
KEN

2023-2027

DOCTORAL SCHOOL

EDUCATION QUALITY REPORT

Szkoła Doktorska

Uniwersytet Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w Krakowie

Name and seat of the doctoral school

Szkoła Doktorska

Evaluation period

10/1/19–5/11/25

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

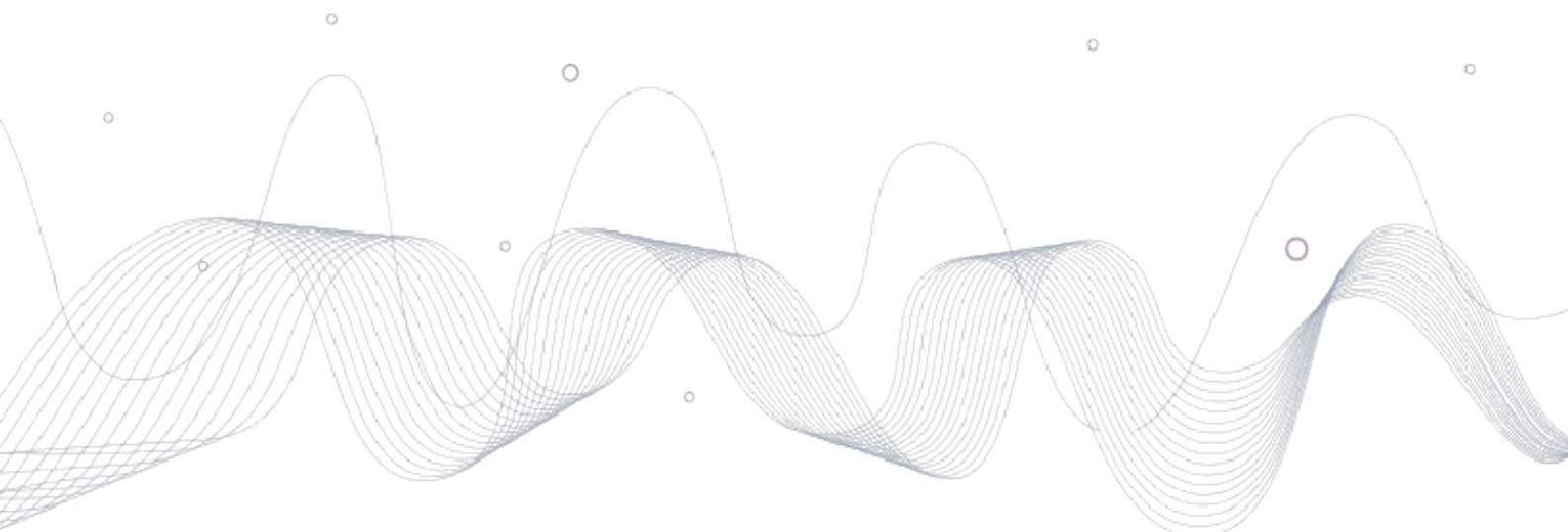
Uniwersytet Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w Krakowie

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

-

Date of report

8/3/25



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I. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE DOCTORAL SCHOOL

Name of doctoral school	Szkoła Doktorska
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	Natural sciences (from: 01-01-2018) Humanities (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	mathematics (from: 01-01-2018) biological sciences (from: 01-01-2018) physical sciences (from: 01-01-2018) earth and related environmental sciences (from: 01-01-2018) philosophy (from: 01-01-2018) history (from: 01-01-2018) linguistics (from: 01-01-2018) literary studies (from: 01-01-2018) arts studies (from: 01-01-2018) economics and finance (from: 01-01-2018) socio-economic geography and spatial management (from: 01-01-2018) security studies (from: 01-01-2018) social communication and media studies (from: 01-01-2018) political and administrative sciences (from: 01-01-2018) law (from: 01-01-2018) sociology (from: 01-01-2018) educational sciences (from: 01-01-2018) psychology (from: 01-01-2018) fine arts and art conservation (from: 01-01-2018)
Name/scope of the education programme	SD security science curriculum Curriculum SD literary studies Curriculum SD history SD political science and administration curriculum

