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2023-2027

DOCTORAL SCHOOL

EDUCATION QUALITY REPORT

Szkoła Doktorska Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Krakowie

Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny w Krakowie



Name and seat of the doctoral school

Szkoła Doktorska Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Krakowie

Evaluation period

10/1/19–9/22/25

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

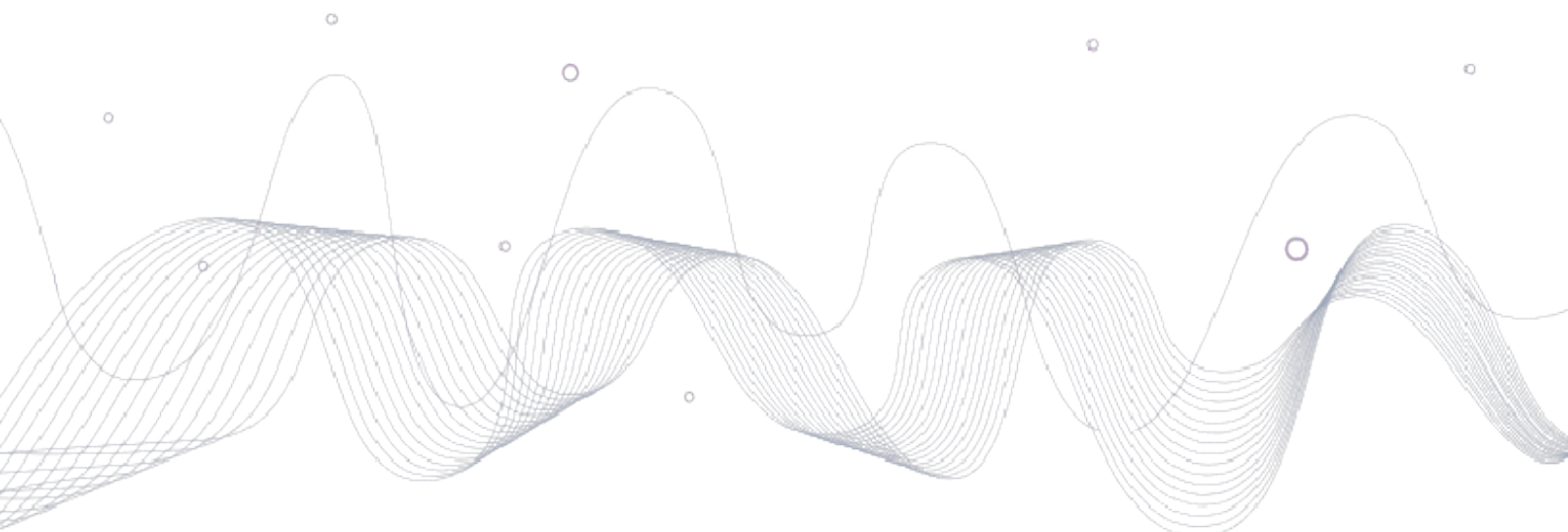
Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny w Krakowie

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

-

Date of report

12/10/25



Composition of the evaluation team:

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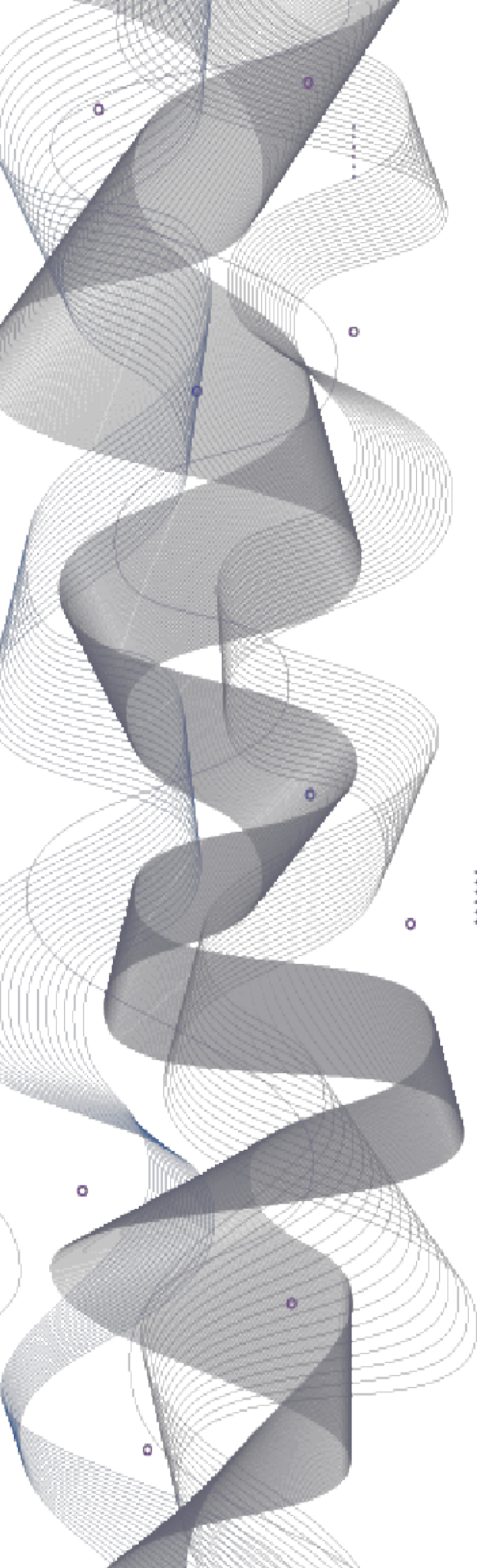


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I. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE DOCTORAL SCHOOL

