

KEN

2023-2027

# DOCTORAL SCHOOL

## EDUCATION QUALITY REPORT

Szkoła Doktorska Politechniki Koszalińskiej

Politechnika Koszalińska

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**Name and seat of the doctoral school**

Szkoła Doktorska Politechniki Koszalińskiej

**Evaluation period**

7/1/19–9/10/25

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

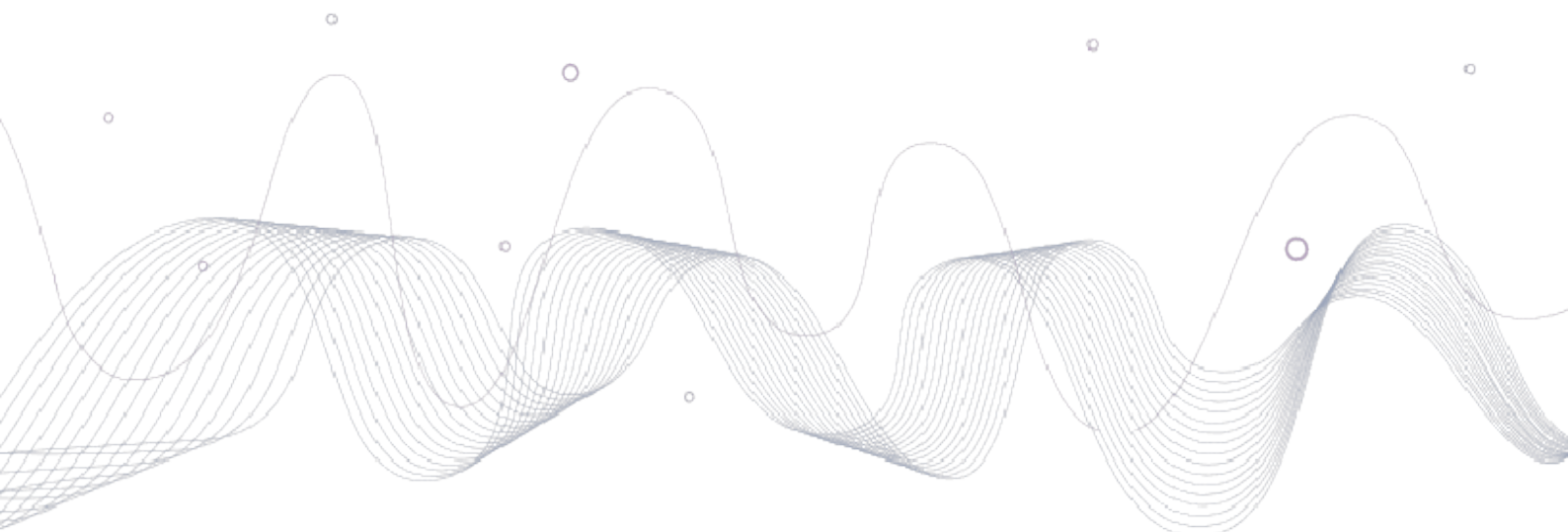
Politechnika Koszalińska

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

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**Date of report**

12/1/25



Composition of the evaluation team:

**Chairman:**

Adam Woźniak

**Secretary:**

Agnieszka Jastrzębska

**Team members:**

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# I. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE DOCTORAL SCHOOL

Name of doctoral school	Szkoła Doktorska Politechniki Koszalińskiej
Date of establishment	2019
Date of commencement of education at doctoral school	11/18/19
Entity cooperating in the conduct of education (this does not refer to entities co-founding a doctoral school)	-
Domains of study	Engineering and technology (from: 01-01-2018) Social sciences (from: 01-01-2018) The arts (from: 01-01-2018)
Discipline(s) of science or art in which training is provided	automation, electronics and electrical engineering (from: 01-01-2018 to: 10-11-2022) civil engineering and transport (from: 01-01-2018 to: 10-11-2022) mechanical engineering (from: 01-01-2018) civil engineering, geodesy and transport (from: 11-11-2022) automation, electronics, electrical engineering and space technologies (from: 11-11-2022) economics and finance (from: 01-01-2018) political and administrative sciences (from: 01-01-2018) fine arts and art conservation (from: 01-01-2018)
Name/scope of the education programme	Doctoral School Curriculum Doctoral School Curriculum – Engineering and Technical Sciences Doctoral School Curriculum – Social Sciences New Doctoral School Curriculum – Engineering and Technical Sciences
Number of instructors	65
Number of doctoral students undergoing training at the doctoral school (as of 11/14/25)	92
Number of supervisors in terms of guidance in preparing doctoral dissertations (as of 11/14/25)	44

Number of auxiliary supervisors in terms of guidance in preparing doctoral dissertations (as of 11/14/25)	29
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## II. INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION AND ITS COURSE

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The visit to the Doctoral School of the Koszalin University of Technology was conducted on January 8–9, 2025, by the Evaluation Team of the Research Evaluation Committee (KEN). Meetings were held in rooms provided by the Doctoral School and were conducted according to the established schedule.

Day One – January 8, 2025 - The visit began at 10:00 AM with a meeting between the Evaluation Team and the Doctoral School Authorities and the School Management Authority. The purpose of the meeting was to present a detailed visit schedule, familiarize the evaluation team members with the organization and operation of the Doctoral School, and discuss key issues concerning educational goals, the role of the Doctoral School within the university structure, and the contribution of individual disciplines to the implementation of the Doctoral School strategy. The School and University authorities presented a concise presentation of key aspects of the Doctoral School's activities. At 1:00 PM At 11:00 AM, an extended, two-hour meeting of the Evaluation Team took place with the bodies established by internal regulations responsible for the quality of education at the Doctoral School, the team preparing the self-assessment report, and the school administration. Also participating were those responsible for the internal quality assurance system, internationalization, doctoral student support, and representatives of the PQF Level 8 qualifications team. During this meeting, key areas subject to evaluation were discussed in detail, including: the adequacy of the curriculum and Individual Research Plans to PQF Level 8 learning outcomes, methods for verifying these outcomes, the qualifications of academic teachers and research staff, the quality of the recruitment process, the quality of scientific and artistic supervision, the reliability of the mid-term evaluation, internationalization, and the effectiveness of doctoral training. During this time, the Evaluation Team analyzed extensive documentation, including: Self-assessment reports, reports from the Committee on the Quality of Education, recruitment and mid-term evaluation regulations, documents confirming staff qualifications, opinions of the Scientific Councils of the Disciplines regarding academic supervisors, data on internationalization, and documents confirming the number of defended doctoral theses. After a break at 1:00 PM, the Evaluation Team began analyzing randomly selected Individual Research Plans and documentation from the mid-term evaluations, which allowed for a direct assessment of the doctoral students' planning, implementation, and verification of progress. The Evaluation Team held a meeting with the Doctoral School Administration at 3:00 PM to discuss organizational issues, document flow, and practical aspects of the school's operation. Day one of the site visit concluded at 4:00 PM.

Day Two – January 9, 2025 - The second day of the site visit began at 7:00 PM. At 10:00 AM, the Evaluation Team met with the Doctoral School instructors, supervisors, and representatives of the Scientific Councils of the disciplines represented at the Doctoral School. The discussion focused on the quality of doctoral education, supervisor-doctoral student collaboration, methods of assessing learning outcomes, and the specifics of education in individual disciplines. At 11:00

AM, a meeting was held with doctoral students of all cohorts and the Doctoral Student Government Council. During the meeting, the Evaluation Team reviewed the doctoral students' opinions regarding the operation of the Doctoral School, the quality of education, supervisory support, and institutional support. Documents related to the activities of the Doctoral Student Government were also reviewed, including opinions on the curricula, the Doctoral School regulations, the criteria for periodic staff evaluations, and documents confirming the allocation and distribution of financial resources for doctoral student affairs. After the substantive meetings concluded, at 11:00 AM, At 12:00 PM, the Evaluation Team held an internal debriefing meeting, during which a preliminary analysis of the collected information and documents was conducted. At 1:00 PM the Evaluation Team held a meeting with the Doctoral School Authorities and the Entity Authorities. During the meeting, the general course of the site visit was presented and the next steps in the evaluation process were discussed. The site visit concluded at 2:00 PM.