	Curriculum SD linguistics SD mathematics education programme Curriculum SD socio-economic geography and spatial management Curriculum SD philosophy Curriculum SD fine arts and art conservation SD literary studies SD physical sciences curriculum Filozofia SD SD political science and administration SD mathematics Curriculum SD biological sciences SD socio-economic geography and spatial management SD fine arts and art conservation Curriculum SD pedagogy SD History SD of security sciences SD linguistics SD philosophy SD history curriculum SD earth and environmental sciences SD biological sciences SD Linguistics SD physical sciences SD pedagogy SD economy and finance SD psychology SD of political science and administration SD legal sciences SD of art sciences SD of social communication sciences and media Earth and environmental sciences I Fine Arts and Art Conservation legal sciences I sociological sciences I political science and administration I economics and finance I philosophy I psychology I mathematics I security sciences I Socio-economic geography and spatial planning I Pedagogy I art sciences I physical sciences I
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	Literary studies I Biological sciences I History I social communication and media sciences I Linguistics I
Number of instructors	222
Number of doctoral students undergoing training at the doctoral school (as of 8/3/25)	229
Number of supervisors in terms of guidance in preparing doctoral dissertations (as of 8/3/25)	163
Number of auxiliary supervisors in terms of guidance in preparing doctoral dissertations (as of 8/3/25)	86

II. INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION AND ITS COURSE

The visitation at the Doctoral School of UKEN in Kraków took place on October 7–8, 2025, and was conducted according to the following schedule:

October 7, 2025

1. Meeting with the University Authorities and the Doctoral School Authorities
2. Meeting with the team responsible for preparing the self-evaluation report and the Doctoral School Council, including individuals responsible for the evaluated criteria
3. Tour of the UKEN infrastructure: Doctoral School office, library, reading rooms, lecture halls, and auditorium
4. Review of the Individual Research Plans (IRPs), mid-term evaluation documentation, and other relevant materials

October 8, 2025

5. Meeting with course instructors, academic supervisors, and representatives of the scientific discipline councils represented within the Doctoral School
6. Meeting with doctoral students and the Doctoral Students' Council
7. Summary meeting of the evaluation team
8. Final meeting with the University Authorities – presentation of the next stages of the evaluation procedure

The evaluation team reviewed the Doctoral School's documentation, including Individual Research Plans (IRPs), mid-term evaluations, evaluation surveys, course syllabi and programs, as well as recruitment reports. The Doctoral School of UKEN provided the evaluation team members with appropriate working conditions, including a dedicated room and meeting spaces for discussions with the authorities, staff, academic teachers, and doctoral students, including representatives of the Doctoral Students' Council.

It is worth emphasizing the strong support provided by the university's governing bodies for the activities of the Doctoral School's doctoral students, which was highlighted by the doctoral students themselves, as well as the university's commitment to promoting the internationalization of the Doctoral School.

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

The cooperation between the Doctoral Students' Council and the Doctoral School of UKEN in Kraków is characterized by a high level of organization and systematic activity. The Council, functioning as a fully autonomous body, operates on the basis of its own allocated budget while remaining under the substantive supervision of the Vice-Rector for Research, which ensures the integrity of its actions with the university's overall policy. The representation of the entire doctoral community's interests is effectively achieved through a system of delegates representing each scientific discipline within the Doctoral School. Members of the Council actively participate in key decision-making bodies of the university, such as the Senate, as well as in numerous senate committees, including the disciplinary, appeal, and scientific committees, thereby influencing the formulation of important resolutions. The Council is also involved in addressing the living and social matters of doctoral students, including issues related to student housing and scholarships. Doctoral students are entitled to accommodation in university dormitories, and they are always assigned single rooms, which fosters both personal and academic development. An important manifestation of this cooperation is the Council's engagement in reviewing fundamental documents such as the Doctoral School Regulations and the education program, as well as its active participation in the work of the relevant discipline council. Another particularly significant aspect of the Council's activities is its ongoing involvement in resolving potential conflicts that may arise between doctoral students and the administration, supervisors, or lecturers, which greatly contributes to maintaining a harmonious academic atmosphere. Furthermore, the Doctoral Students' Council consistently dedicates attention to financial matters – for example, scholarships. At the organizational level, the internal activities of the Doctoral Students' Council within the university are expressed through the regular organization of general assemblies and participation in numerous scientific and integrative events, such as conferences and summer schools. The cooperation also extends beyond the university, as evidenced by the Council's active involvement in initiatives undertaken by the Association of Doctoral Students of Kraków Universities (PDUK) and the National Representation of Doctoral Students (KRD). The Doctoral School, recognizing the importance of these undertakings, supports some of the Council's initiatives through co-financing – for instance, conferences, integration events, and specialized training aimed at enhancing doctoral students' competencies. The activities and achievements of the Doctoral Students' Council are systematically documented and made publicly available through a dedicated website and social media profiles. This not only increases the transparency and legitimacy of its operations but also effectively facilitates the flow of information within the doctoral community. In conclusion, the Doctoral Students' Council plays a significant and multifaceted role in the life of the Doctoral School of UKEN. It actively participates in decision-making processes, contributes to the organization of academic life, ensures proper social conditions, and serves as an invaluable mediator in communication between various actors of the academic environment. Therefore, the cooperation between the Council and the Doctoral School is systematic, fully formalized, and based on clearly defined competences and effective mechanisms of mutual support.