Name of doctoral school	Szkoła Doktorska Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Krakowie
Date of establishment	2019
Date of commencement of education at doctoral school	10/21/19
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) socio-economic geography and spatial management (from: 01-01-2018) political and administrative sciences (from: 01-01-2018) management and quality studies (from: 01-01-2018) law (from: 01-01-2018)
Name/scope of the education programme	Mathematical and Statistical Methods in Economic Analyses Management Quality and Product Management Economics Finance and Accounting Politics and Administration Spatial Management Law
Number of instructors	136
Number of doctoral students undergoing training at the doctoral school (as of 11/27/25)	117
Number of supervisors in terms of guidance in preparing doctoral dissertations (as of 11/27/25)	84
Number of auxiliary supervisors in terms of guidance in preparing doctoral dissertations (as of 11/27/25)	60

II. INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION AND ITS COURSE

The evaluation team conducted a site visit of the Doctoral School (SD) managed by the Krakow University of Economics on March 5, 2026, from 8:30 to 17:00. All members of the evaluation team participated. The visit followed the plan specified in the previously established schedule (with minor modifications).

The first item on the visit agenda was a meeting with the University authorities and the SD authorities. In this part, the Director of the SD gave a short presentation regarding basic information on the functioning of the SD within the University structure, its goals, the assumptions of the education programs, and the problems and challenges faced by the SD. As part of the discussion with the meeting participants, issues were also raised regarding, among others, the internationalization of education and directions of development, and reference was made to modifications introduced in the program from the 2025/2026 academic year, including extending the education cycle from 3 to 4 years and changing the previous education programs within paths (within disciplines) to education programs in disciplines.

The next meeting of the evaluation team took place with the group of people responsible for the evaluated assessment criteria, i.e., the deans of the UEK colleges, the chairman of the Education Quality Team, and head of the Centre for Doctoral Education and Degree Procedures. The discussion concerned, among others, the financing model for research activities and doctoral student mobility, issues of monitoring education quality and standards of scientific supervision over doctoral students, the interdisciplinarity of education programs, the procedure in case of detected irregularities, and responding to problems reported by doctoral students.

Subsequently, the evaluation team had a meeting with representatives of lecturers conducting classes in the SD and supervisors, as well as members of the Scientific Council of the Doctoral School. During the discussion, issues mainly regarding the implementation of the education program were raised, i.e., curriculum content and the formula for introducing changes, practical aspects of the programs, rules for conducting classes, reasons for the low percentage of doctoral students completing their education on time, etc. Requirements for supervisors were also discussed, as well as practices used in conflict situations.

Next, in accordance with the visit schedule, the evaluation team reviewed (randomly selected) SD documents including, among others, individual research plans, the course and results of the mid-term evaluation, recruitment procedures, supervisors' opinions on the implementation of the IRP, and survey results. The overall assessment of the documentation review was positive. Particularly noteworthy is the very reliably documented process of forming the doctoral dissertation concept contained in the IRP (i.e., a detailed protocol from the open discussion on

the IRP organized before its formal adoption, the doctoral student's written response to comments raised in the discussion, and the concept of the doctoral dissertation presented at a high level of detail). Nevertheless, in individual cases of the analyzed documents, minor flaws were also noticed, such as: lack of a date or lack of the doctoral student's signature on a document, missing appendices for the mid-term evaluation in the file, or the lack of previous versions of the IRP. Furthermore, certain areas for possible improvement regarding the collected documentation were identified. Greater standardization regarding the content and level of detail of supervisors' opinions in the IRP is recommended (currently they range from half a page to several pages of content). Similarly, in the case of mid-term evaluation protocols, it is recommended to unify the standards for justifying evaluation results. Regarding the storage of documentation in paper version, the SD adopted the rule that only the final version of the IRP is in the doctoral student's personal file. In such a case, the evaluation team recommends attaching information that previous versions of the IRP are available in electronic version.

The next item of the visit was a meeting with representatives of doctoral students, including those representing the Doctoral Students' Government. The discussion concerned, among others, forms of support (financial and non-financial) for the implementation of the IRP, the quality of supervisory care, the availability of infrastructure, strengths and weaknesses of the education program and the method of its implementation, and the issue of the SD authorities responding to reported problems.

At the end of the visit, a concluding meeting was held with the SD authorities and administration, at which the Chair of the evaluation team conveyed general conclusions from the visit and presented the course of the further stages of the evaluation procedure.

All scheduled meetings took place in a conference room providing appropriate conditions for conducting talks. A representative group of people belonging to each of the groups participated in the meetings. For the purposes of document analysis, a separate room was made available to the evaluation team, in which members of the Team could conduct their work. Throughout the visit, the SD authorities and administrative support staff remained at the disposal of the evaluation team, answering queries and providing necessary explanations.

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

In the opinion of the evaluation team, the cooperation between the Doctoral School of the Kraków University of Economics and the Doctoral Students' Self Government is an example of an effective and systematic implementation of the principle of the partnership model of doctoral candidates' participation in the academic life of the university. It is distinguished by a wide range of formal and substantive forms of engaging the doctoral community – from the ongoing participation in the bodies of the Doctoral School of the Kraków University of Economics and in recruitment committees, through involvement in the processes of shaping the quality of education and internationalisation.

It should be positively assessed that the Doctoral Students' Self Government does not perform merely a consultative role, but is fully engaged in key decision making processes, including the commenting on regulatory acts, financial projects, and international cooperation programmes. Solutions such as including a doctoral representative in recruitment committees, steering committees of NAWA projects or in university level bodies indicate a high level of institutional awareness of the doctoral students' place within the system of self-assessment and quality development in doctoral education.

In particular, the Committee evaluates as highly positive the open door policy, which allows for continuous submission of comments and proposals, translating into flexibility and responsiveness of the organisation of the Doctoral School's work to the needs of the doctoral community. Information meetings, scientific and integration events co-organised with the Self Government, as well as involvement in national and international representative structures of doctoral candidates, confirm the development of a strong, autonomous and proactive doctoral community which constitutes an important factor supporting the quality of education and the engagement of research communities.

