

ACADEMIC DOCTORAL SCHOOL AS A GUARANTEE FOR SUCCESS OF DOCTORAL EDUCATION QUALITY IN POLAND

Summary. Issues related to the education of doctoral students in Poland trigger a series of discussions. In the draft law on higher education (the so-called Act 2.0) of 26 March 2018, it was proposed that the education of doctoral students should take place in doctoral schools. The permission to run such schools shall be granted only to the best universities which will contribute to improvement of conditions and quality of doctoral students' education, which, as a consequence, will impact the reduction of their number. Doctoral schools have an opportunity to promote greater internationalization of science and higher education in Poland.

Keywords: doctoral schools, doctoral education, quality of education.

Аннотация. Вопросы, связанные с обучением докторантов в Польше, вызывают некоторые споры. В проекте Закона о высшем образовании от 26 марта 2018 года предлагается, чтобы обучение докторантов проходило в академических школах. Право на их проведение будут иметь только лучшие университеты, что повлияет на улучшение условий и качества обучения, однако уменьшит количество докторантов. академические школы по подготовке докторантов имеют шанс способствовать большей интернационализации науки и высшего образования в Польше.

Ключевые слова: аспирантские школы, обучение аспирантов, качество обучения.

Changes in the education of doctoral students in Poland were initiated by the adoption of the Bologna Declaration on 19 June 1999. Documents enacted under the Bologna Process have adopted the goal of bringing together higher education systems of European countries.

For the first time, principles of the course of conducting doctoral studies were regulated on 14 March 2003 by the Law on Academic Degrees and Title and Degrees and Title in the Arts, in which the entire chapter was devoted to doctoral studies [1]. The aforementioned principles and the procedure for conferring doctoral degrees have also been included in the Act of Law on Higher Education enacted on 27 July 2005 [2].

The provisions included in both acts were specified in detail in several ordinances, published in 2016–2017 [3].

In the Law on Higher Education (article 2 paragraph 1 subparagraph 10), doctoral studies are defined as [...] third-cycle studies – doctoral studies, for which candidates with a master's degree or an equivalent degree are allowed to obtain advanced knowledge in a specific field or discipline, preparing for independent research and creative activity and obtaining a Ph.D degree.

The Act also defines the concept of third degree qualifications as “[...] obtaining, through a doctoral dissertation conducted on the basis Law on Academic Degrees and Title and Degrees and Title in the Arts of 14 March 2003, a Ph.D degree in a specific field of science in the discipline of science or a Doctor of Art in the field of artistic discipline, confirmed by an appropriate diploma. In addition, it defined the term “doctoral student” as “a participant

in doctoral studies". The detailed rules for the organization of doctoral studies are included in article 195–201 of this Act.

Recently, doctoral studies are also regulated by the scope of qualifications included in the Integrated Qualifications Register as a separate, eighth level of the Polish Qualifications Framework. A detailed description of these qualifications and their characteristics are specified in the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 26 September 2016, on the characteristics of the second degree of the Polish Qualifications Framework typical for qualifications obtained in higher education after obtaining full qualification on level 4 – levels 6–8 [4].

Issues related to the education of doctoral students in Poland constantly trigger a series of discussions. They have intensified with the proposal to introduce statutory changes in the area of higher education. In the discussions on doctoral programs, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education expressed its views in an extensive document entitled 'Development of doctoral programmes of diversified profiles' [5].

This document was developed by a team of experts representing both the academia and the socio-economic environment. Furthermore, members of the team have held or currently hold various functions in institutions and organizations interested in the operation of doctoral studies acting within the higher education and science system. Doctoral education needs were diagnosed and directions and suggestions for changes were indicated, including changes in legal regulations, as well as examples (proposals) of good practices leading to improvement of the quality of education at the doctoral level. It is pertinent, inter alia, due to the ongoing discussion in the academia on the form of the new law on higher education (Act 2.0).

As a result of these actions, in the draft Law on Higher Education announced on 26 March 2018 (the so-called Act 2.0) [6], it was proposed that the education of doctoral students should take place in doctoral schools. Principles of the operation of doctoral schools are presented in article 198–215. Within the meaning of provisions of these proposals, the doctoral school is an organized form of education in at least two disciplines. It can be run by an academic university, an institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences, a research institute or an international institute, holding the scientific category A +, A or B + in at least two disciplines. An exception is made for academic universities that conduct scientific activities only in one discipline, which is a discipline in the field of theology or physical culture or artistic discipline, but they hold in this field the scientific category A +, A or B +.

