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for Quality Assurance at Institutional Level“**

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## **I. Introduction. A brief presentation of procedures linked with university access from Poland's perspective**

The higher education sector in Poland is one of the biggest in Europe. The number of students at Polish universities constituted in 2008 11.51% of the whole number of students in the European Union<sup>1</sup> (slightly fewer than in Germany and the U.K. and slightly more than in France). In the academic year 2008/2009 there were 456 higher schools operating in Poland, including 131 public and 325 non-public higher schools while the total number of students closed at 408,800. The index of higher schooling (for the age group of 19–24) in the years 1990–2008 increased manifolds. In the academic year 1990/1991 it was 13% while in the academic year 2008/2009 it was ca. 52%. After 2006 the index stabilized at ca. 50–52% of age cohort. Here Poland outdistances Germany and Great Britain placing after Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Slovenia. Thus, we have in Poland a genuine mass education at a higher level. This concerns both the first and second degree studies.

The increase in the number of students was accompanied by a proportional growth in the number of academic cadre. Its increase is estimated at ca. 60%. This testifies to, on the one hand, huge cadre reserves in the Polish academic world (see e.g. teaching training of scientific workers at the Polish Academy of Sciences PAN), and the fact that academic cadre is overloaded with duties connected with teaching on the other. It becomes common that academic teachers have many jobs and many employers, which entails serious threats to the quality of education and to research work.

So, Poland is undergoing an extraordinary quantitative development of higher schooling that began with the political transformations of 1990 and with opening universities to broad masses of youth what constitutes a promising perspective of the advancement of economy and society of knowledge under the condition, however, that the quantitative development will be directed at important social needs. Unfortunately, no strategy (in the form of an official government document) of this sector's development has been formulated so far although some of its elements can be founded in, inter alia, reports and strategies on the advancement of intellectual capital in Poland, or in the prognosis of Poland's social development till 2030. In the years 2008–2009, at the initiative of the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (KRASP) and at the request of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MNiSW) (Ernst&Young and the Gdańsk Institute for Market Economics), two strategies were prepared of the higher schooling sector's development till 2020 and, although they presented penetrating diagnoses of the condition of the higher schooling sector they have been not so far used for the construction of a government strategy. Diagnoses show that key indices of intellectual capital for Poland<sup>2</sup> place it low in comparison with other EU countries – the result of many-year delays caused by the rule of the totalitarian system. What is worse, the directions of spontaneous development of this sector are not conducive<sup>3</sup> to making up for those delays. What is disturbing is a weak connection between the structure of educational specializations (both university's offer and students' choices) and the data on job demand, disproportion between indices of quantitative and qualitative development (extensive development with threats to quality), low indices of Life-Long Learning (LLL), low possibilities of competitiveness at European education markets. This is accompanied by a clear disproportion between Poles leaving the country to study abroad and the number of foreign students coming to Poland to learn. Poland, similarly to other countries of the region,

<sup>1</sup> Source: Eurostat, *Society on the Road to knowledge. A report on the condition of education*, IBE, Warsaw 2010, <http://www.nauka.gov.pl/szkolnictwo-wyzsze/dane-statystyczne-o-szkolnictwie-wyzszym/>.

<sup>2</sup> See: *Polskie Szkolnictwo Wyższe. Stan, uwarunkowania, perspektywy*, KRASP, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 2009, pp. 18–25.

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem, pp. 16–17.

is an exporter of young intellectual capital (students and graduates) to higher developed countries, mainly of Western Europe.

The state policy on the development of higher schooling was constructed on the basis of consecutive laws on higher education: of 1990 and 2005 and its amendment of March 18, 2011, as well as other acts that introduced systemic changes coupled with alternations necessary from the point of view of current needs and with a view to fulfilling directives coming from the European Union, and particularly the Bologna process. The most important elements of those alternations influencing the access to higher education in Poland and securing the education quality are as follows:

- making it possible to establish non-public universities (the Law on higher education of September 12, 1990),
- diversification of higher schools' profile (the Law on higher vocational schools of June 26, 1997, including the appointment of the Accreditation Commission for vocational schools),
- appointment of the State Accreditation Commission (as of January 1, 2002, under the Law of July 20, 2001 on the change of the Law on higher education, the Law on higher vocational schools and the change of certain other laws),
- starting of the system of student credits (the Law on loans and *student credits* of July 17, 1998),
- introduction of the two-degree study system (the Law on higher education of July 27, 2005),
- introduction of the so-called “ordered specialties” by MNiSW (implemented within the subactivity 4.1.2. of the “Increasing of the number of graduates from specialties with a key importance for the knowledge-based economy” of the Human Capital Operational Programme,
- introduction of the National Qualification Framework for HE (amendment to the Act on the law on higher education of March 18, 2011).

