequate to the requirements of PRK Level 8. The sequential progression of phases – from a shared methodological foundation, through discipline-specific specialisation, to renewed integration within a multilingual, transdisciplinary space of elective courses – constitutes a structurally mature solution.

Phase I serves an equalising and unifying function: doctoral candidates arriving from diverse institutions and fields of study acquire a common methodological foundation before entering the advanced disciplinary phase. This is a particularly apt solution for a school operating simultaneously in two disciplines and two languages, as it substantially reduces the risk of early divergences in research preparedness – divergences that in practice frequently surface only at the mid-term review, when remediation is costly for all parties involved.

Phase III, in turn, restores a communal dimension through an English-language offering accessible to all doctoral candidates regardless of discipline, thereby fostering the development of intellectual networks that cross disciplinary boundaries – a pro-quality factor of considerable significance in an increasingly internationalised academic environment.

The curricular reform – relocating methodology courses to the first year – merits particular commendation. It directly addresses a fundamental structural problem affecting many Polish doctoral schools: doctoral candidates lacking early and systematic methodological grounding tend to construct research projects intuitively, with deficiencies typically surfacing only at the mid-term review, when corrective intervention is both costly and, not infrequently, followed by withdrawal from the programme. The fact that this reform was initiated by doctoral candidates and supervisors themselves, and subsequently formalised by Senate resolution, demonstrates the functioning of a genuine feedback loop in accordance with § 2(1)(e) of the relevant ministerial regulation. The Panel regards this case as exemplifying a culture of quality – not merely formal regulatory compliance.

The decision to defer the next programme revision until two full educational cycles have been completed is methodologically sound: it will allow the effectiveness of current solutions to be assessed on the basis of complete evaluation data, including student ratings of individual courses.

DS UEKat does not possess a formalised procedure for the selection of course instructors, supervisors, and assistant supervisors. Selection is based on substantive alignment with the thematic scope of a given course or the planned doctoral research, while minimum requirements for prospective supervisors are set out in the School's regulations. The Panel records this as an area requiring procedural clarification: the absence of formalised selection criteria creates a risk of subjectivity in staffing decisions and may impede the assurance of comparable supervisory standards over time.

IV. Assessment of Individual Research Plans

The research activity of doctoral candidates, as defined in the IRPs, is commensurate with the learning outcomes for PRK Level 8 qualifications. The IRP structure – encompassing a semester-by-semester schedule with a planned submission date, research hypotheses, methods, and dissertation structure – exceeds the statutory minimum and serves a meaningful disciplining function: it compels early conceptualisation of the research project and facilitates the supervisor's exercise of systematic, documentation-based academic mentorship. IRPs are subject to review by the designated person specified in the School's regulations and during the mid-term evaluation, ensuring a two-track quality control mechanism.

Particularly commendable is the requirement for a mandatory presentation of the IRP at a departmental meeting of the supervisor's unit. This engages the departmental community as an informal evaluative body and constitutes, in effect, a mechanism of internal peer review. The practice – uncommon in Polish doctoral schools – promotes the development of a reflective research culture at the level of the university's primary organisational unit. The Panel considers it an exemplary solution and recommends its wider dissemination.

V. Areas Identified for Improvement

The Panel identifies one area requiring deeper reflection in the next programme planning cycle. Substantive interdisciplinarity. The shared Phase I and the universally accessible Phase III formally satisfy the requirements of § 2(1)(d) of the ministerial regulation concerning cross-domain education. However, the mere co-participation of doctoral candidates from different disciplines in the same methodology courses is not equivalent to interdisciplinarity in the substantive sense. Meaningful interdisciplinarity requires the active design of tasks and research problems that cross disciplinary boundaries – problems that demand the integration of conceptual and methodological perspectives from both EF and MQS simultaneously. This constitutes an area to be systematically addressed in the next programme cycle.

VI. Conclusion

DS UEKat demonstrates a high level of institutional maturity in the design and delivery of doctoral education. The three-phase programme architecture, the pioneering relocation of methodology courses to the first year, the expanded IRP structure exceeding the statutory minimum, and the departmental peer review mechanism together constitute a coherent quality assurance system whose full effectiveness will be verifiable upon the completion of the first complete cycle involving the new cohort of doctoral candidates.

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

I. Factual Findings

The learning outcome verification system at DS UEKat is structured around two integrated pillars operating in complementary fashion throughout the entire doctoral education cycle. The course-based pillar encompasses all compulsory and elective subjects within the curriculum. Verification employs a diversified range of assessment formats: written examinations (including tests, open-ended questions, and essays), oral examinations, colloquia, projects, presentations, seminar papers, and case studies. The conditions for passing each course – together with learning outcome matrices – are set out in course syllabi made available to doctoral candidates.

The seminar-and-research pillar operates through a structured, semester-by-semester rhythm of progress reports approved by the supervisor: from a literature review (semester 1), through IRP approval (semester 2), a draft article or dissertation chapter (semester 3), conference participation (semester 4), and publication supervision (semesters 5–6), to reporting on overall dissertation progress (semesters 7–8).

During the assessed period, 54 mid-term evaluations were conducted. All 54 (100%) returned a positive outcome; of these, 52 (96.3%) included a recommendation for IRP revision. The School's regulations provide for a panel examination at the doctoral candidate's request, with a student government representative present. Semester-end surveys cover 18 assessment dimensions – including the instructor, course content, and study conditions – but do not extend to doctoral seminars, on the grounds that anonymity cannot be guaranteed in that context.

Doctoral candidates are encouraged to apply for grants from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education as well as internal grants financed through EU funds administered by the University of Economics in Katowice. Candidates also highlighted the absence of an orientation session for the first-year cohort and identified a clear need for structured information on doctoral rights and obligations at the outset of the programme.

II. Expert Assessment

Structural design. The two-pillar verification system is well designed both structurally and substantively. Its defining strength is complementarity: the course-based pillar verifies the acquisition of declarative and procedural knowledge, while the seminar-and-research pillar verifies the capacity to apply that knowledge independently within an original research project. This distinction corresponds precisely to what PRK Level 8 establishes as the defining characteristic of a doctoral qualification. Crucially, the two pillars do not operate in parallel isolation – they are functionally coupled: methodological competences acquired through the course-based pillar are immediately tested in the candidate's own dissertation work, while progress within the seminar pillar reveals gaps that can be addressed through additional coursework or consultations. This bidirectional feedback mechanism is a significant quality asset.

Semester-by-semester progress reporting. The structured rhythm of semestral progress reports constitutes a particularly valuable mechanism in the context of the extended doctoral

process. Unlike annual or single-point assessments, it enables early identification of problems before they threaten the timely completion of the dissertation. The sequenced set of requirements – from literature review to publication supervision – provides a logical research roadmap that simultaneously functions as a verification instrument and a mentoring tool. This is of particular relevance in the economic disciplines, where the process from initial conceptualisation to publication is inherently long and complex. The Panel regards this mechanism as an example of best practice.

Mid-term evaluation outcomes. The rate of 96.3% of mid-term evaluations resulting in an IRP revision recommendation – against a 0% rate of negative outcomes – evidences a rigorous yet constructive approach on the part of evaluation panels. This result should be interpreted positively: panels do not shy away from formulating substantive observations in the interest of maintaining collegial harmony, but treat recommendations as instruments of support rather than sanction. This approach is consistent with the spirit of § 2(6) of the ministerial regulation and reflects institutional confidence in the developmental function of the mid-term evaluation.

