

**Rules of Admission to the Doctoral School of the Graduate School for Social Research,
GSSR, (in Polish, Szkoła Nauk Społecznych, SNS), of the Polish Academy of Sciences for the
Academic Year 2025/2026**

Admission rules to GSSR/SNS's Doctoral School are developed by the Coordinating Unit, the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Polish Academy of Sciences, in agreement with the two Partner Units, the Institute of Psychology and the Institute of Political Studies, both at the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN).

Depending on the doctoral candidate's choice of discipline, the admission process is conducted separately by each of the three partner Units, as follows:

- The Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, IFiS PAN admits PhD students in Sociology
- The Institute of Psychology, IP PAN admits PhD students in Psychology
- The Institute of Political Studies, IPS PAN admits PhD students in Political Science

The Director of each Institute appoints an Admissions Commission in the respective Institute, making every effort to maintain gender parity.

Pursuant to Article 200(1) of the Act of 20 July 2018 Law on Higher Education and Science (Journal of Laws 2018, item 1668, 2024, 2245) the Scientific Councils of IFiS PAN, IP PAN and IPS PAN, respectively, adopt the following resolution:

1. Eligibility. Admission to the Doctoral School is open to any candidate, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age or country of origin, who:

- a. Holds a Master's degree or an equivalent degree,
or
- b. Holds a diploma certifying graduation from a higher education institution abroad that entitles them to continue their education or to open doctoral studies in the country whose higher education system includes the institution that awarded that diploma,
or
- c. Has achieved learning outcomes for a qualification at level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework,
and
- d. Has a thorough knowledge of written and spoken English (see point 11, Required documents).

If an applicant to GSSR/SNS's Doctoral School has not yet defended their Master's thesis but submits a certificate from the home university about the expected date of defense, the Director of GSSR/SNS decides about the possibility of conditional admission, while specifying the time within which the applicant is obliged to submit the diploma of graduation from the Master's program.

A candidate's field of pre-PhD study can differ from the discipline in which they intend to pursue their doctoral degree. As part of their application, candidates indicate the discipline in which they plan to prepare a doctoral dissertation.

2. The window for submitting applications to the Doctoral School for a subsequent academic year shall be announced by GSSR's Director on the website of GSSR (<https://www.gssr.edu.pl/admissions/important-dates/>). The Director of GSSR may also announce the opening of additional application windows in the course of an academic year, in particular as part of doctoral student recruitment within the implementation of specific research projects.

3. Applications to the Doctoral School shall be submitted electronically, by the deadline and following the rules detailed on GSSR's website.

To meet formal admission requirements, a candidate must submit, by **July 9, 2025**, a complete Application Package that includes the following documents, in English (exception is the MA thesis and/or publication, see point 7):

- 1) **Completed application form**
- 2) **Copy of Master's Degree diploma** or of an equivalent certificate of graduation or an official document from the applicant's university stating when the defense of the MA thesis is due to take place.
- 3) **Academic Curriculum Vitae**
- 4) **Letter of Intent** (800 - 1000 words) describing the applicant's experience to date in the given discipline, their academic interests, aims, and the reasons for choosing GSSR/SNS as the site for doctoral training.
- 5) **Concise description of planned research** (1200-1500 words, excluding Bibliography, Figures or Tables) that (i) describes the research problem and why it is important for the candidate's chosen discipline, (ii) states the research question(s), and, as applicable, testable hypotheses, (iii) briefly outlines the main theoretical framework(s) that the research ties to; (iv) introduces the research methods, and, as applicable, the data the candidate plans to use to address the research question(s); and (v) outlines the envisioned type(s) of data analysis (when applicable).
- 6) **Letter(s) of recommendation** – at most two letters, with at least one from the candidate's MA thesis supervisor, or a person who is familiar with their academic achievements and aptitude for conducting independent research.
- 7) **MA thesis or a selected (co-)authored academic publication**. Candidates must also provide a 700-words English-language summary of their MA thesis or academic publication if these studies were originally written in another language than English.
- 8) **Official transcript** issued by the candidate's university that lists all courses completed during MA studies or equivalent studies (cf. point 2) and corresponding grades.
- 9) **Photocopy of passport** (non-Polish applicants only)
- 10) **Payment Confirmation of Application Fee of 200 PLN** (the Application Fee is waived for candidates who are citizens of non-EU countries).
- 11) **Proof of English language proficiency**. Applicants who are non-native English speakers must submit one of the standardized English language test scores listed in Table 1. Candidates who take the TOEFL or IELTS should request a copy of their results to be sent directly to GSSR's Admissions Office. **The TOEFL institution code for the GSSR is 7962.**

Candidates who completed their studies in English (Bachelor's or MA degree) are exempt from providing results of a standardized tests.

- 12) In the case of recruitment of IP PAS: 1) declaration of a supervisor affiliated with IP PAS or 2) declarations of a supervisor from outside IP PAS and an auxiliary supervisor affiliated with IP PAS about readiness to take care of the doctoral student in the event of admission to the GSSR.

