
KEN


2023-2027

DOCTORAL SCHOOL

EDUCATION QUALITY REPORT

Szkoła Doktorska Uniwersytetu Morskiego w Gdyni

Uniwersytet Morski w Gdyni



Name and seat of the doctoral school

Szkoła Doktorska Uniwersytetu Morskiego w Gdyni

Evaluation period

10/1/19–12/18/24

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

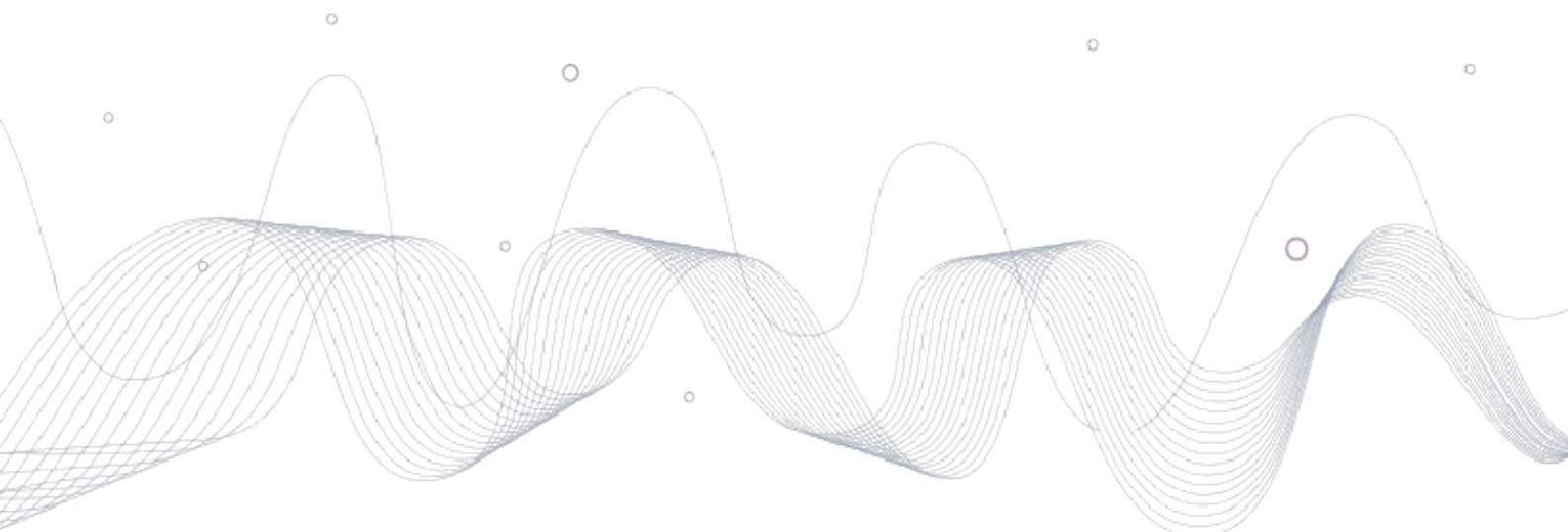
Uniwersytet Morski w Gdyni

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

-

Date of report

3/13/25



Composition of the evaluation team:

Chairman:

Jonak Kamil

Secretary:

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Team members:

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE DOCTORAL SCHOOL

Name of doctoral school	Szkoła Doktorska Uniwersytetu Morskiego w Gdyni
Date of establishment	2019
Date of commencement of education at doctoral school	10/1/19
Entity cooperating in the conduct of education (this does not refer to entities co-founding a doctoral school)	-
Domains of study	Engineering and technology (from: 01-01-2018) Social sciences (from: 01-01-2018) Natural sciences (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, geodesy and transport (from: 11-11-2022) automation, electronics, electrical engineering and space technologies (from: 11-11-2022) management and quality studies (from: 01-01-2018) earth and related environmental sciences (from: 01-01-2018)
Name/scope of the education programme	Education program for the Doctoral School at Gdynia Maritime University I Education program for the Doctoral School at Gdynia Maritime University II
Number of instructors	44
Number of doctoral students undergoing training at the doctoral school (as of 3/12/25)	43
Number of supervisors in terms of guidance in preparing doctoral dissertations (as of 3/12/25)	25
Number of auxiliary supervisors in terms of guidance in preparing doctoral dissertations (as of 3/12/25)	22

II. INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION AND ITS COURSE

The SD UMG visit took place on 8 April 2025 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. It began with a 30-minute meeting of the KEN Evaluation Team with the authorities of the entity, represented by the Vice-Rector for Science at UMG, Dr Dariusz Barbucha, Prof. UMG, and the Director of SD UMG, Dr. Aneta Ociecek, Prof. UMG. The team then met with the team preparing the self-assessment report, the SD administration, SD lecturers and academic supervisors, representatives of the Scientific Councils of the assessed disciplines, doctoral students, and the Doctoral Student Council. All meetings were held in a seminar room, which ensured comfortable working conditions. The meetings with teachers and doctoral students were well attended. All documents requested by the Committee before or during the individual meetings were provided immediately. The participants in the meetings willingly and, in most cases, exhaustively answered the questions of the evaluation team. The atmosphere of these meetings can be described as both professional and relaxed. The team noted the very high level of satisfaction of employees and doctoral students with the way the SD is run and emphasised its intimate nature, which helps to avoid conflict situations. The lack of critical comments from the participants, combined with limited mechanisms for self-improvement or prevention of unusual situations, confirms the limited level of self-criticism in the unit. After the meetings, the Team reviewed in detail the documentation kept in the SD, including sample IRPs, employee surveys, and mid-term evaluation documents. The documentation was found to be stored in an orderly manner and no significant deficiencies were found. The visit ended with another meeting between the Team and the entity's authorities, during which the most important observations and reservations regarding the SD's activities were communicated.

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

The Doctoral Student Government has its own budget of PLN 35,000. According to paragraph 2 of Article 215 of the Law on Higher Education and Science Act (AHES) (Journal of Laws 2024. 1571, i.e.), "A higher education institution shall provide the conditions necessary for the functioning of the student council, including the infrastructure and financial resources available to the student council within the framework of its activities." The university provides funds, however, they are not only for the functioning and cultural activities of the student government and also for the scientific purposes of individual doctoral students. It is recommended that the budget for cultural activities (paragraph 4, paragraph 9 of Article 110 of the AHES) be separated from the total budget. Also incomprehensible is the fact that the chairman of the doctoral students' self-government gives an opinion on applications for funding of doctoral students' scientific tasks. It is recommended to abandon the practice of the Chairperson's evaluation of doctoral students' applications for financing scientific conferences or publishing scientific articles. The doctoral students' self-government's opinion on the changes in the educational program and the regulations of the doctoral school or other acts on issues related to the doctoral community is positively assessed. The Doctoral Student Council closely cooperates with the authorities of the Doctoral School, which is confirmed by the documents shown during the visit. Representatives of the doctoral community are on representative bodies.

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

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

The rules of verification of learning outcomes for qualifications at PQF level 8 are generally available to all interested parties and precisely formulated. The system for verifying learning outcomes at the UMG Doctoral School includes formal methods: written and oral exams, assessments and credits in methodological subjects, minutes, doctoral student reports and supervisor opinions; informal verifications are based on observations of doctoral students' research and teaching work during seminars, workshops and internships. Their exact impact on the assessment has not been determined. The transparency and reliability of the process of verification of learning outcomes for qualifications at PQF level 8 is noted. A key element of the learning review process is the regular provision of feedback to doctoral students as part of formative evaluation, in order to influence their development on an ongoing basis and to get used to the practice of reviewing research results, which is inherent in scientific work.