Panel examination procedure. The provision for a panel examination at the request of the doctoral candidate strengthens procedural transparency and safeguards the candidate's rights against the risk of arbitrariness in individual assessment. The inclusion of a student government representative in the panel constitutes an additional accountability mechanism, the value of which extends beyond its formal function: it signals institutional commitment to fairness and candidate agency.

Research activity and community engagement. Doctoral candidates present their research progress at departmental meetings, with the participation of departmental staff and invited colleagues from other units. Candidates also take part in a faculty conference featuring a dedicated doctoral session. This dual structure of research presentation – at the departmental and faculty level – reinforces the seminar-and-research pillar by embedding doctoral work within a broader scholarly community. Candidates additionally reported regular meetings with their supervisors to discuss research progress, and confirmed access to academic staff for consultations on subject-matter issues relevant to their dissertations.

Identified gap – doctoral seminar surveys. The Panel notes that the exclusion of doctoral seminars from semester-end surveys, while procedurally justified on grounds of anonymity, creates a structural gap in the quality monitoring system. Supervisors remain without any formalised external evaluation during the longest and most decisive phase of doctoral education. The course-based pillar is subject to systematic student feedback across 18 dimensions; the seminar-and-research pillar – which is arguably more consequential for the quality of the doctoral qualification – is not. This asymmetry requires a dedicated compensatory mechanism. The Panel recommends that this issue be addressed within the framework of Criterion V, where supervisory quality assurance instruments are considered in their broader institutional context.

Identified gap – first-year orientation. Doctoral candidates explicitly identified the absence of a structured orientation session for the first-year cohort as a significant deficiency. The need for clear, systematic information on doctoral rights and obligations at the outset of the programme is well founded: candidates entering doctoral education without a clear understanding of the institutional framework governing their status are at a structural disadvantage, independent of their academic preparation. The Panel recommends the introduction of a mandatory orientation session at the beginning of the first semester, covering the regulatory framework, IRP requirements, evaluation procedures, and available support mechanisms.

III. Conclusion

The learning outcome verification system at DS UEKat is coherent, systematic, and fit for purpose at PRK Level 8. The complementarity of the two pillars, the structured semester-by-semester reporting rhythm, the constructive approach to mid-term evaluation, and the procedural safeguards for doctoral candidates collectively constitute a robust verification framework. Two areas require targeted institutional response: the absence of formalised quality feedback on doctoral seminars and supervision, and the lack of a structured first-year orientation. Neither undermines the overall assessment, which is positive. Both are amenable to remediation within existing institutional structures without programmatic restructuring.

- **Qualification of academic teachers and academic staff employed at the doctoral school:**

I. Factual Findings

The University of Economics in Katowice employs 31 professors and 107 associate professors (habilitated doctors) distributed across 46 departments within 5 faculties. The teaching staff of DS UEKat comprises 100 course instructors; doctoral supervision is provided by 59 supervisors and 25 assistant supervisors. The supervisor-to-doctoral-candidate ratio stands at 1:1.1 (59 supervisors to 65 doctoral candidates). The pool of supervisors authorised to supervise doctoral candidates includes 74 individuals in the discipline of Economics and Finance (of whom 18 deliver courses in English) and 54 in Management and Quality Sciences (of whom 12 deliver courses in English).

The procedure for selecting course instructors was conducted by a multi-tiered expert body comprising faculty deans, the DS Council, the Doctoral Candidates' Student Government, and the Senate Committee on Education, and was concluded by a Senate resolution. At the curriculum design stage, each instructor was required to prepare a complete syllabus including a learning outcome matrix. Supervisors and assistant supervisors are selected on the basis of substantive alignment with the scope of the doctoral candidate's planned research; all candidacies require approval by the head of the relevant department. Academic staff may propose their own course subjects. Staff qualifications are reviewed through an employee evaluation conducted every two years. Classroom observation visits are not conducted. Semester-end surveys completed by doctoral candidates cover 18 assessment dimensions but do not extend to doctoral seminars, on the grounds that anonymity cannot be guaranteed in that context.

II. Expert Assessment

Staff potential. The academic staff potential of DS UEKat is high and fully adequate to the disciplines offered. The complement of 31 professors and 107 habilitated doctors provides robust competence resources for both teaching and doctoral supervision. The distribution of staff across 46 departments within 5 faculties guarantees broad thematic coverage, enabling precise alignment between the instructor or supervisor and the specific character of a doctoral candidate's research project. The Panel assesses this potential as fully commensurate with the requirements of PRK Level 8.

Staff selection procedure. The procedure engaging five distinct bodies – faculty deans, the DS Council, the Doctoral Candidates' Student Government, the Senate Committee on Education, and the Senate – is multi-tiered and multi-perspectival in character. The structural multiplicity of control points minimises the risk of staffing decisions being made on grounds other than substantive merit, and prevents the concentration of staffing authority in the hands of individual persons or units. The participation of the Doctoral Candidates' Student Government in this process is a valuable feature, strengthening the legitimacy of decisions from the perspective of the primary stakeholders in doctoral education. The Panel regards this procedure as exemplary within the landscape of Polish doctoral schools.

Syllabi with learning outcomes at the design stage. The requirement for each instructor to prepare a complete syllabus with a learning outcome matrix at the curriculum design stage – rather than after course assignment – is a particularly valuable and relatively uncommon practice in Polish doctoral schools. It compels instructors to think through teaching objectives,

verification methods, and the course's place within the broader programme before it is launched. This translates directly into greater internal coherence of the curriculum and stronger anchoring of individual courses within the learning outcomes for PRK Level 8 qualifications. The Panel considers this requirement exemplary practice consistent with § 2(3) (c) of the ministerial regulation, and recommends its retention and wider dissemination.

Supervisor-to-doctoral-candidate ratio. The supervisor-to-doctoral-candidate ratio of 1:1.1 ranks among the most favourable achievable in the institutional practice of Polish doctoral schools. It ensures that every doctoral candidate has genuine – rather than merely nominal – access to individual supervisory mentorship, without risk of supervisors being overburdened by an excessive number of supervisees. The combined pool of 128 authorised supervisors across both disciplines (74 in EF and 54 in MQS), including 30 delivering instruction in English, enables precise matching of supervisor to the specific character and language of a doctoral candidate's research project. The fact that doctoral candidates confirmed the adequacy of this matching during the site visit lends the ratio a qualitative dimension beyond its statistical significance.

Departmental head approval mechanism. The requirement for a doctoral candidate's supervisor candidacy to be approved by the head of the relevant department serves as an additional competence filter. It eliminates situations in which a supervisor assumes responsibility for a research topic distant from their actual research expertise – a real risk in academic environments where formal entitlements (habilitation or professorial title) do not always coincide with current scholarly activity in a given area. This mechanism strengthens the alignment between the supervisor's research profile and the doctoral candidate's research agenda, which is a necessary condition for substantive supervisory mentorship at PRK Level 8.

Organic coherence between research activity and teaching. The ability of academic staff to propose their own course subjects preserves the organic coherence between the instructor's active research work and the content of doctoral education. This is a condition of academic authenticity of particular importance at PRK Level 8: doctoral candidates should engage with scholars actively producing knowledge, not merely transmitting codified knowledge. Courses proposed by the instructors themselves are more likely to reflect the current state of research and the open problems of the discipline than courses designed top-down according to standardised templates.