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 learning outcomes are consistent with Level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework and appropriately reflect the educational goals for doctoral candidates as defined by law. **Clarity and completeness** The outcomes are formulated correctly, unambiguously, and in a verifiable manner. They address both advanced theoretical knowledge and practical skills related to conducting independent scientific research. The structure of the study program and its associated outcomes are logically linked to the scientific disciplines in which doctoral candidates prepare their dissertations. The program covers 19 disciplines across four scientific fields, enabling interdisciplinary education. The thematic diversity of courses allows for the alignment of learning outcomes with the specific characteristics of each discipline. **Measurability and verifiability** The methods of course completion and assessment of learning outcomes are clearly defined: at the start of each course cycle, the instructor informs students of the assessment form, which may include written assignments, projects, presentations, grant proposals, publications, or conference presentations. This diverse set of evaluation tools assesses both research and transferable skills. **Progress verification** is multi-level and transparent: four public reporting sessions, a mid-term evaluation between the 4th and 5th semesters, and two audits of dissertation progress. During the first session, doctoral candidates present the assumptions of their research project, and in subsequent sessions they report partial results. The third session is conducted in English, which additionally verifies their ability to communicate research outcomes in an international environment. **Teaching tools and methods** The Doctoral School applies a variety of teaching formats and activities that support the achievement of learning outcomes. These include courses on research methodology, academic writing, grant proposal preparation, as well as communication and teaching skills. The program also includes general education courses and provides for teaching practice. The School supports doctoral candidates' participation in summer schools and research workshops. **Individual Research Plan** The rules for developing and approving the IRP are defined in the School's regulations. The plan is created within the first year of study and must be reviewed by at least one reviewer, preferably external to the University. The IRP must include a detailed research schedule, publication plan, and outreach or implementation activities. The IRP may be modified after an audit or mid-term evaluation, allowing it to be adapted to the actual progress of research. The DS operates within an internal quality assurance system. The procedures for selecting supervisors and auxiliary supervisors are clearly defined. The School emphasizes the interdisciplinary nature of education. The curriculum includes both shared courses for all disciplines and specialized courses within specific scientific areas. It also allows for partial program delivery in English. Doctoral candidates can participate in national and international research projects and undertake short-term internships at foreign research institutions. The DS effectively implements the educational assumptions consistent with Level 8 of the PRK. The learning outcomes are developed in accordance with current regulations, are clearly formulated, and verifiable. The verification system ensures ongoing monitoring of progress. The rules for developing the IRP comply with legal requirements, and the document serves as a practical planning and evaluation tool. The curriculum develops scientific, teaching, and social competences, while its structure supports an interdisciplinary research approach. It would be advisable to consider extending the scope of doctoral seminars so that their duration more accurately reflects the actual workload of supervisors and the time devoted to individual work with doctoral candidates.