In addition, the doctoral school may be run jointly by academic universities, institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences, research or international institutes, however each of them must hold the scientific category A +, A or B + in at least one discipline.

The education of doctoral students may also be conducted in cooperation with another entity, in particular an entrepreneur or a foreign university or a scientific institution. In that case, institutions cooperating in running a doctoral school may run no more than three doctoral schools in a given discipline.

The introduction of a rule allowing to run doctoral schools by scientific units with the categories A +, A and B +, means that individuals who have a lower scientific category: B or C (Article 199) lose this right.

The Act also determines the rule that no fees are charged for the education of doctoral students.

A person who holds a Master's degree, a Master's degree in engineering or an equivalent degree can be admitted to a doctoral school. Recruitment for a doctoral school is carried

by means of competition on the terms set by the senate or the scientific council. At the same time, one can be a doctoral student in only one doctoral school.

The Act specifies the duration of doctoral education to be from 6 to 8 semesters. Within 3 months period from the day of starting education, a doctoral student is appointed a doctoral advisor or advisors. The education is carried out on the basis of the education programme and individual research plan.

The education programme is established by academic senate or scientific council of a given scientific unit. Determining the programme needs to be consulted by the Doctoral Students' Union. The education program may provide for apprenticeship in the form of conducting classes or participating in their conduct, with a maximum of 90 teaching hours per year.

A doctoral student, in consultation with the doctoral advisor or advisors, should develop an individual research plan, including in particular the schedule for the preparation of the doctoral dissertation, which is presented to the doctoral school operator within 6 months from the day of beginning the education. The doctoral school policy passed by the senate of the university or the university council should specify such issues as: the method of assigning and changing doctoral advisors; the way of documenting the course of education; the manner of conducting the mid-term evaluation; terms and conditions for the extension of the deadline for submitting a doctoral dissertation.

In the case of leaving educating doctoral students in a given discipline, the subject running a doctoral school must ensure doctoral students preparing a doctoral dissertation in this discipline the opportunity to continue their education at another doctoral school in this discipline.

In the absence of a doctoral school conducting education in a given discipline, the entity running a doctoral school in which education is stopped covers costs of people who have lost the opportunity to complete education, incurred for proceedings in the matter of granting a doctorate in extramural mode.

This system of educating doctoral students allows to combine two models of staff education: the master-student model and the Bologna model of the institutional (and mass) programme of doctoral education. Moreover, the privilege of running doctoral schools will only be granted to the best scientific units, which will of course reduce the number of doctoral students trained in this way. It should be remembered that the activities for the creation of third degree studies in Poland were undertaken during the constantly growing number of students and therefore insufficient number of academic teachers. The development of doctoral studies was to be at that time a way to solve these problems. Meanwhile, the second decade of the 21st century is opposite in this regard. Rapidly decreasing number of students caused the necessity to close many fields of study, for which recruitment was too low to be maintained.

It should be emphasized that the decision to run doctoral schools in few universities would be an important distinguishing factor in the world of leading research centers. Such schools have a good chance of becoming an important instrument of scientific marketing and, consequently, can promote greater internationalization of science and higher education in Poland.

Therefore, the doctoral school should preserve a high level of scientific mentoring, encouraging scientific and personal development of doctoral students. The primary goal of a doctoral school should be to create enabling environment for doctoral students to conduct their own scientific research of the highest standards. The doctorate must also become an important instrument for the selection of academics and highly-qualified staff for the innovative economy.

Such treatment will reduce the number of the most talented young researchers going abroad. Especially because only one fifth of the total number of doctoral students, studies with the intention of continuing a scientific career. Most treat these studies as acquiring the next level of education. It is to be hoped that doctoral schools will improve the current status of doctoral students, stressing their research efforts more strongly and will strongly improve the quality of education.

References

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2. Ustawa z dnia 27 lipca 2005 r. *Prawo o szkolnictwie wyższym*. Dz.U. 2005 nr 164 poz. 1365.
3. Rozporządzenie Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego z dnia 10 lutego 2017 r. w sprawie kształcenia na studiach doktoranckich w uczelniach i jednostkach naukowych; Rozporządzenie Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego z dnia 13 kwietnia 2016 r. w sprawie studiów doktoranckich i stypendiów doktoranckich; Rozporządzenie Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego z dnia 26 września 2016 r. w sprawie szczegółowego trybu i warunków przeprowadzania czynności w przewodzie doktorskim, w postępowaniu habilitacyjnym oraz w postępowaniu o nadanie tytułu profesora i aktach prawa wewnętrznego poszczególnych jednostek.
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