Distance learning at higher education institutions

Reform status: changes related to the pandemic, 27 March 2020

For the duration of the suspension of traditional teaching, the majority of higher education institutions has introduced distance learning provision. In order to answer the questions and satisfy the needs of HEIs, the ministry responsible for higher education has prepared recommendations for conducting classes as part of all degree programmes and cycles of studies using distance learning methods and techniques [1].

Organisation of distance learning

- HEIs should provide technological infrastructure for distance learning;
- HEIs should support the students in their use of ICT tools as part of distance learning;
- The use of technological infrastructure and tools of other domestic universities and institutions is permitted, provided that they conclude an agreement to that end.

Teaching materials for students

- HEIs should support the preparation of teaching materials needed for distance learning;
- Academic teachers or lecturers prepare and provide teaching materials in digital form;
- Teaching materials are subject to monitoring, e.g. by a course manager;
- HEIs should have procedures in place that enable monitoring of the quality of teaching materials and the way they are made available, as well as the detection of undesirable phenomena in the process of distance learning;
- HEIs are responsible for making the distance learning tools available in accordance with the applicable law, including in particular the copyright and licensing laws and GDPR, and ensuring legal and free access to the tool for all participants.

Rights and obligations of the parties

- Students have the right to full information on the course of distance learning;
- Students have the right to obtain support concerning the operation of a distance learning system;
- Students are obliged to regularly participate in distance learning classes in accordance with the rules laid down by academic staff, in accordance with the study regulations;
- Students are obliged to perform and report all tasks specified by the teacher;
- If students are absent from classes conducted using synchronous communication technology, they should have access to learning content offline. A course manager can recommend another
Rights and obligations of academic teachers

- Teachers are obliged to prepare appropriate teaching materials;
- Teachers are obliged to develop and make available to all students a detailed description of intended learning outcomes and methods for their verification - if there are any changes in the syllabus as a result of using distance learning methods and techniques;
- Teachers are obliged to provide students with an accurate work plan;
- In the case of a complete transition to the remote learning process, academic teachers are obliged to prepare teaching materials ensuring that each student has a workload during classes that is consistent with the number of hours assigned in the study plan and programme;
- Teachers are obliged to regularly monitor and record students’ learning. The records should confirm the regularity of contacts and interactions with students;
- Teachers are required to design the distance learning process for students in a way that ensures a workload equal to the number of ECTS credits allocated to a given course;
- Academic teachers or other persons authorised to teach courses enjoy autonomy in the choice of tools supporting distance learning by students;
- Teachers have the right to receive support in the implementation of distance learning methods, tools and techniques in accordance with the rules laid down by the university.

Accounting for the teaching load of academic teachers

- Unless the regulations in force in a higher education institution provide otherwise, 100% of distance learning hours are counted towards the total number of teaching hours in a given year;
- The number of remote teaching hours included in the total number of teaching hours of a given a teacher equals the number of hours they would teach in a traditional manner;
- For distance learning purposes, it is possible to increase the number of students in groups attending tutorials, laboratory and project classes and seminars;
- Unless the regulations in force in a higher education institution provide otherwise, the workload will be settled upon the completion of courses in a given semester and upon confirmation by the head of the organisational unit conducting the courses that all additional conditions defined by the institution have been fulfilled.

Recognition of distance learning outcomes

- The provision of distance learning services does not contravene Art. 63(1) of the Law on Higher Education;
- The number of ECTS credits allocated to a specific course included in the programme does not change;
- One ECTS credit stands for 25-30 hours of student work, including classes using distance learning methods and techniques organised by the HEI and individual work related to these classes.

Assessment of distance learning progress

- Academic teachers give feedback to students on their progress;
- The HEI's distance learning platform or other similar tool is used to store feedback on learning progress;
- Teachers set online consultation dates for students;
- All activities related to monitoring students' learning and giving them feedback are recorded on the HEI's distance learning platform or by means of other tool.
Summative assessment of distance learning outcomes

- Academic teachers are required to define methods and criteria for verifying each distance learning outcome;
- Unless other regulations in force at the university provide otherwise, the verification of distance learning outcomes is an individual decision of the course leader and can be carried out as follows:
  - on a regular basis, on the campus of a higher education institution, taking the form of an oral or written test specified by the course leader, on the basis of which a credit for the course is given.
  - or online - using IT tools.
- HEIs should ensure reliable verification of learning outcomes -- it can be conducted online or it can take place outside the University premises;
- Earning credit for all distance-learning courses specified in a student's semester study plan is obligatory and is subject to a final assessment in accordance with the rules laid down in the study regulations of the institution.