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

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Cooperation with the Doctoral Student Council is based on the University Statute and the Doctoral School Regulations. The University has developed a well-functioning model of cooperation with the Doctoral Student Council. The Council's responsibilities are defined in its regulations. Members of the Doctoral Student Council participate in, among other things, regular meetings with the Doctoral School Council and provide opinions on planned changes to documents, including the curriculum and admissions rules. At the request of a doctoral student, a representative of the Council may participate in the evaluation committee. Members of the Doctoral Student Council maintain regular contact with the Director of the Doctoral School. The Doctoral Student Council of the Koszalin University of Technology Doctoral School is currently in the process of intensifying its activities and gradually building its own organizational identity. The Council has a dedicated budget for representative activities and initiatives aimed at the doctoral student community. From 2026, the Doctoral Student Council declares its intention to actively participate in representing the Doctoral School of the Koszalin University of Technology Doctoral School at national forums, such as participation in the National Representation of Doctoral Students meetings and within the framework of the Agreement of Technical Universities. These activities should be viewed as a significant step towards increasing the visibility of the Doctoral School and strengthening the voice of doctoral students in the academic community. Representatives of the Doctoral Student Government unequivocally emphasized the excellent cooperation with the Doctoral School Director, the Doctoral School Office, and the University Rector's Office. These relationships are assessed as based on mutual trust, openness, and a willingness to collaborate. No objections or comments requiring intervention were raised in this regard. Doctoral students can also count on meetings and discussions with Doctoral School representatives in situations that are important to the Doctoral Student Government and the doctoral students. The Doctoral Student Government can also count on financial support from the Director of the Doctoral School. In the opinion of the Experts, the amount allocated for this support is relatively small, which is worth reconsidering at the University's management level. Doctoral candidates do not raise critical comments regarding the structure of the education programme. They emphasize, however, the importance of working in small groups and an individual approach to the education process. An important element of the programme is the possibility of co-deciding on the offer of elective courses—doctoral candidates, through choices made during the enrollment process, influence which classes are launched, with each choice being subject to approval by supervisors. The Doctoral School maintains continuous and constructive cooperation with the Doctoral Students' Union, which—despite having been established relatively recently—has already consolidated its position as an active and important partner in dialogue concerning education and the conditions for doctoral candidates' development. This cooperation is systematic in nature and based on the principles of openness and mutual respect. It is manifested through regular and frequent working meetings between representatives of the Union and the management and administration of the Doctoral School, serving the purpose of substantive exchange of information, consultation on planned activities, and joint resolution of any issues requiring intervention. At the beginning of the academic year, training sessions and meetings are held for participants of the Doctoral School, aimed at

presenting the manner and principles of the School's operation. The activities of the Doctoral Council also include organizing integration events, training sessions, and workshops. The Doctoral Students' Union also organizes integration meetings for doctoral candidates, one of which took place in the form of a recreational event. Attendance at this event was moderate, which indicates the need to further seek forms of activity that correspond to the expectations and possibilities of a broader group of doctoral candidates. Engagement of doctoral candidates in the creation of the Doctoral Students' Union was assessed as relatively low, as was participation in events organized by the Doctoral Union for doctoral candidates. With the support of the Doctoral Students' Union, doctoral candidates have not yet elected a "person of trust" to represent them in conflict situations, serve as an advisory voice, and provide support on matters related to the functioning of the School. Altogether, the presented information indicates proper functioning cooperation between the Doctoral School and the Doctoral Students' Union, as well as favorable conditions for the further development of self-government activity. No critical remarks were formulated in this area. The Doctoral School implements cooperation with doctoral candidates in a positive and engaged manner. During discussions with experts, a proposal emerged to extend the participation of representatives of the Doctoral Students' Union in the institutional life of the University, for example by inviting a doctoral candidates' representative to meetings of the Rector's College. This proposal was received very positively by the University authorities, along with a declaration of readiness to implement it. This demonstrates a high level of dialogue, mutual trust, and partnership-based treatment of doctoral candidates in decision-making processes. It is also worth considering updating the Doctoral School's website, which currently lacks, for example, a section dedicated to the Doctoral Students' Union (during the visit to the Doctoral School, we were informed that this section is under construction). At the same time, social media (Facebook) function well, where the self-government shares matters important from the doctoral candidate's perspective and current issues.

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

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- **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:**

Koszalin University of Technology has prepared the Education Programme for the Doctoral School (SD). The current version has been in force since the 2022/2023 academic year. The education programme was approved by the Doctoral School Council on 1 March 2022, positively reviewed by the Doctoral Students' Union on 3 March 2022, and adopted by Resolution No. 31/2022 of the Senate of Koszalin University of Technology on 30 March 2022; it was modified twice during the evaluated period. The programme defines the educational objectives, learning outcomes, methods of verification, and learning outcomes matrices for courses within the education modules. It includes 560 hours of classes (54 ECTS credits) and 160 ECTS credits related to the implementation of the Individual Research Plan (IPB). The programme structure consists of six modules: (1) General courses (75 hours, 6 ECTS); (2) Research workshop (90 hours, 13 ECTS); (3) English language (90 hours, 6 ECTS); (4) Discipline-specific courses (180 hours, 24 ECTS), including elective courses (30 hours, 4 ECTS per semester) selected from lists prepared by the Scientific Discipline Councils (RND); (5) Pedagogical training (45 hours, 5 ECTS); (6) Individual Research Plan (80 hours, 160 ECTS). Teaching practice is carried out in semesters VI and VII through co-teaching classes with students and culminates in a pass. The structure of the education programme in the SD is based on a clear separation between the framework education programme and detailed study plans. Framework programmes are separated, while study plans function as separate documents, which ensures organisational flexibility but may cause interpretative difficulties at the recruitment stage. Candidates may have problems analysing the plans, e.g. in relation to learning outcomes coverage matrices. Doctoral candidates indicate that a curriculum grid is a more transparent and intuitive way to present the programme, facilitating understanding of its structure and sequence. Separate education programmes have been developed for each field of science. Some courses are included in all programmes, but their content and methods for verifying learning outcomes differ and are tailored to the specificities of individual scientific disciplines. It is stated that the implementation of the education programme and the IPB aims to achieve learning outcomes for qualifications at level 8 Polish Qualifications Framework (PQF). The SD has developed a complete set of learning outcomes for the programme, including all outcomes specified in the Regulation of the MNiSW of 14 November 2018. Course syllabi are prepared and verified within the programme. The scientific or artistic activity of doctoral candidates and the dissemination of their results, defined in the IPB, are adequate to the learning outcomes for level 8 PQF qualifications. The correctness of this alignment is subject to formal and substantive review. The Director of the SD is authorised to request corrections to the IPB also after its approval, in particular in the event of identified errors. The SD Regulations are coherent with the IPB, defining the required elements and tasks of IPB descriptions. The conditions for preparing the IPB comply with statutory requirements (Art. 202 PSWiN). The IPB includes planned research activities and the dissemination of results. It indicates and verifies forms, methods, and the effectiveness of cooperation between the doctoral candidate and the supervisor. The SD Regulations specify requirements regarding the language of the IPB. The schedule for preparing the doctoral dissertation is defined in the SD Regulations. Its feasibility and quality are verified and approved by the supervisor each time. An important element is internationalisation, aimed at strengthening doctoral candidates' academic mobility, including participation in foreign internships, international conferences,

and research cooperation with foreign institutions. Innovative elements in doctoral education are implemented, including modern teaching methods and forms of work supporting the development of research competencies. The analysis of learning outcomes indicates the need for additional verification of their reference to specific scientific disciplines. The outcomes are formulated mainly in general terms, based on commonly accepted categories, which makes it difficult to clearly assign them to individual disciplines. This reduces the clarity of the programme and hinders the assessment of the adequacy of learning outcomes in relation to discipline-specific competences. At the same time, separate education programmes have been developed for each discipline, including elective courses. Some learning outcomes have been intentionally transferred to implementation and verification within the IPB. Learning outcomes corresponding to level 2 PQF, including requirements for level 8, have been formally included in the SD Regulations. Verification takes place on a semester basis and results in a positive, negative, or conditional assessment. Doctoral candidates are obliged to achieve the adopted learning outcomes, with social competences integral to the assessment system. In the case of unmet requirements, remedial procedures are initiated, and in extreme cases, removal from the list of doctoral candidates. It is also stated that the implementation of interdisciplinarity in the education process enables the achievement of learning outcomes for level 8 PQF qualifications. Interdisciplinarity shapes various aspects of the doctoral school, including its structure, education programme, research projects, academic support, international and inter-university cooperation, funding and grant opportunities, and post-doctoral career paths. The process of improving the education programme is reliable and focused on enhancing its adequacy to learning outcomes for level 8 PQF qualifications. Quality management activities include regulatory mechanisms that enable verification of various aspects of the education process. Learning outcomes are reviewed in terms of proper assignment to disciplines and full coverage of level 8 PQF qualifications. The SD Regulations define systemic solutions enabling verification of key aspects of the education process, including compliance of learning outcomes with level 8 PQF requirements and their correct assignment to scientific disciplines. These are regularly reviewed for completeness, currency, coherence with level 8 PQF qualifications, and correctness of assignment to disciplines in which doctoral degrees are awarded. The process is continuous and practice-oriented, involving regular evaluation and corrective actions. The mid-term evaluation is conducted after the second year of education in the SD by a committee including an external expert in the relevant discipline. It enables a reliable assessment of doctoral candidates' progress in implementing the IPB and preparing the doctoral dissertation. To date, all doctoral candidates (36) have passed the mid-term evaluation.