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

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

The education programme implemented at the Doctoral School of the Krakow University of Economics is designed in a manner consistent with the requirements for learning outcomes at Level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework. The assumptions and documentation presented demonstrate a clear focus on building advanced theoretical and methodological knowledge, competences for conducting independent research, and social competences that are crucial for the role of a researcher capable of actively contributing to the development of science and the socio-economic environment.

Attention should be paid to the modular structure of the programme and the comprehensive approach to methodological and practical content, including, among others, research methodology, data analysis, research ethics, intellectual property protection and academic teaching. A significant reinforcement of the feasibility of achieving learning outcomes is the extension of the education cycle from three to four years, preceded by a diagnosis of the needs of the doctoral community.

A key role in achieving Level 8 learning outcomes is played by the Individual Research Plan, understood not as a formal document but as a tool for managing academic development. The Individual Research Plan includes research stages, a dissertation work schedule, publication objectives, as well as academic and teaching activities, and additionally contains justifications linking the content of the plan with the learning outcomes. An important good practice is the multi-stage development of the plan, including public presentation and discussion of its assumptions, followed by the doctoral candidate's documented response to the comments received, which directly translates into the quality of the research concept and the maturity of research planning.

The educational process is distinguished by the logical coherence of the programme and Individual Research Plans with Level 8 requirements, a mature approach to developing research skills, and a well-documented practice of open discussion of Individual Research Plans, which genuinely enhances the quality of the plans and supports the development of research, organisational and teaching competences. A further strength is the formal embedding of programme improvement within the activities of internal quality structures, providing a basis for cyclical updating of teaching content and methods.

The programme promotes interdisciplinarity and the development of research, organisational and teaching competences, among others through the possibility of appointing an additional supervisor or an assistant supervisor from another discipline. The reliability of programme improvement is ensured by cyclical evaluation of education quality, monitoring of learning outcomes implementation and surveys of doctoral candidates' satisfaction, conducted within the Internal Quality Assurance System supervised by the Quality Assessment Team. The

achievement of learning outcomes is further reinforced by doctoral candidates' participation in research projects, internships, seminars and conferences, as well as publication activity in Poland and abroad, and by participation in teaching activities.

In summary, education at the KUE Doctoral School, oriented towards the preparation and defence of a doctoral dissertation and the award of the doctoral degree in the field of social sciences, is consistent with the requirements of the Polish Qualifications Framework at Level 8. The learning outcomes include the development of advanced theoretical and methodological knowledge, the ability to conduct independent research, and social competences (8 outcomes in the area of knowledge, 11 in the area of skills and 4 in the area of social competences). The education programme and Individual Research Plans are designed to comprehensively implement these outcomes in a modular format - up to 2024/2025 in a three-year cycle, and from 2025/2026 in a four-year cycle - combining theoretical, methodological and practical content. The programme includes compulsory, discipline-specific and elective courses, seminars and teaching practice; in parallel, education pathways are launched in subsequent disciplines together with the acquisition of degree-awarding rights.

Within the scope of Criterion 1, areas for potential optimisation can also be identified. The recommendations of the evaluation team for further changes include:

- **Introduction of English-language components into teaching** – the delivery of selected courses in English would strengthen the internationalisation of the programme and better prepare doctoral candidates for research activity in an international environment. This measure would complement the already implemented model of institutional internationalisation of the Doctoral School.
- **Strengthening the indicator-based approach in assessing the effectiveness of programme changes** - more systematic use of measurable indicators to evaluate the impact of introduced programme modifications would allow for a more objective and comparable assessment of the effectiveness of improvement actions.

Criterion 1 of the evaluation has been met.

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

The system for verifying learning outcomes at Level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework at the doctoral school includes: ongoing assessment of achievements within the study programme, assessment of achievements planned in the Individual Research Plan, as well as the final evaluation of academic output and the doctoral dissertation related to its submission.

The assessment of learning outcomes intended to be achieved through doctoral candidates' participation in courses is carried out through exams and credits covering projects, essays, presentations and class participation. Attendance is compulsory, and classes are generally organised in an on-site format, with the exception of courses delivered to doctoral candidates who began their education cycle in an online format (i.e. during the Covid-19 pandemic). Detailed rules for verifying learning outcomes are available to doctoral candidates via the Doctoral School website, where links to education programmes implemented in successive years and to all course syllabuses in the Syllabus system are provided. The reliability of achieving learning outcomes within the courses comprising the education programme is assessed by the Quality Assessment Team operating within the structure of the Doctoral School, which, in a systematic and formalised manner, after each semester collects and analyses information received from all academic teachers delivering courses in a given semester (using the form "Academic teacher's information on the achievement of intended learning outcomes"). Similarly, after each semester, doctoral candidates complete an anonymous Survey on the quality of the education process at the KUE Doctoral School.

Verification of learning outcomes related to the implementation of the Individual Research Plan takes place after each semester and is conducted by the supervisor, who prepares a written opinion on the doctoral candidate's completion of tasks planned in the IRP for a given semester. This opinion is structured and refers both to the stages of dissertation implementation foreseen in the schedule and to all additional activities planned in the IRP, such as preparation of publications, conference participation, preparation of grant applications and mobility. In addition, verification of learning outcomes included in the IRP is carried out during the mid-term evaluation. The process of developing Individual Research Plans should be assessed positively, as it is multi-stage and includes, as one of its required components, an open discussion of the preliminary IRP proposal, which significantly affects its quality and consequently allows for fuller development of skills, competences and knowledge at Level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework.