Diplomas

- The diploma examination can take place using synchronous online communication facilities;
- The diploma examination can be conducted using videoconferencing, videoconferencing application, a remote learning platform or other tools for synchronous group work;
- The examination board should verify personal data of the student taking the diploma examination;
- The examination board should draw up a report on the course of the diploma examination. The HEI should make sure that all members of the examination board sign the report.

Materials

Recommendations of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education on education provided using distance learning methods and techniques

2019

Changes in the system of education and training of pre-school and early school education teachers

Reform status: announced, to be implemented 1 October 2019

Starting from the next academic year, a new system of education and training for pre-school and early school education teachers will enter in force. Students who have already started their training are taught according to the previous rules.

Changes in the system of education and training of pre-school and early school education teachers will enter into force on 1 October 2019. Teacher education will be offered as part of a long-cycle master's degree programme in preschool and early-school pedagogy.

New education standards

The changes will be introduced by the regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education on the standard of initial teacher education, which will enter in force on 1 October 2019. The amendment will apply only to those students who commence their studies in October - the remaining ones will continue their studies in accordance with existing rules.

Current (or previous) qualification system applies to students who graduated or commenced their
studies before 1 October 2019. At present, graduates of first cycle programmes in pedagogy trained
to work with children at the stage of preschool or early school education hold qualifications to teach
pre-schoolers and primary school grade 1-3 students.

More info:

A new portal for candidates, students and doctoral students has been launched

Reform status: launched, July 2019

STUDIA.GOV.PL is a new portal of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and a unique
compendium of knowledge on Polish universities’ educational offer, the quality of education at
individual faculties, and the earnings of Polish universities’ graduates created for young people who
want to study as part of second and third cycle programmes.

ELA (Ekonomiczne Losy Absolwentów Szkół Wyższych - Tracer Study of University
Graduates)

ELA forms a part of the STUDIA.GOV.PL portal and generates automatic reports on every field of study
offered by every university in Poland. In recent years, ELA has analysed the situation of more than 1.1
million graduates who completed their studies in the years 2014-2016. It determines how much they
earn, how long they look for a job, or how many of them are unemployed.

The system presents data from the Social Insurance Institution and POL-on, an official database on
higher education. Infographics, rankings and reports present, among other things, the salaries of
recent graduates. The system also compares graduates’ earnings to the situation on local labour
markets. So it shows how well off they are and their standard of living.

Faculties, study programmes, universities - Select your studies search engine

The studia.gov.pl portal features the ratings for 385 universities, 2997 faculties and 5243 study
programmes. The Select your studies search engine is another great tool available on the portal. It is
based on verified information from four reliable sources. The consistently updated data comes from
the POL-on higher education database and is based on degree programme assessments conducted by
the Polish Accreditation Committee, assessments of scientific activities conducted by the Committee
for the Evaluation of Scientific Units and information provided by universities themselves.

Thanks to such diversified data, it is possible, among other things, to:

- search for degree programmes based on subjects taken at the matura (final secondary
  education) examination;
- compare offers of individual universities;
- check, which degree programmes have received an outstanding, positive or negative rating
  from the Polish Accreditation Committee;
- see how many foreigners study at a given university;
- verify how many academic teachers hold the title of a professor, degree of doktor
  habilitowany and doktor.

First Polish MOOC - continuation

Reform status: implemented, July 2019
The Ministry of Science and Higher Education in cooperation with the Young Science Foundation has initiated a first Polish MOOC type educational platform. Thanks to 20 million PLN support from the National Research and Development Centre (NCBR) anyone will be able to access 52 newly developed on line courses. The offer includes language courses, coding workshops, entrepreneurship and marketing courses and even sign language classes. Upon course completion every registered user can receive a certificate issued by the HEI which has prepared the given course.