The access to universities is regulated particularly by provisions of the Act on the law on higher education. Pursuant to article 169 pt 3, *the grades at the secondary school certificate are the basis for the acceptance for the first degree studies or master degree studies. The senate of a university decides (...) what grades at the secondary school certificate are the basis for university accession.* Thus, the enrollment to the first degree studies should be carried out on the basis of grades attained at the secondary school final exams; although pt 4 and pt 6 of the article 169 maintain that the senate of a university can make a resolution on conducting entry exams. Simultaneously the law points to the needs of disabled candidates; article 169 pt 5 says that *the conditions and the course of enrollment in case of entry exams (...) should take into account special needs of disabled candidates for studies.* The enrollment to studies of foreign candidates is regulated by article 43 of the Act on the law on higher education of July 27, 2005 and the Decree of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of October 12, 2006 on taking up and continuing by foreigners studies and trainings and their participation in research work and development projects. Generally, foreigners can take up studies but they are not entitled to social grants, reliefs, or grants for the disabled.

The process of access to higher education must also take into account other normative acts not directly linked to higher schooling, e.g. the Law on the protection of personal data of August 29, 1997 and the Law on the national archives of July 14, 1983.

## **I.1. Main assumptions of admission policy in surveyed universities (on the basis of documents)**

### **SGH (Warsaw School of Economics)**

The enrollment strategy is not based on the School's general strategy following the Senate's failure to adopt a general strategy. There are, however, general directions of enrollment procedure:

- a tendency to accept foreign candidates which is reflected by a considerable flexibility of the admission department in accepting foreign candidates under normative acts regulating these issues in Poland,
- preserving the selection character of enrollment to the first degree studies reflected by high requirements concerning students' grades at the secondary school final exams. Moreover, there is an instrument preserved to help select candidates to the second degree studies – an exam.

The above activities aim at preserving the exclusive character of SGH as far as candidates selection is concerned, which helps maintain the high quality of education.

### **UAM (Adam Mickiewicz University)**

UAM runs the first, second and third degree studies as well as post-graduate studies – they constitute the fundamental base of education.

The development strategy of UAM for the years 2009–2019 envisions that in the case of the first degree studies UAM would strive to provide the widest possible opening to all candidates who wish to study, perceiving the studies as a key to individual progress and to professional success. In the case of the second and third degree studies UAM shall apply stricter criteria to candidates for students; it will assume the role of a selective university.

### **PL (Technical University of Lodz)**

One of the key postulates of PL's mission is education adjusted to the current needs of the labour market, both the Polish and European one. As a consequence, the University is shaping its admission policy on the basis of regularly conducted analyzes of the Polish labour market and also carries out the educational process in foreign languages through the Centre of International Education (CKM) simultaneously seeing to it that graduates from such faculties can easily find a job abroad, mainly in economically advanced countries of the European Union. To meet this target PL has signed many bilateral agreements with different foreign centres of education, especially in France, that offer the students a possibility to obtain dual diplomas and at the same time effectively seeking jobs in countries that house partner universities. The educational system of PL embraces three-level studies: engineering, BA, MA and PhD. The first degree studies offer a possibility of acquiring skills and competences at a higher technical level; the second degree studies make it possible to develop own personality and interests; the third degree studies above all initiate the academic career of a student. PL's curricula are prepared so as to meet the requirements of the European and National Qualifications Frameworks. The university tries to construct educational paths for

students so that after graduation they could join the highest-class specialists in a given field. The high quality education at PL finds its reflection above all in positive opinions by independent institutions responsible for the assessment of an educational process as well as in many favourable comments provided by employers as to the level of knowledge, skills and attitudes of University's graduates.

PL provides education not only within the three-degree studies. It also offers education within the Life-Long Learning being a party to the SIRUS European programme. PL also runs many post-graduation studies, also financed through EU funds. The university also provides education for children organizing the so-called Children University, for youth – at a PL secondary school and for adults at the University of the Third Age.

