2019

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 [1].

Accessibility Plus Programme

Reform status: under implementation, April 2019

Uczelnia Dostępna [2]

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 [3]) 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/[4].

**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 HEI)
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous regulation of 2011</th>
<th>New regulation of 2018</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Areas</strong></td>
<td><strong>FIELDS OF SCIENCE/ FIELDS OF ARTS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Field of science/arts: Theology</td>
<td>Field of science/arts: Theology</td>
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<td>Area of knowledge: Social sciences</td>
<td>Field of science/arts: Social sciences</td>
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<td>1) Safety studies 2) Defence studies</td>
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<td>3) Media studies 4) Politics studies</td>
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<td>5) Public policy studies 6) Cognitive and social communication studies</td>
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<td>7) Education studies 8) Psychology</td>
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<td>9) Sociology</td>
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| Area of knowledge: Science | Field of science/arts: Mathematics | 1) Mathematics  
2) Computer science |
| Field of science/arts: Physics | 1) Astronomy  
2) Biophysics  
3) Physics  
4) Geophysics |
| Field of science/arts: Chemistry | 1) Biochemistry  
2) Biotechnology  
3) Chemistry  
4) Environmental protection  
5) Chemical technology |

| Field of science/arts: Science and natural sciences |
| 1) Computer science  
2) Mathematics  
3) Biological sciences  
4) Chemical sciences  
5) Physical sciences  
6) Earth and environmental sciences |

| Area of knowledge: Natural sciences | Field of science/arts: Biology | 1) Biochemistry  
2) Biophysics  
3) Biology  
4) Biotechnology  
5) Ecology  
6) Microbiology  
7) Environmental protection |
| Field of science/arts: Earth sciences | 1) Geophysics  
2) Geography  
3) Geology  
4) Ocean studies |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Area of knowledge: Technology</th>
<th>Field of science/arts: Technology</th>
<th>Field of science/arts: Engineering and Technology</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Architecture and urban studies</td>
<td>1) Architecture and urban studies</td>
<td>1) Architecture and urban studies</td>
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<td>2) Automation and robotics</td>
<td>2) Biotechnology</td>
<td>2) Biotechnology</td>
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<td>3) Bio-cybernetics and biomedical engineering</td>
<td>4) Biotechnology</td>
<td>3) Electrical and electronic engineering</td>
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<td>5) Machine building and exploitation</td>
<td>5) Machine building and exploitation</td>
<td>4) Applied computer science</td>
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<td>6) Construction engineering</td>
<td>6) Construction engineering</td>
<td>5) Chemical engineering</td>
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<td>7) Electronic engineering</td>
<td>7) Electronic engineering</td>
<td>6) Civil engineering</td>
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<td>8) Electrical engineering</td>
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<td>7) Materials engineering</td>
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<td>9) Energy studies</td>
<td>9) Electrical engineering</td>
<td>8) Mechanical engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>10) Geodesy and cartography</td>
<td>10) Geodesy and cartography</td>
<td>9) Medical engineering</td>
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<td>11) Mining and engineering geology</td>
<td>11) Mining and engineering geology</td>
<td>10) Environmental protection, mining and energy studies</td>
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<td>12) Computer science</td>
<td>12) Computer science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Area of knowledge: Agricultural, forestry and veterinary sciences</td>
<td>Field of science/arts: Agricultural sciences</td>
<td>Field of science/arts: Forestry sciences</td>
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<td>Area of knowledge: Medical, health and physical culture sciences</td>
<td>Field of science/arts: Medical sciences</td>
<td>Field of science/arts: Pharmaceutical sciences</td>
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<td>Field of science/arts: Physical sciences</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 [5].

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 [6] 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.

**2017**

**Constitution for science**

**Reform status: draft**

Constitution for science is a new, comprehensive act regulating the area of higher education. It will result in a profound change of the system of higher education institution funding and management.

The objectives of the reform include: enhancing internationalisation, intensifying cooperation between science and business, creating new career paths for academic teachers and researchers and adjusting the number of students admitted to individual fields of study to actual needs of the labour market.

The draft of parialmetary act consolidates basic regulations concerning higher education and science and merges provisions currently contained in various laws: law on higher education; law on science funding; law on student loans; and law on academic degrees and title and degrees and title in the field of arts. Regulations concerning the agencies supervised by the minister responsible for higher education and science, research institutes, as well as the Polish Academy of Sciences and its institutes will be included in separate laws.