The mid-term IPB assessment is a key element of the verification. It includes a self-report, which documents: objectives, hypotheses, methods, progress in publications and grants, and mobility. A three-person committee (including an external expert) conducts a conversation verifying substantive and methodological knowledge, fills in the IPB assessment form and requires justification for shortcomings. The doctoral student submits a revised plan with a written reference to the recommendations. The form of the response, which takes the form of repeated thanks for comments, raises doubts. A more synthetic description is recommended that does not create the appearance of exerting social pressure on doctoral students.

Reporting sessions and work in the doctoral laboratory enable semester-long monitoring of progress and involve the supervisory staff in assessing the quality of activity. This is a very good solution and should be promoted as good practice. In view of the semester reports they are found to be very frequent. According to the doctoral students' self-government, this is heavily engaging but helpful before the mid-term evaluation and the final defense.

We also note that the description of the system overemphasizes the dominance of exams, when in fact exams only occur in some subjects. A large part of the verification of training in the subjects included in the curriculum includes presentations. A method of verifying the level of implementation of professional teaching practices is to subject this activity of doctoral students to student feedback. Conferences and grants are optional in the SD regulations, and the procedure for student internship surveys is not formally specified in the subject cards. At the same time, the documents lack a clear assignment of each of these methods to individual categories of PQF effects (knowledge, skills, social competences).

- **The method of assessing the learning outcomes for qualifications at level 8 of the PQF:**
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- **Qualification of academic teachers and academic staff employed at the doctoral school:**
Qualifications are closely linked to the scope of education provided; the selection of staff is based on the pragmatics of SD UMG and the specificity of the interdisciplinary offer. Teaching staff and supervisors must hold at least a doctoral degree and demonstrate current, significant scientific and professional achievements. The Doctoral School has included in the report in advance profiles of those who conduct education in the doctoral school, taking into account scientific achievements and scientific activity. The profiles of staff members provided by SD UMG do not raise any objections, but there are procedural deficiencies. Lecturers and supervisors are approved by the discipline councils, but there are no documents with justifications for approval. There is a lack of procedures related to the selection of teachers in the doctoral school, other than Council's favor to conduct the given lecture.
According to the report, the system for assessing the work of academic teachers encourages continuous professional development by monitoring achievements, doctoral students' opinions and the work assessment system. Moreover, the report suggests constant monitoring of the quality of education by collecting doctoral students' opinions confirms the high quality of the staff's work. Analysis of the surveys allowed us to conclude that the surveys are filled out fragmentarily. A negative assessment was found for only one sub-criteria, while the employee's overall assessment remained positive.
Additional requirements apply to supervisors – including an increase in publication output in the last 5 years in the scientific discipline in which the doctoral dissertation is to be prepared, by at least 3 publications published in scientific journals included in the list of scientific journals and peer-reviewed materials of international conferences of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, and also must not serve a supervisor for more than 3 doctoral students of SD UMG. Information obtained during meetings with employees and management of the doctoral school indicates that no supervisor has ever been refused.
According to the report, the university supports the development of teaching staff by organizing training (including so-called transversal skills and interpersonal skills), courses and participation in external events. However, conversations with employees indicate that knowledge about possible training is fragmentary and the vast majority of employees teaching at the doctoral school do not use it. However, it should be emphasized that it would be a good practice to introduce mandatory training for supervisors before taking a doctoral student under supervisor's care. It should also be noted that external specialists from industry are not involved in education at the doctoral school.

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

Recruitment takes place through an open competition. Recruitment rules in Polish are published in a timely manner and are also easily accessible. The description of the procedure is published on the SD website with all the necessary information in Polish only. The website in Polish contains a description of the doctoral school's staff along with their achievements, available infrastructure, a catalog of ongoing research, information on scientific cooperation and the achievements of doctoral students and graduates of the doctoral school. The Doctoral School declares in the report that it is open to candidates from various centers from home and abroad. In fact, this is in contrast to the lack of access to documents in English and confirmed by the low percentage of foreign PhD students. The recruitment regulations specify the criteria for awarding points for the candidate's achievements and the thematic scope of the interview. The complete recruitment information was published in March at the latest, i.e. in compliance with the deadline.