In summary, the learning outcomes described in the education programme are complete and adequate to learning outcomes for level 8 PQF of qualifications. The formulated outcomes reflect preparation for independent scientific work and support doctoral candidates' development. Learning outcomes matrices and framework programmes were developed separately for engineering and technical sciences, social sciences, and the arts. The learning outcomes therefore, correspond to the disciplines in which doctoral degrees are awarded. However, the assessment criteria table does not explicitly require achievement of all learning outcomes. Although it was explained that they are achieved in practice, it is suggested to revise the table in the next iteration of the programme. The education programme, framework programmes (curricula), and course descriptions are available on the SD website. Learning

outcomes for individual courses are described in course descriptions; however, it is suggested to verify their consistency with learning outcomes matrices. Some courses implement between four and seven or eight learning outcomes, including social competencies, which may be excessive, particularly for lectures. Therefore, it is suggested to review all course descriptions for consistency with matrices and the correct formulation of learning outcomes. The list of elective courses is available on the SD website under the doctoral candidates' "education programme" section. The English version of the website does not provide access to this list; therefore, an update is suggested.

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

Education at the Doctoral School is conducted based on a framework curriculum and an individual research plan (IPB). It leads to the achievement of learning outcomes for qualifications at level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework. These learning outcomes are achieved through, among other things, the implementation of a framework curriculum, separate for each field of study, and the implementation of an individual research plan. Both the learning outcomes and the methods for their assessment are defined in various documents: the Doctoral School Regulations (resolution of the Senate of the Koszalin University of Technology of March 29, 2023), the curriculum, and individual course cards. The method of assessing learning outcomes is consistent with the requirements for qualifications at level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework. It includes the curriculum, individual research plan, and a mid-term assessment. The education system at the Doctoral School (DS) of the Koszalin University of Technology incorporates mechanisms for assessing the degree to which doctoral students have achieved specific learning objectives. The purpose of this verification is to verify whether, upon completion of the coursework and/or the entire course/program, participants possess the expected qualifications in terms of knowledge, skills, and social competences. For PQF level 8, full qualifications are ultimately confirmed by a doctoral diploma, in accordance with the provisions of Article 186, Section 1 of the PSWiN (Polish Doctoral School of Laws and Sciences). The verification of learning outcomes at the PhD School encompasses systemic solutions and the requirements for doctoral students in the process of obtaining a doctoral degree and is consistent with the doctoral school's educational concept. The grading period is the semester to which the relevant learning outcomes are assigned. Completion of classes and confirmation of learning outcomes may be in the form of a credit with or without a grade, based on written or oral tests, term papers, projects, presentations, or other forms. Credits and entries in the USOS system are made by the instructor. The evaluation of a doctoral student's progress is based primarily on (i) a mid-term assessment conducted midway through the study period; (ii) periodic assessment of the doctoral student's ongoing progress, conducted in seminar format before the relevant Scientific Discipline Council and/or the Doctoral School Council. Additionally, semester-long assessments are collected from the supervisor(s) or supervisor and assistant supervisor regarding academic progress, progress in preparing the doctoral dissertation, and the achievement of the learning outcomes covered by the individual research plan. Course completion and confirmation of learning outcomes covered by the framework curriculum may be achieved through an examination, a graded assessment, or a gradeless assessment. Examinations and assessments may take the form of written or oral tests of knowledge and skills; course completion may also be based on written term papers, multimedia projects, presentations, etc. The course crediting method is specified in the course card. The academic instructor in charge of the course informs doctoral students about the procedure for conducting the examination or assessment before the commencement of the course cycle. The principles for assessing learning outcomes for qualifications at PQF level 8 are confirmed to be available and unambiguous. The principles for assessing learning outcomes for qualifications at level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework are formalized at the doctoral school and available in internal documents, particularly the doctoral school regulations and individual course syllabi. These documents define the general assessment framework, the roles of participants in the educational process, and the basic forms of course crediting. The

course syllabi clearly assign learning outcomes to specific forms of assessment. The most commonly used methods are presentations, doctoral students' own research, and project assignments, which allow for the assessment of knowledge mastery and the ability to apply it practically in research. Forms such as tests and exams are rare or not used at all, consistent with the nature of doctoral education, which focuses on the development of research and analytical skills. It should also be noted that the detailed rules for course crediting remain largely at the discretion of instructors, who define them individually in course cards. Although this solution promotes flexibility and adaptation of assessment methods to the specific nature of the subject and the master-student relationship, it may lead to varying levels of clarity in assessment rules between individual courses. The transparency and reliability of the learning outcomes verification process for PQF level 8 qualifications are also confirmed. The process of verifying learning outcomes at the doctoral school is multi-stage and relies on diverse assessment tools, tailored to the educational objectives at PQF level 8. It encompasses both the assessment of teaching achievements in classes and progress in research. Both theoretical knowledge and the ability to apply it to an individual doctoral thesis are assessed. While learning outcomes achieved across courses may vary, the final assessment is cumulative and reflects the doctoral student's overall development. A key element of the system is semester reports submitted by supervisors and annual reports prepared by doctoral students, which form the basis for ongoing assessment of research progress. This process takes place in a direct mentor-student relationship, in small groups, fostering an individual approach and enabling constructive feedback. Doctoral students confirm that the assessment tools used allow for an objective assessment of their achievements and support their further scientific development. The process of improving the methods of assessing learning outcomes for qualifications at PQF level 8 has been verified to be reliable. The doctoral school has implemented mechanisms for systematically evaluating learning outcomes, which comply with the principles of ex-ante, ex-post, ongoing, and mid-term evaluation. It should be emphasized that the mid-term evaluation operates as a separate set of activities and is not identical to the mid-term assessment of doctoral students. In 2023, an internal audit of the doctoral school was conducted, including an analysis of the functioning of the education system and the assessment of learning outcomes. The audit results were included in the report on the doctoral school's activities and presented at a meeting of the university's Senate. Additionally, regular surveys of teaching activities are conducted, the results of which are discussed with doctoral students during regular meetings with the director of the doctoral school. These meetings are documented in the form of notes, and proposals for changes to the curriculum submitted by doctoral students are analyzed for their feasibility. The improvement system also includes university-wide regulations for class observations, which also apply to instructors at the doctoral school. Furthermore, a representative of the doctoral students participates in the work of the Education Quality Committee, which enhances the transparency and participatory nature of the improvement process.

In summary, from the doctoral students' perspective, the learning outcomes verification system functions properly and meets its objectives, as evidenced by their positive opinions regarding the reliability and effectiveness of the implemented solutions. After analyzing the available documents, the Commission concluded that the process for verifying learning outcomes achieved through the IPB is described in detail, transparent, and reliable. However, it was noted that some responsibility for reporting academic progress and achieving learning

outcomes within the IPB has been transferred to the supervisor(s). It is recommended that a solution be considered whereby doctoral students prepare a report on the implementation of tasks planned within the IPB each semester, and the supervisor evaluates and confirms the doctoral student's achievements on this report. During the inspection, it was noted that the attached framework program lacks guidance on how to complete individual courses, and the methods for verifying learning outcomes specified in the course cards are inconsistent with those specified in the SD Regulations/Program of Study (examination/credit with grade/credit without grade). Taking into account the principle of transparency and the need to provide doctoral students with full and sustainable access to feedback, it is recommended to align the description of the crediting methods for individual courses with the guidelines in the Curriculum, as well as to indicate the course-specific procedures (exam/pass). The self-assessment report prepared by the unit does not include adequate information regarding improvements in the methods for assessing learning outcomes for qualifications at PQF level 8. During the visit, access was obtained to the Report on the Internal Evaluation of the Quality of Education and the Academic Supervision Provided by Supervisors (dated February 13, 2024). However, this report merely presents the current method for assessing learning outcomes for qualifications at PQF level 8. It lacks a critical analysis of this system and any conclusions regarding potential changes in this area.