- The method of assessing the learning outcomes for qualifications at level 8 of the PQF:**
 The system for verifying learning outcomes is well-structured, coherent, and aligned with the overall concept of doctoral education. The adopted solutions enable systematic and comprehensive assessment of the extent to which doctoral students achieve the learning outcomes corresponding to Level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework (PRK). The principles of assessment and verification are clearly defined in the Doctoral School (DS) regulations and curriculum. Doctoral candidates are informed at the start of each course about its completion requirements and verification methods, which may include exams, written papers, research projects, grant proposals, publications, or active participation in conferences. Each course specifies its intended learning outcomes and corresponding assessment criteria, ensuring transparency and comparability across disciplines. Verification is integrated with both research and teaching activities, encompassing scientific development, progress in implementing the Individual Research Plan (IRP), and publication achievements. The verification system combines formal and informal assessment methods. Formal methods include course completion, exams, and graded assignments, while informal verification considers a doctoral student's engagement in research teams, participation in seminars, and presentation of results at conferences and workshops. Knowledge is assessed through exams, coursework, and research presentations. Supervisors confirm that the doctoral student has acquired advanced theoretical knowledge and familiarity with the latest research developments in their field. Skills are verified through preparation and implementation of the IRP, participation in reporting sessions, and dissemination of research results. Doctoral candidates learn to plan research independently, conduct analyses, and interpret data. Submission of at least one scientific publication or an equivalent artistic achievement is required before graduation. Competences are assessed through involvement in research projects, teaching practice, and science communication activities. Each doctoral student completes 60 hours of supervised teaching practice, documented and evaluated by an academic mentor. Competences are also enhanced through participation in public reporting sessions and English-language presentations, which develop communication skills in international academic contexts. Several mechanisms strengthen the verification system: a four-stage reporting cycle where doctoral candidates present research progress, dissertation progress audits after the 5th and 7th semesters, external review of IRPs, ongoing monitoring of outcomes within the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS), and regular analysis of feedback from doctoral students and supervisors. Full Level 8 PRK qualifications are ultimately confirmed by the award of the doctoral degree. The doctoral defense process is transparent and conducted in compliance with national legislation and university regulations. The Doctoral School also implements continuous improvement measures in the verification process. Mid-term evaluations, supervisor reports, and doctoral self-assessments are regularly analyzed, and conclusions are used to update the curriculum and IRP structure. Doctoral and supervisor representatives are actively involved in these improvements, ensuring transparency, objectivity, and broad acceptance. Overall, the system for verifying learning outcomes is coherent, multi-level, and effective. The rules are accessible, clearly defined, and consistently applied. The evaluation process is transparent and well-documented, and mechanisms for monitoring and refining verification procedures function effectively through collaboration among supervisors, committees, and doctoral candidates. It is recommended to consider adjusting the balance between seminar hours and research work so that it more accurately reflects supervisors' workload and the time devoted to individual mentoring.

- Qualification of academic teachers and academic staff employed at the doctoral school:**
 The qualifications of the academic staff involved in the recruitment committees for DS candidates should be highly commended. This is confirmed by documentation—minutes from all three stages of candidate evaluation and written reviews of applicants’ research proposals. The competencies of lecturers teaching DS courses are thoroughly verified at the level of discipline councils, based on their academic achievements and research activity. A complete list of courses and lecturers is available on the regularly updated DS website and in the USOS system. The teaching staff for general academic courses is appointed by the DS Directorate, based on the opinions of DS Council members. A similar verification process applies to lecturers responsible for specialist courses in specific disciplines. When selecting instructors—usually several per course—the DS Directorate collaborates with discipline councils, faculty deans, and institute directors. The staffing of specialist courses for each discipline, and thus the supervision of academic qualifications, is determined directly by the respective discipline councils. Individual seminars are subject to special rules: they are led by the doctoral student’s supervisors, whose qualifications are verified upon appointment. Exceptions occur when a student has two supervisors. In special cases, upon a supervisor’s request, the seminar may be temporarily conducted by an auxiliary supervisor or another lecturer. All supervisors are required to complete two training sessions organized by the DS Directorate during the first and third semesters. Additionally, both supervisors and lecturers participate in workshops on the legal aspects of doctoral procedures. Supervisors regularly confirm qualifications through periodic evaluations of doctoral students’ scientific and publication activity and their contributions to science dissemination. They also prepare opinions for semester reports, mid-term evaluations, and individual assessments of the implementation of each student’s research plan (IRP). The evaluation team confirmed that the majority of classes are conducted by individuals holding the title of professor or postdoctoral degree (dr hab.). Only a small number of courses were led by lecturers with a doctoral or master’s degree. All staff members demonstrated high qualifications. The correctness of course staffing is further verified through regular evaluation surveys completed by doctoral students. The results are discussed during DS Council meetings. In cases of conflict, appropriate actions are initiated by the DS Mediation Council. Any complaints or remarks regarding lecturers are addressed promptly. Staff selection is based on academic expertise and teaching experience. Between 2019 and 2025, a total of 915 lecturers were involved in course delivery (some multiple times). Among them, 88.4% were UKEN academic teachers and researchers, 9.4% came from other Polish academic or research institutions, and 2.2% were international scholars from recognized foreign centers. Notably, professors from most major Polish universities participated in DS courses and seminars. In conclusion, the visitation confirmed that the Doctoral School ensures a high level of teaching quality through a multi-layered staffing structure and systematic verification of lecturers’ and supervisors’ competencies. At the same time, despite this strong evaluation, after a detailed review of documentation, the team recommends greater attention to and implementation of anti-mobbing procedures within the University and the DS—so that both faculty members and doctoral students are clearly informed about their existence and accessibility. Interviews with staff and doctoral candidates indicated that the content of these procedures is not well known within the DS community.