Biennial employee evaluation. The cyclical employee evaluation conducted every two years constitutes a formal instrument for verifying staff qualifications. It provides institutional continuity in monitoring the research and teaching activity of instructors, supplying the managerial data necessary to maintain the quality of DS staff. The Panel records this mechanism as satisfying formal requirements, while noting the need to consider its supplementation with instruments operating at higher measurement frequency.

Identified gap – absence of classroom observation. The Panel identifies the absence of classroom observation as a significant systemic gap in the quality assurance of teaching practice. The biennial employee evaluation and the semester-end doctoral surveys – while valuable – do not substitute for direct, collegial observation of teaching in practice. Classroom observation is a foundational instrument of external teaching quality assurance: it enables the identification of didactic problems that are invisible in survey data and research activity metrics alike. Its absence means that DS UEKat lacks any mechanism for assessing how the documented research competences of its instructors translate into the actual quality of teaching delivered. The Panel recommends the introduction of a classroom observation system – at minimum in the form of mutual collegial peer observations – as a component of

the internal quality assurance framework.

Identified gap — absence of doctoral seminar surveys. The exclusion of doctoral seminars from the semester-end survey system, justified on grounds of anonymity, creates an additional gap in the assessment of staff quality during the longest and most consequential phase of doctoral education. Supervisors remain without any formalised external evaluation of their work throughout semesters 3 through 8. This gap is all the more significant given that the seminar-and-research pillar constitutes the core of PRK Level 8 education. The Panel recommends the development of an alternative mechanism for collecting doctoral candidate feedback on the quality of supervisory mentorship — with anonymity preserved through appropriate process design, such as externally administered aggregate surveys incorporating a minimum respondent threshold that prevents individual identification.

III. Conclusion

The qualifications of DS UEKat staff are high and fully adequate to the requirements of PRK Level 8. The multi-tiered staff selection procedure, the requirement for syllabi with learning outcomes at the curriculum design stage, the favourable supervisor-to-doctoral-candidate ratio, and the departmental head approval mechanism together constitute a coherent and well-considered staffing system. The two identified gaps — the absence of classroom observation and the absence of a mechanism for evaluating the quality of supervisory mentorship — do not undermine the overall positive assessment, but require targeted institutional response within the next evaluation cycle.

- The quality of the admission process:

I. Factual Findings

Recruitment to DS UEKat is conducted through an open competition, governed by separate Senate resolutions adopted for each academic cycle. Four qualification criteria have been applied throughout the entire assessed period: (1) alignment of educational background with the scientific discipline, (2) the candidate's academic record, (3) a research project outline, and (4) a qualification interview. The recruitment committee comprises four independent research staff members – two from each discipline – together with a representative of the Doctoral Candidates' Student Government and a representative of the Recruitment Office.

Three significant quality reforms were implemented during the assessed period. From the 2020/2021 academic year, the academic record criterion was refined by specifying four types of activity with assigned detailed weightings. From 2022/2023, a letter of recommendation was introduced, detailed weightings were established for the research outline and the interview, and an English-language recruitment track was launched. From 2025/2026, a two-stage procedure applies: Stage I comprises document assessment; Stage II – a qualification interview for candidates who achieved at least 50% of available points in Stage I, with a maximum of 1.5 times the enrolment limit admitted to interview.

The cumulative effect of these reforms has been an increase in the share of prospective criteria – the research project outline and the qualification interview – from 35% of total points in the 2019/2020 recruitment to 80% from 2022/2023 onwards. Actual admission thresholds in the 2024 recruitment stood at 74–75% for Polish-language programmes, against a formal minimum of 50%. Admission rates were as follows: EF-PL 51.7%, MQS-PL 48.0%, EF-EN 37.1%, MQS-EN 21.2%. Across four editions of English-language recruitment (2022–2025), 51 applications were submitted, 13 candidates were admitted, and 10 commenced doctoral education. The website of DS UEKat is fully accessible to persons with disabilities, and qualification interviews may be conducted via videoconference using communication-support tools. The results of concluded recruitment rounds are not published on the DS website or in the Public Information Bulletin.

II. Expert Assessment

Evolution of the recruitment model. The evolution of the recruitment system towards a prospective model grounded in the verification of research potential constitutes one of the most significant quality transformations at DS UEKat during the assessed period. The increase in the share of prospective criteria from 35% to 80% is a strategic change: it represents a departure from the logic of selection based on prior academic record – which is largely determined by the location and quality of previous studies, and therefore by structural factors beyond the candidate's control – in favour of assessing research potential: the capacity to formulate scientific questions, to think conceptually, and to withstand substantive critical scrutiny. This model is fully consistent with the spirit of § 2(4)(e) of the ministerial regulation and corresponds to best practice among European doctoral schools. The Panel regards this evolution as a deliberate and effectively executed quality-enhancement measure.

Individual reforms – assessment. Each of the three reforms merits separate consideration. The refinement of the academic record criterion through the specification of four types of activity with detailed weightings (from 2020/2021) increased the objectivity and comparability

of assessments across candidates, reducing the scope for discretionary judgment in the most readily quantifiable criterion. Although letters of recommendation in Polish higher education remain poorly standardised in terms of form and scope, their presence in the procedure provides the committee with an additional dimension of information unavailable through document analysis alone. The two-stage procedure (from 2025/2026) further strengthens selectivity by limiting the group proceeding to interview to a maximum of 1.5 times the enrolment limit. This reduces numerical pressure on the committee and raises the quality of deliberation in the most consequential phase of the process – the direct interview with the candidate.

Actual admission thresholds. The Panel regards with particular commendation the fact that actual admission thresholds – 74–75% for Polish-language programmes in the 2024 recruitment – substantially exceed the formal minimum of 50%. The gap of 24–25 percentage points between the formal threshold and the actual admission threshold demonstrates that the committee applies standards higher than the minimum required and does not delegate responsibility for the entry standard to the regulations. This is a mark of institutional maturity: the institution voluntarily sets a higher bar than required, acting in the interest of educational quality rather than mere procedural compliance.

Openness and non-discrimination. The recruitment process is fully open and non-discriminatory. The accessibility of the DS website for persons with disabilities meets the standards of equal access. Taking into account the internal regulations, the statements of doctoral candidates during the site visit, and the documentation submitted, the Panel finds that the manner in which the competition referred to in Article 200(2) of the PSWiN Act is conducted is transparent, non-discriminatory, fully open, competitive, and based on the substantive assessment of submitted applications.

English-language recruitment. Data from four editions of English-language recruitment (2022–2025) – 51 applications, 13 candidates admitted, 10 commencing education – require careful interpretation. Admission rates for English-language programmes (EF-EN 37.1%, MQS-EN 21.2%) are substantially lower than those for Polish-language programmes, which may reflect either higher substantive standards applied to candidates from outside the domestic education system, or limited international recognition of DS UEKat. The Panel recommends monitoring this indicator across subsequent cycles, with analysis of the applicant pool by country of origin and application quality, in order to assess whether the low admission rate reflects high selection standards or insufficient promotional reach.

Doctoral research funding. DS UEKat maintains a dedicated budget for financing doctoral candidates' research. The recruitment process does not take into account considerations related to the schedules and funding conditions of research or development projects conducted by doctoral candidates. The Panel records this as a matter warranting reflection: as external grants become increasingly significant in financing doctoral research, the absence of any assessment of candidates' grant potential – or their capacity to be integrated into externally funded projects already underway – may constitute a gap in the evaluation of their actual research capacity.