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

The Doctoral School of the Koszalin University of Technology commissions the implementation of courses within the prescribed curriculum to individual institutions. Academic teachers conducting classes are academics, teaching staff, researchers, or other individuals with significant academic achievements published within the last five years or significant practical experience in the subject matter of the planned classes. Classes are conducted using distance learning methods and techniques (in Polish and English). Currently, the Doctoral School employs 16 professors, 32 postdoctoral degree holders, and 17 doctoral degree holders, who primarily serve as adjunct supervisors. The adequacy of these individuals' academic, artistic, and professional achievements, as well as their academic, artistic, and professional activities, is determined to be relevant to the scope of doctoral education provided. Education at the doctoral school is conducted by appropriately selected staff with appropriate qualifications in the area of the implemented educational program, in particular, recognized scientific or artistic achievements and competences in the field of scientific or artistic supervision, as well as adequate professional achievements. The quality of the professional development activities undertaken by academic teachers participating in doctoral school education, particularly in their roles as supervisors or assistant supervisors, should be assessed positively. Both the entity running the doctoral school and the academic teachers themselves undertake systematic activities aimed at improving the competencies necessary to carry out teaching and mentoring tasks. Academics teaching at the doctoral school develop their qualifications in two primary areas: their own scientific or artistic development; and providing scientific or artistic supervision to doctoral students. This activity includes participation in research projects, conferences, and research internships, as well as developing competencies related to planning, monitoring, and assessing the progress of doctoral dissertations. Particular emphasis is placed on developing transversal competencies, crucial to the role of a supervisor. Development activities focus on strengthening critical thinking, creativity, initiative, and effective research problem-solving skills. These also encompass competencies related to risk assessment, decision-making, and conducting research in accordance with the principles of research integrity and ethics. Actions undertaken by the entity operating a doctoral school to verify the qualifications of academic teachers involved in doctoral education are embedded in applicable legal provisions and implemented systemically. The basis is the statutory criteria for the evaluation of academic teachers specified in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science of September 27, 2021 (Journal of Laws 2021, item 1847), § 2, section 3, covering scientific and teaching achievements, professional and scholarly activity, involvement in doctoral education and professional development, as well as promotional and organizational activities. A key element in the qualifications assessment of supervisors and co-supervisors is the quality of collaboration with doctoral students, including the form and frequency of contact, monitoring progress in the implementation of the Individual Research Plan, and supporting doctoral students' research activities, particularly in the preparation of grant applications and conference participation. Supervisors submit semester reports, while doctoral students submit annual reports, which are often prepared collaboratively and discussed during seminars. The supervisor assesses the doctoral student's progress in implementing the IPB, which is an important element of ongoing assessment of the quality of research supervision. Detailed criteria for assessing and verifying academic teachers' qualifications are developed

autonomously – both at the doctoral school and university level – taking into account the university's research and teaching profile, the specific nature of the education provided, and the development priorities of academic staff. In practice, this means that criteria can be differentiated depending on the discipline, including its dynamic development (e.g., in political science and administration or in the arts). The mid-term evaluation procedure is perceived as reliable and well-designed by both doctoral students and staff. To date, all mid-term evaluations have been positive. However, there are instances where a positive mid-term evaluation is followed by negative supervisor reports, indicating the independence of the ongoing progress assessment from the formal mid-term evaluation process. It should be noted, however, that members of the evaluation committees, including external experts, do not conduct direct interviews with supervisors, which may limit the full picture of the quality of the supervisory supervision provided. The reliability of staff qualification verification is also reflected in the procedure for creating doctoral topic proposals. Supervisors are required to submit topic proposals, which can then be modified during interviews with candidates. The topic sheets are approved by the scientific councils of the disciplines and then forwarded to the doctoral school as an official recruitment offer. When submitting a topic, the supervisor must demonstrate their scientific achievements and the availability of resources necessary to complete the doctorate. Supervisor profiles are updated annually, reviewed by the scientific councils of the disciplines, and approved by the Doctoral School Council. Additional criteria for verifying qualifications include the number of completed doctorates, grant-seeking activity, and the quality of the supervisor's duties. The scientific councils of the disciplines conduct detailed, substantive monitoring in this regard, including an assessment of the supervisor's and co-supervisor's involvement during the doctoral process. The verification system also reveals certain challenges. Supervisors have limited formal influence on assessing candidates' qualifications during the recruitment phase, resulting in limited knowledge of their preparation at the entrance stage. The high number of withdrawals during or after the first year is primarily due to difficulties in balancing professional work with the doctoral program, random factors, and attractive job offers outside the university. In terms of internationalization and staff involvement, there is significant mobility among staff involved in doctoral education, including through EU projects, the ERASMUS and CEEPUS programs, and initiatives such as EU4DUAL and "Solidarity with Ukraine." This mobility includes research, teaching, and artistic trips, participation in conferences, and visits by foreign specialists. At the same time, problems with the classification and central reporting of these activities to the doctoral school are highlighted, which limits comprehensive data analysis.

In summary, the actions taken by the Doctoral School to verify the qualifications of those involved in doctoral education are reliable, multidimensional, and formally mandated. The system encompasses both the assessment of staff achievements and activities and monitoring the quality of supervisory cooperation. Areas requiring further clarification are identified, particularly in the areas of information consistency, supervisors' participation in assessment processes, and the systematic use of data on mobility and international activity. The qualifications of academic teachers teaching at the Doctoral School are appropriate and ensure the implementation of the educational process at the level required for the 8th Polish Qualifications Framework. The staff possesses scientific achievements, research experience, and teaching competencies appropriate to their teaching and supervision of doctoral students. The existing staff recruitment and verification procedures are effective and ensure that

doctoral students remain under the supervision of specialists with established academic standing and appropriate teaching competencies. This fully aligns with the mission of the Doctoral School and creates optimal conditions for the academic development of its graduates. The scientific, professional, and artistic achievements of those teaching doctoral students are adequate to the educational process. The academic teachers who teach are characterized by high research and publication activity, both nationally and internationally, consistent with the profile and scope of education at the Doctoral School. Both the academic supervisors and the lecturers teaching courses within the program are scientists with significant and recent scientific achievements published within the last five years or significant practical experience. Koszalin University of Technology also offers a wide range of professional development support for academic teachers teaching at the Doctoral School – it provides training and conducts periodic meetings enabling the development of key competencies in the educational process aimed at achieving learning outcomes for qualifications at PQF level 8. A motivational system (so-called quality supplements) has been introduced to support the scientific development of academic teachers who make a significant contribution to the development of the university and achieve scientific standing. Based on the available document analysis, it was found that, in practice, academic teachers teaching at the Doctoral School improve their qualifications and competencies.

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

The Doctoral School's admissions policy is adopted annually by the Senate of the Koszalin University of Technology and published on the Doctoral School's website, as are other documents concerning the Doctoral School's operations. The Admissions Policy, the Curriculum, and the Doctoral School Regulations were published in the Public Information Bulletin (BIP) within the appropriate deadlines specified in Article 358, Section 2 of the Doctoral School Act. The institution provides potential candidates with the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the Doctoral School's staff, its achievements, available infrastructure, a catalog of ongoing research, and scientific collaboration with other institutions. The admissions criteria are unambiguous. Documents regarding admissions to the Doctoral School and the operating rules of the Doctoral School of Koszalin University of Technology are available on the university website at: <https://www.tu.koszalin.pl/szkoladoktorska>. The admissions policy and deadlines are public and clear on the Koszalin University of Technology's website. They can be found both in the admissions tab and in the main "about us" and "legal acts" tabs. The Doctoral School is open to candidates from various institutions in Poland and abroad. The recruitment process also takes into account the needs of people with disabilities. The committee assessed the recruitment process as being conducted in accordance with appropriate standards, as an open competition, and the established recruitment rules provide for a thorough verification of candidates' skills and aptitudes for conducting research. For the 2025/26 competition for the SD, proposed research topics were available for the first time in all six scientific disciplines. Documents are published in advance, allowing candidates to adequately prepare for the SD. The SD recruitment competition rules were published in accordance with Article 200, Section 2 of the Act of 20 July 2018 – Law on Higher Education and Science, i.e., no later than 5 months before the start of recruitment. Applying for the SD is done through the Online Candidate Registration (also available in English), where you must submit electronic versions of basic documents, including proof of completion of your master's degree, your diploma, and additional documents required for the qualification process, such as a research project, cover letter, CV, and optionally, a list of achievements. The competition for the Doctoral School (SD) takes place in September. Candidates with a certificate confirming English language proficiency at least at a B2 level are exempt from the language proficiency test. The interview is based on the research project, a cover letter (in which the candidate outlines their previous work), a CV, etc. The document – Recruitment rules for the Doctoral School of the Koszalin University of Technology in the academic year 2025/2026 – includes a provision for adapting the interview to the candidate's disability. The candidate must submit a prior application for an appropriate interview. During the visit to the SD, these solutions were presented, as six of the students are doctoral students with disabilities (one of whom is fully utilizing remote learning). The qualification procedure includes: a) assessment of the submitted documents, which takes into account: – final grade from second-cycle studies (excellent – 10 points, very good – 8 points, good plus – 7 points, good – 6 points), – compatibility of the higher education with the scientific discipline (10 points) or field 7 - (5 points) to which the candidate is applying, – additional qualifications, relevant from the point of view of the planned doctoral thesis – courses, trainings, certificates, etc. (1 point for each qualification, maximum 5 points), b) assessment of scientific achievements and predispositions for scientific work, which takes into account: • publications and other scientific-research, design or artistic-design achievements in the scientific discipline