On the basis of the analysis of documentation provided by the Doctoral School and interviews with individual stakeholder groups conducted during the site visit, it should be concluded that the verification of learning outcomes is carried out in a reliable manner. It can also be assessed that the requirements of transparency, clarity and accessibility of the rules for verifying learning outcomes are met, however with some minor reservations that indicate areas for improvement, namely:

- **Improvement of the method for verifying learning outcome U07.** This outcome has the

same wording for each discipline: *The graduate is able to use a foreign language at B2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages to the extent enabling participation in the international academic and professional environment and to apply English-language scientific and specialist terminology in the field of social sciences.* However, the Doctoral School does not offer courses taught in English, nor has it introduced a mandatory requirement for doctoral candidates' activity in the international environment (e.g. through English-language publications or participation in international academic conferences). In addition, in course syllabuses, learning outcome U07 appears only in isolated cases of elective courses, which may or may not be chosen by doctoral candidates. The introduction of lectures/seminars taught in English (e.g. by visiting professors from abroad) could constitute a step towards clarifying and making more realistic the verification of learning outcome U07.

- **Clarification of the forms of verification of learning outcomes** – currently, each course in the education programme is assigned one of two forms of confirmation of learning outcomes: an exam or a credit. However, detailed analysis of course syllabuses indicates that in practice this distinction does not occur, as courses assigned an examination often list such verification methods as class participation and work prepared outside classes, such as essays or projects, which are typical of a credit. It is therefore recommended to clarify the rules and differentiate the two forms of verification of learning outcomes, i.e. credits and examinations.

- **Formulating and disseminating rules for obtaining credits** – as indicated by interviews with doctoral candidates' representatives, they are not familiar with the rules for passing courses if they fail to obtain a credit at the first attempt, i.e. regarding their entitlement to a limit on retakes of a credit/examination in a given semester, or the maximum number of missing final grades that would allow conditional semester completion. Doctoral candidates were also unable to indicate whether formalised and generally applicable regulations addressing these issues exist at the Doctoral School. Therefore, in order to prevent potential conflicts and increase transparency of learning outcome verification rules, it is recommended that such guidelines be implemented and disseminated.

- **Inclusion of supervisors in the periodic analysis of education quality** – surveys conducted cyclically within the Internal Quality Assurance System concern academic teachers delivering courses and doctoral candidates. It is recommended to include supervisors in this assessment as well, so that they can express their opinions on the extent to which doctoral candidates' needs related to knowledge, development of academic competences and research skills are being met. The semesterly evaluations of IRP implementation provided by supervisors do not fulfil this function.

- **Introduction of indicator-based analysis concerning doctoral candidates' scientific activity and the effectiveness of education at the Doctoral School** – interviews conducted during the site visit revealed that the Doctoral School does not carry out indicator analysis in the area of monitoring the implementation of education. Regular indicator-based analysis concerning, for example, the number of doctoral candidates completing education on time and submitting doctoral dissertations, publication activity, grant activity and mobility would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of problems, identification of their causes and implementation of appropriate remedial measures.

- **Increasing the regularity and universality of forms of presenting doctoral candidates' research results** - doctoral candidates have the opportunity to develop academic competences in presenting their own research results and conducting scholarly discussion through active participation in scientific conferences and internal departmental seminars and inter-university seminars. However, the approach is predominantly individualised and non-compulsory. It is

suggested to introduce greater regularity and universality of such scholarly activities, for example through the organisation of cyclical scientific seminars during which Doctoral School candidates would be able to present the results of their work.

Criterion 2 of the evaluation has been met.

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

The information presented in the self-assessment report generally confirms the adequacy of the academic output and the activity of the staff in the context of doctoral education. It is indicated that the teaching staff possess scientific output, project experience, publication and conference activity, as well as supervisory experience. This is confirmed by the information included in the description in the self-assessment report and in the appendix containing profiles of selected lecturers of the Doctoral School. It is emphasized that, in the selection of staff, the management of the Doctoral School is guided by the qualifications held by academic staff (lecturers, supervisors), including their scientific output. A key element is that this output is consistent with the profile/programme of education at the Doctoral School and with the represented discipline. Knowledge of the English language is also an important element, although education at the Doctoral School is conducted in Polish. The material presented in the self-assessment report, as well as the conclusions from the conducted site visit, allow the overall assessment that the scientific and teaching potential of the staff is adequate for doctoral education.

The self-assessment report generally indicates activity in the area of initiatives undertaken by the school to support staff development. It is stated that staff participate in conferences, symposia, (scientific/research) projects and international cooperation. It should be noted, however, that these activities are typical for work in academic teaching or research positions. A positive aspect is that the Doctoral School staff are active in this area and have the opportunity to pass on their experience to doctoral candidates. It is indicated that the Doctoral School staff have access to free training opportunities. The self-assessment report provides a link to a list of training courses available to interested staff members. This confirms the existence of activities supporting the professional development of those delivering courses. However, there is no evidence that staff are actively encouraged to take advantage of the available offer. It should be understood that participation in the offer is limited to those who are personally interested.

In the self-assessment report submitted for evaluation, information regarding the reliability of activities aimed at verifying staff qualifications is fairly limited. As indicated, certain actions are undertaken, but they are not transparent. In fact, it was only during the site visit that the conduct of such activities was confirmed. In this area, a survey among Doctoral School students and observation are conducted. Although (as confirmed during the site visit) the response rate of the surveys does not allow them to be considered representative, the feedback from doctoral candidates is nevertheless taken into account. This should be assessed as a positive action. As emphasized, every comment is valuable in improving the doctoral education process. However, it was not indicated how such surveys are conducted or how doctoral candidates are encouraged to participate.