The navoica.pl platform was launched last year and now is open to all users, regardless their age, education or residence.

To date only a few courses have been available on the platform. This will change as the National Research and Development Centre has just announced the winners of the „Towards MOOC” competition in which 77 concepts of online courses were reviewed. Finally NCBR has decided on financing 52 best projects.

The total value of all financed projects amounts to 20.6 million PLN. The competition is financed from the PO WER funds for years 2014-2020, implemented in the framework of EFS.


Initiative for excellence - research university

Reform status: announced, April 2019

The reform is aiming to identify and support HEIs which will strive for the status of “research universities”, in order to enter the group of best European and World HEIs.

The HEIs will be identified on a basis of an open competition and will be obliged to present a plan of developing and increasing quality of their research activities and quality of teaching which will contribute to the future improvement of HEI’s position on the international research market. In order to implement this plan selected HEIs will receive higher funding in the years 2020–2026.

HEIs applying for additional funding will have to present an application including e.g. analysis of their own potential and research development plans, in particular related to:

- better contribution towards development of global research,
- strengthening of research cooperation with research institution with high position on the international scale,
- improvement in the quality of teaching of students and doctoral students,
- improvements of HEIs’ staff policy,
- improvement in the quality of management of HEIs.

HEIs will be obliged to define their priorities in research areas in which they will intensify their research activities.

First competition will take place between 15 May and 24 June 2019.

More info on the Ministry’s website [4].

Accessibility Plus Programme

Reform status: under implementation, April 2019
In the framework of Accessibility Plus Governmental Programme („Dostępność Plus”), a competition Accessible HEI has been initiated („Uczelnia dostępna”). The programme aims at provision of free access to goods, services and possibilities of participation in social and public life to persons with special needs. The Programme measures are initiated and financed in 8 thematic areas: architecture, transport, education, health service, digitalization, services, competition and coordination. The value of investment in this programme amounts to around 23 billion PLN in the years 2018-2025. The programme will be supported by funds from the following sources: European Funds, Norwegian and EOG and national public funds (state budget, funds from territorial self-government and funds provided by the State Fund for Rehabilitation of the Disabled People.

The NCBR competition is aiming at removing barriers in access to higher education through introduction of organisational changes and improvement of competences and awareness of academic Staff which will result in increasing accessibility of their educational offer to persons with disabilities.

The competition takes place between 15 April and 28 June 2019.

**300 million PLN for HEIs in the competition Integrated HEIs Programmes**

**Reform status: competition, January 2019**

10 HEIs will receive 295 million PLN in total for financing of projects which will contribute towards improvement of teaching quality. Results of NCBR Competition Integrated HEIs Programmes (Zintegrowane Programy Uczelni) have been announced. The competition is implemented in the framework of Operational Programme Knowledge, Education, Development (PO WER).

The IH Programme has a total budget of one billion PLN and includes 3 paths. The currently announced results of competition in path III concern the biggest HEIs with a minimum of 20 thousand students. This competition had a 250 million PLN budget which was increased due to the high quality and importance of submitted proposals.

According to the competition requirements projects selected for financing includes at least 4 out of the following modules: study programmes, improving competences of students, placement programmes, high quality support to students in their job seeking activities (e.g. Academic career offices), PhD programmes and management in HEIs.

The following HEIs will receive funding in the framework of the programme: University of Lódź, Academy of Mining and Metallurgy in Kraków, Jagiellonian University, University of Wrocław, Silesian University in Katowice, Warsaw University of Technology, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Mikołaj Kopernik University in Torun, Wrocław University of Technology and Silesian University of Technology.

Results for the two remaining paths will be announced in the first 3 months of 2019. Road map includes announcing results for Path II in mid-February 2019 (budget 250 million PLN) and for Path I in mid-March (budget 500 million PLN).

**2018**

**First Polish MOOC  - online education for everyone**

**Reform status: implemented, November 2018**
The first Polish MOOC Platform has been initiated by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. The Platform offers open online courses for free, and to all users. The Platforms functions in cooperation with the Young Science Foundation.