declared by the candidate, including active participation in conferences (maximum 10 points), • outline of the research project with particular emphasis on the scientific problem and the aim of the research, analysis of the state of knowledge, proposed Research methods and justification of the cognitive and applied significance of the work (maximum 20 points), • Interview (maximum 25 points). The interview, the most important part of the recruitment process, consists of the candidate's introduction (presentation of achievements, interests, and intentions), followed by a question-and-answer session regarding the submitted research outline. In the recruitment process, the interview (25 points) is the highest-scoring part. The results of the competition are public; a list of qualified candidates is published on the SD website approximately 10 days before the start of the new academic year. Candidates then have time to submit original documents for the final list of doctoral students. In the doctoral school recruitment process, the opportunity for a representative of the doctoral student government to participate as an observer deserves special mention. The presence of a representative of the doctoral students increases the transparency of the recruitment process, strengthens its credibility, and fosters trust in the procedures used, both among candidates and the academic community. Another important element in improving the quality of the recruitment process is the inclusion of individuals employed outside the entity running the doctoral school on recruitment committees. The participation of external experts promotes the objectivity of evaluations, reduces the risk of bias, and allows for a broader perspective on the candidates' competences and research potential. This solution is particularly valuable in the context of the diversity of scientific disciplines and the diverse career paths of doctoral students. Another good practice is the use of transparent, clearly defined and publicly available candidate evaluation criteria. The transparency of these criteria allows candidates to better prepare for the recruitment process while also increasing the predictability and reliability of decisions. This approach promotes the perception of recruitment as a fair process based on clearly defined principles. Another important aspect of good practice is the systematic monitoring and analysis of recruitment results. These activities allow for the identification of potential areas for improvement and the ongoing adaptation of recruitment procedures to the changing conditions and needs of the doctoral school. This process is complemented by regular feedback from both candidates and recruitment committee members, which supports the continuous improvement of the quality and effectiveness of recruitment. Also noteworthy is the consideration of individualized recruitment processes for individuals with special needs, particularly those with disabilities. Adapting individual recruitment stages to candidates' individual limitations or requirements ensures equal access to education at the doctoral school and adheres to the principle of equal opportunities, without compromising substantive assessment standards. The Doctoral School of Physicians and Dentists (SD PK) also has a social media profile: Facebook. The English version of the website is sparse, containing general information and links to key documents (available in English). Visual material, such as photographic documentation of the building, laboratories, instructors' business cards, etc., is also lacking.

In summary, the Doctoral School recruitment process is transparent and based on clearly defined principles, which are publicly available on the University's website. Candidates are guaranteed equal access to information and equal conditions for applying to the Doctoral School. Analysis of the documentation and information obtained during the site visit confirms the proper implementation of the recruitment process and compliance with the requirements

for equal treatment of candidates. It is suggested to clarify the interview scenario or specify the main areas (questions) that all candidates should address, such as motivation to undertake doctoral studies, a preliminary doctoral dissertation concept with reference to the scope of research specific to the given discipline, publication plans, including an indication of the scope of publications and publications or journals, awareness of research funding opportunities from external sources, etc. Candidates have the opportunity to choose a proposed research topic, along with a proposed supervisor, for a given recruitment year. A list of supervisors and research topics is available on the PhD School website (however, there are no additional links here that would take candidates to the profiles of potential supervisors, which are already extensively available on university faculty websites). In the Commission's opinion, one of the main problems of the PhD School is the high rate of students withdrawing from education in the first and second semesters after beginning their studies, which is partially due to the candidates' level of achievement. However, the institution (PK) did not provide a self-assessment in its report (or in other documents). There are no comparisons of recruitment processes over the years or conclusions regarding the quality of candidates. The Committee suggests analyzing this issue and taking steps to improve the recruitment process.

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

The PhD Regulations assume the thorough recruitment of individuals applying for the role of supervisor. The supervisor must be a CUT employee, hold at least a PhD, and possess research experience in the student's chosen scientific discipline, evidenced by publications and international activity, and related to the student's Individual Research Plan. In exceptional circumstances, the supervisor may be someone from outside Koszalin University of Technology, but in such cases, such a candidate is approved by the CUT Discipline Scientific Council; in this case, the role of the PhD Student Council Director is limited. Within 30 days of commencing their studies at the PhD Student Council, the PhD Student submits an application (available on the PhD Student Council website) for the appointment of a final supervisor. The proposed supervisor(s) are approved by the PhD Student Council, after the application has been reviewed by the Discipline Scientific Council. Over time (the provisions in the SD regulations have been modified to clarify them; the current regulations were approved in 2023), there is greater support from the SD Director, although in the case of a change of supervisor, this is more likely to be related to an emergency (e.g., the death of the supervisor, a change of supervisor's place of employment). In justified situations, a doctoral student may request a change of supervisor (the application is available on the website). Furthermore, to ensure the quality of education, supervisors cannot be lecturers whose previous doctoral students have not received positive reviews (in the last 5 years, at least 2 doctoral students) or have been removed from the SD student list (from 4 doctoral students). The number of supervisors for doctoral students (max. 4) and assistant supervisors (max. 2 doctoral students) is also limited, allowing for greater focus on the doctoral students. Regular meetings are held between the supervisor and the doctoral student, as part of seminars and research. Promoters also ensure the possibility of constant contact using tools enabling remote contact - e-mail, telephone contact, and consultations via Teams. One student with disabilities, who due to the current situation is participating in his studies at the PhD School remotely, is fully utilizing these latest tools. International students (three students) are provided with language support from the PhD School administration, but the English-language teaching of classes still requires further refinement (classes are conducted primarily in Polish, but students can count on the assistance of the instructors – translating lectures, assignments, etc.). The assistant supervisor, who is also qualified, also supports ongoing contact and communication between the instructor and the doctoral student. During the visit to the doctoral school, students positively assessed the supervisors' involvement, indicating ongoing contact and commitment to research. Furthermore, the supervisor's support is evaluated during the doctoral student's mid-term evaluation, after two years of collaboration. Surveys are also conducted on classes conducted at the PhD School, and the survey results are positive, often reaching scores above 4.5 (with a maximum score of 5). Although not all doctoral students take advantage of this opportunity, as document analysis during visits to the Doctoral School revealed that 21 out of 47 invited doctoral students responded to surveys regarding classes in the 2024/25 academic year. Doctoral students cited the low level of activity as a result of the small number of lecture groups, which raised concerns about their true anonymity. The Doctoral School provides doctoral students with research supervision throughout their education. The method and criteria for appointing and replacing the supervisor, supervisors, and assistant supervisor are specified in the Doctoral School Regulations. The Doctoral School website includes a list of potential supervisors, along with a brief description of their research areas and proposed

doctoral dissertation topics. This list is reviewed annually. In addition to the statutory negative criteria for supervisory work, the Doctoral School Regulations also address the lack of current scientific achievements related to the proposed research topic and the presence of too many doctoral students (a supervisor can have no more than four, an assistant supervisor no more than two). Doctoral students establish their first contacts with supervisors already at the recruitment stage - in the recruitment documents they indicate the supervisor along with a description of his/her scientific achievements, and the potential supervisor must agree to provide scientific supervision during their education at SD. When submitting a research topic application form, a potential supervisor is required to provide not only a description of the topic, but also information regarding available research infrastructure and funding opportunities. This ensures that the doctoral student is provided with supervisors with appropriately high supervisory competencies, that the supervisor(s) are optimally matched to the specific research problem constituting the subject of the doctoral dissertation, and that the doctoral student has access to research infrastructure. The PhD Student Research Center (SD) ensures high-quality collaboration with their supervisors. Doctoral students may participate in research teams led by their supervisors. During their supervision, supervisors and assistant supervisors are assessed by the doctoral students through surveys, and the results are used in the process of appointing supervisors and for periodic staff evaluations. The relationships between doctoral students and their supervisors are described by the students as substantive, constructive, and based on regular contact. Supervisors demonstrate commitment to the doctoral dissertation, offering relevant methodological guidance and support in overcoming challenges. Systematic progress reviews organized by the Doctoral School further strengthen this process, providing an institutional framework for informed discussion on the development of the research project. The situation is also positive in the area of institutional and training support. Doctoral students are provided with access to essential research infrastructure, library resources, and specialized workshops to develop soft and methodological skills. The Doctoral School's administrative department effectively supports doctoral students in formal and organizational matters, allowing them to focus primarily on their research. No systemic barriers were observed hindering research or fulfilling doctoral-related responsibilities. Despite these overwhelmingly positive assessments, the analysis identified one key area where further improvement could significantly benefit the international profile and future careers of graduates: increased activity in promoting and facilitating the internationalization process of doctoral students. While the research community and substantive support on-site are highly rated, participation in the global scientific community through trips to prestigious international conferences or participation in longer research internships at renowned foreign institutions seems to have potential for further development.