Table 1. Standardized English Language tests and required minimum scores

Test Type	Required Minimum Score/ CEFR level
(TOEFL) Test of English as a Foreign Language	80
(IELTS) International English Language Test	6.5
C1 Advanced, formerly (CAE) Cambridge Advanced English Test	B
B2 First, formerly (FCE) First Certificate in English	B2
C2 Proficiency, formerly (CPE) Cambridge Proficiency Test	C

Test Type	Required Minimum Score/ CEFR level
Certificate from university examination	B2

4. Admission to the Doctoral School is competitive and consists of two stages. The assessment in both stages of the competition is conducted by the Admissions Commission of the relevant Institute.

A positive evaluation of a candidate in Stage I is a necessary condition for qualifying for Stage II of the admission process.

Stage I. The Admissions Commission evaluates on formal grounds the documents that constitute the Application Package (see art. 3). If formal requirements are met, the Commission assesses each applicant's potential to conduct scientific activities and contribute to the Doctoral School, as reflected in the following documents:

1. The description of the planned research
2. The letter of intent
3. The MA thesis or scientific publication
4. The Academic CV
5. The recommendation letter(s)

Based on these documents, the Commission also evaluates the degree to which a candidate's planned research project matches the research themes and academic profile of IFiS PAN, IP PAN and IPS PAN, respectively.

As a result of the evaluation conducted at Stage I, the Commission selects the candidates who continue to the second stage of the admission process.

Stage II. Interview conducted in English

Candidates who successfully pass Stage I of the admission process are informed electronically by the Doctoral School about the date of the interview, and, if applicable, the date of the Psychology test (cf. details below).

Interviews are generally conducted online. Notification emails are sent to the email address that the candidate provides in the Application Package.

Candidates who choose Psychology as their doctoral dissertation discipline when this is not the discipline of their previous studies must, prior to the interview, take a test about core issues in psychology. Testing details are decided by IP PAN and communicated via GSSR's and IP's websites. During the interview, the IP Admissions Commission may refer to issues covered in the test.

During the interview, each candidate to GSSR's Doctoral School will be asked questions related to their planned research project and academic achievements. Regardless of a candidate's academic background, the Admissions Commission of the respective Institute may also test a candidate's knowledge of concepts and issues fundamental to the discipline within which the candidate seeks a PhD degree.

Candidates who fail to attend the scheduled interview without prior notification of the School and documented justification are considered to have withdrawn their application.

5. The decision process for admission to GSSR/SNS's Doctoral School

Following each interview, all members of the Admissions Commission, independently and via secret ballot, score the candidate's performance on a scale from 0 (lowest) to 10 (highest) points. A candidate's final score is the arithmetic mean (average) of these scores.

After completing all interviews, the Admissions Commission uses the final score each candidate received (i.e. the score based on the arithmetic mean) to rank interviewed candidates. The Commission uses secret ballots to vote on the resulting ranking, records the outcome of the voting, and communicates the results to GSSR.

The Admissions Commission of the respective Institute proposes supervisors for the candidates it recommends for admission to the Doctoral School.

On the basis of the Admissions Committee's recommendation and the minutes of the evaluation process, the Director of the relevant Institute decides whether a candidate is admitted or not to the Doctoral School.

Admission results will be announced after both competition stages are complete, and no later than August 21, 2025.

It is further stipulated that:

Candidates shall be notified of the results (protocol of admissions) by email and by post (letters of acceptance), and by means of a protocol posted on GSSR's website, in compliance with the provisions of GDPR (RODO). The administrative decision about refusal of admission to the Doctoral School is sent by post (registered mail) or by other means indicated in the Code of Administrative Procedure.

The decision of the Director of the relevant Institute to refuse admission to a doctoral program may be appealed against within 14 days of receipt of the decision. The written appeal must be submitted to GSSR/SNS's office electronically (sns@gssr.edu.pl) or in hard copy, at GSSR's office (room 261, Staszic Palace, Nowy Swiat 72, 00-330, Warsaw, Poland).

The Director of the Institute shall appoint an Appeals Committee that shall consider the candidate's appeal and make a written recommendation as to whether the original decision should be upheld or reversed. Such recommendation, to be made in writing within 15 days from the School having received the appeal, shall be submitted to the Institute's Director, who shall have the decisive voice. Their decision cannot be appealed within the Doctoral School.

6. The above admission rules apply to candidates who, on the date of the deadline for submitting applications to the Doctoral School, are not winners of doctoral scholarships in accepted research projects that foresee the financing of doctoral scholarships for at least 36 months.

7. Winners of competitions for doctoral scholarships referred to in pt. 6 shall become students of GSSR/SNS's Doctoral School provided that the Principal Investigator (PI) in whose grant they are hired submits in due time all required documents, as specified in the Call for doctoral scholarships that the applicant won. Among documents to be submitted to GSSR, the PI must include (i) the copy of the winner's MA diploma, an equivalent certificate of graduation, or an official document from the student's university stating when the defense of the MA thesis is due to take place, (ii) proof of the student's English language proficiency, and (iii) the selection protocol prepared by the Commission that evaluated the applicants to the PI's research project.

8. These rules of admission to the Doctoral School were adopted by the Scientific Councils of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology PAN (27.11.2024), the Institute of Psychology PAN (13.12.2024) and the Institute of Political Studies PAN (13.12.2024).

9. These Admission Rules have been drawn up in two language versions: Polish and English.

10. This resolution comes into force on the date of its adoption.

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