## **BWS (Bielska Wyższa Szkoła im. J. Tyszkiewicza)**

### **BWS' mission**

BWS' mission is to prepare cadres for firms operating in the Podbeskidzie region as well as for enterprises and institutions of national and international scope and use scientific and expert potential with a view to knowledge's commercialization. Vocational skills of students offered by BWS come as a response to demands of business practice, market entities and state institutions implemented with the application of modern educational tools.

### **The strategic vision of development for the years 2011–2015 (abstract)**

BWS is a regional higher school closely connected with the labour market providing education for it and through its active participants (trainings, participation of professionals in the education process, development of activities of the Council of Employers, Career Office).

The BWS development strategy is based on continuous improvement, deepening and widening of cooperation with regional employers to reach solutions leading to the establishment of a spin-out firm. Such an enterprise would bring about a possibility to commercialize scientific knowledge and expert's skills of BWS employees on the basis of the infrastructural potential of the School.

Considering the above provisions one can state that BWS focuses on providing staff for local employers. Documents on the vision, mission and strategy fail to offer a direct reference to admission procedures. BWS runs only the first degree studies and other shorter forms of education. It is a university that in fact does not select incoming students.

## **II. Questions and answers concerning all surveyed universities presented in the form of a table**

<b>1. What is the institutional policy on access?</b>	
SGH/WSE	Access policy and procedures are reflected by Resolutions of Senate and Decrees of Rector defining the rules of admission and enrollment procedures. Abovementioned documents defining the admission rules are amended every year and issued one year ahead. The rules of admission refer to actual forms of studies (intramural, extramural, English language studies) both paid and unpaid and new faculties. SGH admits only 1,000 intramural students and 1,000 extramural students to the first degree studies. The limit has been maintained for many years although the number of candidates is higher than the number of places. The

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	<p>selectivity is obtained through accessing candidates with the highest number of points attained at secondary school final exams – accessed are 1,000 candidates with the highest score.</p>
UAM/AMU	<p>A compromise between a mass and selective character applies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mass character at the first degree – competition of secondary school certificates (or other forms of selection if provided by regulations),</li> <li>• the second and third degree are of selective character.</li> </ul> <p>In the faculties where the number of candidates for the first degree is higher than the number of places, selective procedures apply on the basis of results scored at secondary school final exams.</p> <p>The admission procedure in a given year is regulated by Resolutions of Senate; the procedure of selection for individual faculties by resolutions of councils of faculties.</p>
PL/TUL	<p>Technical University of Lodz admits intramural and extramural students according to limits adopted for a given academic year by University's Senate for individual departments, faculties and forms of study.</p> <p>The limits are adopted following an analysis of the labour market carried out on a regular basis mainly for Lodz province. All in all the University admits ca. 5,000 intramural students and ca. 1,200 extramural students.</p> <p>University's admission policy is conditioned by the situation at the labour market. University's Career Office analyses the needs of the market on a regular basis and accordingly prepares an offer for incoming students.</p> <p>The Resolution of the Senate is an act documenting the accession Policy.</p>
BWS	<p>BWS is a private university with main revenues coming from students' fees. Thus, the admission procedure is recognized as one of key procedures of university's operation.</p> <p>The admission procedure is included in the marketing strategy which is constructed so that the admission could be the broadest possible. A marketing plan is formulated every year, a budget is estimated and a website with admission regulations is prepared. The enrolment is open, non-selective; all candidates are admitted. A condition for studying: the passed secondary school final exams and paid fee.</p>
<p><b>2. To what extent does your institutional policy align with national policy?</b></p>	
SGH/WSE	<p>University's policy and relevant practices are concordant with national policy provided by the Act on the law on higher education – Resolutions of the Senate to a considerable extent reflect the provisions of the Act.</p> <p>There are no the so-called ordered specialties.</p>
UAM/AMU	<p>The state policy seems unclear apart from a few elements, e.g. credits for study or the so-called ordered specialties – UAM identifies itself with this dimension. The problem is posed here by system's inertia – a several-year perspective of identifying the demand for graduates is fallible so the present preferences do not guarantee the meeting of real needs of the economy in 10 or 20 years.</p> <p>The rationality of accession strategy of UAM is hampered by the provision that accession limits cannot be changed by more than 2% over a year. That is why UAM sets limits with a slight excess so as to introduce bigger changes.</p> <p>UAM runs the so-called ordered specialties. It will run 7 faculties, including 2 new ones, as of the academic year 2011/2012. Thanks to grants, more</p>