The Platform offers online courses prepared by Polish academic institutions and centres specializing in open and distance education in cooperation with businesses and NGOs. The technical aspects of platform’s functioning were secured by the Information Processing Centre – the National Research Centre on the basis of Open edX system. First courses are already available on the Platform, more will be added in due course. The initiative of platform’s establishment and supervision of the Platforms rests with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

The MOOC Platform falls within the concept of lifelong learning (LLL) and is open to all Internet users from all over the World.

Preparation of new courses for the Platform will be supported in the framework of a competition announced by the National Centre for Research and Development entitled „Towards MOOC“. The competition is dedicated to higher education institutions.

The following types of courses will be considered for funding in the competition:

- Course for students understood as an additional element of a study programme in first or second cycle of study;
- Massive open online course (MOOC) open to all learners.

The total budget of this competition amounts to 10 milion PLN. Both public and non-public HEIs (as well as clusters of HEIs) can apply for funding.

Winning courses are to improve competences of at least 1500 students and doctoral students and 7000 other learners from outside the higher education system (young people, seniors, persons willing to develop their professional skills).

The competition is open up to the 25 January 2019. More information is available at www.ncbr.gov.pl/ [7].

**Law on Higher Education and Science**

**Status: in the course of being implemented - planned date: 1 October 2018**

This Law and its implementing regulations, which underpin the reform known as the Constitution for Science, form the first in years comprehensive change of the attitude to education, conducting research and university governance.

The reform is based on the analysis of the current state, as part of which the most significant problems of Polish higher education were identified:

1. **flawed principles of the organisation and structure of HEIs, which limit efficient governance** - extensive regulations excessively detailing governance principles at the level of HEIs and their units.
2. **mismatched structure of higher education in terms of economic and social challenges** - it is imperative to strengthen both higher education vocational schools focussing on top quality teaching provided as part of programmes with practical profile and research universities, which would be able to compete effectively with the best universities in Europe and the world.
3. **limited financial autonomy of HEIs** - there are several dozens of sources of finance
governed by different principles regarding the permitted scope of spending.

4. **unsatisfactory quality of education provided by HEIs** - education insufficiently adapted to the needs of social and economic stakeholders, low status of academic teachers.

5. **low effectiveness of educating PhD students** - a significant growth in the number of doctoral students does not result in a growing number of people who are awarded PhD.

6. **system of degrees and titles hindering researchers’ scientific excellence and interdisciplinary research** - the fragmented classification of areas of knowledge, fields and disciplines of science and the arts coupled with authorisations to provide higher education and doctoral programmes as well as to confer degrees in science and the arts is a source of serious problems with conducting interdisciplinary research; so is the late age of obtaining habilitation - independence in research (46 years).

7. **minor global scientific significance of Polish research** - Polish scientists’ publications in 1% of the best sources indexed in international bases account for only 0.7%.

The Law consolidates basic regulations concerning higher education and science by merging provisions resulting from the following acts under current legislation: the Laws: on Higher Education, on the Principles of Financing Science, on Student Loans, as well as on Academic Degrees and Title and Degrees and Title In the Arts.

Most of the provisions of the Law will become effective on 1 October, however, the first provisions entered into force in August 2018 and the full implementation of the Law will be completed as late as in 2022.

The main amendments introduced by the Law are presented below by category.

**System of HEI governance**

- **extending the autonomy of the HEI and and transferring competences concerning the internal structure to the HEI itself** - the provisions of the law apply to the HEI as a whole entity, not to its units as in the current legal situation.

- **limiting statutory provisions to the absolute minimum** (the Law will regulate only the HEI’s central authorities) - key principles relating to the organisation are to be found in the Statutes, from now on to be treated as the HEI’s constitution.

- **streamlining HEI financing principles** - the HEI is to receive one subsidy instead of a number of previous numerous targeted subsidies, which will allow the HEI greater control and a wider scope of decision-making as to spending.

- **introducing a new body - the HEI council** - modelled on western European solutions. Those councils will be composed of people outside the academic community (the HEI will decide whether or not they are to constitute a majority of the council). The Senate will elect council members and the Head of the Student Government will also be included in the composition of the council. Among other things, the council will be competent to give their opinion on the HEI’s strategy.

