

**Study Programme for the Doctoral School
at the Graduate School for Social Research, GSSR
(Szkola Nauk Społecznych, SNS, in Polish),
Polish Academy of Sciences**

The Doctoral School has an international profile. The main language of instruction is English. Some courses may be offered in other languages, as necessary. A doctoral thesis may be written and defended in either English or Polish.

The Aim and Three Pillars of the Study Programme

Candidates who have been admitted to the Doctoral School become researchers and work in the academic community of the institutes which co-found the Doctoral School within SNS (hereafter, referred to as GSSR). The aim of the study programme is:

- (a) to consolidate and deepen the theoretical and methodological knowledge in the discipline concerned,
- (b) to broaden the candidates' cognitive horizons and support them in making an informed choice when selecting a research topic for their doctoral thesis,
- (c) to help candidates to be open to other perspectives,
- (d) to develop the ability to conduct independent research that can be useful in science and other sectors,

as well as:

- (e) to develop the ability to combine scientific theories and methods with practical research in a selected field,
- (f) to gain experience in research, including the design of a research project, conducting fieldwork, engaging in teamwork, preparing publications and participating in scholarly debates,
- (g) to prepare a doctoral thesis.

The work on the doctoral thesis and related publications is an integral part of the study programme, which also includes three main types of activities, namely:

1. mandatory courses in a selected academic discipline,
2. optional courses,
3. participation in the activities of a selected research team, understood as a unit (*zakład*), laboratory (*pracownia*) or another organisational unit within the institute concerned.

The mandatory courses in a discipline are also available as optional courses for doctoral students from other disciplines. Moreover, there is a pool of optional courses available to all doctoral students, as well as the possibility for doctoral students to attend selected courses in other academic centres.

Doctoral students' participation in the work of at least one research team in one of the institutes constituting the Doctoral School is obligatory. This may include participation in seminars, conferences, symposiums, summer schools related to a particular topic as well as work on research projects and publications. In agreement with their supervisor, doctoral students have the option to take part in the work of another research team (or teams) in the co-founding institutes.

Supervisor and Research Team

Academic supervision of the preparation of the doctoral thesis is carried out by a supervisor or supervisors, or a supervisor and support supervisor (in the remainder of this document ‘supervisor’ may also refer to a supervisor and support supervisor). Taking into account the student’s opinion and the recommendations of the Selection Committee, the Board of the doctoral school recommends a supervisor for each admitted candidate within the shortest possible time after the end of the recruitment.

The Scientific Council of the institute competent for the discipline concerned approves the supervisor by adopting a relevant resolution no later than during the third month following the start of the study programme. Together with the doctoral student, the supervisor chooses the research team to serve as the doctoral student’s core environment and guides the student’s academic progress, co-deciding on his/her *individual study programme*. In the case of doctoral students who hold a master’s degree in a field other than the discipline of their doctoral thesis, the supervisor also specifies which courses specific to the discipline of the doctoral thesis to be taken by the doctoral student as part of the *individual study programme*.

Individual Study Programme

Each doctoral student follows an *individual study programme*.

The *individual study programme* should be designed in such a way that doctoral students can acquire the necessary methodological skills and theoretical knowledge to achieve the aforementioned learning objectives. These skills and knowledge will be acquired through participation in the courses and research work of the Institute, writing and presenting texts publicly and undertaking other activities. After the completion of the four-year programme, in addition to the completion of the doctoral student’s own research, the doctoral student will also have gained an insight into various aspects of work undertaken by the research group, such as: research concept development and implementation at various stages, writing a grant application and administering grants, preparing publications, organising scholarly events, alongside important “soft skills” necessary for teamwork.

The doctoral student cooperates with his/her supervisor in order to agree on the *individual study programme* for each academic year. The *individual study programme* for an academic year specifies the mandatory courses to be taken by the doctoral student during the academic year, as well as other courses to be taken, together with the mode of such courses. The *individual study programme* also specifies the research team for the doctoral student to participate in, as well as conferences and other events that the doctoral student plans to attend, other activities planned for the academic year, including the research activities to be undertaken, the publications and sections of the doctoral thesis to be prepared. The *individual study programme* may also include non-academic activities, in particular for non-governmental organisations, commercial companies or public administration, or activities linked to participation in public debates that are in some way related to the doctoral student’s area of academic interest.