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

During the visitation, the following documents related to the recruitment process of candidates were analyzed: recruitment regulations for 2019–2020 and 2021–2025, personal files of selected doctoral students, documentation of the 2024 recruitment process, and decisions on non-admission to the Doctoral School (DS) for the academic year 2024/2025. The review of documentation, along with interviews conducted with faculty members and doctoral students, confirmed the consistency of the School's practices with the *Self-Evaluation Report on the Quality of Education* provided to the KEN Evaluation Team (section 4, pp. 19–21). Admission to the DS is regulated annually by a resolution of the Senate of UKEN and follows a competitive process. Since the School's establishment, recruitment has consisted of three stages:

Evaluation of the research proposal by two experts/reviewers,

Admission interview,

Assessment of academic achievements.

To qualify for stages 2 and 3, a candidate must obtain at least 8 out of 15 points in stage 1. The maximum scores for stages 2 and 3 are 20 and 7 points, respectively. Admission requires a minimum total of 22 points.

Recruitment is carried out by dedicated committees for each discipline. In the first years, the DS recruited in 11 scientific disciplines; this number later increased to 13 and currently to 19. Since 2023/2024, applications have been managed through the IRK online system, with administrative support provided by the DS Office. The reviewed documentation and interviews confirmed the reliability and diligence of the process—records include correspondence with candidates and confirmation of required payments.

In addition to standard recruitment, the DS also conducts special admissions for candidates such as principal investigators of NCN grants. Statistical data show that between 2019 and 2023, 1,019 candidates applied, and 233 were admitted (including 35 international students, 8 NAWA fellows, and 5 participants from NCN grants). Each year, several appeals are submitted against recruitment decisions; all are thoroughly reviewed by the DS Director, and the proceedings are archived in the DS Office. The analysis shows that the DS is open to candidates from other national and international institutions. Graduates of UKEN constitute about half of admitted doctoral students, while approximately one-third of candidates come from abroad.

The recruitment process is continuously evaluated internally to identify weaknesses and optimize procedures. Each discipline's specific requirements are taken into account—for instance, in the field of arts, specialized committees are appointed. Particular attention is given to the needs of candidates with disabilities: they are granted 50% more time during interviews, which may also be conducted online. No complaints related to discrimination have been reported.

Expert reviews of research proposals assess various aspects, including the state of research, innovation, clarity of objectives, and relevance to the Doctoral School's profile. During discussions with the KEN Evaluation Team, doctoral students emphasized that the admission interview at UKEN focuses more on substantive and research-oriented aspects than in other doctoral schools.

One identified challenge in recruiting international candidates is verifying publications in foreign languages, as no uniform mechanisms exist. Even in cases involving NAWA scholarship recipients, the DS must independently assess submitted works due to the lack of prior verification. The Doctoral School actively promotes its program, reaching candidates

through both internal and external channels at various levels of academic access.