- **maintaining the democratic nature of electing HEI authorities** - the community is responsible for electing the senate and the electoral college; the senate and the electoral college elected by direct voting will - in turn - elect the HEI council and the rector.

**HEI employees**

- **deducting 50% of tax deductibles** in favour of academic teachers,

- **increasing researchers’ minimum remuneration** by PLN 800 on average - in line with the proposed regulation,

- **introducing a new academic career path** – based on teaching, and existing alongside the
other ones; research-based and research combined with teaching, intended for academics who are eminent educationalists.

- **Increasing employment stability** - a second employment contract will have to be concluded for an indefinite period of time; competitions for the post of an academic teacher will be organised only before first employment by a HEI.

- **Reducing the importance of habilitation** - when employing, the turnover requirement (meaning that the degree of doktor habilitowany is to be attained within a specified period of time) no longer applies. Unlike now, habilitation will no longer be required when employing people as assistant professors.

**Scientific activity**

- **The whole HEI’s academic activity in individual disciplines will be evaluated** and not - as previously - that of its faculties. Owing to that, the academic achievements of those from one HEI that represent of a discipline will be comparable with the achievements of representatives of the same discipline from other HEIs or institutes.

- **Reducing the number of evaluation criteria** - preference will be given to publication quality, number of patents, academic activity results and the impact of academic activity on the functioning of society and the economy. The weight of individual criteria will depend on the specificity of individual fields of science/arts (it will be different for the humanities and different for technical sciences).

- **Combining disciplines and increasing interdisciplinarity** - reducing the number of disciplines by adopting a new list prepared on the basis of the OECD standards. (45 disciplines will be identified instead of today’s 8 areas of knowledge and 102 disciplines).

- **Limiting the “publish or perish” trend** - when under evaluation, academics will have to indicate not more than 4 best academic achievements from the past 4 years, owing to which not “how many”, but “how good” will be important when publishing.

- **Programme supporting national journals** - there will be a competition to select another 500 journals to obtain increased funding to fulfil the requirements that are necessary for indexing them in international databases.

**Educating students and doctoral students**

- **Introducing PhD schools** - to be run by HEIs and scientific institutes in order to change the Polish model of PhD student education and depart from a mass approach in favour of elitism and quality. Entities possessing at least a B+ academic category in two disciplines will be allowed to establish PhD schools. Entities authorised to confer PhD degrees will be allowed to do so only during a transitional period. Research interdisciplinarity will be much more valued.

- **Guaranteed scholarships** - from 2019 onwards, each doctoral student admitted to a PhD school will be granted a scholarship amounting to PLN 2350, which will be increased to PLN 3652 after periodical evaluation.

- **Introducing maternity and paternity leave** - it will be granted to doctoral students on principles similar to those applicable to persons with employment contracts.

- **Raising the quality of student education** - introducing numerous quality-oriented solutions relating to the preparation of graduates for entering the labour market, eg.: practical profile programmes will include at least 6-month-long work placements.

- **Regularising the system of fees** - at the beginning of a programme, the HEI will be obliged to set and disclose any fees and charges to be paid by students during the whole duration of the programme.

- **Support to students- parents** - the HEI will be obliged to ensure the provision of individualised course of study to pregnant students; during the first year after a baby is born, both the father and mother will be entitled to take time off (previously at the HEI’s discretion).
Systemic issues

- **indicating a new category of “regional” HEIs** - HEIs based in smaller academic centres will obtain special support (requiring no competition with HEIs with bigger potential) - in the form of a competition called “Regional Excellence Initiatives”. An algorithm serving as a basis for granting subsidies will be appropriately adapted to such HEIs’ specificity.
- **introducing a new competition - “Excellence Initiatives - Research HEIs”** - to identify leading HEIs able to compete with those from abroad.
- **increased funding** - public HEIs will obtain an additional amount of PLN 3,000,000,000 as treasury bonds; the incorporation of new valuation principles will attract another PLN 47,000,000,000 to the higher education system within a period of 10 years; expenditure on the higher education system and science envisaged in the 2019 budget will be higher by about PLN 700,000,000 than this year’s (the previous budgetary increased funding guarantee referred to a mere PLN 100,000,000).