Candidates submit their documents via the IRK system. All criteria are merit-based and serve to determine the academic level of the candidates. The catalogue of criteria is relatively limited and does not differentiate between the involvement in research projects. The critical part is the recruitment interview, during which the concept for the realisation of the dissertation, agreed between the candidate and the potential supervisor, is assessed. The recruitment committee, initially common to all disciplines, is now appointed separately for each discipline. The composition of the committee is impartial, but the selection procedure of the committee is not formally regulated. The Commission does not include a PhD student - this possibility should be considered in the Regulations.

The SD Statutes, Recruitment and Curriculum do not take into account the specifics of full funding of a PhD fellowship from external project, including the possibility of admitting a PhD student during the academic year or for a three-year training programme. This may hinder the effective implementation of externally funded research projects.

Recruitment to SD UMG takes into account the needs of people with disabilities, including adaptation of tools with the use of which recruitment is carried out, guaranteed friendly architectural and premises conditions and provision of solutions facilitating communication.

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

According to the description, the selection of a supervisor is based on clear criteria, including the compatibility of the dissertation topic with the supervisor's competences and confirmation of readiness to provide scientific supervision. A potential supervisor must report research issues, have current achievements and be approved by the discipline council. One person can be a supervisor of a maximum of 3 doctoral students. The process of initiating supervisory supervision is carried out by submitting an application by the doctoral student (with the consent of potential supervisors) to the scientific council. It should be emphasized that the process itself, apart from obtaining consent, is informal and there are no documents justifying why a given supervisor is well connected to the topic. It is possible to change the supervisor and procedures are prepared. They are based on the justification and opinion of the Director of SD UMG. One change of supervisor was carried out without a problem. However, it was found that there are no procedures for solving problems between the supervisor and the doctoral student. There is an informal path, based on the intervention of the director of SD UMG, but, for example, there is no solution if a conflict occurs with a supervisor who is also the director of SD. It is recommended to expand the SD UMG regulations to include appropriate procedures. The University has a Trust Ombudsman.

The university provides doctoral students with full access to research and scientific infrastructure. On the other hand, if research needs arise that are beyond UMG's capabilities, support for doctoral students is provided through supervisors and is based on creating opportunities to use the facilities of other universities. The Doctoral School should also develop a transparent procedure for evaluating the work of supervisors. The key requirement for teachers to become supervisors is to be willing to do so, and to meet the criteria for academic achievement in particular. Supervisors and academic teachers are evaluated on the basis of questionnaires, which, given the low number of doctoral students, are not entirely objective and anonymous for doctoral students.

SD UMG can boast of good practices in relations with doctoral students with special needs. This refers to the provision of proper conditions and support in the implementation of the educational program and preparation of dissertations, including the provision of the necessary infrastructure. However, this aspect is also based on informal activities and should be better regulated. There is no possibility of non-statutory suspension of education (in other words, leave from education) in case of the need for childcare.

Education at SD UMG promotes constant contact between the doctoral student and the supervisor (including seminars, workshops, reporting sessions) and the quality of cooperation is monitored by the SD UMG Director.

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

The evaluation is carried out according to the procedure described in the SD Statutes and in the documents titled "Method and rules for conducting the mid-term evaluation of doctoral students of the UMG Doctoral School" adopted by the individual Scientific Councils of the Disciplines. The latter are not available on the SD website. Different rules of mid-term evaluation are allowed for SD participant from different disciplines. One of the Scientific Council imposes an additional requirement for a successful evaluation in the form of a published article, which leads to inequality in the evaluation of doctoral students within the same educational process. The other criteria are clearly defined and measurable. Standard document forms are used.