Identified weakness – absence of published recruitment results. The Panel identifies the absence of published results from concluded recruitment rounds as a significant transparency deficiency. The openness of competition procedure referred to in § 2(4)(b) of the ministerial regulation encompasses not only the rules and criteria of the process but also its outcomes. The absence of recruitment result data from the DS website and the Public Information Bulletin limits institutional transparency and prevents candidates in future recruitment rounds

from benchmarking their own preparation against actual admission thresholds. The Panel recommends the immediate implementation of the practice of publishing the results of each concluded recruitment round – covering at minimum: the number of applications submitted, the number of candidates admitted to each subsequent stage, the number of candidates accepted, and the actual point thresholds – in compliance with applicable personal data protection requirements.

Identified weakness – absence of regulations governing recruitment committees. DS UEKat does not possess formalised regulations concerning the manner of appointing recruitment committee members or procedures for verifying their qualifications to perform this function. The committee compositions made available were not accompanied by justifications for the selection of individual members. The absence of such regulations creates a risk of arbitrariness in committee composition and prevents external verification of whether the committee's membership guarantees competent and impartial assessment across all areas covered by the qualification criteria. The Panel recommends the introduction of written regulations specifying: the qualifications required of recruitment committee members, the procedure for their appointment, rules for recusal in cases of conflict of interest, and the procedure for documenting the justification of committee composition.

III. Conclusion

The quality of the recruitment process at DS UEKat is assessed positively. The systematic evolution of the system towards a prospective model, the consistent maintenance of actual admission thresholds well above the formal minimum, the implementation of the two-stage procedure, and the full openness and non-discriminatory character of the process together constitute a recruitment system of high substantive standards. The two identified weaknesses – the absence of published recruitment results and the absence of formalised regulations governing recruitment committees – require prompt remediation but do not undermine the overall positive assessment. Both are amenable to correction within existing regulatory structures without the need for systemic reform.

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

I. Factual Findings

The supervisor is appointed by the Dean within 2 months of the commencement of doctoral education, on the basis of a declaration submitted by the doctoral candidate and accepted by the head of the supervisor's department. The DS regulations specify 9 detailed supervisor obligations – encompassing academic supervision, substantive and methodological assistance, a written assessment of the doctoral candidate's progress every semester, opinions on applications for extension of the education period, and a duty to notify the Dean of lack of progress – as well as 2 tasks assigned to the assistant supervisor. The regulations also contain an exclusion criterion linked to inadequate supervisory competence, restricting eligibility for the supervisory role. During the assessed period, 7 applications for a change of supervisor were submitted – 6 at the initiative of the doctoral candidate and 1 at the initiative of the supervisor – all resolved in accordance with the DS regulations.

The research infrastructure available to doctoral candidates includes: EBSCO, ProQuest, Springer, Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press (Economics & Finance), and Wiley databases, as well as LSEG Workspace (formerly Refinitiv) – providing access to financial, ESG, KRS, and corporate data – together with the Notoria and OECD databases. The Young Researchers programme (2019–2025) funded 23 research projects for 18 doctoral candidates, with total funding of PLN 217,210. In parallel, 42 doctoral candidates participated as project contributors in research projects conducted by departmental units across the faculties.

Support for doctoral candidates with special needs is governed by a Rector's ordinance and the provisions of the DS regulations; examinations and assessments are adapted to individual needs.

II. Expert Assessment

Regulatory operationalisation of supervisor obligations. The defining strength of the academic supervision system at DS UEKat is the operationalisation of supervisor obligations across 9 specific regulatory provisions. This solution is uncommon in Polish doctoral schools, where statutory provisions – terse and general in character – frequently remain the only guidance available to supervisors regarding the scope of their responsibilities. The requirement for a written progress assessment every semester is of particular significance: it documents the supervisory relationship in a verifiable manner and creates an institutional record available for reference in the event of a dispute. The Panel regards this solution as exemplary regulatory practice consistent with § 2(5)(a) of the ministerial regulation.

Supervisor selection and competence. The supervisor selection procedure – comprising the doctoral candidate's declaration, acceptance by the head of department, and appointment by the Dean – ensures multi-stage verification of substantive alignment. Doctoral candidates confirmed during the site visit that supervisors verify their alignment with the specific character of the research problem before assuming supervisory responsibility.

Supervisor change procedure. The DS regulations provide a clearly described procedure for changing a supervisor, initiated at the request of either the doctoral candidate or the

supervisor. The fact that all 7 applications submitted during the assessed period were resolved in accordance with the regulations – with no unresolved or escalated cases recorded – attests to the operational effectiveness of this procedure. The Access to LSEG Workspace (formerly Refinitiv) merits particular commendation. This is one of the world's leading financial, ESG, and corporate data platforms, widely used by central banks, investment funds, and leading research institutions globally. Its availability to DS UEKat doctoral candidates means that they conduct empirical research using data of the same class as first-tier research centres – a necessary condition for producing results publishable in highly ranked academic journals. The Cambridge UP, Oxford UP, and Wiley databases complement this infrastructure with a literature resource rarely encountered in Polish universities at the doctoral school level. Taken together, this infrastructure constitutes a research environment commensurate with the requirements of PRK Level 8 and comparable to the conditions offered by leading European doctoral schools in the economic disciplines.

Young Researchers programme. The Young Researchers programme (2019–2025) effectively initiates doctoral candidates' research independence. The figure of 23 funded projects for 18 doctoral candidates at a total value of PLN 217,210 over six years indicates a selective and merit-based allocation of funds – this is not automatic support for all applicants, but a competition grounded in the assessment of a project's scientific merit. The Panel regards this programme as a valuable component of the support system for doctoral research activity.

Participation in departmental projects. The involvement of 42 doctoral candidates as contributors in departmental research projects is a mechanism of no lesser importance than the grant programme. It introduces doctoral candidates to the culture of collaborative research, where they acquire not only research methodology but also competences in research ethics, authorship norms, project management, task allocation, and the communication of results in a multi-person environment. These competences – critical for an academic and research career – are difficult to acquire through individual dissertation work alone. The Panel regards this mechanism as a significant complement to individual supervisory mentorship.

Quality of feedback on IRPs. The Panel notes variation in the quality of feedback provided to doctoral candidates by IRP evaluation panels. Of the 5 IRPs selected for analysis during the evaluation, one instance was identified in which the panel's comments were excessively general in character: a range of possible research methods was indicated rather than recommending the one or two most appropriate to the specific research problem. Doctoral candidates confirmed during the site visit that not all feedback provided by evaluation panels is sufficiently clear and comprehensible. The Panel emphasises that the quality of feedback is a critical element of academic supervision at PRK Level 8: recommendations that are overly general do not fulfil a mentoring function and may place the doctoral candidate in a state of methodological uncertainty rather than reducing it. The Panel recommends the introduction of a specificity standard for feedback into the internal documentation of IRP evaluation panels. Identified gap – absence of a formalised conflict resolution procedure. The Panel identifies the absence of a formalised procedure for resolving conflicts in the supervisor–doctoral candidate relationship as a significant systemic gap. The general clause currently applied – the Dean acting as mediator – is a solution that functions effectively on an ad hoc basis but does not satisfy the procedural requirement arising from § 2(5)(b) of the ministerial regulation. A doctoral candidate should have access to a clearly described, predictable, and confidential escalation pathway, independent of the goodwill of a specific individual and not requiring knowledge of informal institutional channels. The Panel recommends the development and

incorporation into the DS regulations of a formalised conflict resolution procedure specifying: the catalogue of situations covered by the procedure, successive stages of escalation, confidentiality guarantees, and resolution deadlines.