Constitution for science - update

Reform status: approved for implementation, August 2018

The Constitution for science has been accepted by the Polish Parliament and approved by the President.

Constitution for science brings a new complex change in approach to science, teaching and governance in Higher Education.

The reform will be implemented starting 1 October 2018. It has been in preparation for 2.5 years and its implementation will take another several years.

Major changes (among others):

1. HEIs governance – more autonomy, more flexibility in organizing the structure of HEIs, statutes as a constitution of each HEI, less central regulations on HEIs functioning
2. Financial support – one subvention to be distributed according to the HEI’s needs, more funds for higher education in total (e.g. 3 billion PLN to HEIs in government bonds, additional 700 mln PLN for HE and research earmarked in the 2019 budget)
3. A new advisory body for each HEI – a HEI council including also persons from outside the HEIs academic community, proportion of such members in the new body is to be decided by the HEIs itself. Members of council will be selected by the HEI’s senate. By law the council will include a leader of students’ self-government
4. Democratic election of HEIs bodies (senate and collegium of electors elected by the whole community will elect the HEI’s council and rector)
5. Higher salaries for academic teachers – to start with around 50% of all teachers will receive higher salaries with an average increase of 800 PLN
6. New career paths for academic teachers – enhancing either the research or teaching component of the academic job, a separate career path for outstanding lecturers to open
7. Stable employment for academics – a second employment agreement will be concluded for an unlimited period of time, competitions will be organized only in the case of first employment
8. Changes to research evaluation procedures
9. Combining of disciplines and enhancing of interdisciplinary research (the present 8 areas of knowledge and 102 disciplines will be merged to 45 disciplines including artistic ones)
10. All doctoral students will receive scholarships (starting from 2350 PLN, and increasing to 3 632 PLN upon completion of mid-term evaluation, when a PHD student can be also employed at the
11. Higher quality of teaching (studies with practical profile will include at least a 6-month practical placement)
12. Support to students and their families, better involvement of students in drafting HEIs internal regulations, and in collegial HEIs bodies
13. Additional support to regional and public vocational HEIs
14. Research oriented HEIs – Initiatives for Excellence – support will be offered to those HEIs which intend to compete on the international scale.

New list of journals and publishing companies

Status: published - 31 July 2018

The reform has introduced new principles of evaluating scientific articles and monographs. Above all, the regulation adopted the so-called principle of inherited impact factor, which is globally recognised. That is how lists of publishers of monographs and scientific journals will be compiled. Owing to this, scientists will no longer be compelled to publish as much as they can. Instead, they will have motivation to have their work published in prestigious journals and publishing companies (transition from focussing on quantity – which results in the so-called “publish or perish” attitude - to quality).

New principles of scientific activity evaluation

Status: published - 31 July 2018

The key principles of the reform include:

- evaluation criteria taking account of the specifics, importance and evaluation method of individual fields of science and arts, especially in relation to the arts and humanities, social and theological sciences;
- inclusion of solutions encouraging researchers to conduct high level interdisciplinary research;
- significantly increased emphasis put by evaluation criteria on the importance of the impact of scientific activity on the functioning of society and economy;
- taking account of transitional rules resulting from the fact of publishing a regulation more than one and a half years after the beginning of the period under evaluation.

Evaluation will be carried out focussing on disciplines and not HEI units. The achievements of all employees conducting research (researchers and academics) and not of individual persons at a faculty will be a fundamental factor in evaluation. For the purpose of evaluation, employers will have to present not more than four best achievements from the past four years. Achievements will be reported via the POL-on IT system, where data will have to be entered on an ongoing basis (as opposed to special evaluation questionnaires completed every four years by academic units, which was a serious burden on administrative staff).

The evaluation of academic entities will be conducted on the basis of three criteria:

1. academic and artistic level of research,
   a. scientific articles,
   b. scientific monographs,
   c. patents for inventions,
2. financial impact of research and development works,
   a. projects financed under calls for proposals - except funds transferred directly by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education or projects financed by entrepreneurs,
b. commercialisation of research and development work results or of the resulting know-how (this criterion does not apply to the arts).