In summary, the assessment of the qualifications of the academic staff is generally positive. However, certain shortcomings can also be identified in this area, leading to the following

recommendations:

- **Clarification of the criteria according to which teaching staff are selected, and how their academic output and competences support the achievement of learning outcomes and programme content** - the self-assessment report does not present, in an orderly manner, the procedure for staff selection. It would be advisable to indicate how staff achievements translate into specific elements of the education programme and learning outcomes. In this way, scientific and research experience could be transparently linked to education, covering both the programme and learning outcomes. The report contains general declarations about high-quality teaching and development of doctoral candidates' competences, but lacks a more direct connection to learning outcomes.
- **Clarification which specific development activities are directed explicitly at the staff of the doctoral school** (a list alone is insufficient). This applies in particular to the enhancement of supervisory competences. The self-assessment report provides a list of training opportunities available to Doctoral School staff; however, this is of a general nature. The information provided does not indicate which training courses are directly dedicated to Doctoral School staff. It is difficult to identify whether there are training sessions, courses or meetings focused on presenting information, for example, on the role of a supervisor or assistant supervisor. It is also not stated whether development activities are mandatory or optional. The content suggests that they are optional. It would be worth emphasizing how staff development activities translate into improved quality of doctoral education.
- **Introduction of transparency with regard to the methods used to verify staff qualifications, including evaluation procedures, tools used, frequency of application and the way in which results are used to improve the quality of education.** Such information/procedures should be known to Doctoral School staff and made available in formal documents. Currently, there is no clear description of the mechanisms and procedures for verifying qualifications, nor an indication of evaluation criteria, mode and frequency.

Criterion 3 of the evaluation has been met.

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

The recruitment process is characterised by a high level of organisation, transparency and compliance with the requirements of the Scientific Evaluation Committee. The admission procedure is objective and competitive, aimed at selecting candidates with strong academic potential, analytical competences and motivation. It is based on internal regulations, including the Senate's annual resolution and the Rector's ordinance.

The introduction of an electronic recruitment system has increased the accessibility and transparency of the procedure. All key information is published on KUE websites (the Public Information Bulletin and the Doctoral School website), including limits of places, offers of academic supervision, the schedule, document templates and assessment criteria. The list of supervisors, updated online, indicates disciplines and research areas, facilitating candidates' matching of a supervisor and research topic.

Until the 2024/2025 academic year, recruitment was conducted in the following disciplines: Economics and Finance, Political Science and Public Administration, Management and Quality Sciences, and Socio-economic Geography and Spatial Management. From the 2023/2024 a.y., recruitment was also launched in the discipline of Legal Sciences. From the 2025/2026 a.y., admission quotas are linked to the number of independent academic staff in a given discipline (e.g. Economics and Finance – 6 students, Management and Quality Sciences – 5 students, others – respectively 2, 1, 1 student), ensuring proportionality and balanced staff development.

The procedure consists of two stages. In the first formal stage, the documents and payment of the recruitment fee are verified. In the second - substantive - stage, the following are assessed: scientific output, research proposal, motivation and competences of the candidate. The research proposal, prepared under the guidance of a selected supervisor, is assessed by two reviewers; the final score is the arithmetic mean. The entire process is conducted electronically, which increases security and transparency.

Candidates who obtain the required minimum number of points for the research proposal are admitted to the interview. The interview concerns the research concept, interests and plans of the candidate. The final score includes the result of the research proposal, the interview and the candidate's previous achievements. On this basis, a ranking is created and candidates within the admission limits are accepted. The results are publicly announced, and candidates have the right to access the documentation and to appeal. Between 2019 and 2025, 365 applications and 22 appeals were submitted, of which one was accepted, which confirms the reliability of the procedure.

The school also implements the "Implementation Doctorate" programme. By 2025, 11

applications had been submitted and one doctorate completed, which indicates the existence of a pathway linking research with practice, although its use remains limited.

Recruitment is coordinated by a committee appointed by the Rector, consisting of representatives of disciplines, the Director of the school and a representative of the doctoral students' self-government. Recruitment rules are systematically analysed and improved – after each admission procedure an evaluation of procedures is conducted, and changes are reviewed by the Scientific Council and the Doctoral Students' Self-Government.

In summary, the recruitment process at the KUE Doctoral School is distinguished by high transparency, objective criteria and efficient organisation. Nevertheless, certain challenges and corresponding possible directions of change can be identified, namely:

- **Increasing the internationalisation of the recruitment process** – currently, the Doctoral School's educational offer is addressed mainly to Polish-speaking candidates, which does not entirely preclude raising the level of internationalisation. Further development of the recruitment process may include actions aimed at increasing the participation of foreign (Polish-speaking) candidates, including through appropriately targeted recruitment offers. In a longer-term perspective, the introduction of education in English may also be considered.
- **Increasing the flexibility of recruitment requirements** – currently, high formal requirements may limit access for candidates from outside the academic environment.
- **Optimisation of the organisation of the recruitment process** – it is recommended to undertake actions aimed at reducing the administrative burden on recruitment committees and monitoring interest in individual disciplines, which may contribute to more balanced recruitment and more efficient process management.

Criterion 4 of the evaluation has been met.

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

The Doctoral School at the Krakow University of Economics (KUE) presents a procedurally coherent and institutionally supported model of doctoral supervision, aligned with the requirements of PQF level 8 and centred on the Individual Research Plan (IRP) as the core instrument for guiding and monitoring doctoral progress. The Individual Research Plans are scientifically rigorous and appropriately structured, demonstrating conceptual clarity, coherence, and alignment with doctoral-level research standards.

A distinctive feature of the model is the possibility of establishing cooperation between the doctoral candidate and a prospective supervisor already at the recruitment stage, which may enhance early topic alignment and supervisory engagement. While this solution reflects good practice in terms of research continuity, it also requires careful balancing through transparent institutional mechanisms to ensure equal access for candidates without pre-existing academic networks.