Identified gap – absence of supervisor evaluation. The absence of a formalised evaluation of the work of supervisors and assistant supervisors constitutes the most serious systemic gap in the area of academic supervision. The written progress opinions on doctoral candidates appended to mid-term evaluation documentation – the only available indirect indicator of supervisory quality – do not substitute for a direct, cyclical assessment of the supervisor's fulfilment of their 9 regulatory obligations. The absence of such an evaluation prevents DS UEKat from identifying weaknesses in supervision in a systemic manner and from intervening before their consequences manifest in the form of delays or withdrawals from the programme. The Panel recommends: (1) the development of an evaluation instrument for supervisors and assistant supervisors, encompassing the degree of fulfilment of regulatory obligations, the timeliness of written progress assessments, and – with anonymity preserved – structured feedback from doctoral candidates; (2) the conduct of periodic evaluations of academic supervision to enable the systemic identification of areas requiring improvement.

III. Conclusion

The quality of academic supervision and support for research activity at DS UEKat is assessed positively. The regulatory operationalisation of supervisor obligations, the multi-stage procedure for supervisor selection and change, the exceptional research infrastructure including access to LSEG Workspace, the Young Researchers programme, and the involvement of doctoral candidates in departmental research projects together constitute a coherent and well-resourced support system. The three identified areas requiring remediation – the absence of a formalised conflict resolution procedure, the absence of supervisor evaluation, and variation in the quality of IRP feedback – do not undermine the overall positive assessment, but require targeted institutional response within the next evaluation cycle.

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

I. Factual Findings

The mid-term evaluation is conducted after the fourth semester of doctoral education, in accordance with Article 202(2) of the PSWiN Act, and in practice takes place during the second or third week of October of each academic year. A total of 54 mid-term evaluations were conducted throughout the assessed period. All 54 returned a positive outcome (100%); of these, 52 – representing 96.3% – included a recommendation for revision of the individual research plan.

The composition of each evaluation panel is configured individually for each doctoral candidate and comprises three members: (1) the Dean of the DS, serving as chairperson; (2) the head of the supervisor's department; and (3) an external researcher from outside UEKat, whose scholarly expertise is thematically aligned with the subject of the specific dissertation. Evaluations are conducted in synchronous remote mode via the Google Meet platform. The evaluation follows a two-part structure: the open part comprises the doctoral candidate's self-presentation and questions from the panel; the closed part comprises the panel's deliberations and the formulation of a reasoned assessment with recommendations. At the doctoral candidate's request, the supervisor may attend the open part. The reasoned assessment with recommendations is communicated to both the doctoral candidate and the supervisor, and serves as the mandatory basis for IRP revision. DS UEKat has introduced an additional requirement for the existing dissertation content to be appended to the mid-term evaluation documentation. The mid-term evaluation regulations, assessment criteria, and required forms are continuously available to doctoral candidates on the DS website.

II. Expert Assessment

Compliance with legal requirements. The mid-term evaluation procedure at DS UEKat is fully compliant with Article 202 of the PSWiN Act and the detailed criteria set out in § 2(6) of the ministerial regulation. All 54 evaluations were conducted on schedule, with panel compositions meeting statutory requirements, and on the basis of substantive assessment criteria defined in the internal regulations. The Panel finds no procedural irregularities in this area.

Participation of an external expert. The first particularly commendable feature is the participation of an external researcher from outside UEKat in every individual mid-term evaluation panel. Although this requirement derives from applicable regulations, its implementation at DS UEKat exhibits a quality that exceeds the formal minimum: the external expert is not drawn from a fixed pool of rotating reviewers but is selected on each occasion specifically for thematic alignment with the dissertation under review. This approach is organisationally demanding but ensures the substantive adequacy of the assessment and effectively prevents the routinisation that inevitably arises when a limited standing pool of external evaluators is used. The Panel regards this mechanism as exemplary implementation of the requirements of objectivity and disciplinary peer review.

Individualisation of panel composition. The second distinguishing feature is the full individualisation of panel composition for each doctoral candidate. The combination of three perspectives – the Dean as guarantor of formal and institutional standards, the head of the supervisor's department as guarantor of familiarity with the substantive and departmental

context, and the external expert as guarantor of objectivity and broader disciplinary perspective – produces a panel of complementary and mutually reinforcing competences. This configuration eliminates the risk of generic assessments incapable of capturing the specific character of an individual dissertation, and ensures that the doctoral candidate is evaluated by persons with genuine expertise in their area of research.

Rate of IRP revision recommendations. The rate of 96.3% of mid-term evaluations resulting in an IRP revision recommendation, against a zero rate of negative outcomes, is statistically significant and interpretatively decisive. It demonstrates that panels actively and responsibly engage in the substantive assessment of dissertation progress, rather than limiting themselves to formal confirmation of advancement. IRP revision recommendations should be understood as an instrument of support and directional guidance for the doctoral candidate's further work – not as an expression of distrust in their achievements, but as evidence of the panel's rigour in fulfilling its mentoring function. This outcome is consistent with the spirit of Article 202 of the PSWiN Act and attests to the institution's understanding of the mid-term evaluation as a formative rather than purely selective stage of doctoral education.

Requirement to append dissertation content. The requirement introduced by DS UEKat for the existing dissertation content to be appended to mid-term evaluation documentation constitutes a significant qualitative strengthening of the procedure. The evaluation panel thereby has direct access to the actual state of the work, enabling an assessment that is not merely reportorial – based on the doctoral candidate's self-presentation – but textual, verifying actual writing and methodological progress. This solution is uncommon in Polish doctoral schools and is assessed by the Panel as an exemplary procedural innovation with a direct positive impact on the rigour of the evaluation.

Two-part evaluation structure. The division of the evaluation into an open and a closed part corresponds to the standards of rigorous assessment proceedings. The open part – self-presentation and panel questions – provides the doctoral candidate with the opportunity to actively present their project and respond to the panel's concerns. The closed part – deliberations and formulation of the reasoned assessment outside the candidate's presence – protects the independence of the assessment and minimises the risk of interpersonal relationships influencing the content of the recommendations issued. The option for the supervisor to attend the open part at the doctoral candidate's request is a well-balanced solution: it provides the candidate with support without compromising the autonomy of the panel in the deliberative phase.

Remote format. The conduct of mid-term evaluations in synchronous remote mode via Google Meet is a positive solution from the perspective of accessibility and inclusivity. It ensures full participation by doctoral candidates with disabilities, parental responsibilities, or professional commitments that preclude in-person attendance, while – by virtue of its synchronous character – preserving all the qualities of direct interaction between the doctoral candidate and the panel. The remote format also facilitates the recruitment of external experts from distant academic centres, broadening the pool of potential evaluators beyond the geographical constraints of in-person meetings.

Quality of feedback. The Panel notes the signal raised by doctoral candidates during the site visit regarding variation in the quality and clarity of the recommendations communicated. The call for a more synthetic and hierarchically structured form of feedback is substantively justified: doctoral candidates have a limited period in which to revise their IRP following receipt of the panel's recommendations, and recommendations that are excessively general or unprioritised impede effective revision and may lead to superficial rather than substantive

changes to the IRP. The Panel recommends the development of an internal standard for the formulation of post-evaluation recommendations, specifying a minimum level of detail, a requirement to prioritise recommendations by importance, and a clear indication of which recommendations are mandatory and which constitute suggestions for the candidate's consideration.