As required by Article 202(1) of the Act of 20 July 2018 – “*The Law on Higher Education and Science*” (Polish Official Journal of 2018, items 1668, 2024 and 2245, hereinafter referred to as “the Law”) doctoral students prepare their ***Individual Research Plan*** in cooperation with the supervisor, within 12 months from the start of the study programme.

Each year, doctoral students present a report on their actual achievements in the academic year, documenting them with the required attachments, alongside a written opinion by the supervisor.

Components of the Individual Study Programme

1) Mandatory Courses

In order for a course to be considered completed, students must pass the final assessment. During the first two years of study, doctoral students are required to complete all courses from the list of mandatory courses for the discipline of their doctoral thesis.

Topics of mandatory courses for disciplines covered by the study programme, listed in the language of instruction (with Polish in brackets):

Philosophy

Major Theories and Concepts in Contemporary Humanities (*Główne teorie i pojęcia we współczesnej humanistyce*)

Interpreting and constructing – working with a philosophical text (*Czytanie i pisanie tekstów filozoficznych*)

The Human in the 21st Century Philosophical Anthropology (*Wybrane koncepcje w dwudziestowiecznej antropologii filozoficznej*)

Philosophy in the Process of Making Concepts (*Filozofia jako proces tworzenia pojęć*)

Sociology

Sociological theories: the tradition and current ideas (*Teorie socjologiczne: tradycja i współczesne idee*)

Quantitative methods of data analysis: statistical theory and good practices (*Metody ilościowej analizy danych: statystyka i dobre praktyki jej stosowania*)

Approaches to Qualitative Methods in Research Practice (*Zastosowania metod jakościowych w praktyce badawczej*)

Empirical Research in the Social Sciences: Design, Implementation and Write-up (Part I) (*Badania empiryczne w naukach społecznych: projektowanie i zastosowanie (cz. I)*)

Reading and Writing in the Social Sciences (Part II) (*Czytanie i pisanie tekstów w naukach społecznych (cz. II)*)

Psychology

Methodology and ethical issues of psychological studies (*Metodologia i etyka badań psychologicznych*)

Advanced statistical analysis (*Zaawansowane analizy statystyczne*)

Psychology in modules: Cognitive Psychology, Personality Psychology and Individual Differences, and Neurophysiological Basis of Behaviours (*Psychologia ogólna w modułach: psychologia poznawcza, psychologia osobowości i różnic indywidualnych oraz neurofizjologiczne podstawy zachowania*)

Social Psychology (*Psychologia społeczna*)

Political Science and Administration

Contemporary Political History of the Central-Eastern Europe (*Najnowsza historia polityczna Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*)

Quantitative methods of data analysis: statistical theory and good practices (*Metody ilościowej analizy danych: statystyka i dobre praktyki jej stosowania*)

Approaches to Qualitative Methods in Research Practice (*Zastosowania metod jakościowych w praktyce badawczej*)

Empirical Research in the Social Sciences: Design, Implementation and Write-up (Part I) (*Badania empiryczne w naukach społecznych: projektowanie i zastosowanie (cz. I)*)

Reading and Writing in the Social Sciences (Part II) (*Czytanie i pisanie tekstów w naukach społecznych (cz. II)*)

Successful completion of a mandatory course is graded on the following scale:

- very good (5),
- good (4),
- fair (3),
- fail (2).

A ‘fail’ means that the student gets no credit for the course.

The Equality and Inclusion Workshop

Starting with the academic year 2026/2027, all doctoral students shall complete a one-time practical workshop addressing mechanisms of discrimination (on various grounds) and sexual harassment. The workshop, led by a qualified expert with experience in equality and inclusion training in academic settings, examines manifestations of discrimination in academia and familiarizes students with GSSR procedures for responding to such cases. As a rule, students are expected to complete this workshop during their first year of studies at GSSR, and no later than by the end of their second year. Doctoral students who started their studies prior to the academic year 2026/2027 may participate on a voluntary basis.

2) Optional Courses

Optional courses are available to all doctoral students. They can be followed in two modes: “for credit” (according to the grading scale for mandatory courses) or “without credit”. Students opting for a course “without credit” are nevertheless required to attend the course regularly and take an active part in it. Courses are selected mainly on the basis of the doctoral students’ interests and upon their initiative. However, participation in courses must be recorded in the *individual study programme* for the academic year concerned. In justified cases, in particular where a doctoral student’s previous studies have been completed outside the discipline of his/her thesis, the supervisor may require a doctoral student to complete specific courses in the discipline of his/her thesis and to include them in the student’s *individual study programme*.