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	<p>candidates apply what makes it possible to carry out a selective admission to the first degree studies.</p>
PL/TUL	<p>The connection between the accession policy of the University and the state policy is expressed by the running of the so-called ordered specialties (ordered by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education). PL is currently running six so-called ordered specialties and plans to organize admission procedures to the seventh. The number of candidates for the so-called ordered specialties is very high and in some cases translates into a dozen or so candidates per place.</p>
BWS	<p>No direct connection between the accession policy and state policy. The school identifies itself strongly with the needs of the region. The school broadly exploits EU means through which it makes investments improving the access of special needs students. No so-called ordered specialties.</p>
<p><b>3. How is information made available to the secondary sector?</b></p>	
SGH/WSE	<p>The Accession Office and the Information and Promotion Office participate in the process of informing secondary schools about the accession policy and rules. Also deans and scientific and didactic workers are taking part in meetings with secondary school authorities. SGH is engaged in the wide campaign promoting the university with the use of all media, the Internet and Facebook. Moreover, it initiates frequent contacts with secondary schools attended by scientific workers named by dean’s offices. SGH also runs an economic secondary school to prepare potential candidates to studies at this university.</p>
UAM/AMU	<p>UAM pursues an active policy of cooperation with secondary schools. Within this policy UAM cooperates with 14 secondary schools, provides scientific and didactic care over Teachers Foreign Language Colleges, currently implements the project of academic support for secondary schools scientific movement “Newton was a pupil, too” directed to 24 secondary schools.</p>
PL/TUL	<p>Information activities directed to secondary schools are organized by PL and assume different forms. The so-called educational fairs that present, inter alia, the development of different technical and technological concepts and inventions are to help promote the University among potential candidates and their environments. The university also promotes itself through the Internet and organizes events for the city. All media are applied to promote the University and regular meetings are held by students’ representatives and junior scientific workers with secondary schools of Lodz province. An offer describing the possibilities and conditions of education at PL is addressed to all secondary schools in the region. Occasional postcards are sent to directors of those schools. The Facebook is another promotion tool of PL.</p> <p>Also the PL Student Self-government takes an active part in the promotion campaign holding talks, discussions and interviews among potential candidates for studies. The promotion campaign is above all of the regional scope while unique specialties are promoted through all-Poland media.</p>
BSW	<p>The school carries out cooperation aimed to strengthen relationships and improve the quality of education in secondary schools. It has signed agreements on cooperation, organizes mini-lectures, exhibitions and seminars as well as open days, etc.</p> <p>The school is strongly oriented at reaching potential groups of incoming students since the canvassing of candidates directly translates into a financial result. The relations with the region and labour market are BSW’s strongest</p>

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	point of a promotion campaign in secondary schools.
<b>4. What data do you collect on offers/enrolments/non-completion/graduates?</b>	
SGH/WSE	Registering is carried out via electronic way; there is a computer system. The system is not integrated so it is not possible to smoothly generate the reports. SGH collects data on candidates, students and graduates. The data are collected in tune with the Law on the Protection of Personal Data.
UAM/AMU	Registering is carried out via electronic way; there is a computer system. The system is continuously improved according to, e.g. opinions by candidates. All personal data are collected to facilitate the enrolment process. There is a questionnaire available on the Website for candidates to share their opinions on the enrollment procedure. The data are collected in tune with the Law on the Protection of Personal Data.
PL/TUL	Registering is carried out via electronic way; there is a computer system. The system is continuously improved according to opinions of students. All personal data are collected to facilitate the enrolment process. There is a questionnaire available on the Website where a candidate presents factors behind his/her choice of the school and specialty and their importance. The data are collected in tune with the Law on the Protection of Personal Data.
BWS	Registering is carried out via electronic way; there is a computer system. All personal data are collected to facilitate the enrolment process. Moreover, there is a questionnaire available to a candidate during his/her visit at the university to collect opinions about the enrolment process. The data are collected in tune with the Law on the Protection of Personal Data.
<b>5. Within the student profile of your institution, can you disaggregate this data to provide information on different cohorts (e.g. mature learners, learners with disabilities, different ethnic groups)?</b>	
SGH/WSE	The collected data make it possible to identify mature students, disabled students and foreigners. They provide no direct base to identify ethnic minorities except for cases of, e.g. taking up studies by reason of a political asylum, what stems from the Act on the law on higher education.
UAM/AMU	The enrolment process allows for identifying only disability. Questions about other sensitive issues would be treated by UAM as discrimination. A low material status can be revealed when applying for grants. Candidates and students are outside cohorts of low diversification because of the mentioned criteria.
PL/TUL	Information provided by candidates help diversify ethnic minorities. The university uses such information trying to accept specificity of individual groups in the admission process – compare with point 6.
BSW	The whole enrolment process is based on the XP computer programme what makes it possible to filter students according to the majority of the criteria. Candidates are asked about disfunctions, attainments, certificates, etc.
<b>6. What is done to support the admission and progression of distinct cohorts of students? How does this vary by academic programme? Distinct cohorts might include:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower socio-economic groups</li> </ul>	
SGH/WSE	Candidates' material status is not identified at the stage of enrolment. This can be indirectly possible during the course of study when a student reveals his/her sources of earnings (in tune with Minister's decree). A system of grants is available to students with low incomes during their studies at SGH.
UAM/AMU	There are social grants offered to worse-off students in tune with general