Identified gap – documentation of panel composition rationale. The Panel identifies the absence of documented justification for the selection of individual mid-term evaluation panel members, and the absence of formal procedures for verifying their competence, as a gap requiring remediation. While in practice selection is carried out on substantive grounds – as confirmed by the thematic alignment of external experts with the dissertations under review and the institutional role of the departmental head – the absence of a formal record of justification prevents external verification of the selection standard and creates a risk of inconsistency across evaluation cycles. The Panel recommends the introduction of a requirement for a brief written justification of each panel's composition – covering in particular the substantive basis for the selection of the external expert – as a mandatory element of the evaluation documentation.

III. Conclusion

The rigour of the mid-term evaluation process at DS UEKat is assessed very positively. Full compliance with Article 202 of the PSWiN Act, the individualisation of panel composition with a thematically matched external expert, the exemplary rate of IRP revision recommendations, the innovative requirement to append dissertation content, and the accessible remote format together constitute a mid-term evaluation system of high substantive and procedural standards. The two identified areas for improvement – variation in the quality of feedback and the absence of documented justification for panel composition – do not undermine the overall assessment and are amenable to correction through straightforward regulatory and procedural interventions within existing institutional structures.

- **Internationalisation:**

I. Factual Findings

DS UEKat implements a formal Internationalisation Policy adopted by the DS Council in 2022, structuring activities across four operational areas: (a) enhancing research quality through internationalisation; (b) improving education through international experience; (c) increasing doctoral candidate mobility; (d) internationalisation at home and sustained institutional collaboration.

English-language programmes in both disciplines – Economics and Finance (EF) and Management and Quality Sciences (MQS) – have been offered since the 2022/2023 academic year and are currently in their fourth cohort. Across four editions of English-language recruitment (2022–2025), a total of 51 applications were submitted by foreign candidates; 13 were admitted, 10 commenced doctoral education, and 8 are currently enrolled – representing 12.3% of the total DS doctoral candidate population.

DS UEKat is a member of the CESEENet network, comprising 42 institutions from 17 countries, with the DS Dean serving on its Executive Committee. From 2026, the DS participates in the Bauhaus4EU alliance of 10 European universities, with the DS Dean serving on its Academic Council and 2 doctoral candidates participating in its PhD Council. Doctoral candidate A.

Widuch participates in the Horizon Europe project DUST. The mobility programmes available to doctoral candidates include ERASMUS+ and CEEPUS. Academic staff maintain collaborative relationships with researchers at foreign institutions; however, no academic teachers affiliated with foreign institutions are currently present in the DS teaching body. Courses are delivered in Polish and English, with the majority of elective subjects taught in English. The administrative office supports doctoral candidates in applying for international grants, and supervisors actively involve doctoral candidates in applying for and implementing international grants.

II. Expert Assessment

Strategic dimension of internationalisation. Internationalisation at DS UEKat is an area of intensive, strategically directed development throughout the assessed period. The adoption of a formal Internationalisation Policy by the DS Council in 2022 – encompassing four operationally distinct areas of activity – demonstrates an institutional approach to internationalisation as a managed process rather than an ad hoc response to external impulses. The Panel regards this dimension as evidence of the institution's strategic maturity. English-language programmes. The introduction of English-language programmes in both disciplines from 2022/2023 is a decision of strategic rather than merely tactical significance. Its importance extends beyond the attraction of foreign doctoral candidates: it represents a fundamental transformation of DS UEKat's character from a monolingual to a multilingual institution. This transformation generates multi-layered benefits: domestic doctoral candidates enrolled in the English-language programme acquire the communicative and scholarly competences necessary for publishing and presenting their findings on the international stage; the entire DS academic community becomes accustomed to operating in a multicultural and multilingual environment; and the English-language offering itself serves as an instrument for building the DS's visibility in international markets. The four editions of English-language recruitment – 51 applications, 13 admitted, 10 commencing education, 8 currently enrolled – reflect an early but substantively real phase of building an international

candidate base.

Active participation in international networks. The active role of DS leadership in the decision-making bodies of CESEENet and Bauhaus4EU is a factor of decisive importance for the real-world effectiveness of internationalisation. Passive membership in academic networks rarely translates into measurable institutional benefits; it is participation in decision-making bodies – such as the Executive Committee of CESEENet and the Academic Council of Bauhaus4EU – that enables DS UEKat to actively shape network agendas, initiate exchanges and joint projects, and build durable institutional relationships grounded in reciprocity and trust. CESEENet encompasses 42 institutions from 17 countries, meaning that DS UEKat has direct access to an extensive network of potential research and teaching partners across Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern Europe. Bauhaus4EU – an alliance of 10 European universities, operational from 2026 – opens the prospect of European-level collaboration, including joint doctoral programmes and staff mobility.

Doctoral candidate participation in European structures. The participation of 2 doctoral candidates in the PhD Council of Bauhaus4EU merits separate commendation. It introduces them directly into the environment of European doctoral schools, enabling the development of professional networks, the exchange of experiences, and participation in European discourse on doctoral education quality. This is a benefit difficult to achieve through other internationalisation instruments and is assessed by the Panel as an exemplary feature of the DS's internationalisation strategy.

Horizon Europe project DUST. The participation of doctoral candidate A. Widuch in the Horizon Europe project DUST demonstrates that DS UEKat is entering the space of European-funded research. Involvement in a Horizon Europe project is of particular value from a doctoral education perspective: it provides the doctoral candidate with experience in an international consortium environment, familiarity with European project reporting procedures and standards, and opens the prospect of future grant applications. The Panel recommends the systemic support and monitoring of this type of engagement as a pathway to internationalisation through research – complementary to educational mobility.

Administrative support and the role of supervisors. The administrative office's support in the grant application process and the active involvement of supervisors in encouraging and enabling doctoral candidates to apply for and implement international grants are valuable practices, consistent with the function of the seminar-and-research pillar of the curriculum. They create an environment in which internationalisation through grants is accessible to the doctoral candidate not merely nominally, but with genuine institutional and supervisory support at every stage of the application process.

Identified gap – absence of teachers from foreign institutions. The Panel identifies the absence of academic teachers affiliated with foreign institutions in the DS teaching body as a significant gap in the dimension of internationalisation at home. The collaborative relationships maintained by DS academic staff with foreign research centres – while confirmed and valuable – do not substitute for the direct presence of a foreign academic teacher in the curriculum. Academics from foreign universities bring different research, methodological, and pedagogical traditions; their presence in the programme is one of the strongest internationalisation signals available to both domestic and foreign doctoral candidates. The Panel recommends that steps be taken to incorporate into the DS curriculum at least several courses delivered by academic teachers from partner universities abroad – in the first instance within the framework of the Bauhaus4EU alliance and the CESEENet network, where institutional relationships are already established.

Identified gap – language barrier in administrative services. The Panel records the absence of full English-language administrative services as a gap that limits the genuine integration of foreign doctoral candidates. Foreign doctoral candidates who function without difficulty in the English-language academic sphere encounter a language barrier in their dealings with university administration – in relation to documentation, formal procedures, and day-to-day communication. The disparity between the high English-language standard in the academic sphere and the deficit in the administrative sphere is reported by foreign doctoral candidates as a serious inconvenience, limiting their sense of inclusion in the DS community. The Panel recommends the development of a plan for the gradual implementation of full bilingual administrative services for DS doctoral candidates, with priority given to the documents and procedures most frequently encountered by foreign doctoral candidates.