The mid-term evaluation is carried out at the end of the 4th semester, in accordance with the deadline. The members of the commission are two impartial, independent UMG academics and only one external expert, which comes with financial issues. The selection of the committee members is made in consultation with the relevant Scientific Council. A member of the Commission may not be a person who has previously given an opinion on the IRP. A representative of the doctoral student's self-government may attend the mid-term evaluation as an observer. One element of the evaluation is a discussion between the Commission and the supervisor/assistant supervisor.

The procedure is hybrid, i.e. remote participation of an external expert is allowed. The results are public; they are published on the notice board and on the SD website, as soon as the signatures of the Committee members are complete. The documentation provided shows that in one case the results were published in October, which does not comply with the "timeliness" required by the law. To date, all doctoral candidates who have undergone a mid-term evaluation have received a positive evaluation.

It would be a good practice to summarize and compare the mid-term evaluation processes over the years covered by the evaluation, which should include a discussion of the stated level of advancement of doctoral students' implementation of IRP and an overall assessment of the success of the first half of the educational process. It would also be a good practice to introduce the principles of mid-term evaluation for doctoral students on the website, even in the form of infographics.

To date, in the evaluated entity, all persons participating in the mid-term evaluation received a positive evaluation. There have been no appeals or requests from either party, so SD has not implemented solutions to improve the process.

- **Internationalisation:**

The level of internationalization among the faculty is moderate, which opens up broad prospects for further development and deeper international collaboration. The general information provided in the report does not allow a reliable assessment of the mobility and international activities of individual teachers. The number of activities reported is at best average. The participation of international staff in the teaching process is negligible. The internationalisation of the training process is at a low level (one training course, one seminar in English). The new programme foresees courses that will be delivered entirely in English by foreign scholars. Elements of internationalisation are included in the IPB in the form of required participation in an international conference in English. SD does not provide systematic support for funding conference attendance. No specific and attractive mechanism to support academic fellowships, Erasmus only. A low percentage of PhD student mobility was noticed, despite encouragement from supervisors. The SD is keen to introduce forms and a range of measures aimed at internationalizing the educational process, i.e. at providing doctoral candidates with the conditions to operate in an international scientific environment, as evidenced by its (unsuccessful) application for funding under the NAWA STER programme. PhD students request an increase in the number of conversations in English. There is one foreign PhD student in SD who speaks Polish, so SD does not carry out any activities to support his adaptation. The training programme, mostly conducted in Polish, is a major obstacle to the training of foreigners and their recruitment is severely limited. It is noted that documents, announcements and materials published during the course of study and prepared on an ongoing basis in foreign languages are not available. The website does not provide the same information that is made available to Polish-speaking users. The SD Director contacts SD UMG graduates directly through phone calls, which may be ineffective as more years pass.

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

The effectiveness of doctoral training is at a high level; to date, 100% of students in the NZiJ discipline have submitted their dissertations on time and received their doctoral degrees. In AEEiTK, at the request of the doctoral student and with the agreement of the SD Director, the submission of one doctoral thesis was postponed by one year. In the other disciplines, the full training process has not yet been completed. During the evaluation period, 80 % of those who completed their studies in the Doctoral School submitted an application to initiate the doctoral degree procedure, and 60 % actually received the degree. Considering all enrolled doctoral candidates, 67 % who completed their studies applied for the doctoral degree procedure, and 50 % were ultimately conferred the doctoral degree.

The SD Regulations provide for the possibility of extending the deadline for the submission of the dissertation, and the list of reasons for allowing an extension is accessible and reasonable (candidate's illness or maternity or parental leave), although it leaves room for interpretation to the SD Director, e.g. by providing for 'fortuitous events'. So far, there has not been a situation where a doctoral student has applied for a suspension of training or been granted a leave of absence. The provisions concerning the possibility of taking a break from training are regulated in the SD regulations by means of provisions that are identical in content to the relevant legal provisions (Article 204 § 3 of the Act on Higher Education and Science). Such suspension is granted solely at the doctoral student initiative.