3. impact of scientific activity on the functioning of society and economy
   a. description of influence proving the existence of links between the most important manifestations of scientific activity in an entity and the economy, health care, culture and the arts, environmental protection, safety and state defence or other factors impacting the development of society.

**New classification of disciplines**

**Status: published - 31 July 2018**

The reform intends to reduce the number of disciplines by adopting a new list prepared on the basis of the OECD standards (instead of the current 8 areas of knowledge and 102 disciplines only 48 disciplines will be indicated). Due to this fragmentation, 1/5 of all science disciplines is represented by a number of researchers not exceeding 100 persons across the country. Fewer than 24 researchers are active in three of the disciplines listed in the current classification. The current classification was the source of serious problems with conducting interdisciplinary research, as it was linked to authorisations to provide higher education and doctoral programmes and to confer degrees in science and the arts.

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<th>Previous regulation of 2011</th>
<th>New regulation of 2018</th>
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<td>Field of science/arts: Veterinary sciences</td>
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<td>Area of knowledge: Art sciences</td>
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2) Instrumental studies  
3) Composition and music theory  
4) Sound engineering  
5) Eurhythmics and dance studies  
6) Vocal studies |
| Field of science/arts: Visual arts | 1) Fine arts  
2) Design studies  
3) Art conservation and restoration |

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<td>1) Film and theatre studies</td>
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<td>2) Music studies</td>
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<td>3) Art studies and art conservation and restoration</td>
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### Polish Returns – first pilot project by the National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA)

**Reform status: announced** (7 March 2018)

A new pilot project launched by NAWA in March 2018 gives returning Polish researchers a possibility to build their own research teams in Poland. Support is offered on long term basis with 36 to 48 months of financing up to 2 175 000 PLN. Financial support covers remuneration of returning researchers (up to 350 thousand PLN a year for a period of 4 years), as well as pay to the members of their teams. This gives Polish HEIs an opportunity to improve their research potential without additional costs.

More information about this project [nawa.gov.pl](http://nawa.gov.pl) [8].

### 248 million PLN for 28 Polish HEIs for teaching, international cooperation and management

**Reform status: approved, 9 February 2018**

248 mln PLN – this amount of financial support will allow 28 Polish HEIs to organise practical classes, placements for students, will improve the level of internationalization and provide IT infrastructure, and will support projects improving competences of research staff. The Minister of Science and Higher education has announced the results of the second path of the Integrated HEIs Programme which will offer support to 39 thousand persons from small HEIs.

The Integrated HEIs Programme is managed by the National Centre for Research and Development.

The [second edition of this programme](http://nawa.gov.pl) [9] offers support to public and non-public HEIs with at 200 but no more than 20 thousand students.

Institutions which won support are located in Kraków (6 institutions), Warszawa (4), Katowice, Lublin, Rzeszów, Szczecin (2 each), and Białystok, Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk, Gdynia, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Kielce, Koszalin, Łódź, Poznań, Wrocław (with 1 institution each).
The programme includes 3 financing paths for 3 different groups of HEIs:

- Path I with a budget of 500 mln PLN for public and non-public HEIs with at least 200 students enrolled and a positive assessment by the Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA). Maximum support has been earmarked at 30 mln PLN.
- Path II with a budget of 250 mln PLN for public and non-public HEIs with at least 200 students enrolled and with B assessment by the Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA) granted to at least 50% of their faculties. Maximum support has been earmarked at 20 mln PLN.
- Path III with a budget of 250 mln PLN intended for the biggest and best HEIs - those with at least 20 thousand students and with A or A+ assessment by the Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA) granted to at least 50% of their faculties.

**Constitution for science - update**

Reform status: draft

The consultation stage for the new act has been concluded. On the 22 January 2018 the Ministry of Science and Higher Education will present an updated draft of the act which will be proceeded further by the Government (Council of Ministers).

One of the proposed changes is related to the maximum yearly number of teaching hours for (among others) academic teachers including lecturers, instructors and language teachers. The number of teaching hours will be reduced from the planned 540 hours to 360. Additionally, the set minimum number of hours will be abolished – the detailed number of hours and scope of responsibilities will be defined by the higher education institution.

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**Source URL:** https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/national-reforms-higher-education-50_en

**Links**

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