In summary, the quality of scientific and artistic supervision and support for research activities constitutes key elements of a doctoral school's operation, directly influencing its reputation, teaching effectiveness, and scientific potential. The role of the supervisor and assistant supervisor is crucial to the proper preparation of a doctoral dissertation, the development of a doctoral student's research competencies, and their subsequent academic or professional career path. Doctoral students are provided with regular contact with their supervisors and substantive support appropriate to their research. At the same time, academic staff should more actively encourage doctoral students to participate in international internships, exchanges, and conferences, which are a crucial element of scientific development. However,

it should be emphasized that due to the high professional activity of many doctoral students and the resulting organizational constraints, participation in international mobility cannot be considered mandatory or forced. At the same time, given the ongoing problems of mobbing, abuse of hierarchical relationships, and improper supervision in the academic community, it is both justified and necessary to conduct a thorough review of the quality of research supervision and other forms of support offered to doctoral students by the doctoral school. This review should encompass both formal solutions and their actual implementation in practice. The analysis of the doctoral school regulations indicates that quality-oriented solutions are being implemented, including ensuring appropriate supervision, protecting doctoral students' rights, and monitoring supervisor-doctoral student relationships. However, these solutions are fragmented and do not constitute a fully coherent, comprehensive system encompassing all evaluation criteria related to the quality of research supervision and doctoral student safety.

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

The principles and procedures for conducting the mid-term evaluation are detailed in § 14 and § 15 of the Regulations of the Doctoral School of Koszalin University of Technology and are uniformly applied. The mid-term evaluation at the Doctoral School took place during the period covered by the evaluation, at the statutory deadline, midway through the education period, i.e., at the turn of semesters 4 and 5. Therefore, it takes place midway through the education at the Doctoral School, i.e., after semester 4 (the turn of semesters 4 and 5). The mid-term evaluation is conducted by a committee appointed by the Doctoral School, on which one of the experts must represent an external university. This expert must have scientific achievements in the represented discipline and a similar IPB to the evaluated doctoral student. The doctoral student and the supervisor(s) are informed of the mid-term evaluation date at least 14 days in advance. During the mid-term evaluation, the supervisor's supervision is also assessed. The evaluation results are public and available, along with the justification, on the Doctoral School website. During the evaluation period, 36 mid-term evaluations (all positive) were conducted, with the participation of external reviewers. The rules for conducting the mid-term evaluation are available on the Doctoral School website. A doctoral student may request that a representative of the doctoral students (a member of the Doctoral Student Council) participate in the mid-term evaluation as an auditor. The evaluation includes the implementation of the IPB, including scientific activity and progress in research necessary for the final doctoral dissertation. Each mid-term evaluation is recorded, including a final opinion highlighting and justifying the positive or negative evaluation of the doctoral student. It is particularly noteworthy that both the presentation template used during the mid-term evaluation and the doctoral student's report on the implementation of the individual research plan are available on the Doctoral School website. This solution facilitates doctoral students' preparation for the evaluation process while ensuring formal and visual uniformity of the presented materials, promoting equal treatment of doctoral students and comparability of evaluations. The results of mid-term evaluations are public and are communicated to the doctoral student and their supervisor(s), or the supervisor and the assistant supervisor. The document available on the website, "Principles for Conducting Mid-Term Evaluations," states that if a doctoral student receives a negative evaluation, they have the right to appeal. However, the entity does not specify a procedure for handling objections to the evaluation results. The SD Regulations also lack such a provision. During the period under review, 36 SD students underwent mid-term evaluations; all received positive evaluations, which may be why it was unnecessary. However, the Committee suggests considering introducing an appeals procedure against the mid-term evaluation results and including this in the SD Regulations. During the visit and analysis of the mid-term evaluation documentation, it was noted that the committee's conclusions, suggestions, and opinions contained in the reports varied in detail and, in some cases, were rather terse. Despite the provision in the doctoral school regulations that international mobility should be planned in the individual research plan, the submitted plans were noticeably lacking in this regard. This issue was also not addressed (for the most part) during the mid-term evaluations. The report does not include a detailed list of criteria (e.g., point weights for publications, grants, research progress) or references to the public evaluation regulations. At the same time, during interviews with representatives of the Doctoral School, it was emphasized that the bulk of the feedback is provided to doctoral students directly during the mid-term interview. Committee meetings are characterized by in-depth, substantive

discussions and typically last over an hour, often around two hours. During this time, the doctoral student presents detailed research results to date, the progress of their individual research plan, and plans for further work, while the committee formulates recommendations regarding potential modifications to the research direction, schedule, and elements requiring reinforcement to ensure timely completion of the doctoral dissertation. This practice should be viewed positively as significantly enhancing the developmental nature of the mid-term evaluation. Given the principle of transparency and the need to ensure full and ongoing access to feedback for doctoral students, it seems reasonable to consider further standardization of the written form for conclusions and recommendations following the mid-term evaluation. In particular, it is recommended to develop a sample or supporting form specifying the scope of information to be included in the evaluation justification, including a description of the research's strengths to date, areas requiring further development, and recommendations for subsequent stages of the individual research plan. Such a solution could contribute to greater consistency in documentation and strengthen the informative and developmental function of the mid-term evaluation, while maintaining the well-established practices of direct, in-depth feedback. During interviews with doctoral students, it was also noted that the pre-assessment procedure includes an additional presentation of research progress to the Scientific Council. Doctoral students indicated that, on the one hand, this approach is labor-intensive and requires additional preparation, but on the other hand, it is perceived as a valuable element of the educational process. During Scientific Council meetings, doctoral students present the current status of their research, achieved results, and encountered difficulties, which allows for an early, substantive review of the direction of their work. This practice should be viewed positively, as it serves as a preparatory step for the actual mid-term evaluation and simultaneously allows for the early identification of potential problems in the implementation of the individual research plan. At this stage, corrective or remedial actions can be implemented and substantive support provided to the doctoral student before potential difficulties negatively impact the timely completion of the doctoral dissertation. This approach enhances the continuity of research progress monitoring and confirms the reliability and multi-stage nature of the process.

In summary, the mid-term evaluation process is formally sound, timely, and includes an external element, which enhances objectivity. Weaknesses include the lack of full transparency of criteria, detailed competencies of the committees, and visible mechanisms for improvement. A 100% positive result requires a more in-depth analysis to eliminate the risk of a lack of differentiation in evaluations. The lack of information about the clarity and accessibility of the rules for doctoral students (e.g., publication on the SD website) reduces transparency. The committees include external reviewers (from other Polish universities) and professors from the Cracow University of Technology, which increases objectivity. A representative of the Doctoral Student Self-Government can participate at the doctoral student's request. In September 2025, the committees were composed of recognized experts. However, there is no information on the minimum qualifications (e.g., a mandatory external habilitation doctorate) or the rules for selecting reviewers, which could enhance credibility. Regarding the substantive assessment of mid-term evaluations, the external experts' evaluations are very brief and do not include constructive comments. Evaluations are an integral part of the curriculum and are conducted on time (e.g., September 2025 for the next cohort). A separate mid-term evaluation committee is appointed for each doctoral student.

The doctoral school regulations include provisions aimed at ensuring the impartiality and objectivity of committee members (e.g., introducing a ban on serving in this capacity in designated cases) and procedures for removing such a person from the committee's work. Unfortunately, the reliable documentation of the mid-term evaluation committee's operations—particularly in the form of minutes of its proceedings—requires improvement in the next iteration. IPB monitoring seminars are open to the public, ensuring continuous monitoring of progress. The process is on schedule, with no reported delays. There is no evidence of systematic improvement (e.g., post-assessment surveys among doctoral students, analyses of the reasons for 100% positive results, or changes to the regulations). All evaluations completed successfully may indicate high quality doctoral students, but also potentially excessively lenient criteria—the report does not analyze this phenomenon or describe corrective actions.