The act contains regulations concerning the following topics:

1. the bases for the functioning of the system of higher education and science (including the mission of the system, the rules for its operations, the definition of terms that are constitutive for the functioning of the system, the identification of essential entities operating within the system);
2. organisational framework of universities and federal universities;
3. the rules for the operation of university associations;
4. the processes for the establishment, transformation and closure of higher education institutions;
5. the rules for maintaining order and security in the campus;
6. offering study programmes (including the launch of new programmes);
7. the rights and obligations of students (including financial support provided to students);
8. students’ self-government and student organisations;
9. academic staff (including basic qualification requirements for academic teachers, establishing and terminating the employment relationship, periodic assessments, holidays, basic remuneration principles);
10. commercialisation of research results, development work and know-how;
11. post-graduate studies and other forms of education;
12. degrees and the title in the system of higher education and science (including the procedure leading to the award of the doctoral and habilitation degree and the title of professor, as well as the rules for the operation of doctoral schools);
13. evaluation of quality in education, evaluation of doctoral schools, and evaluation of the quality of scientific activities;
14. disciplinary procedure for academic teachers, students and doctoral students;
15. status of foreign nationals in the system of higher education and science;
16. the functioning of institutions representing higher education and academic circles (and the advisory body to the minister responsible for higher education and science);
17. IT systems used in the higher education and science;
18. scholarships and awards granted by the minister, and the awards granted by the Prime Minister;
19. the funding of the system of higher education and science;
20. financial management of universities; supervision over the system of higher education and science;
21. and the functioning of universities supervised by the minister other than the minister for higher education and science.

The draft act provides for the functioning of specialised institutions ensuring the efficiency of the system of higher education (The Polish Accreditation Committee, Academic Excellence Council, Science Evaluation Committee).

Inter alia, the proposed changes include:

- in the area of the **science and higher education system**: maintaining the tradition of academic freedom - university community selects the HEI’s authorities; easier management of financing streams; broadening the university’s autonomy by transferring additional powers to the level of university statutes; the possibility to establish federal universities; professionalisation of university management.
- in the area of **education**: introducing new solutions to ensure additional protection of students’ rights; facilitating admissions to programmes within study areas and allowing for the selection of the field of study after the completion of the first year; the introduction of doctoral schools as a new model for doctoral student training; scholarships for all doctoral students; new solutions aimed to improve the quality of doctoral dissertations.
- in the area of **academic staff**: establishing a new career path for outstanding teachers, abolishing the obligation to be awarded habilitation, streamlined habilitation procedure for prominent scholars, the introduction of mechanisms to ensure the stability of employment, guarantee for preserving existing privileges for academic staff, universities will be authorised to create individual academic career paths, abolishing the existing requirement to indicate in the
habilitation procedure solely the results achieved after the award of doctoral degree.

- in the area of **academic activity**: evaluation of research at the level of the entire higher education institution, additional funding streams - research universities and regional excellence initiatives, a new classification of academic areas and disciplines adapted to international standards, departure from excessive focus on impact factor and placing more emphasis on the quality and not on the quantity of publications, providing financial support to Polish scientific journals.

The draft act includes 457 articles.

(Source: Justification for the higher education and science act dated 16.09.2017).

**The National Agency for Academic Exchange**

**Reform status: launched on 1 October 2017.**

The mission of the Agency is to support academic exchange and international cooperation in order to develop the potential of Polish science and higher education. The Agency’s role is to carry out a long-term policy to support academic mobility and quality-oriented internationalisation of Polish universities’ educational offer thanks to the implementation of programmes addressed to students and academic staff from Poland and abroad.

The Agency’s tasks include: mobility programmes for students and researchers, programmes supporting the internationalisation of Polish universities and scientific units, promotion of Polish higher education and science abroad and promotion of teaching Polish abroad.

The Agency will implement more than twenty programmes in five areas:

1. Speed up Academic Career - the development of individual scientific careers,
2. Run International Education - internationalisation of Polish universities’ educational offer,
3. Participate in Academic Community - organizational support for internationalisation,
4. Poland - my first choice - cross-cutting scholarship programmes for foreigners
5. Promotion of the Polish language.

**Innovations for the economy**

**Reform status: adopted in November 2017**

The thematic scope of the law has been established as part of an extensive consultation process with business, science, administration and non-governmental organisations. White Paper on Innovation has been drafted based on 340 proposals submitted to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, from which the most valuable ones have been selected.

The reform aims to introduce changes leading to effective transfer of knowledge to the economy and the cooperation of science with business, especially in the areas identified as strategic ones for the state’s development policy. The act is of a horizontal nature and amends regulations, which limit innovation included in different laws.

The act is consistent with the basis of the Responsible Development Plan, which provides for an increase in research and development expenditure up to the level of 1.7% of GDP in 2020 and the founding of 1500 start-ups within 7 years.