The appointment, change and oversight of supervisors are regulated through a multi-level governance structure, involving the Scientific Council and the Discipline Council, with defined timelines, mediation mechanisms and the possibility of re-examination. This framework provides procedural safeguards and corresponds to European expectations regarding fairness, accountability and doctoral candidates' rights. Regular seminars, consultations and IRP evaluations enable continuous monitoring of both substantive and organisational progress, while anonymous semester feedback and mediation by the Director of the Doctoral School offer channels for early identification and resolution of difficulties.

The School provides a broad ecosystem of research and professional support, including access to research funding, infrastructure, bibliometric and data management services, methodological training, transferable skills development and wellbeing support. At the same time, the report remains largely descriptive with respect to the operational standards of supervision (e.g. minimum supervisory engagement, structured supervisory agreements) and the systematic use of feedback results for documented improvements. Interdisciplinarity is supported procedurally through the possibility of appointing assistant or second Promoters, yet its practical implementation appears to remain limited.

Overall, the Doctoral School at KUE meets the criterion at a solid and credible level, with a supervision system that is procedurally sound, supportive and aligned with national and European expectations.

However, several areas would benefit from further strengthening. In particular:

- **Increasing the availability of aggregated data on supervisory processes, such as patterns of changes in supervisors, that could enhance transparency and support institutional learning**
- while monitoring mechanisms are in place, the absence of clearly defined remedial pathways linked to progress evaluations may affect consistency in addressing challenges. More explicit

integration of research ethics within supervision practices would also be advisable.

- **More comprehensive documentation of the impact of feedback** – although doctoral candidates' opinions are collected regularly, their impact is not sufficiently evidenced through documented improvements. A more transparent presentation of how survey results lead to concrete changes would strengthen the quality assurance system. Additionally, it is recommended to strengthen mechanisms for linking feedback collected from doctoral candidates to concrete supervisory development actions, including targeted training or support measures for supervisors where necessary.
- **Enhancing interdisciplinary engagement** - interdisciplinarity remains limited in practice; cross-disciplinary seminars, joint supervisory committees or institutional incentives could strengthen this dimension
- **Strengthening ethical standards in doctoral education** - it is recommended to implement the systematic use of specialised software tools for similarity detection, plagiarism prevention and the identification of AI-assisted writing, integrated into the doctoral supervision and evaluation processes in order to ensure academic integrity and transparency.
- **Greater focus on doctoral education outcomes** - effectiveness of support could be demonstrated more clearly through aggregated indicators (e.g. grant success, publication trajectories, time-to-degree).

Criterion 5 of the evaluation has been met.

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

The mid-term evaluation at the Doctoral School of the Krakow University of Economics is presented as one of the key elements of the quality assurance system for doctoral education at Level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework. Its role is appropriately defined as a tool for ongoing verification of progress in the implementation of Individual Research Plans, assessment of the development of research competences and monitoring the scientific activity, including publication output, teaching activity and mobility. It is conducted midway through the education cycle (starting on 1 April, with results published in the first ten days of June), and committee meetings are organised in May. For each doctoral candidate, a three-member committee composed of independent academic staff is appointed, with at least one member employed outside KUE. The basis for the assessment is the doctoral candidate's report together with appendices and a presentation of achievements at the committee meeting; following the evaluation, a protocol with conclusions and recommendations is prepared. The result is public, with justification, communicated to the doctoral candidate and the supervisor, and in the case of a negative outcome, an appeal may be lodged with the Rector within 14 days.

A high assessment should be given to the formalisation of the process, its temporal predictability and the complete documentation pathway. According to the description, the evaluation takes place midway through the education cycle, with a clearly defined start date and publication of results, and committee meetings may be organised in a manner suited to doctoral candidates' needs. The process is based on the doctoral candidate's report, submitted to the committee in advance, followed by a presentation of achievements during the committee meeting and preparation of a protocol with recommendations for the next stage of work. Reliability and objectivity are strengthened by the method of appointing committees and their composition. It is indicated that a committee is appointed for each doctoral candidate, and that the competences of its members correspond to the discipline and subject matter of the dissertation, while ensuring the participation of at least one member from outside the university.

The transparency of the outcome and the mechanisms safeguarding doctoral candidates' rights should be assessed positively. The result together with its justification is made available, and the doctoral candidate has the right to submit comments and to make use of the appeal procedure. It is also worth emphasising the developmental function of the mid-term evaluation, which does not end merely with a verdict, but provides conclusions supporting adjustments to the Individual Research Plan, in line with good practices in quality assurance of doctoral education.

The process is implemented on a large scale, indicating its operational capacity and stability. During the evaluation period, 90 mid-term evaluations were conducted, all with positive outcomes, which confirms organisational coherence and the absence of signals indicating systemic problems in the implementation of the procedure. At the same time, the materials

indicate that, after the evaluation, it is possible to submit comments to the Director of the Doctoral School, and that doctoral candidates' opinions have been used for improvement actions, including changes in the organisation of the process.

The process is characterised by high transparency, formal anchoring, appropriate selection of committees with the participation of an external expert, and a clear assessment logic based on the report, presentation and documented conclusions. A strong point is also the clear linkage of the evaluation with the further development of the doctoral candidate, including the possibility of modifying the Individual Research Plan and receiving substantive support in the case of methodological or organisational barriers.

In summary, the mid-term evaluation process is highly formalised in regulations and procedures. Reliability is ensured by clear criteria, a points-based assessment system, transparency and the possibility of submitting comments. The evaluation also fulfils a developmental function, enabling adjustments to the IRP and support in the event of delays. Nevertheless, certain challenges can also be identified that indicate areas for possible improvement, namely:

- **Unification and standardisation of documentation and assessment justifications** – further harmonisation of standards for justifying results and ensuring documentation completeness is advisable, as the review of randomly selected documents revealed isolated formal deficiencies, and the standardisation of supervisors' opinions and committee protocols was recommended.
- **Reducing the risk of differences in interpretation in the assessment of interdisciplinary projects** (despite the use of a points-based approach) - actions in this area may simultaneously reduce assessment variability and increase the comparability of decisions across committees.

