

**Changing PUEB Together – a Survey Report (PhD Students)**  
**2022 Edition**

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Dear Doctoral Students,

when we gathered in March to review the implementation of the 2021 strategy, I encouraged you to take part in a survey on the state of affairs at our University. It was designed to identify potential areas for improvement and change to ensure that PUEB becomes a more welcoming environment for you to grow and work in. I would like to thank all of you who have accepted my call and chosen to share your thoughts. I can assure you that each of your comments has been carefully considered. Today I present you with the survey report and encourage you to read it.

The key areas for improvement, according to your feedback, include:

- the internal communication system (increasing the accessibility and relevance of information, better tailoring of the content provided, conducting the communication in English);
- the flexibility of PUEB operations (streamlining and expediting the way administrative and financial matters are handled, e.g. by shortening decision-making paths);
- the doctoral school programme (more practice-based teaching).

I would like to assure you that we intend to introduce the proposed changes gradually and consistently. All the areas identified have already been incorporated into our strategy. Meanwhile, we will be submitting a detailed action plan inspired by your suggestions in the near future.

Your constructive feedback and ideas offer us immensely valuable insights into further directions for change, both in the day-to-day operations of our University and in terms of updating our strategy. Thank you for taking the time to share your perspective. I hope you will kindly accept my invitation to complete a follow-up survey next year.

We can and we are committed to changing PUEB for the better. I have confidence that we will accomplish this together.

THE RECTOR

## **1. Background data**

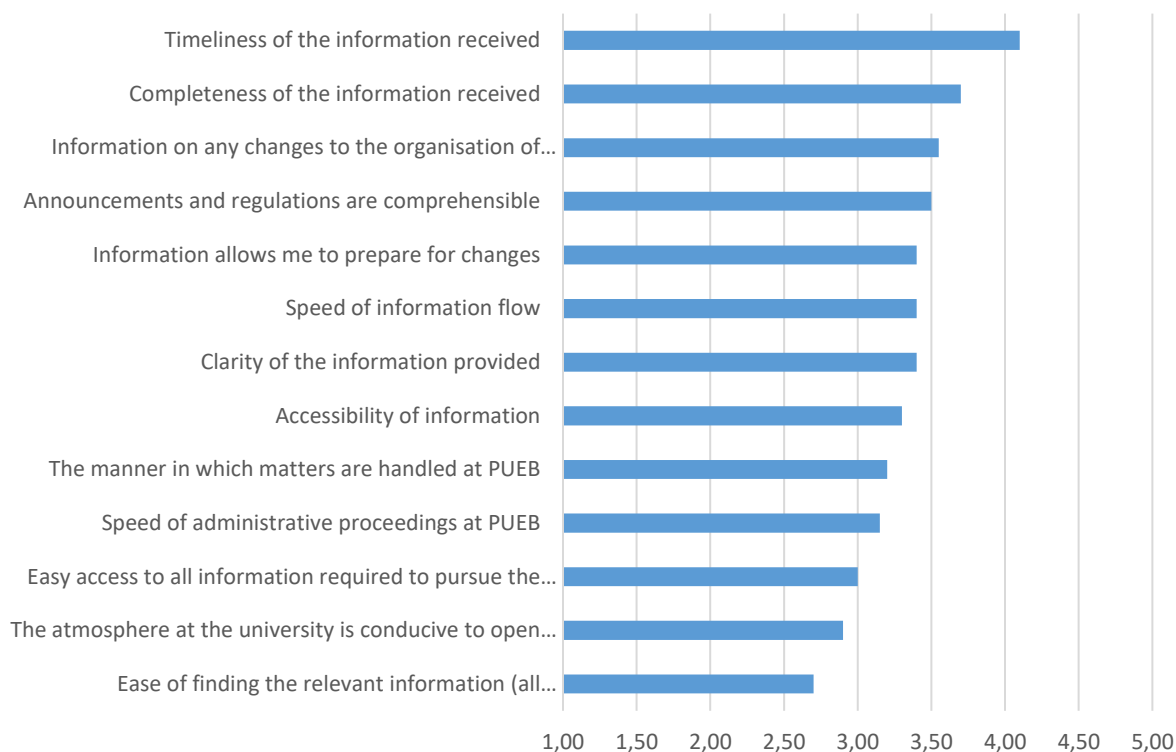
The survey was conducted in February and March 2022. A link to an online questionnaire in English was sent to 42 PhD students; this number included 39 PhD students from the Doctoral School and three individuals working on implementation PhDs. A total of 20 subjects (48%) completed the questionnaire. The sample included 8 women and 12 men.