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

The quality of doctoral supervision is characterized by high substantive, organizational, and ethical standards. The process of appointing a supervisor is described in detail in the school's regulations and involves four key entities: the doctoral student, the management, the Doctoral School Council, and the discipline council. This system not only ensures transparency, but also ensures that the supervisor matches the doctoral student's research profile, which promotes the individualization of the education process and increases its effectiveness.

The extensive network of supervisor cooperation deserves special recognition. In addition to the dominant group of supervisors affiliated with UKEN (76.3%), academic teachers from other Polish universities (20.2%) and researchers from abroad (3.5%) also play a significant role.

This staffing structure promotes the internationalization of education and enhances its prestige, which is one of the key quality indicators in the evaluation of doctoral schools.

Cooperation with renowned centers such as the University of Oxford, Université Grenoble Alpes, and Ghent University confirms the institution's high capacity for creating partner networks and transferring knowledge.

The supervisor's tasks go far beyond standard supervision of the preparation of the dissertation. They include comprehensive substantive support, assistance in developing an individual research plan (IRP), regular review of administrative documentation, and coordination of research internships and placements. The supervisor also acts as a mentor, supporting the doctoral student in the development of academic, publishing, and teaching skills. The program provides for a flat rate of 10 hours per semester (a total of 80 hours per cycle) for supervisor support, but given the current intensity of research and expectations regarding the internationalization of scientific activity, it should be recognized that this amount does not fully meet the needs of the process.

The quality control system at the UKEN Doctoral School includes both monitoring of current progress (audits, documentation checks, doctoral student reports) and periodic evaluation, which analyzes the effectiveness of cooperation with the supervisor. It is worth noting that these assessments are supplemented by graduate surveys, whose opinions are an important element in improving the quality of education. The combination of institutional monitoring, self-assessment, and external feedback creates a coherent supervision system in line with European quality standards in higher education.

It is recommended to increase the number of seminar hours and individual meetings with supervisors. This increase will enable more in-depth methodological consultations, systematic support in the field of scientific publications and grant projects, and will also increase the possibility of workshop-based work on the research skills of doctoral students. Additional contact time will significantly contribute to improving the quality of research, preparing publications in higher-scoring journals, and improving communication between supervisors and doctoral students. At the same time, increasing the number of group seminars would promote the integration of the scientific community and the exchange of interdisciplinary knowledge, which is one of the key elements of effective academic education.

In summary, doctoral supervision at the UKEN Doctoral School has been organized in a professional manner, in accordance with applicable academic standards and European recommendations for doctoral education. However, steps should be taken to intensify teaching contact and expand the scope of seminar classes. This change will strengthen the systemic quality of education and better prepare doctoral students to conduct independent research and academic work in an international environment.

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

According to the DS Regulations, the evaluation takes place after the fourth semester (usually in October, before the next academic year begins). Each time, it is carried out by a three-member committee appointed by the Director. The committee consists of individuals holding a postdoctoral degree (*dr hab.*) or the title of professor in the relevant or related discipline, with documented research experience in the dissertation's subject area.

In the first evaluation cycles, for quality assurance reasons, two of the three committee members were appointed from outside UKEN — experts from 37 national academic institutions. Since 2024, in accordance with legislation, the committee has included one external and two internal members. The doctoral supervisor, DS Director, and Deputy Director cannot serve as committee members. When appointing committees, the Director follows the principle of avoiding conflicts of interest, especially direct hierarchical dependence between a member and a supervisor. Importantly, all committee compositions are proposed and reviewed by the relevant discipline councils.

The evaluation is based on documentation prepared by the doctoral candidate, including progress reports, supervisors' opinions, an interview with the candidate, and other materials. Detailed procedures and templates are provided in the DS Regulations. Six months before the evaluation, the School organizes a preparatory meeting to assist candidates in compiling documentation. Results are published on the DS website. Six months after the mid-term evaluation, a first audit verifies whether doctoral candidates followed the committee's recommendations and whether dissertation work aligns with the IRP schedule. All audit protocols are stored in the DS archive.