- **Internationalisation:**

The internationalization of the Doctoral School of the Koszalin University of Technology is a significant element of its teaching and research activities and is implemented in many areas, including through collaboration with foreign academic centers, participation in international research projects, and the organization and co-organization of conferences, workshops, and scientific seminars. An analysis of the self-assessment report indicates that the international mobility of academic teachers teaching at the Doctoral School, particularly in the form of longer research internships, is presented in a limited manner. At the same time, information obtained during interviews conducted during the evaluation indicates that the actual international activity of the staff is broader and includes, among other things, participation in international projects, short-term research trips, conference activity, and research collaboration with foreign centers. Therefore, it is justified to more fully reflect this activity in future self-assessment reports. The self-assessment report does not fully reflect the actual internationalization situation, as revealed by a meeting with the Doctoral School authorities, faculty, and doctoral students, providing valuable insights. A significant number of lecturers (out of 65 teaching staff) have international academic achievements, including participation in projects funded by the National Science Centre (NCN), the National Centre for Research and Development (NCBiR), and the Foundation for Polish Science. The faculty actively participates in international trips, such as conferences and internships, which support collaboration within the EU4Dual European University alliance (starting in 2022/2023), which focuses on dual education with partners from Spain, Germany, Austria, Finland, France, Hungary, Croatia, and Malta. However, the report does not include precise quantitative data, including the percentage of faculty with international experience, the number of outgoing/incoming mobilities among supervisors (44 main and 29 auxiliary), or co-authored publications with foreign institutions. The lack of systematic mechanisms for monitoring these activities indicates that internationalization relies primarily on individual initiatives rather than large-scale institutional support. We assess this level as moderate, with potential for growth through EU4Dual. The school promotes mobility through the Erasmus+ and CEEPUS programs (collaboration with universities in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Moldova, Montenegro, Austria, and Romania), as well as research fellowships and international conferences. Examples from late 2025 include the participation of doctoral students in the Qualitative Research Conference in Malta (November 2025) and other similar events. The English-language curriculum (adopted in February 2025) facilitates participation from outside Poland. However, the number of foreign doctoral students during the evaluation period remains low – only 3 out of 92 (approximately 3.3%). Although staff demonstrate high levels of international mobility, the number of such mobility opportunities among doctoral students could be higher, suggesting the need to intensify the promotion of these opportunities. The lack of detailed information on trips undertaken within the IPB, publications with foreign co-authors (although doctoral students published a total of 159 papers, including in JCR) or international grants underlines that the scale of internationalisation of scientific activity is limited. With regard to doctoral students, it should be noted that the utilization rate of available international mobility opportunities, including research fellowships and conferences abroad, is currently unsatisfactory. Due to the minimal number of foreign doctoral students (3), support mechanisms have not been extensively tested. The report indicates the possibility of participation by foreign auditors and an English-language curriculum (from 2025), which constitutes a step towards inclusiveness.

A conversation with a doctoral student from outside Poland confirmed that he receives support from the Doctoral School, but attends lectures conducted in Polish. As indicated during the evaluation meetings, a significant factor limiting doctoral student mobility is their high professional activity outside the university and the resulting organizational constraints, including employers' refusal to allow longer trips abroad. However, this circumstance should not permanently limit doctoral students' scientific development or their commitment to the internationalization of their research. In this context, it is justified to undertake more intensive measures to encourage doctoral students to actively participate in internationalization, particularly through trips abroad, research internships, participation in international conferences, and establishing scientific collaborations with researchers from foreign centers. There is a clear need for greater involvement of doctoral students in this area, both at the stage of implementing individual research plans and in the broader context of the Doctoral School's development strategy. At the same time, an important direction for further internationalization is the need to increase the number of in-person guest lectures and workshops led by foreign researchers. Direct contact with foreign researchers fosters lasting scientific relationships and the real internationalization of the academic community. It is also worthwhile to actively involve doctoral students in initiating such activities, including encouraging them to invite foreign researchers representing their disciplines, in cooperation with the Doctoral School authorities. The internationalization efforts undertaken to date are considered positive, but their further development should focus more on the direct engagement of doctoral students and strengthening their mobility and scientific visibility internationally. Such an approach will contribute to increasing the visibility of the Doctoral School and Koszalin University of Technology, as well as improving the quality of education and research competences of doctoral students.

In summary, increasing capacity through internationalization is one of the five main strategic goals adopted by Koszalin University of Technology. The university actively participates in the EU4DUAL European University and strives to intensify international exchange – among both staff and students. According to the self-assessment report, international cooperation is a significant element of the educational mission of the Doctoral School, enabling doctoral students to conduct part of their research in foreign academic centers and participate in international research projects, conferences, and research workshops. Unfortunately, this trend is not reflected in the quantitative data presented by the institution in the self-assessment report. According to the committee, doctoral students rarely attend scientific conferences, and few have taken advantage of the opportunity to participate in foreign internships. Despite Resolution No. 81/2024 of the Senate of Koszalin University of Technology of February 26, 2025, establishing an English-language program for the Doctoral School of Koszalin University of Technology, and recruiting three foreigners to the Doctoral School, no courses are offered in English. During the visit to the University of Applied Sciences, the university authorities emphasized the participation of Koszalin University of Technology and the University of Applied Sciences in the EU4Dual project – the European University of Dual Education – a European alliance comprising universities from Spain, France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Croatia, Finland, Malta, and Poland. This program develops the relationship between education and the potential job market, collaborating with foreign centers and industry. The CEEPUS program facilitates teaching mobility. Lecturers exhibit greater mobility and research activity than doctoral students. During the visit to the University of Applied

Sciences, it was discovered that in most cases, doctoral students simultaneously pursue professional activities, which prevent them from participating in internships and longer study stays. These activities are more common in conferences. To further strengthen the internationalization of the Doctoral School at Koszalin University of Technology, it is suggested to increase the activity of doctoral students in international travel, such as conferences, research internships, and exchange programs within projects implemented at Koszalin University of Technology. Although academic staff demonstrate high mobility, which positively impacts international collaboration, extending these opportunities to doctoral students would allow for deeper integration with the global academic community, development of language skills, and establishing contacts with foreign institutions. To achieve this goal, it is suggested to implement dedicated promotional campaigns, additional funding for mobility, and a system for monitoring and reporting travel. This will contribute to an increase in the number of co-authored publications and international grants, ultimately enhancing the institution's prestige.

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

The program lasts eight semesters; during the evaluation period, only three doctoral students (from the 2019/2020 intake) graduated from the Doctoral School. The school's young age explains the low number of graduates, but the high dropout rate (38 of 93 recruited, approximately 41%) indicates significant retention challenges. According to information obtained during a meeting with Doctoral School representatives, a significant number of these dropouts, mostly occurring in the initial year of the school's operation, occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic and were largely due to human factors such as adaptive difficulties or personal challenges faced by participants. However, these causes were not analyzed in detail in the submitted report, limiting the ability to fully assess and implement preventative measures. During the evaluation period, 93 students were recruited, but only three doctoral students were awarded a doctorate. To date, no doctorate degrees have been denied. This indicator is satisfactory, although the database is small, preventing broader conclusions at the current stage of the school's development. The timeliness of doctoral studies at the PK SK is very unclear. Considering the results of the mid-term evaluation of doctoral students to date, the results have been positive. Considering the duration of study at the doctoral school and the list of doctoral students in the PhD School report in the SEDok system, the PhD School should graduate three doctoral students in 2023, eight in 2024, and five in 2025. According to the report, the PhD School graduated two doctoral students with their doctoral dissertation defenses, and one doctoral student submitted his doctoral dissertation in June 2025. During the site visit, information was provided about three additional submitted doctoral dissertations. The pandemic, which covers the evaluation period, certainly influenced this situation. However, the report submitted by the unit lacked information about extended study periods during selected study programs (e.g., maternity leave). This was clarified during the inspection of documents. Furthermore, the SD authorities, lecturers, and supervisors noted that the high number of withdrawals in the first years of the SD is largely due to the decisions of the doctoral students themselves, who abandoned their studies at the SD in favor of professional work (better financial conditions) and lack of awareness of the implications of participating in the SD and the doctoral student's obligations. During the inspection, suggestions were made to promote the SD and present the nature of the studies at dedicated meetings for students (future doctoral candidates) and to raise the admission thresholds to accept candidates truly focused on research and scientific development, not just financial gain. The PhD students achieved a total of 159 publications (totaling 10,921 MEiN/IF points as of November 5, 2025), including articles in JCR-listed journals, active presentations at conferences (including international ones), and participation in projects and grants. These publications were published between 2019 and 2024, while no publications by PhD students were recorded in 2025, which constitutes an unfavorable result and may indicate a decline in research activity in the last evaluation period. These achievements are directly related to the implementation of Individual Research Plans (IRPs), however, the lack of follow-up publications in 2025 requires further analysis of the causes and implementation of possible corrective actions to maintain the dynamic scientific development of program participants. Doctoral student surveys are conducted regularly, and the results are discussed at meetings between the Doctoral School Director and doctoral students (monthly with representatives of the Doctoral Student Council and semesterly with all participants). Good cooperation with the Doctoral Student Council leads to the consideration of submitted suggestions, as exemplified

by changes to regulations and the introduction of a doctoral student zone starting in 2023. However, the report does not include detailed survey results or specific examples of implemented changes, which could further strengthen the evidence for the effectiveness of these mechanisms. With only three graduates (as of 2025), career monitoring is not yet systematically described or implemented. The lack of a dedicated alumni tracking system constitutes a gap in the evaluation of the program's long-term effectiveness, which is suggested for consideration in the Doctoral School's future development plans.

