

# Rules for Verification of Learning Outcomes for Qualifications at Level 8 of the Polish Qualification Framework

## 1. Scope and Legal Basis

These rules describe the general principles, responsibilities, and procedures by which the Graduate School for Social Research, GSSR (Szkoła Nauk Społecznych) verifies that each doctoral student achieves the knowledge, skills, and social competences required for level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework (PQF). They are based on the Study Program (*Program kształcenia w szkole doktorskiej*), the Regulations (*Regulamin szkoły doktorskiej*), and other internal policy documents.

These rules apply to all doctoral students at GSSR, regardless of cohort or academic year. Specific implementation details (e.g., deadlines, assessment formats) are set out in course syllabi, the PhD Handbook, and institutional guidelines for supervisors and students.

## 2. Learning Outcomes at PQF Level 8

Verification focuses on three categories of outcomes:

- **Knowledge (Wiedza)** – PQF8: P8U\_W, P8S\_WG, P8S\_WK  
The student knows and has an advanced understanding of a discipline and its theoretical and practical frontiers, including recent developments and interdisciplinary links.
- **Skills (Umiejętności)** – PQF8: P8U\_U, P8S\_UW, P8S\_UK, P8S\_UO, P8S\_UU  
The student can independently conduct research, formulate and solve complex problems, integrate knowledge, and creatively apply research methods. The student can communicate results, plan and manage one's development, and contribute to others' learning.
- **Social competences (Kompetencje społeczne)** – PQF8: P8U\_K, P8S\_KR, P8S\_KO  
The student is ready to act responsibly in research and professional settings, is prepared for collaboration and leadership, and is committed to ethical standards and public engagement.

## 3. Principles of Verification

GSSR verifies learning outcomes based on the following principles:

- Transparent and structured evaluation at each stage of doctoral studies;
- Use of diverse and discipline-appropriate verification methods;
- Alignment with the formal learning outcomes of the Study Program;
- Involvement of qualified academic staff and external experts where appropriate;
- Periodic review and improvement of procedures based on feedback and institutional learning.

## 4. Verification Process and Tools

Component / Stage	Verification Methods and Tools
Mandatory Coursework	Exams, assignments; grades or pass/fail assessments; outcomes specified in syllabi
Optional Courses (GSSR / external)	Assignments; grades or pass/fail assessments; participation certificates, ECTS documentation, or supervisor validation
Participation in Faculty-led Research Teams	Supervisor evaluation of activity in research teams (LtR) and progress toward dissertation
Optional LtR Activities	Seminars, workshops, internships; verified via reports, attendance, or supervisor approval
Individual Study Program (ISP) and Individual Study Reports	Yearly planning and self-assessment; checked in the annual internal evaluations

<b>Component / Stage</b>	<b>Verification Methods and Tools</b>
Individual Research Plan (IRP)	Submitted by end of Year 1; formally reviewed in mid-term evaluation
Internal Annual Evaluations (Y1–3)	Student and supervisor reports; reviewed by Evaluation Commissions at institute level
Midterm Evaluation (midpoint of doctoral studies)	Formal review of IRP implementation; conducted by a commission constituted by the Directors of IFiS, IP, and ISP in accordance with the 2018 Law on Higher Education and Science
Academic Output	Verified through publication lists, conference records, public engagement activities
Dissertation and Defense	Thesis submission with supervisor approval; public defense; decision by Scientific Council of IFiS/IP/IPS

## 5. Responsible Parties

- **Doctoral student** – engages actively in research and academic development; submits required documents and reports at specified deadlines;
- **Supervisor(s)** – monitors academic progress; provides written evaluations; supports skill development;
- **Internal Evaluation Commissions** – institute-specific commissions that assess students’ annual progress (Years 1–3);
- **Midterm Evaluation Commission** (midpoint of doctoral studies) – assesses IRP implementation; constituted by the Directors of IFiS, IP, and ISP in accordance with the 2018 Law on Higher Education and Science.
- **GSSR Director** – confirms the overall achievement of PQF level 8 learning outcomes and issues the official certificate of completion.
- **Scientific Council (of IFiS/IP/IPS, respectively)** – approves the dissertation defense and awards the degree based on verified outcomes.

## 6. Transparency and Accessibility

- Verification principles and expectations are published in the *Study Program, Regulamin* and *PhD Handbook*.
- Students receive guidance on these procedures at the start of their studies.
- Supervisors follow dedicated guidance (cf. PhD Handbook).
- Learning outcomes, evaluation criteria and verification methods are made available in advance, e.g. in course syllabi published on GSSR’s website or the PhD Handbook.

## 7. Mechanisms for Improvement

The verification process is regularly updated based on, for example:

- Feedback from doctoral students (e.g., anonymous surveys);
- Observations from faculty and supervisors;
- Evolving academic standards and regulations;
- Institutional learning from evaluations and external collaboration (e.g., grants, international best practices);

## 8. Certification

Upon successful completion of the programme, each doctoral student receives a formal certificate confirming that their learning outcomes have been positively verified at level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework, in accordance with applicable regulations.

*Adopted by the GSSR Doctoral School Council at its meeting of March 4 2020.*