Doctoral candidate mobility. The availability of ERASMUS+ and CEEPUS programmes creates a formal mobility infrastructure. The Panel recommends the systematic monitoring of actual uptake rates for these programmes by DS doctoral candidates – distinguished by outgoing and incoming mobility – as a measure of the effectiveness of mobility instruments rather than merely their availability.

III. Conclusion

The internationalisation of DS UEKat is assessed positively as an area of dynamic and strategically managed development. The formal Internationalisation Policy, English-language programmes in both disciplines, the active participation of DS leadership in the decision-making bodies of CESEENet and Bauhaus4EU, doctoral candidate participation in the Bauhaus4EU PhD Council, and engagement in the Horizon Europe DUST project together constitute a coherent and multi-dimensional internationalisation system. The two identified gaps – the absence of teachers from foreign institutions in the DS teaching body and the language barrier in administrative services – require targeted institutional response and constitute priorities for the next strategic planning cycle.

- The effectiveness of the doctoral education:

I. Factual Findings — Statistical Data

Across seven recruitment rounds spanning the academic years 2019/2020 through 2024/2025, DS UEKat recruited a total of 110 doctoral candidates. As of the date of the self-evaluation report, 65 candidates are currently enrolled. A total of 30 candidates have been removed from the doctoral candidates register, representing 27.3% of all those recruited. Nine candidates have completed their education and graduated (8.2% of those recruited). Of these graduates, 8 out of 9 (88.9%) initiated proceedings for the conferral of the doctoral degree; 6 out of 9 graduates (66.7% of graduates; 75.0% of those who initiated proceedings) were awarded the doctoral degree. No doctoral candidate has been refused the conferral of the doctoral degree. Two applications for distinction of dissertations were submitted. Ten proceedings for the conferral of the doctoral degree are currently ongoing. Five graduates are continuing academic careers as employees of UEKat — across 5 different departments.

II. Expert Assessment

Methodological calibration — a prerequisite for interpretation. The assessment of the effectiveness of doctoral education at DS UEKat requires, at the outset, careful methodological calibration, without which raw quantitative indicators will be systematically misinterpreted. DS UEKat is a six-year-old institution, and the standard education cycle lasts four years (eight semesters). At the time of the evaluation, only the first two cohorts — recruited in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 — had a genuine opportunity to complete their education within the standard timeframe. The figure of $n=9$ graduates is therefore not a target indicator or a measure of system effectiveness, but an artefact of the institution's early stage of operation. The appropriate horizon for assessing effectiveness will be the next evaluation cycle — when at least four cohorts will have passed through the full education cycle. The Panel adopts this calibration as a critical interpretative qualification applicable to all quantitative indicators, and assesses the available data within this context.

Rate of refusals to confer the doctoral degree. The zero rate of refusals to confer the doctoral degree (0 out of 8 candidates who initiated proceedings) is the most important positive quality indicator available at the current stage. It demonstrates that DS UEKat does not produce dissertations that are formally complete but substantively insufficient for external doctoral examination committees. Any refusal to confer the degree would signal a serious dysfunction in the system — either at the level of supervisory mentorship or at the level of the mid-term evaluation, which is specifically designed to detect and correct substantive deficiencies in the dissertation long before its submission. A zero refusal rate across 8 initiated proceedings demonstrates that both quality control mechanisms are functioning effectively.

Applications for dissertation distinction. Two applications for dissertation distinction among only 9 graduates constitute an outstanding indicator — 22.2% of graduates produced work judged by external evaluation committees as meriting distinction. This figure suggests that a portion of DS UEKat doctoral candidates achieves results substantially exceeding the minimum required for the conferral of the doctoral degree. It is simultaneously indirect evidence of the quality of supervisory mentorship and the research environment: distinguished

dissertations are not the product of chance, but of systematic and intensive scholarly work conducted within a supportive institutional setting.

Continuation of academic careers. The employment of 5 graduates as research staff at UEKat – across 5 different departments – is a rare and significant indicator. It demonstrates that DS UEKat effectively produces human resources of a quality recognised and valued by its own parent institution. The distribution of graduates across 5 different departments eliminates the interpretation that employment resulted from departmental connections with a specific supervisor, and attests that the quality of education is sufficiently uniform for graduates from different supervisors and departments to be competitive in the academic labour market. The Panel notes simultaneously that the short operational history of DS UEKat currently prevents systematic monitoring of graduates' professional careers outside UEKat – this is an area for development in the next cycle.

Rate of graduates initiating degree proceedings. The rate of 88.9% of graduates initiating proceedings for the conferral of the doctoral degree is high and demonstrates that completing education at DS UEKat translates almost automatically into entry onto the formal pathway to degree conferral. This means that the curriculum effectively prepares doctoral candidates for the submission of a dissertation ready for formal assessment – not merely for the completion of the education period. The combination of this indicator with the zero refusal rate produces a picture of a system with high internal coherence between the education process and its formal culmination.

Withdrawal rate – diagnosis and recommendations. The withdrawal rate of 27.3% (30 out of 110) is the only indicator requiring in-depth institutional diagnosis. The Panel notes that the numerical value itself is not unambiguous in interpretative terms – withdrawal rates in Polish doctoral schools vary widely, and a rate of 27.3% does not deviate dramatically from the national average observed for institutions at an early stage of operation. The critical problem, however, is the absence of a breakdown of withdrawal causes in the self-evaluation report.

Without information on the structure of withdrawals by discipline, recruitment cohort, semester of withdrawal, and mode (voluntary resignation versus administrative removal), an accurate diagnosis of the phenomenon's sources is impossible. Each of the potential causes – over-ambitious recruitment expectations, insufficient support in the early semesters, external factors such as professional employment or family circumstances, or supervisor-candidate mismatch – requires a different systemic intervention. The Panel recommends the introduction of systematic documentation of withdrawal causes as managerial data, analysed by the DS Council at least once per academic year, with identification of patterns requiring programmatic or staffing intervention.

Doctoral candidate assessment mechanisms. DS UEKat provides doctoral candidates with multi-channel access to expressing their assessment of educational quality: through course surveys, through the Doctoral Candidates' Student Government, and through direct contact with the DS Dean. The Panel regards positively the fact that virtually all problems reported by doctoral candidates are resolved in their favour – this is an indicator of institutional responsiveness and a doctoral-candidate-oriented organisational culture. It simultaneously evidences the functioning of a genuine feedback loop between doctoral candidates and DS leadership, consistent with the requirements of the educational quality assurance system.

Documentation of the link between research activity and IRPs. DS UEKat has documented the connection between the research activities of selected doctoral candidates and their individual research plans, confirming the operational function of the IRP as a tool for planning and monitoring research progress – rather than merely a formal document. This is meaningful

confirmation of the coherence between the designed and the actually implemented doctoral education pathway.

Monitoring of graduates' professional careers. The Panel notes that the short operational history of DS UEKat objectively prevents, at the current stage, the systemic monitoring of graduates' professional careers outside UEKat. It recommends, however, that preparatory action be taken now: the development of a graduate tracking tool that will be operational once the number of graduates reaches a threshold permitting statistical analysis. Early implementation of such a tool will ensure data continuity and enable a full assessment of educational effectiveness in the next evaluation cycle.

III. Conclusion

The effectiveness of doctoral education at DS UEKat is assessed positively, with an important methodological qualification regarding the institution's early stage of operation. The zero rate of refusals to confer the doctoral degree, the 22.2% of graduates with applications for dissertation distinction, the 88.9% of graduates initiating degree proceedings, and the employment of 5 graduates across 5 different UEKat departments together produce a coherent picture of an institution educating effectively and at a high substantive level. The withdrawal rate of 27.3% requires in-depth diagnosis based on systematic documentation of causes – this is a priority area to be addressed in the next managerial cycle. A full assessment of educational effectiveness will be possible once at least four complete cohorts have passed through DS UEKat, which will occur within the horizon of the next evaluation cycle.