All mandatory courses for a discipline are optional for doctoral students from other disciplines.

In addition, it is possible to attend social science and interdisciplinary courses, the topics of which include, for example: social and political theory, women's political identity, evolutionary psychology, social neuropsychology, clinical neuropsychology, political psychology, clinical psychology, cultural psychology, laboratory – acquisition of psychophysiological data, statistical analyzes in R/JASP, academic writing, tools of creating psychological experiments (Psychopy/Inquisit/Vizard), psychometrics.

Courses pursued outside GSSR

Students may also take courses in other academic institutions, whether in Poland or elsewhere. Participation in such courses must be included in the *individual study programme* for the academic year concerned.

3) Work on the Doctoral Thesis and Activities in the Research Team

The *individual study programme* includes the doctoral student's activities within the selected research team, as well as planned participation in conferences, seminars, symposiums, summer schools and other scholarly events, in particular involving the presentation of the doctoral student's own work. The individual study programme presents the work on the doctoral student's scientific publications and their outcomes, as well as teaching activities and involvement in the organisation of scientific events in and outside the School.

The *individual study programme* may include the doctoral students' activities for the benefit of other sectors (business, central and local government administration, and non-governmental organisations), including participation in public debates, provided that such activities are related to the doctoral student's academic interests.

Work on the Doctoral Thesis

The *individual study programme* for an academic year specifies the research activities for that year as well as the planned parts of the doctoral thesis and related publications.

In the first year of study, the doctoral student prepares his/her *individual research proposal* in cooperation with his/her supervisor. The *research proposal* is a literature-based research project which argues for the need to undertake the proposed research, describes the theoretical framework, proposed methodology and coverage, as well as the schedule of activities to be taken with a view to submitting the finished thesis.

In subsequent years, the *individual study programme* specifies and updates the intended activities.

The achievements of a doctoral student from the beginning of education at the School until June in the second year of education are subject to the midterm evaluation referred to in Article 202 of the Act. Moreover, the Evaluation Committee assesses the student's progress after each year of training.

Annual evaluation of doctoral students' work

Progress in a student's academic work and preparation of the dissertation is assessed by an evaluation committee.

Detailed rules for the course of studies are specified in the annually upgraded guide, known as the *PhD Handbook* - posted on the website of GSSR.

Obligations of a doctoral student during four years of studies - implementation schedule

Year I

1. By the end of the 2nd semester:

- fulfilment of obligations related to passing compulsory courses selected for the first year.

2. Until June 15:

- preparing a draft of an article that meets the requirements of an academic publication. The article may be based on one of the essays submitted as a final paper in a given year. In the case of an empirical study, the article does not have to contain a part devoted to the analysis of a complete set of data, but it should meet the standards of a previously registered study (according to the rules set by the Center for Open Science). The

presented article may be a text published during the academic year (with the student as the first author). The article will constitute 50% of the overall grade.

3. Until June 30:

- providing *an Individual Study Report* with a written opinion of the supervisor. The report should include specific achievements of the doctoral student in a given year - the assessment of achievements will be based only on this summary, without reference to the plans and intentions presented in the *Individual Study Program* at the beginning of the academic year,
- providing the draft of the doctoral thesis: submitted during the recruitment procedure or its updated version,
- submitting for assessment an essay prepared in accordance with the requirements of the courses (participation in some courses may involve the need to write the paper at an earlier date agreed with the lecturer).

4. Until the end of September:

- sending **an individual research plan** (in accordance with the requirements of Article 202 of the Act on Higher Education and Science),
- preparation of *the Individual Study Programme* for the next academic year.

Year II

1. Until January 15:

- presentation of the doctoral thesis project along with a description of the proposed research work and references to the subject literature (applies only to students who started the second year in October 2019).

2. Until June 15:

- presenting the draft of the key chapter of the doctoral thesis,
- providing the opinion of the scientific supervisor on the presented chapter and its importance for the entire work.

3. Until June 30

- preparation of *Individual Study Report*.

The implementation of the individual research plan for students starting their first year in October 2019 will constitute the basis for assessing progress in the fourth semester. Article 203 of the *Law on Higher Education and Science* of 2018 states that a negative assessment of a student's progress at the end of the second year leads to his or her removal from the list of students of the doctoral school.

Year III

1. Until June 30:

- presentation of *an Individual Study Report* together with a written opinion of the supervisor, a significant part of the doctoral thesis and the results of previous research,
- preparation of *the Individual Study Programme* for the next academic year.

