



Short introduction to the Doctoral School recruitment process



In accordance with art. 200 section 1 of the Law on Higher Education and Science (Journal of Laws 2023, item 742 as amended), a person with a Master's degree, a Master of Engineering, or an equivalent degree may be accepted into the Doctoral School. The additional amendments to this legal act also allow the participation of candidates who have not yet achieved any of these titles in the recruitment process. In such cases, they need to be graduates from first-degree studies or students who have completed the third year of long-cycle Master's degree programme studies and prove they already possess outstanding scientific achievements.

The definitions of outstanding scientific achievements differ among the universities, depending on the specificity of the scientific disciplines in which the education is provided. For example, according to the Regulations of the Doctoral School of the Medical University of Silesia in Katowice, the outstanding scientific achievement is established by the number of publications, whose total punctation must amount to over 250 points according to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education point system, and the candidate needs to be the first author in at least one publication. Another condition defying the achievement quality allows the candidate to partake in the recruitment process if they contributed to a national or international scientific project, which must be confirmed by proper documentation of the scope of participation. However, it should be emphasized that interpretations of this concept are usually not precisely stated. Students' interest in starting their studies at a doctoral school while completing their Master's studies also varies. Based on my experience so far, I can say that in the field of medical sciences, the percentage of students applying for doctoral schools is relatively high. I suppose this may be influenced by the duration of these studies, which is six years.

Art. 200 Section 2 of the Law on Higher Education and Science states that the qualification procedure for admission to the Doctoral School is based on the rules and regulations established by the University Senate or a designated scientific committee. The recruitment process usually consists of two stages – the first stage is based on the assessment of the documents required by a doctoral school and submitted by the candidates, and the second stage is an interview. The points may be assigned variously for specific scientific achievements, depending on the internal regulations of the recruiting facility.



In most documents specifying the recruitment rules and regulations, the highest number of points is assigned to authorship or co-authorship of high-scoring scientific papers published in high-ranked scientific journals and reviewed materials from international conferences listed on the Ministry of Science and Higher Education Register and the ISI Master Journal List. My analysis of the selected regulations of doctoral schools shows that usually additional points are awarded for being the first author of a publication. Presentations at national and international scientific congresses, awards and activities in scientific teams and societies are also considered. In most universities and institutes, the second stage of recruitment is an interview with the candidate, when the candidate's current scientific activity and future research plans are discussed. There is quite a lot of diversity when it comes to assessing predispositions to conduct research and the method of selecting the research topic of a future doctoral dissertation. In some universities and institutes, the candidate chooses the subject and creates a draft of the work schedule. In other scientific facilities, candidates choose from an arrangement of topics proposed by potential supervisors – employees of a university or institute.

It is essential to familiarize oneself with the rules early enough and find out whether it will be possible to implement our scientific plans at the selected university or institute. Recruitment regulations appear on the facilities' websites approximately six months before the start of the academic year for which recruitment is conducted (the rules must be made available no later than five months before the beginning of the recruitment process, in accordance with art. 200 Section 3 of the Law on Higher Education and Science). It is worth considering the topic of future research carefully, based on personal resources, institutional possibilities, and individual interests and passions. After all, we engage in the selected research area for four years of intense scientific work.



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