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	<p>regulations – family income is here a decisive factor. A “ministerial grant” will be available as of next year, calculated according to average grades and other forms of activities. It is a chance for the worse-off but talented and engaged students. Besides,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is a special pool of grants for disabled students,</li> <li>• there are additional reliefs, connected with misfortunes, e.g. deteriorating health.</li> </ul>
PL/TUL	Students with material problems are exempted from an enrolment fee and enjoy certain privileges during the course of studies, e.g. a lower ceiling in the grants awarding procedure.
BWS	Social grants are offered to worse-off students. The most talented students – with the average grade of 4.5 and higher at the secondary school certificate – are offered the first semester free of charge. For students with the average grade of 4.5 and higher at the end of a semester the following semester is free of charge.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From ethnic minorities</li> </ul>
SGH/WSE	No different treatment is applied to candidates and students of different ethnic groups and minorities; no data is collected in regard to such questions.
UAM/AMU	No such minorities – no such problem.
PL/TUL	There is a special enrolment procedure that applies to students coming from national minorities. There is no limit as to their number in the admission process. Moreover, there are two free-of-charge places plus free hostel for worse-off candidates of Ukrainian descent. The Students Self-government has appointed a special commission to provide assistance to foreign students. Moreover, the studies of foreigners are monitored at the rector’s level.
BSW	No such minorities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-native language speakers</li> </ul>
SGH/WSE	<p>There are two groups of candidates among foreigners as regards the admission procedure. Candidates are qualified by the Admission Office.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poles and foreigners from EU countries are subject to admission by the Admission Commission,</li> <li>• foreigners whose admission is subject to separate procedures by the Admission Office.</li> </ul> <p>Students who are non-native language speakers may choose a special studying course in a foreign language (most frequently English). The registering of candidates and enrolment procedure can be conducted in English at the first degree since the enrolment questionnaire is both in Polish and English.</p>
UAM/AMU	The only group of non-native language speakers at the university are foreign students within e.g. Erasmus Project. The group is not treated as a minority.
PL/TUL	The only group of non-native language speakers at the university are foreign students within e.g. Erasmus Project.
BWS	The only group of non-native language speakers at the university are foreign students within e.g. Erasmus Project.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mature students</li> </ul>
SGH/WSE	There is no differentiation of candidates and students in regard to age during the basic enrolment to the first, second and third degree studies although there are data available concerning the issue. Youth predominates at intramural studies; extramural and post-graduate students differ as to their age. There are