V. FINAL OPINION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. General Assessment

Following the conduct of the evaluation visit, the analysis of the self-evaluation report and accompanying documentation, and the hearing of representatives of the university leadership, teaching staff, and doctoral candidates, the Evaluation Panel of the Commission for the Evaluation of Science issues a positive opinion on the quality of education at the Doctoral School of the University of Economics in Katowice.

DS UEKat is an institution of a high level of institutional maturity, clearly exceeding what might be expected of a doctoral school that has been in operation since 2019. This is evidenced by the coherence of the education quality system, the strategic approach to key programmatic and staffing decisions, the functioning of genuine feedback loops, and the capacity for self-critical identification of areas requiring improvement. All eight evaluated criteria received a positive assessment; none of them exhibits deficiencies of a systemic character or in violation of statutory requirements.

II. Strengths – Synthesis

1. The three-phase curriculum architecture with the relocation of methodology courses to the first year constitutes an exemplary structural solution, initiated by doctoral candidates and supervisors and formalised by Senate resolution – evidence of a functioning culture of quality and a genuine feedback loop.
2. The two-pillar learning outcome verification system – the complementarity of the course-based and seminar-and-research pillars, the structured rhythm of semestral progress reports, and the constructive rate of 96.3% of mid-term evaluations with IRP revision recommendations against a zero refusal rate – constitutes a coherent and rigorous verification system fully adequate to PRK Level 8.
3. The multi-tiered staff selection procedure engaging five bodies and concluded by Senate resolution, combined with the requirement to prepare syllabi with learning outcome matrices at the curriculum design stage – a solution rare and exemplary across Polish doctoral schools.
4. The exceptional research infrastructure, including access to LSEG Workspace (formerly Refinitiv) – a financial, ESG, and corporate data platform of first-tier institutional class – together with Cambridge UP, Oxford UP, and Wiley databases, creates a research environment comparable to leading European doctoral schools in the economic disciplines.
5. The exemplary mid-term evaluation procedure: individualisation of panel composition with a thematically matched external expert, the innovative requirement to append dissertation content to the evaluation documentation, the two-part structure of the proceedings, and the zero rate of refusals to confer the doctoral degree – all confirm the high rigour of the process.
6. The supervisor-to-doctoral-candidate ratio of 1:1.1 (59 supervisors to 65 doctoral candidates), with a combined pool of 128 authorised supervisors across both disciplines and the extensive regulatory operationalisation of 9 supervisor obligations, ensures doctoral candidates' genuine access to high-quality academic supervision.
7. The strategically managed internationalisation: English-language programmes in both

disciplines from 2022/2023, the active role of DS leadership in the decision-making bodies of CESEENet and Bauhaus4EU, doctoral candidate participation in the Bauhaus4EU PhD Council, and engagement in the Horizon Europe DUST project together constitute a multi-dimensional internationalisation system.

8. The effectiveness indicators: a zero rate of refusals to confer the doctoral degree, 22.2% of graduates with applications for dissertation distinction, 88.9% of graduates initiating degree proceedings, and the employment of 5 graduates across 5 different UEKat departments – confirm the high substantive quality of education, taking into account the early stage of the DS's operation.

III. Areas Requiring Improvement

The Evaluation Panel identifies the following areas requiring targeted institutional response in the next evaluation cycle, presented in order of urgency:

1. The absence of an evaluation of the work of supervisors and assistant supervisors – the most serious systemic gap in the area of academic supervision quality assurance. Written progress opinions on doctoral candidates do not substitute for a direct, cyclical assessment of the supervisor's fulfilment of their 9 regulatory obligations. The absence of such evaluation prevents the systemic identification of supervisory weaknesses and intervention before their consequences materialise.

2. The absence of a formalised conflict resolution procedure in the supervisor–doctoral candidate relationship. The general clause currently applied – the Dean acting as mediator – does not satisfy the procedural requirement of § 2(5)(b) of the Regulation: a doctoral candidate should have access to a clearly described, predictable, and confidential escalation pathway, independent of the goodwill of any specific individual.

3. The absence of published recruitment results on the DS website and in the Public Information Bulletin – a transparency deficiency arising from § 2(4)(b) of the Regulation. Candidates in future recruitment rounds are denied the opportunity to benchmark their own preparation against actual admission thresholds.

4. The absence of classroom observation – a gap in the teaching quality assurance system. The employee evaluation and semester-end surveys do not substitute for direct, collegial observation of teaching practice; its absence prevents assessment of whether staff research competences translate into the actual quality of instruction delivered.

5. The absence of doctoral seminar surveys – an asymmetry in the quality monitoring system: the course-based pillar is subject to systematic feedback across 18 dimensions, while the seminar-and-research pillar – the most consequential for the quality of the doctoral qualification – remains outside the assessment system.

6. The absence of teachers from foreign institutions in the DS teaching body – a gap in internationalisation at home that is not compensated by staff collaboration with foreign centres or by the English-language programmes.

7. The language barrier in administrative services for foreign doctoral candidates – a disparity between the high English-language standard in the academic sphere and the deficit in the administrative sphere, reported by foreign doctoral candidates as a serious inconvenience limiting their integration.

8. The absence of systematic documentation of withdrawal causes – the rate of 27.3% of withdrawals requires in-depth diagnosis based on a breakdown of causes by discipline, cohort, semester, and mode of withdrawal. Without this data, accurate systemic intervention is not

possible.

9. The absence of formalised regulations governing recruitment committees – the lack of written qualification criteria for committee members and procedures for verifying their competence creates a risk of inconsistency in standards across recruitment cycles.

10. Variation in the quality of IRP feedback – a portion of the recommendations issued by IRP evaluation panels is excessively general in character, limiting their mentoring function and impeding doctoral candidates' effective revision of their research plans.

Final Assessment

The Doctoral School of the University of Economics in Katowice satisfies the requirements set out in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science of 22 February 2022 on the evaluation of education quality in doctoral schools. The quality of education delivered by DS UEKat is assessed as positive across all eight evaluation criteria.

In accordance with Article 261 and subsequent provisions of the Act of 20 July 2018 – Law on Higher Education and Science (PSWiN) – and the provisions of the Regulation, the Commission for the Evaluation of Science conducts the evaluation of doctoral schools no less frequently than every 6 years. The positive assessment of education quality issued to DS UEKat remains valid until the next evaluation is conducted, for a period not exceeding 6 years from the date of its issuance. During this period, DS UEKat retains full authorisation to conduct doctoral education in the disciplines of Economics and Finance and Management and Quality Sciences.

The Evaluation Panel expresses its conviction that DS UEKat possesses the institutional, staffing, and infrastructural resources necessary for the effective implementation of the recommendations formulated herein and for the continued enhancement of doctoral education quality in the next evaluation cycle, which is to be conducted no later than 6 years from the date of the present assessment.

VI. ASSESSMENT AND REASON

Final assessment
positive

Reason:

Following the conduct of the evaluation visit, the analysis of the self-evaluation report and accompanying documentation, and the hearing of representatives of the university leadership, teaching staff, and doctoral candidates, the Evaluation Panel of the Commission for the Evaluation of Science issues a positive opinion on the quality of education at the Doctoral School of the University of Economics in Katowice.

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