In the self-evaluation report, extensive information on doctoral students' research activities is included, participation in conferences in Poland and abroad, scholarships (e.g., Santander), and funding, such as those from the MINIATURA program (1 doctoral student). Interestingly, there are no recipients of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education Scholarship for Young Scientists among the doctoral students. There is also no information on whether the doctoral students applied for the aforementioned scholarship. The SD report also presents doctoral students whose research activity is not outstanding. During the site visit, this situation was justified by the professional activity undertaken by the doctoral students, which is often dominant. However, it is noteworthy that the first doctoral dissertation was defended with distinction. Evaluations of the quality of education at SD are based on observations and electronic course surveys completed by doctoral students. The survey results are positive, with an average score above 4.5 points (the threshold is 5 points). However, the doctoral students' activity in completing the surveys is low (I have described the survey process and sample results in more detail in the report for criterion 5). The results are then discussed at the School Council and during meetings between the SD Director and the doctoral students. Information on the professional development of PhD graduates is collected by the Office of Career and Education Promotion. The institution has not specified specific verification tools, such as email contact or a graduate survey and their achievements. Information and reports on graduates' professional activity are available in the ELA system. PhD authorities and former supervisors assured that they are in regular contact with graduates (currently three graduates), as they are employed by the institution. The Doctoral School Regulations specify the criteria for doctoral education and the conditions for its implementation. The Evaluation Team also suggests considering amendments to the regulations to clearly clarify the provisions so as to eliminate any doubts regarding the achievement by all doctoral students of all learning outcomes assigned to qualifications at level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework. This clarification will enhance the consistency of internal regulations and the transparency of the evaluation of the effectiveness of doctoral education.

## V. FINAL OPINION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Based on the analysis of documentation, the results of site visits, and interviews with the Doctoral School authorities, academic staff, administration, and doctoral students, the Evaluation Team clearly determines that the Doctoral School meets all evaluation criteria established for assessing the quality of doctoral education. The organizational, teaching, and research solutions in place constitute a coherent system for ensuring the quality of education, meeting the requirements of qualifications at level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework (PQF).

Criterion 1 – Adequacy of the curriculum and Individual Research Plans to the learning outcomes for PQF level 8 qualifications and their implementation. The curriculum and Individual Research Plans have been designed in a manner consistent with the learning outcomes appropriate for qualifications at level 8 of the PQF. The program structure reflects the specific scientific disciplines represented at the Doctoral School and ensures an appropriate balance between methodological training, the development of research competencies, and the implementation of individual research projects. Individual Research Plans constitute a viable tool for planning and monitoring doctoral students' progress, and their implementation is systematically reviewed. The following is also recommended:

- 1.1. updating the table containing the description of the criteria, contained in paragraph 26, Point 4 "Grading Scale Used in the Doctoral School" (Annex to Resolution No. 21/2023 of the Senate of the Koszalin University of Technology of March 29, 2023, "Regulations of the Doctoral School of the Koszalin University of Technology");
- 1.2. conducting a detailed verification of the learning outcomes contained in all course cards and the accuracy of the formulation of learning outcomes for individual courses;
- 1.3. adding a list of elective courses to the English version of the Doctoral School website in the "education program" section for doctoral students.

Criterion 2 – Method of verifying learning outcomes for qualifications at PQF level 8. The verification of learning outcomes is conducted in a reliable, multi-faceted manner, adapted to the nature of doctoral education. The assessment methods used enable verification of both the level of knowledge and the ability to practically apply it in research. A system of progress reporting, seminars, partial assessments, and ongoing feedback ensures the objectivity of assessments and supports the development of doctoral students, while maintaining transparent verification principles. At the same time, it is recommended to implement:

- 2.1. better aligning the description of the crediting methods for individual courses with the guidelines in the Curriculum, as well as specifying the course-specific requirements (exam/credit);
- 2.2. critical analysis of the Report on the Internal Evaluation of the Quality of Education and Scientific Supervision Provided by Doctoral Supervisors (dated February 13, 2024), and formulating and implementing conclusions.

Criterion 3 – Qualifications of Academic Teachers or Research Staff Teaching at the Doctoral

School. Staff involved in doctoral education possess high scientific and teaching qualifications, confirmed by research achievements, supervisory experience, and involvement in scientific and international projects. The system for verifying the qualifications of supervisors and instructors is reliable and takes into account both statutory requirements and the specificity of individual disciplines. Continuous development of staff competencies is ensured, including in the area of supervisory supervision. It is also recommended:

- 3.1. clarifying the interview scenario for candidates for the Doctoral School or specifying the main areas of expertise (questions) that all candidates should address;
- 3.2. updating the Doctoral School website with additional links redirecting candidates to the profiles of potential supervisors;
- 3.3. In view of the high rate of students withdrawing from their studies in the first/second semester after beginning their studies, it is recommended to analyze this issue and take steps to improve the recruitment process.

Criterion 4 – Quality of the Recruitment Process. The recruitment process for the Doctoral School is transparent, based on clearly defined, publicly available candidate evaluation criteria. The inclusion of doctoral student representatives as observers and the participation of external experts on recruitment committees increase the transparency and credibility of the procedures. Systematic analysis of recruitment results enables improvements and adaptation to changing needs. It is also recommended:

- 4.1. developing and implementing a mechanism enabling greater detail in the preparation of applications, recommendations, and committee opinions, included in the mid-term evaluation reports of doctoral students;
- 4.2. planning international mobility in the individual research plan;
- 4.3. supplementing the requirements for evaluation reports mid-term review with a detailed list of criteria (e.g., point weights for publications, grants, research progress) and verification of the reporting process.

Criterion 5 – Quality of scientific or artistic supervision and support in conducting research. The Doctoral School provides doctoral students with high-quality scientific or artistic supervision based on an individualized approach, regular contact with the doctoral supervisor, and clearly defined principles of cooperation. Functioning mechanisms for monitoring the supervisor relationship, the possibility of changing supervisors, and access to institutional support enhance the safety and comfort of doctoral students and promote the effective implementation of research projects.

Criterion 6 – Reliability of the mid-term evaluation. The mid-term evaluation is conducted in accordance with applicable regulations, in an objective and substantive manner. It is an important element of the system for monitoring doctoral students' progress, enabling the assessment of the quality of the implementation of the Individual Research Plan and the effectiveness of corrective actions. This procedure is positively evaluated by both doctoral students and academic staff. It is also recommended:

- 6.1. establishing a procedure for handling objections to the results of the mid-term evaluation;
- 6.2. introducing an appeals procedure for the mid-term evaluation results and including this in

the Doctoral School Regulations.

Criterion 7 – Internationalization. The Doctoral School actively pursues internationalization of education and research. These include the mobility of doctoral students and staff, participation in international projects, collaboration with foreign research centers, and the presence of foreign specialists in the educational process. These activities effectively support improving research quality and enhancing the Doctoral School's recognition in the international community. The following are also recommended:

- 7.1. developing and implementing a mechanism to increase doctoral student participation in international travel, such as conferences, research internships, and exchange programs within projects implemented at Koszalin University of Technology;
- 7.2. implementing dedicated promotional campaigns, additional funds for mobility, and a system for monitoring and reporting on international travel.

Criterion 8 – Effectiveness of doctoral education. The effectiveness of doctoral education is confirmed by the results achieved in the form of research projects, publication activity, participation in conferences, and positive assessments of progress at subsequent stages of education. A system of support, monitoring, and evaluation promotes the timely completion of doctoral dissertations and prepares doctoral students for further research, teaching, or professional careers outside the university. The following is also recommended:

- 8.1. greater promotion of the PhD School at dedicated meetings for students (future doctoral school candidates);
- 8.2. raising the admission thresholds to accept candidates truly focused on research and scientific development, rather than, for example, financial gain.

## VI. ASSESSMENT AND REASON

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Final assessment  
positive

**Reason:**

Based on the analysis of documentation, the results of site visits, and interviews with the Doctoral School authorities, academic staff, administration, and doctoral students, the Evaluation Team clearly determines that the Doctoral School meets all evaluation criteria established for assessing the quality of doctoral education. The organizational, teaching, and research solutions in place constitute a coherent system for ensuring the quality of education, meeting the requirements of qualifications at level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework (PQF).

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