**The major basis of the second law on innovation in the area of science and higher**
education:

- expanding the scope of operation of special purpose vehicles founded by universities and scientific institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) by economic activity,
- enabling universities and scientific institutes of PAN to establish companies managing research infrastructure,
- providing the Ministry of Science and Higher Education with legal instruments for monitoring the careers of doctoral students,
- deregulating the procedure for developing Polish Road Map for Research Infrastructure.

The aims of the reform include providing researchers with a number of new benefits, such as: attractive conditions for the commercialisation of research, more funds earmarked for cooperation with business, commercialisation grants, knowledge transfer and economic implementations, extending the time for deriving benefits from the implementation of inventions, and dedicated support for the commercialisation of technologies (mandatory support from Technology Transfer Centres).

Science for You

Reform status: launched

Social responsibility of science is to constitute an important offer addressed to a wide social forum. It should be helpful in identifying opportunities and possibilities, promoting dialogue and involving broad stakeholder groups, and increasing productivity and efficiency of activities carried out in the field of science and research. Programmes focusing on social responsibility of science not only aim at propagating and disseminating science and research, but also at encouraging cognitive curiosity and integrating local communities with academic centres. They also aim to provide equal educational opportunities and to reach the regions of the country, in which academic and scientific activity did not exist. The reform includes the following programmes: Young Explorer University, Science Bus Programme, Programme for Third Age Universities.

The Young Explorer University Programme provides for staging classes in universities and research institutes for children aged 6-16. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education offers financial support amounting up to 80% of project costs (the budget of the first edition amounts to 1.5 million and PLN 5 million for the second edition of the programme). The aim of the programme is to excite cognitive curiosity, ensure integration of local communities with academic centres, and untap the potential of children and young people).

The Science Bus Programme implemented together with the Copernicus Science Centre aims to propagate science and research in small towns and villages.

The objective of the Programme for Third Age Universities is to support the idea of solidarity between the generations, social activation of senior citizens and involving senior students in work on behalf of local communities.

Polish MOOC Competition

Reform status: competition announced on 4 August 2017

The Minister of Science and Higher Education has announced a competition for implementation of the project entitled „Polish MOOC“. The announcement has been made on the basis of the Communication by the Minister of 11 July 2017 on the establishment of the “Polish MOOC” initiative.
The competition aims at selecting a research project based on modern didactic approach and efficient ways of learning. The project is to be devoted to preparation of key solutions to the establishment and functioning of a national MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) platform. The platform will serve higher education institutions and units to offer on-line courses and training sessions in order to develop new skills necessary for students while entering the labour market as well as open courses and training session open to unlimited number of users in the life-long learning system. One project with no support from other public sources will be financed which includes:

- Preparation and implementation of the platform concept including the rules for preparation of courses and training sessions and their selection for publication on the platform as well as the quality assurance system,
- Preparation of three pilot courses and training sessions,
- Content related supervision of the platform during a minimum of 2 years.

The project should be prepared by an interdisciplinary team.

Additional info about this competition is available at the Ministry of Science and Higher Education at e-mail: MOOC@nauka.gov.pl [7].

**Industrial Doctorates**

**Reform status: legislation approved in April 2017**

Industrial doctorates aim at stimulating cooperation and transfer of knowledge between research and business. They also open a new fast path to PhD.

The following three groups are invited to take advantage of this programme:

- MA degree (or its equivalent) holders who intend to develop their academic career;
- Best academic centres – namely research institutions rated A+ and A;
- Businessmen/women and other employers who wish to develop research and development activities and therefore improve their chances of success on the market.

**Dual doctorates**

Industarial doctorates will be implemented in the dual system. A research institution and an enterprise will agree a research programme with a clear aim of solving a particular problem indicated by the employer. The doctoral candidate will have two tutors – an academic tutor – an independent researcher who is charge of research quality control and a supporting tutor indicated by the employer. A double tutorship allows for intensified contact between the world of science and business.

**Doctorate candidate’s opportunities – up to two salaries**

Two places of employment mean also additional benefits to the candidates. Apart from the remuneration due to the full time employment the candidate also receives a stipend from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. It will be equal to a minimum basic salary of an assistant at a public HEI – at present it amounts to 2450 PLN.

500 PhD candidates can enter the programme each year. First participants should commence their studies in October 2017. 21 million PLN has been earmarked for the first academic year of the programme. A maximum level of financing stipulated in the legislation is estimated at around 85 million PLN a year.
Industrial habilitation

The project assumes that PhD holders will be able to continue their industrial career path and obtain qualifications equivalent to the degree of habilitated doctor.

HEIs

Research institution offers access to research facilities and support by the research team and in return receives additional funding covering costs of infrastructure use.

The reform is to be implemented in mid 2017.

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