Year IV

It is expected that by the end of the academic year, the doctoral student will have completed the requirements for defending his or her doctoral thesis.

Procedures for defending a doctoral thesis are established individually by the institutes constituting the Doctoral School in accordance with the principles set out in the Act on Higher Education and Science.

This study program at the doctoral school has been prepared in two language versions: Polish and English.

The study program was adopted by the Scientific Councils of the institutes co-creating the doctoral school: Institute of Philosophy and Sociology (24/04/2019), the Institute of Psychology (19/04/2019) and the Institute of Political Studies (26/04/2019). It was last amended by the Scientific Councils of IFiS (March 25, 2026), IP (April 10, 2026) and ISP (March 13, 2026).

Appendix 1 to the GSSR Study Program

Table 1. Structure of the 4-year Doctoral Program realizing the Study Program (Graduate School for Social Research/Szkoła Nauk Społecznych): Rules for Verification of Learning Outcomes at Level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework (PQF), Tabular Summary

Discipline	Type	Activity	Structure	Format	Contact hours/ semester	Self-study effort hours/ semester	Learning Outcomes, PQF Level 8 ¹	Verification methods
Mandatory ²								
Philosophy	Methodology courses, 1.A.	Interpreting and constructing ...	2-semester	Seminar	30	70	L8H_KS, L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_SL; L8H_CE, L8H_CR, L8H_CP	Assessment with grades
		Philosophy in the process of making concepts	2-semester	Seminar	30	70	L8H_KS, L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_SL; L8H_CE, L8H_CR, L8H_CP	Assessment with grades
	Theory/ Substantive courses, 1.B.	Major theories and concepts...	1-semester	Seminar	30	70	L8H_KS, L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_SL; L8H_CE, L8H_CR, L8H_CP	Assessment with passing credit
		The human in the 21th century...	1-semester	Seminar	30	70	L8H_KS, L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_SL; L8H_CE, L8H_CR, L8H_CP	Assessment with grades
	LtR	Participation in faculty-led research team, IFiS PAN	7-semester	Doctoral research internship	16	60	L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO; L8H_CP, L8H_CR	Yearly evaluation of PhD progress
Sociology	1.A.	Quantitative methods of data analysis...	1-semester	Lecture + workshops	30	70	L8H_KS, L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_SL; L8H_CE, L8H_CR, L8H_CP	Assessment with grades
		Approaches to qualitative methods...	1-semester	Seminar	30	70	L8H_KS, L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_SL; L8H_CE, L8H_CR, L8H_CP	Assessment with grades
	1.B	Sociological theories...	2-semester	Seminar	30	70	L8H_KS, L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_SL; L8H_CE, L8H_CR, L8H_CP	Assessment with passing credit

		ERSS, I: Research design & implementation...	1-semester	Lecture + seminar	30	70	L8H_KS, L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_SL; L8H_CE, L8H_CR, L8H_CP	Assessment with grades
		ERSS, II: Writing in social sciences	1-semester	Lecture + seminar	30	70	L8H_KS, L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_SL; L8H_CE, L8H_CR, L8H_CP	Assessment with grades
	LtR	Participation in faculty-led research team, IFIS	7-semester	Doctoral research internship	16	60	L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO; L8H_CP, L8H_CR	Yearly evaluation of PhD progress
Political Science	1.A.	Quantitative methods of data analysis...	1-semester	Lecture + workshops	30	70	L8H_KS, L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_SL; L8H_CE, L8H_CR, L8H_CP	Assessment with grades
		Approaches to qualitative methods...	1-semester	Seminar	30	70	L8H_KS, L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_SL; L8H_CE, L8H_CR, L8H_CP	Assessment with grades
	1.B	Contemporary political history...	1-semester	Lecture + seminar	30	70	L8H_KS, L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_SL; L8H_CE, L8H_CR, L8H_CP	Assessment with passing credit
		Sociological theories...	1-semester	Lecture + seminar	30	70	L8H_KS, L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_SL; L8H_CE, L8H_CR, L8H_CP	Assessment with grades
		ERSS, I: Research design & implementation...	1-semester	Lecture + seminar	30	70	L8H_KS, L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_SL; L8H_CE, L8H_CR, L8H_CP	Assessment with grades
		ERSS, II: Writing in social sciences	1-semester	Lecture + seminar	30	70	L8H_KS, L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_SL; L8H_CE, L8H_CR, L8H_CP	Assessment with passing credit
	LtR	Participation in faculty-led research team, IPS	7-semester	Doctoral research internship	16	60	L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO; L8H_CP, L8H_CR	Yearly evaluation of PhD progress
	Psychology	1.A.	Methodology & ethical issues of psychological studies	1-semester	Seminar	30	70	L8H_KS, L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_SL;