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	special offers for matured students such as the University of the Third Age, or Children University for the youngest.
UAM/AMU	Young people predominate at all forms of studies of the first, second and third degree but UAM takes into account matured students by organizing for them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the University of the Third Age, run by an association operating within UAM,</li> <li>• post-graduate studies (ca. 80) addressed chiefly to more matured people (with experience).</li> </ul>
PL/TUL	A special system of interpreting grades scored during the “old” secondary school final exams is applied towards mature candidates; there is also a career counseling institution and an additional grants awarding system.
BWS	Students at the first degree differ as to their age. There are many 40-year students – the mature group is one of university’s target groups. There is a mailing offer addressed to managers with secondary education and poster actions in institutions. There is an offer of summer trainings addressed to people above 50 (50+) in handling the Internet, Photoshop program as well as art and graphic art classes.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students with disabilities</li> </ul>
SGH/WSE	Students with disabilities are identified at the enrolment stage. They are sent individually to Rector’s Commissioner for the Disabled who undertakes actions to help meet the specific needs stemming from disability during the enrolment process and the course of study. There are also continuous improvement works of university’s infrastructure so that students with disabilities could better use its offer.
UAM/AMU	There is the UAM Office of Rector’s Commissioner for Disabled Students. Related information can be found at the UAM website. The university systematically improves its infrastructure to help study the disabled: there are special elevators, driveways, computer equipment, reliefs, sick leaves. There are also specially adjusted rooms in hostels to meet the needs of disabled students. All renovation works are planned to include such needs. Apart from central actions there are steps taken by individual departments, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organization of sign language classes for students and employees of the philology department who are to help deaf students,</li> <li>• individual organization of studies for the disabled and easy access to sick leaves at the journalism department,</li> <li>• there are ca. 1,000 disabled students at the Department of Social Sciences.</li> </ul>
PL/TUL	There is the Office for Disabled Students at the university. Disabled candidates are exempted from an enrolment fee. Moreover, all buildings of the university are in part, and two of them completely adjusted to the needs of students with disabilities.
BWS	There is a commissioner for the disabled; a disabled candidate receives his assistance during the course of study. There are days open to the disabled. The school is adjusted to the needs of the disabled: there is an elevator, driveways, etc. There are further renovation plans to adjust the building main entrance to the needs of the disabled.
<b>7. How has the pattern of enrolments changed in the last decade (by academic programme/cohort)?</b>	
SGH/WSE	Till the academic year 2005/2006 candidates had to face an entry exam

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	<p>composed of 4 exams including 2 language exams.</p> <p>Currently, the admission to the first degree is carried out on the basis of candidates' grades at secondary school final exams in 5 subjects (including 2 languages). A candidate should pass 3 exams in an extended form (1 language). Thus, a selective character of the admission process is maintained since the requirements are stricter than at other universities that do not require passing exams in an extended form.</p> <p>Candidates for English-language first degree studies are admitted directly to specialties; candidates for Polish-language studies choose their specialties after the second semester.</p> <p>At present (since 2006) candidates for the second degree studies have to pass a qualification test on the economic knowledge but the main criterion is the number of vacancies – when the number of candidates is lower than the number of vacancies, all candidates are accepted irrespective of the results of the test.</p>
UAM/AMU	<p>There were entry exams to all specialties and faculties till the academic year 2005/2006. With the introduction of a new law in 2005, as of the academic year 2006/2007, the enrolment to the first degree and MA studies is based on the results scored at secondary school final exams. There are additional tests concerning a few individual specialties such as art and pedagogy.</p> <p>The rules of enrolment to the second and third degree studies differ and are set by individual faculties.</p>
PL/TUL	<p>There were entry exams to all specialties and faculties till the academic year 2005/2006. With the introduction of a new law in 2005, as of the academic year 2006/2007, the enrolment to the first degree studies is based on the results scored at secondary school final exams. Over the last ten years two changes have been introduced to the regulations of admission to higher schools connected with the secondary school final exams. A curricular mathematics exam has been introduced (what is important for candidates to studies at PL since their grades in mathematics are required during the enrolment procedure) and in case of the International Baccalaureate Diploma a collective grade of all subjects has been introduced. Here, a collective grade of IBD and not grades of individual exams is the base for assessing the result of the secondary school exams for enrolment goals.</p> <p>The PL experience shows, however, that the introduction of the curricular mathematics exam has failed to bring any improvement as far as the quality of knowledge of incoming students is concerned. This resulted in PL authorities' appeal for a possibility of assessing the admission process-required results of certain secondary school final exams by an academic staff with a view to improving the educational quality. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education has so far failed to give its consent to the proposal.</p>
BWS	<p>There have been slight changes in the admission procedures over the recent years. Since the establishment of the school the admission procedures have been based on the results of the secondary school final exams. A selective procedure has been liquidated at the architecture department. Now, an incoming student is required to present certain documents, included passed secondary school final exams. The admission procedure is published at BWS' website.</p>
<b>8. What are perceived to be the main drivers of change?</b>	
SGH/WSE	The driving force of changes is the striving to strengthen the position of the