To date, the evaluation has been conducted four times, covering 107 doctoral students. A total of 103 experts from 38 national institutions participated. All evaluations were completed according to schedule; in two cases, the evaluation was conducted after the third semester. Of the 107 doctoral students, 106 received positive evaluations and one negative. Committee members were appointed based on competencies and documented achievements, following recommendations from discipline councils. Each appointment involved discussion and voting. On average, one expert evaluated three doctoral candidates. Preference was given to experts who had previously reviewed the initial IRP during the first year, allowing for a deeper assessment of progress.

The evaluation team concludes that the process is transparent, compliant with regulations, and based on principles of impartiality, transparency, and avoidance of conflicts of interest. The evaluation process at the Doctoral School of UKEN is also a significant element of its internal quality assurance system. It not only verifies academic progress but also strengthens the culture of responsibility and continuous improvement among doctoral candidates and supervisors. The structured evaluation timeline, clear documentation requirements, and standardized feedback forms ensure comparability and consistency across disciplines. Furthermore, the involvement of external experts brings an additional layer of objectivity and fosters the exchange of good practices between institutions. Their feedback is often used to improve supervision quality, enhance training modules, and update the curriculum. The DS management regularly analyzes the outcomes of mid-term evaluations to identify recurring challenges and implement systemic improvements—such as expanding research methodology workshops or introducing mentoring support.

Overall, the mid-term evaluation contributes directly to maintaining high academic standards, promoting transparency, and ensuring that doctoral studies at UKEN remain aligned with both national regulations and international best practices.

- **Internationalisation:**

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The aspect of internationalization should be assessed positively overall. It should be emphasized that in 2024, SD UKEN commissioned external experts to examine the issue of internationalization. The assessment was positive, but the experts also identified some areas for improvement. This concerned long-term activities, so the direct results of these improvements are not yet visible.

SD UKEN strives for internationalization by obtaining funds for projects (NAWA STER), which were used for research stays and conferences. Thanks to these funds, 23 doctoral students were financed for 3-, 4-, and 5-month stays abroad. In addition, there were many research and conference trips abroad by doctoral students. It should be noted that in some disciplines, mobility is lower and less common. For example, in 2024, no applications for foreign travel were submitted in disciplines such as mathematics and psychology. Project funds (e.g., NCN – Preludium) also made it possible to finance foreign trips for researchers.

SD UKEN has an internal system for awarding grants for research stays for doctoral students and employees. Doctoral students greatly appreciate the opportunity to obtain these internal mini-grants, as they enable good planning of research stays and, at the same time, can be increased if necessary. The IPB provides for the preparation of a project proposal, research stays lasting a total of at least 20 working days, and participation in summer schools. Doctoral students are informed about various domestic and foreign offers by both their supervisors and the SD UKEN administration, and they also show great initiative in establishing relevant scientific contacts at home and abroad. Thanks to appropriate classes, doctoral students are prepared to acquire projects. In this case, greater consideration should be given to the specific nature of obtaining artistic scholarships for the discipline of fine arts.

During the period covered by the evaluation, a total of 20 foreign lecturers worked at SD UKEN, accounting for 2.2% of all lecturers. This situation could be changed and expanded, provided that the necessary budgetary resources are available. At the same time, SD UKEN invited foreign academic guests who, in the spirit of interdisciplinarity, gave lectures for the entire SD UKEN, as well as for the interested public (e.g., Norman Davies, Sammy Smooha).

National and international scientists and experts are employed as supervisors. Some SD UKEN researchers participate in international research projects. A review of doctoral students' publications shows that they are also published by renowned foreign publishers (e.g., V & R unipress, Peter Lang, Springer) and in foreign journals.

During the evaluation period, 36 foreign doctoral students studied at SD UKEN. SD UKEN uses the international platform Study Portals to recruit foreign doctoral students. Foreign doctoral students particularly emphasize the fact that, at least in some disciplines, a supervisor's opinion is not yet required when applying for a place at the school, which greatly facilitates the recruitment process for foreign applicants. Both the self-assessment report and the interviews conducted on site during the evaluation clearly showed that foreign doctoral students receive a lot of support in everyday matters, such as dealing with official matters and looking for accommodation (student dormitory). In the first year, foreign doctoral students can choose whether they want to attend classes in Polish or English. In this context, it should be noted that the doctoral school has an informative website in English, but it would also be optimal to prepare forms for individual classes in two languages, not only in Polish.