							L8H_CE, L8H_CR, L8H_CP		
		Advanced statistical analysis	1-semester	Lecture + seminar	30	100	L8H_KS, L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_SL; L8H_CE, L8H_CR, L8H_CP	Assessment with grades	
	1.B	Psychology in modules: Module I, II, III	1-semester	Seminar + lecture	30	170	L8H_KS, L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_SL; L8H_CE, L8H_CR, L8H_CP	Assessment with passing credit	
		Social psychology	1-semester	Lecture + seminar	30	70	L8H_KS, L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_SL; L8H_CE, L8H_CR, L8H_CP	Assessment with grades	
	LtR	Participation in faculty-led research team, IP PAN	7-semester	Doctoral research internship	25	60	L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO; L8H_CP, L8H_CR	Yearly evaluation of PhD progress	
Common across all disciplines		Equality & Inclusion Workshop	1-time	Practical workshop	3	-	L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_CR, L8H_CP	Confirmation of participation	
Optional									
Common across all disciplines	2. 1. Courses @GSSR	Optional GSSR courses ³	1-semester or 2-semester	Lecture + seminar	30	Depending on course load	L8H_KS, L8H_KX; L8H_SU, L8H_SC, L8H_SO, L8H_SL; L8H_CE, L8H_CR, L8H_CP	Assessment with pass/fail or grades	
	2.2. Courses outside GSSR	Courses ⁴	1-semester or 2-semester	Lecture or seminar	Usually 30	Depending on course load	Course dependent	Assessment with grades or pass/fail	
	2.3. Other Training @GSSR	Interdisciplinary scientific events	Event dependent	Event dependent	Invited lecture	Event dependent	Event dependent	Event dependent	Confirmation of participation
		New Projects Seminar Series	8-semester	8-semester	Seminar	Based on attended sessions	Event dependent	L8H_KX, L8H_SC, L8H_SU L8H_CP, L8H_CR	Confirmation of participation
		International Interdisciplinary Summer School	Event dependent	Event dependent	Summer School	Event dependent	Event dependent	L8H_KX, L8H_SC, L8H_SU L8H_CP, L8H_CR	Confirmation of participation
2.4. Other Training outside GSSR	Summer/Winter schools (incl. interdisciplinary)	Event dependent	Event dependent	Seminar + workshops	Event dependent	Event dependent	Event dependent	Certificate of participation	

		International workshops (incl. interdisciplinary)	Event dependent	Workshops	Event dependent	Event dependent	Event dependent	Certificate of participation
	2.5. Inter-sectoral Ltr	Inter-sectoral Internships in NGOs or other organizations	Event dependent	Intersectoral internships	Event dependent	Event dependent	Event dependent	Certificate of participation

¹ The legend for the PQF descriptions is provided in Table 2.

² All discipline-specific mandatory courses are available as optional courses to the other disciplines.

³ See note 2. List of courses: www.gssr.edu.pl/doctoral-school/courses-and-timetables/

⁴ Must be approved by GSSR prior to enrolment.

Table 2: Legend, Description of Level 8 of the Polish Qualifications Framework, Polish and English (<https://kwalifikacje.gov.pl>)

Polish		English	
P8S_	Poziom 8	L8H_	Level 8
W	Wiedza	K	Knowledge
_WG	Głębina i zakres	_KD	Depth and scope
_WK	Kontekst	_KX	Context
U	Umiejętności	S	Skills
_UW	Wykorzystanie wiedzy	_SU	Using knowledge
_UK	Komunikowanie się	_SC	Communication
_UO	Organizacja pracy	_SO	Organising work
_UU	Uczenie się	_SL	Learning
K	Kompetencje społeczne	C	Social Competence
_KK	Oceny	_CE	Evaluation
_KO	Odpowiedzialność	_CR	Responsibility
_KR	Rola zawodowa	_CP	Professional role

This annex was adopted by the resolutions of the Scientific Councils of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences (March 26, 2025), the Institute of Psychology of the Polish Academy of Sciences (March 21, 2025), and the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences (March 14, 2025). It was amended by the resolutions of the Scientific Councils of IFIS (March 25, 2026), the IP (April 10, 2026), and IPS (March 13, 2026).