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	<p>university at the market and improve transparency following the requirements of candidates to be presented with clear rules of admission and to have possibility to question all cases arousing doubts during the course of enrolment. The university sees no problems connected with the admission procedures to intramural studies. There is, however, a falling interest reported in extramural studies.</p> <p>There is a continuous high interest in the third degree extramural studies.</p>
UAM/AMU	<p>There is a general weakening of a selective character of the university as a response to the decreasing number of candidates (population decline).</p>
PL/TUL	<p>The university operates under the conditions of the market of educational services so it has no challengers. There is University of Lodz and non-public universities operating in the region employing in most cases retired professors of PL and AGH. The quality of offered education and the growing position of PL results in university's having no problems with candidates whose number continuously increases.</p>
BWS	<p>Changes in the admission strategy are forced by the environment. The population decline causes the sharpening of a competitive struggle for candidates. In relation to this situation the school continues to increase its attractiveness through, e.g. giving up selection procedures, offering a pool of free-of-charge studies, etc.</p>
<p><b>9. Have any of these developments altered the approach to the way that your university manages quality?</b></p>	
SGH/WSE	<p>The changes introduced to the admission process facilitated the technical base of the enrolment and contributed to the improvement of awareness of the methods standardization and rules of conduct in quality management (standardized secondary school final exams). The university is working out systemic solutions in quality management covering also admission procedures.</p>
UAM/AMU	<p>The resignation from entry exams accelerated and facilitated the admission process. The enrolment on the basis of the results scored at secondary school final exams is more objective since the results are assessed by external bodies and constitute the effect of the three-year preparation of a pupil. The enrolment carried out according to the results of entry exams, which included also qualification interviews, posed a risk that good candidates were not admitted due to a stressing situation or indisposition.</p> <p>The resigning from entry exams does not have any influence on quality. Greater impact is put by a population decline as the number of candidates falls and at certain faculties and specialties a number of candidates is lower than the number of vacancies which results in the admission of all candidates. Thus, the quality of the admission process decreases what entails a fall in the quality of education. Such situation concerns 10% of faculties and specialties.</p>
PL/TUL	<p>The resigning from entry exams and university's control over the quality of incoming students has its impact on the quality of education. This stems, above all, from the nature of technical education which requires the exploitation of the achievements of exact sciences. This forces PL's authorities to organize extra mathematics classes to supplement students' knowledge.</p> <p>As it was mentioned, PL authorities appealed for a possibility of assessing the admission process-required results of certain secondary school final exams by</p>

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	an academic staff with a view to improving the educational quality. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education has so far failed to give its consent to the proposal.
BWS	The giving up of the selection generally causes a fall in the quality of education although the fall is a slight one since there was an open enrolment to the majority of faculties of BWS – without selection.
<b>10. Where does responsibility lie for ensuring and monitoring access?</b>	
SGH/WSE	The responsibility for ensuring the admission process lies with the Vice-Rector for Student Affairs, SGH Senate and Admission Commission appointed under the Senate's resolution. The Admission Office set up in 2010 is responsible for monitoring the process.
UAM/AMU	Vice-Rector for Student Affairs, Office for Admission.
PL/TUL	Vice-Rector for Student Affairs, Office for Admission.
BSW	The marketing and admission department in cooperation with other bodies of the school, and with Chancellor in particular, are responsible for the enrolment process.
<b>11. Are there any problematic issues surrounding access and quality in your system?</b>	
SGH/WSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The biggest problem of the enrolment procedure is an unclear offer for candidates, i.e. whether the procedure concerns entry of a university or a faculty,</li> <li>• internal legal regulations hamper the signing of contracts with recruiting agencies what makes it impossible to increase the effectiveness of admitting foreign candidates,</li> <li>• the admission of practically all candidates to the second degree extramural studies diminishes the selective character/university's exclusiveness.</li> </ul>
UAM/AMU	<p>The application of an enrolment policy is a delicate matter since a sensitive dilemma emerges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• either a mass education and access openness,</li> <li>• or a selective enrolment for the best candidates,</li> </ul> <p>and both ways have their weak points.</p> <p>The selective access concerns intellectual competences of students – it is to favour quality understood as a level of possible attainments of graduates, characteristic of a research university. It is fully applied only in the case of entering the second and third degree studies.</p>
PL/TUL	<p>The university has no bigger problems with candidates' enrolment. Students praise the admission system. Two arguments are behind such assessment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) a possibility of completing all matters linked with university entry via the Internet,</li> <li>2) a possibility of formulating a list of eight preferred specialties.</li> </ol> <p>According to administration officers engaged in the admission process, the website requires improvement in part concerning the admission questionnaire since in many cases the document is filled erroneously.</p>
BWS	No problems on the part of the school. The computer system facilitates the enrolment procedures. There is a problem with the falling number of incoming students, particularly as regards intramural studies. There is no decrease in the number of candidates for extramural studies. The fall in the number of candidates causes resignation from selection procedures what undermines the quality of education.