The availability of foreign publications and collections is ensured. In the disciplines, internationalization is strongly marked among both doctoral students and researchers.

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

The DS of UKEN places great emphasis on monitoring progress in the implementation of IRPs. Each semester – independently of progress reports – includes at least one checkpoint: in the first year, there are two reporting sessions and two reviews of the IRP project; in the second year – a reporting session and the mid-term evaluation; in the third year – an audit and a session; and in the fourth year – an audit. The monitoring system is comprehensive, and delays are detected early. If any delays are identified, the doctoral student is invited for an explanatory meeting, and a corrective plan is implemented. If the plan fails, a decision on removal from the list of doctoral students is issued, which can be appealed to the Rector. In the fourth year, a two-year extension is possible only in the case of ongoing research grants, according to their schedules (to date, the School has recorded two such cases). In other cases, the Doctoral School management may propose extensions of 1, 2, 3, or 6 months – each requiring a schedule and the supervisor's opinion.

The system for monitoring the implementation of IRPs at the DS is multi-stage, transparent, and allows for quick intervention. The statistics confirm its effectiveness – most doctoral students complete their education on time or after only a short extension.

The DS of UKEN effectively achieves its educational and research goals. Doctoral candidates attain the intended learning outcomes, the program supports the successful completion of the PhD, and graduates integrate well into the academic or professional environment. The data on research activity include: a substantial number of doctoral students' publications (including high-impact ones, depending on the discipline – e.g. history), participation in funded research projects (NCN, NAWA), national and international conference presentations, participation in exchanges, internships, summer schools, and cooperation with the socio-economic environment.

Qualitative indicators of the effectiveness of education at the DS of UKEN include doctoral students' opinions and satisfaction levels, which are generally high. They positively assess the range of courses, training, and summer schools offered; emphasize good relationships with supervisors and lecturers, their accessibility, professionalism, and engagement; highlight clear communication and substantive support; and express satisfaction with administrative assistance, access to databases, collections, and various research tools. The documents submitted for analysis and the self-evaluation report indicate that doctoral students indeed achieve the learning outcomes defined in the program (e.g. in research methodology, academic communication, and research ethics), and that the curriculum supports interdisciplinarity and transferable skills (e.g. project management, science communication, international collaboration). The available learning paths are also found to be satisfactory. The main strengths include high research activity and good supervisory support. One area identified for improvement – as a recommendation – is to ensure that specialized courses are taught primarily by senior academic staff, such as associate professors (*doktorzy habilitowani*) and full professors.

The quality assurance system also functions effectively. Management structures operate within it, with a sufficient scope of competence and responsibility. The Doctoral School has introduced and applies mechanisms for improvement, responds to evaluation results and feedback, implements corrective actions, and provides transparent information on procedures and doctoral students' obligations, maintaining openness to dialogue with them.

V. FINAL OPINION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis of the self-evaluation report, documents, and the on-site visit confirm that the educational process at the UKEN Doctoral School fully meets the criteria for Level 8 PRK qualifications.

Recommendations:

Strengthen documentation of collaboration with external socio-economic partners.

Assign subject-specific courses primarily to senior academic staff (professors, habilitated doctors) and language or skills courses to junior instructors.

Adjust the number of seminar hours to better reflect supervisors' actual mentoring workload.

Final Assessment:

The evaluation team rates the Doctoral School of UKEN very positively in all assessed areas and recommends the next external evaluation in six years, in accordance with Article 259(2) of the Higher Education and Science Act of 20 July 2018 (Journal of Laws 2024, item 1571, as amended).

VI. ASSESSMENT AND REASON

Final assessment
positive

Reason:

Final Assessment:

After analyzing the self-assessment report, documents and visits, the team appointed by the Chairman of the Science Evaluation Committee made a positive assessment of the UKEN Doctoral School in Krakow.

The evaluation team rates the Doctoral School of UKEN very positively in all assessed areas and recommends the next external evaluation in six years, in accordance with Article 259(2) of the Higher Education and Science Act of 20 July 2018 (Journal of Laws 2024, item 1571, as amended).

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2023-2027



Minister of Science and Higher Education
Republic of Poland



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