Criterion 6 of the evaluation has been met.

- **Internationalisation:**

Internationalisation at the KUE Doctoral School is presented as a project-driven and institutionally coordinated process, strongly supported by external funding instruments such as NAWA PROM, PROM KUE 2.0 and STER. These initiatives have enabled substantial international mobility of doctoral candidates and staff, participation in conferences and summer schools, and the development of competencies related to international research communication and publication.

A significant step towards sustainability is the formal appointment of an Internationalisation Coordinator, responsible for diagnosing needs, supporting funding applications and expanding international mobility and cooperation. The School has also developed international visibility through the organisation of workshops, doctoral colloquia and summer schools with foreign participation, as well as engagement in regional academic networks. The possibility of writing and defending doctoral dissertations in English and the inclusion of international components in a proportion of theses further indicate an outward-looking orientation.

Nevertheless, internationalisation appears to be stronger in mobility and event-based activities than in structural academic integration. The historically limited number of English-taught courses, explicitly identified as a weakness in the report, constrains the recruitment and integration of international doctoral candidates and reduces the internationalisation of the everyday learning environment. Compared with more mature European doctoral schools, further development would be expected in the direction of systematic English-language provision, international co-supervision and joint or cotutelle doctoral formats.

Overall, the Doctoral School demonstrates an active and well-resourced approach to internationalisation, with clear achievements in mobility, skills development and international exposure. However, to reach a higher level of maturity comparable with leading European doctoral schools, future efforts should prioritize structural internationalization. In particular:

- **Expanded and systematized provision of English-taught courses and doctoral training modules across all disciplines**, in order to strengthen the international learning environment and support the integration of international doctoral candidates.
- **Further consolidation the role of the Internationalisation Coordinator by embedding internationalisation objectives into long-term institutional planning, with clear targets and monitoring mechanisms beyond project-based funding cycles.** While the doctoral school demonstrates a clear commitment to internationalisation, further development is needed to strengthen its structural depth and long-term impact. In particular, the current approach appears to rely predominantly on externally funded initiatives, which, although effective in the short term, may raise questions regarding sustainability beyond specific project cycles. A more embedded, institution-wide strategy could ensure greater continuity and integration of international activities.
- **Strengthening the strategic use of international partnerships and networks by developing joint doctoral activities (e.g. shared seminars, collaborative research projects and co-**

authored publications), thereby increasing the sustainability and academic impact of internationalisation efforts. This would complement mobility-based internationalisation with more structural forms of academic integration. Moreover, the monitoring of internationalisation outcomes would benefit from a more systematic, evidence-based approach. The absence of clearly defined performance indicators limits the capacity to assess the effectiveness of international engagement in areas such as joint research outputs, co-supervision practices, or participation in international grant schemes.

- **Greater attention given to the inclusiveness of international opportunities** - while a range of activities is available, their accessibility may vary across doctoral candidates, suggesting the need for more flexible or diversified formats that can accommodate different circumstances and stages of doctoral progression.

Criterion 7 of the evaluation has been met.

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

The effectiveness of education at the Doctoral School may be analysed in a multidimensional manner, in particular through: the timeliness of IRP implementation, the effectiveness of obtaining the doctoral degree (completions, removals from the register, awards of the degree), the scientific achievements of doctoral candidates (publications, conferences, grants, internationalisation), as well as the functioning of internal quality assurance and improvement mechanisms, supplemented by monitoring of graduates' career paths and their professional situation.

The key indicator of effectiveness remains the timely implementation of individual research plans. In the years 2019–2022 (i.e. covering four full education cycles completed by September 2025), a total of 78 doctoral candidates were admitted, 19 completed their education, 12 were removed from the register, and 14 graduates were awarded the doctoral degree. In the evaluation period, 90 doctoral candidates underwent the mid-term evaluation and all obtained a positive outcome. In the opinion of the Commission, the proportion of doctoral candidates who obtained the doctoral degree (12% out of the total number of 119 students admitted to DS in the period 2019-2025) is a matter of concern and largely results from the three-year education cycle; however, it should be noted that from the 2025/2026 academic year the education cycle at the Doctoral School has been extended to four years.

The level of scientific achievements of doctoral candidates implemented within Individual Research Plans should be assessed positively. Doctoral candidates are involved in projects of a high degree of complexity—often interdisciplinary and internationalised—resulting in publications in journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, co-authorship of monographs, active participation in national and international conferences, and applications for grants (including NCN and NAWA). The implementation of these activities is systematically monitored by supervisors and constitutes the basis for a positive mid-term evaluation.

The quality assurance system at the KUE Doctoral School is based on the active involvement of doctoral candidates in the evaluation process. Periodic, voluntary and anonymous surveys yield very high ratings for teaching classes (average 4.90/5.00) and administrative services (5.0/5.0). These results are systematically analysed by the Quality Assessment Team and then translated into specific improvement actions, for example, recommendations for staff to increase the use of practical examples and diagnostic questions, as well as supplementation of the library collection in response to doctoral candidates' comments. The participation of representatives of the Doctoral Students' Self-Government in the work of the team ensures that students' voices actively shape quality policy.

Monitoring of graduates' careers, despite the relatively short time horizon, provides valuable information on the effectiveness of education in the labour market. Approximately 25% of graduates continue an academic career in the university sector, while the others find

employment in the economic sector in expert, managerial and analytical positions. These data confirm that the programme - emphasising the development of research, methodological and teaching competences - prepares graduates both for an academic career path and for work in the socio-economic environment.