### III. Conclusions

University	2006		2008		2010	
	Number of candidates/ accessed to intramural first degree studies	Average/ lowest score of the secondary school final exams of accessed candidate	Number of candidates/ accessed to intramural first degree studies	Average/ lowest score of the secondary school final exams of accessed candidate	Number of candidates/ accessed to intramural first degree studies	Average/ lowest score of the secondary school final exams of accessed candidate
SGH	No data available	No data available	1,000	255	1,000	253
AMU						
PL						
BWS	227	No data available	320	from 31,0% to 48,2%	305	from 34,0% to 53,3%

Since the European Standards & Guidelines lacks a direct standard regarding the accession process, it is difficult to sum up the four analyses of Polish higher schools addressing them to barriers and factors favourable for their implementation. Thus, our summing up will focus rather on problems and challenges placed before those schools and an attempt to point to tendencies concerning the access to higher schools in Poland illustrated by the cases.

- State policy vs. university's enrolment policy. All three public universities maintain that there is no clear state policy on the accession process – they cannot make it a basis for their long-term strategies. PL and AMU also point to the weakness of partial policies (so-called ordered specialties) which, in their opinion, not necessarily provide proper forecasts as to the needs of the market and Poland's development needs in ten and more years. Only a small non-public higher school (BWS) has no problems with the matter; as a school closely tied to the local market it can properly adjust the offer to the needs.
- Labour market survey vs. admission process. All universities make efforts to independently follow the careers of their graduates and needs of the labour market sector that is their educational target. The more precisely defined is the market (PL, BWS) the stronger subordinated are offers of education to its concrete needs. AMU and SGH provide more universal education.
- Exclusive/mass character of education vs. admission mode. A dilemma between those two factors is differently approached by different higher schools. The BWS non-public local school admits all candidates who passed the secondary school final exams – it applies no selection procedure. All public universities accept the passed secondary school final exams as a criterion of admission but as a tool of selection admitting the determined number of candidates with the best results in the selected subjects. In admitting to the second degree studies universities frequently organize an extra test to check competences of candidates for a given specialty after completing another specialty of the first degree. Contrary to declarations of governors, the limits of admissions to the second degree are not conducive to the factual selectiveness and exclusive character of the studies – a large part of graduates from the first degree continue studies of the second degree at these universities; in some of them (WSE/SGH) all the candidates are admitted irrespective of the results of the test.

- The competitiveness at the education market, population decline and enrolment procedure. All higher schools expect a fall in the number of incoming students in the whole country and increased competitiveness connected with the upcoming population decline. Public higher schools' fears in this respect are smaller than those on the part of non-public ones. For the former a fall in the number of incoming students does not entail a considerable reduction of operations – it can even translate into an improvement of the education and research work quality, and smaller burdens for academic teachers as a result. For a non-public university whose chief incomes are student fees this may mean a necessity to close down the school.
- Enrolment mode vs. education quality. The introduction of the results of the secondary school final exams as a basis for entering higher schools is deemed a good tool providing equal chances to youth coming from different environments. Big hopes are pinned to re-introduction of mathematics as a curricular subject of the secondary school final exams as a factor improving the quality of candidates' knowledge. Today higher schools frequently organize free-of-charge (financed through EU means) extra classes for weaker candidates to help adjust their competences to university's requirements.
- All higher schools are conducting activities that help equal chances of students coming from different social classes. In Poland there is no problem of equality of women towards men (and vice versa); there are no problems in practice as concerns ethnical minorities or non-native speakers. The student grants and credits system is generally recognized as insufficient; on the other hand, however, the number of schools and students as well as popularization of extramural studies that allows to linking learning with working provides hope that the majority of candidates for studies face no considerable financial barriers. Students with disabilities are taken care of at every higher school although the procedures differ.

The ES&G-formulated directives as regards the access to information about an educational offer, the transparency of the admission and assessment system, etc., are implemented at a satisfactory level by all four higher schools – they are referred to on the websites, through electronic registering systems, etc.