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HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

## Introduction of the new Law on Higher Education – situational context of functioning of Polish Universities from the October 2018.



## Introduction of the new Law on Higher Education in Poland.

- Law on Higher Education and Science is an act that was created on the initiative and in cooperation with the academic community. Over 7,000 persons took part in consultations and in developing the assumptions of the reform.
- represents a change of the attitude to education, conducting research and university governance.
- Most of the Law's innovations will become effective as from October 1<sup>st</sup>, although some first provisions entered into force in August 2018. The law's full implementation is scheduled for 2022 this is why every University in Poland is in the process of implementation and change.
- New approach: linking provisions resulting from several legislative acts such as 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.

### 4 areas of main amendments:

#### 1. Higher Education Institution's (HEI) governance

- **HEI autonomy has been extended** and the **competences** concerning the internal structure have been **transferred to the HEI itself**.
- **Statutory provisions have been limited to the minimum** (the Law regulates 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.
- One financing stream – the HEI started receiving one subsidy instead of a number of previous targeted subsidies. Thanks to this HEI have a greater control and a wider scope of decision-making when it comes to spending.
- **Introducing a new body - the HEI council**. Those councils are composed of people who are also from the outside of the academic community. 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.
- Introducing a new competition - **"Excellence Initiatives - Research HEIs"** - to identify leading HEIs able to compete with those from abroad. **NCU obtained the status of Research University (only 10 in Poland have been given this status).**



## 2. HEI employees

- **Introduction of a new academic career path** – based on teaching, and existing alongside the other ones; research- based and research combined with teaching.
- **Increase of the employment stability** – a second employment contract is concluded for an indefinite period of time; competitions for the post of an academic teacher are organised only before first employment by a HEI.
- **Decrease 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* is no longer required when employing people as assistant professors.

## 3. Scientific activity

- **The HEI's academic activity evaluation** is now global and not done by faculties.
- **Evaluation criteria have been reduced** - preference is to publication quality, number of patents, academic activity results and the impact of academic activity on the functioning of society and the economy.
- **Quality instead of quantity** - when under evaluation, academics indicate not more than 4 best academic achievements from the past 4 years, owing to which not “how many”, but “how good” is important when publishing.
- **Disciplines and interdisciplinarity** . A new discipline list, prepared on the basis of the OECD standards has been adopted.

## 4. Students and doctoral students

- **Introduction PhD schools** - The Polish model of PhD student education presents a quality approach. HEIs possessing at least a B+ academic category in two disciplines are allowed to establish PhD schools. Entities authorised to confer PhD degrees are allowed to do so only during a transitional period. Research interdisciplinarity began to be much more valued.
- **Guaranteed scholarships** - from 2019 onwards, each doctoral student admitted to a PhD school is granted a scholarship amounting to PLN 2350, which is to be increased to PLN 3652 after periodical evaluation.
- **Introduction of maternity and paternity leave** - it is granted to doctoral students on principles similar to those applicable to persons with employment contracts.
- **Quality of student education** - numerous quality-oriented solutions relating to the preparation of graduates for entering the labour market have been introduced, eg.: practical profile programmes will include at least 6-month-long work placements.
- **Giving support to students-parents** - the HEI is 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 is entitled to take time off.