For each of the four disciplines in which training takes place, between three and five doctoral students' academic achievements are reported. This has been done even in the case of NZiŠ, where only one doctoral student has been in training for less than two years. The selection was made arbitrarily by the SD Director. The achievements are diverse and include, among others, publications on the ministerial list, participation in externally funded projects, patent applications, utility models. A large percentage of the publications are mdpi publications, the others have an IF of 1.0 or less. Considering the stage of the doctoral students' careers and their number, the quality of the publications can be considered satisfactory, although the low number of publications in which the doctoral student is the first author is of concern. The achievements are related to the doctoral topics and activities described in the IRP.

The doctoral school conducts evaluations on the quality of education, using tools like a survey on supervisor care and academics. While supervisory evaluations yield very positive results, their low level of anonymity - due to the limited number of doctoral students - is noted, and additional anonymity safeguards are recommended. Finally, the Doctoral School maintains a rational policy for granting or denying extensions to the dissertation submission deadline.

V. FINAL OPINION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations of the evaluation committee in individual evaluation criteria:

1. TRAINING PROGRAM

clarify in the syllabuses the rationale for the purpose and connection of the organizational module with effects (e.g. health and safety with social competences, library training with theoretical knowledge);
include guidelines linking research activities with training effects;
include tools for assessing social competences in the IRP;
include in the Senate resolution the deadline for making the educational program available before the start of recruitment.

2 VERIFICATION

supplement the syllabuses or effects matrix with more detailed references, i.e., assign methods and verification mechanisms to each category of learning outcomes.

3. TEACHERS' QUALIFICATIONS

consider involvement of external industry experts;
disseminate information on possible training to SD supervisors and teaching staff.

4. RECRUITMENT:

describe the recruitment process in English on the website;
consider how to evaluate participation in scientific projects, accounting the role, time of involvement and type of project;
align recruitment regulations and training levels with the timing and rules of external projects;
supplement accessibility by changing the documents provided from scanned versions to digitally accessible files;
include a representative of the doctoral students' self-government in the composition of the recruitment committees.

5. QUALITY OF SUPERVISION

allow the suspension of education in justified cases;
offer solutions to help doctoral students who are parents (guardians).

6. MID-TERM EVALUATION

introduce uniform rules for mid-term evaluation for all PhD students;
improve the process of collecting signatures for hybrid meetings;
invite doctoral students to participate in the mid-term evaluation as observers;

7. INTERNATIONALISATION

significantly increase the participation of international staff in the teaching process;
develop attractive mechanisms to support the international mobility of PhD students;
consider developing a training programme in English.

8. EFFECTIVENESS OF EDUCATION

introduce additional, anonymous mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of the educational process.

FINAL OPINION

Following a review of the Self-Assessment Report submitted by the Gdynia Maritime University Doctoral School and an analysis of the information obtained during the site visit, the KEN Evaluation Team formulates the following conclusions: The educational process at the Doctoral School meets the requirements for PQF level 8. The remaining evaluation criteria were also assessed positively, as discussed in detail in this report. The concerns outlined in the Team's recommendations are intended to further improve the quality of education. We hope that the Doctoral School will consider implementing them, seeing them as an opportunity to improve the education of young academic staff. Overall, we assess the institution, its recruitment procedures, and the doctoral education process positively. We recommend conducting another evaluation of the Gdynia Maritime University Doctoral School in five years, in accordance with Article 259, Section 2 of the Act on Higher Education and Science of 20 July 2018 (Journal of Laws of 2024, item 1571, as amended).

VI. ASSESSMENT AND REASON

Final assessment
positive

Reason:

After analyzing the self-assessment report and the site visit, a team appointed by the Chair of the Science Evaluation Committee positively assessed the Doctoral School of the Gdynia Maritime University. Therefore, it is recommended that another evaluation of this institution be conducted in five years, in accordance with Article 259, item 2 of the Act on Higher Education and Science of 20 July 2018 (Journal of Laws of 2024, item 1571, as amended).

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the Minister of Science and Higher Education.

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Minister of Science and Higher Education
Republic of Poland



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