In summary, the effectiveness of education at the KUE Doctoral School is based on a coherent, multidimensional system. During the evaluation period, this effectiveness is assessed as satisfactory, although the system still bears the features of an entity in a developmental phase (in statu nascendi). Analysis of indicators of timeliness, effectiveness of obtaining the doctoral degree, scientific achievements of doctoral candidates and the functioning internal evaluation and quality enhancement mechanisms confirms that programme assumptions and strategic objectives are being implemented appropriately. Nevertheless, certain areas requiring attention and improvement can be identified, namely:

- **Undertaking actions aimed at increasing the proportion of students completing their education at the Doctoral School on time** - it can be observed that there is a clear discrepancy between the assessments of progress in the implementation of Individual Research Plans at mid-cycle (i.e. at the stage of the mid-term evaluation, which was positive in 100% of cases during the analysed period) and actual timeliness at the finalisation stage of education, measured by the proportion of doctoral candidates who completed education at the Doctoral School (24% across the four full education cycles started in 2019–2022) and who were awarded the doctoral degree (18%, respectively). It should be noted, however, that over 80% of KUE Doctoral School graduates eventually obtained the doctoral degree.
- **Introduction of monitoring based on indicators of education effectiveness and doctoral candidates' academic output** - systematic collection and analysis of data are necessary to identify and eliminate the causes of adverse phenomena in the area of education effectiveness, including occurring delays.

Criterion 8 of the evaluation has been met.

V. FINAL OPINION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the information available in the Self-Assessment Report and the site visit to the premises of the Doctoral School, during which meetings were held with representatives of the evaluated entity, university authorities, doctoral candidates, and academic staff, as well as an analysis of documentation related to the educational process at the Doctoral School, the Evaluation Team gives a positive assessment of the educational process at the UEK Doctoral School. All criteria for the evaluation of the quality of education specified in Article 261 of the Act of 20 July 2018 *Law on Higher Education and Science* (Journal of Laws 2018, item 1668, as amended) are considered to be met.

Overall, the team assesses the implementation of the educational process at the UEK Doctoral School as good and has not identified any significant deficiencies in this area. Nevertheless, this report presents recommendations in Section IV (extended version) and Section V (general) in areas related to individual evaluation criteria. These recommendations constitute suggestions addressed to the authorities of the Doctoral School concerning potential changes and actions aimed at further improvement of the educational process.

Recommendations

Recommendations of the evaluation team regarding the implementation of changes and/or the identification of areas for potential optimization are as follows:

Criterion 1

- Introduction of English-language components into teaching.
- Strengthening the indicator-based approach in assessing the effectiveness of programme changes.

Criterion 2

- Improvement of the method for verifying learning outcome U07.
- Clarification of the forms of verification of learning outcomes.
- Formulating and disseminating rules for obtaining credits.
- Inclusion of supervisors in the periodic analysis of education quality.
- Introduction of indicator-based analysis concerning doctoral candidates' scientific activity and the effectiveness of education at the Doctoral School.
- Increasing the regularity and universality of forms of presenting doctoral candidates' research results.

Criterion 3

- Clarification of the criteria according to which teaching staff are selected, and how their academic output and competences support the achievement of learning outcomes and programme content.
- Clarification which specific development activities are directed explicitly at the staff of the doctoral school (a list alone is insufficient).
- Introduction of transparency with regard to the methods used to verify staff qualifications, including evaluation procedures, tools used, frequency of application and the way in which results are used to improve the quality of education.

Criterion 4

- Increasing the internationalisation of the recruitment process.
- Increasing the flexibility of recruitment requirements.
- Optimisation of the organisation of the recruitment process.

Criterion 5

- Increasing the availability of aggregated data on supervisory processes, such as patterns of changes in supervisors, that could enhance transparency and support institutional learning.
- More comprehensive documentation of the impact of feedback
- Enhancing interdisciplinary engagement.
- Strengthening ethical standards in doctoral education.
- Greater focus on doctoral education outcomes.

Criterion 6

- Unification and standardisation of documentation and assessment justifications.
- Reducing the risk of differences in interpretation in the assessment of interdisciplinary projects (despite the use of a points-based approach).

Criterion 7

- Expanded and systematized provision of English-taught courses and doctoral training modules across all disciplines.
- Further consolidation the role of the Internationalisation Coordinator by embedding internationalisation objectives into long-term institutional planning, with clear targets and monitoring mechanisms beyond project-based funding cycles.
- Strengthening the strategic use of international partnerships and networks by developing joint doctoral activities (e.g. shared seminars, collaborative research projects and co-authored publications), thereby increasing the sustainability and academic impact of internationalisation efforts.
- Greater attention given to the inclusiveness of international opportunities.

Criterion 8

- Undertaking actions aimed at increasing the proportion of students completing their education at the Doctoral School on time.
- Introduction of monitoring based on indicators of education effectiveness and doctoral candidates' academic output.

VI. ASSESSMENT AND REASON

Final assessment
positive

Reason:

The Doctoral School has met all the criteria identified during the evaluation process and was positively assessed by the Evaluation Team. Detailed information is provided in the individual sections of the evaluation report. The comments raised and the identified shortcomings do not disrupt the overall functioning of the Doctoral School of the University of Economics in Krakow (SD UE in Krakow). The Evaluation Team presented recommendations for the use of the SD UE in Krakow, whose implementation will improve the quality of the educational process at the doctoral school. The members of the Team unanimously concluded that the doctoral education process at the SD UE in Krakow deserves a positive evaluation. The educational process is characterised by coherent organisation, a high level of academic content, and the commitment of the academic staff, which contributes to improving the quality of education and the development of doctoral students.

The Evaluation Team recommends conducting the next evaluation of the Doctoral School operated by the University of Economics in Krakow in 6 years, in accordance with Article 259(2) of the Act "Law on Higher Education and Science" of July 20, 2018 (Journal of Laws of 2024, item 1571, as amended).

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