The questionnaire consisted of five sections addressing the following issues: the flow of information and flexibility of operations, the attractiveness of PUEB Doctoral School's offer, the quality of education, the overall satisfaction rating (one question) and a demographic information form. The questionnaire comprised closed questions, as well as a number of open-ended questions allowing respondents to articulate their specific concerns and suggestions for change in the way the University operates. The survey was anonymous.

This report provides a summary of the most important quantitative data in the form of charts and a qualitative analysis of the respondents' statements. The survey makes it possible to distinguish between the responses of men and women, but due to the small sample size, the summary of the individual sections only includes charts for the total data. All detailed data can be found in the annex. Among the comments, those that most accurately reflect the problems identified and the suggested solutions were selected for publication. The University governing bodies have additionally been provided with a detailed breakdown of all statements within the framework of the open-ended questions, which will enable them to gain a more thorough understanding of the issues raised and the suggestions made, and then to introduce, where possible, appropriate measures at the University.

## 1. Flow of information and flexibility of operation

Chart 1: Rating of individual aspects of information flow and flexibility of operation (scale of 1-5)



### STEPS TO FOSTER THE FLOW OF INFORMATION BETWEEN PUEB AND PHD STUDENTS (19 statements)

- reducing the number of documents/reports required from doctoral students studying at the Doctoral School
- reducing the number of 'levels' at which doctoral students' affairs are handled (and thus speeding up the handling of these affairs)
- shifting the processing of various documents in their entirety to digital solutions (without the need to obtain signatures)
- cutting the time required for various expense claim settlements (e.g. participation in conferences, travel abroad)
- improving access to the VPN for doctoral students involved in, among other things, university committees
- streamlining the payment of scholarships to doctoral students

### **Suggested improvements - the doctoral students' perspective**

*"The capacity for doctoral students to carry out activities on an equal footing with staff. At the moment you cannot even get an access card for your room".*

*"Semestral reporting to the DS - this seems like a redundant procedure to me, especially as we are assessed on an ongoing basis and at the mid-term evaluation. Perhaps an annual report would suffice".*

*"Streamlining decision-making pathways, delegating higher authority to the Head of Department or Doctoral School level".*

*"Would be good if the doctoral school could send us calendar invites to the lectures so that it's all in our calendars instead of a regular excel sheet".*

*"Content management on the university website. It is unclear, the information is impossible to find or the available information is outdated. Remove the outdated portions and hire UX specialists and people familiar with content management processes, as well as translators to quickly translate material into other languages. Currently, I cannot imagine not speaking Polish and navigating through university documents. Change applications to forms instead of sending files by email - using files seems very 1995 :)".*

## 2. Attractiveness of PUEB Doctoral School

Doctoral students were presented with five social benefits that are available to them. The survey showed that few doctoral students were aware of the possibility of enjoying them:

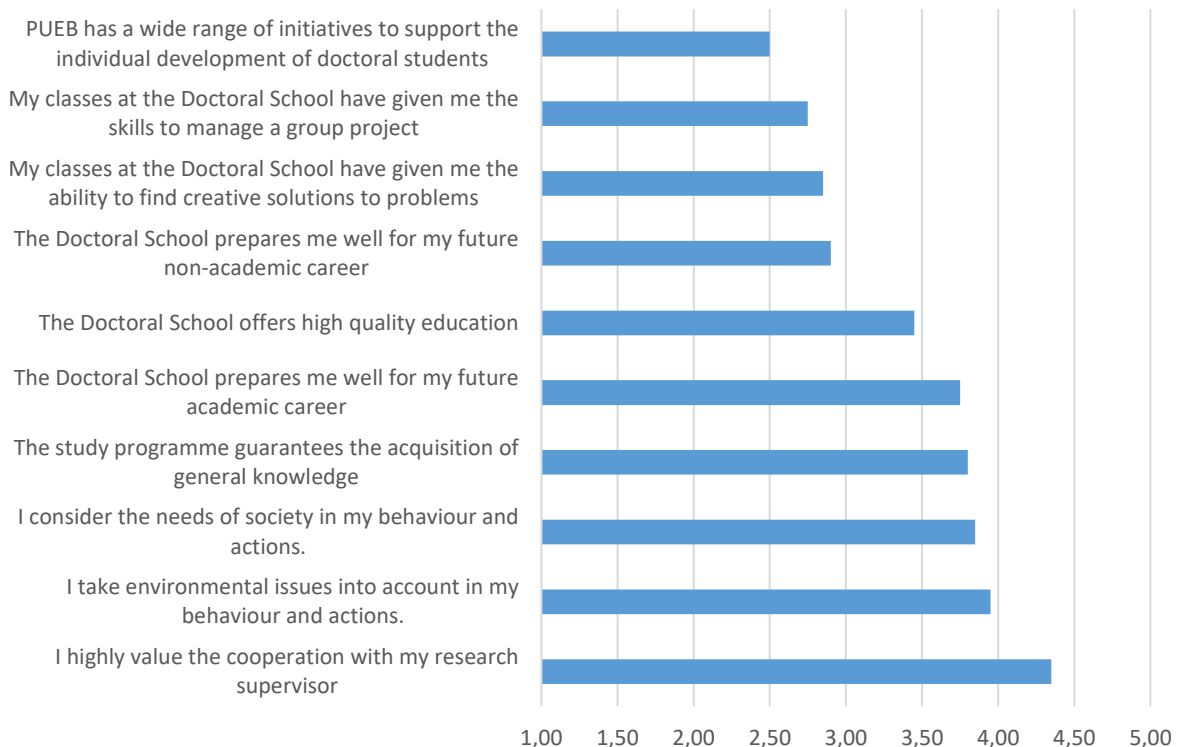
- Sports passes - 4 individuals were able to give a rating, the rest did not know about this benefit,
- Psychological counselling - 12 individuals gave a rating,
- Cinema and theatre tickets - 5 individuals gave a rating,
- Financing additional training - 7 individuals gave a rating,
- Common room facilities - 10 individuals gave a rating.

Those who were aware of the opportunity to receive social benefits rated them as having a positive impact on the attractiveness of the Doctoral School. However, the transparency of the rules for granting these benefits was rated low (mean score of 2.15 on a scale of 1-5).

Separately, doctoral students rated the possibility of obtaining funding for academic development. They rated the ease of obtaining funding at 2.15 points and the transparency of the rules for awarding funding at 2.55 points (on a scale of 1-5).

## 3. Quality and academic nature of education

Chart 2. Rating of individual aspects of educational quality (scale of 1-5)



## FEEDBACK ON COMMUNICATION AND ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF THE PUEB OFFER

*“It is sometimes the case that certain announcements are made using legal terminology. Most of us are not lawyers, so if there is a need for information in ‘legalese’ on an issue, it should be accompanied by a message that translates the most important points into user-friendly language. It also seems to me there are times when legalese is used because it sounds more authoritative and credible. Worse, if it is therefore incomprehensible. I think we should avoid such language whenever possible”.*

*“Funding for Summer Schools, conferences and individual English language courses. At the moment, we cannot receive support in this area, as the PLN 1,000 allocated to us is only sufficient for language revisions or cheaper conferences - a one-off. This is unfortunate, because in the reports we submit to the DS, we are asked to indicate the summer schools and conferences we have attended. Whereas none of us want to invest our private resources here as well”.*

*“I think a collective FAQ would be very helpful, both with general information, how to proceed and the benefits we can use”.*

*“The voice of students should be listened to and the ‘impossible to change’ model of 100% on-site classroom teaching should be changed. The pandemic has demonstrated that a hybrid model is perfect. In terms of communication, the website should be sorted out and used to inform students of administrative and academic year changes, rather than such communication being confined to e-mail. It would be nice to soften the tone of email statements a bit”.*

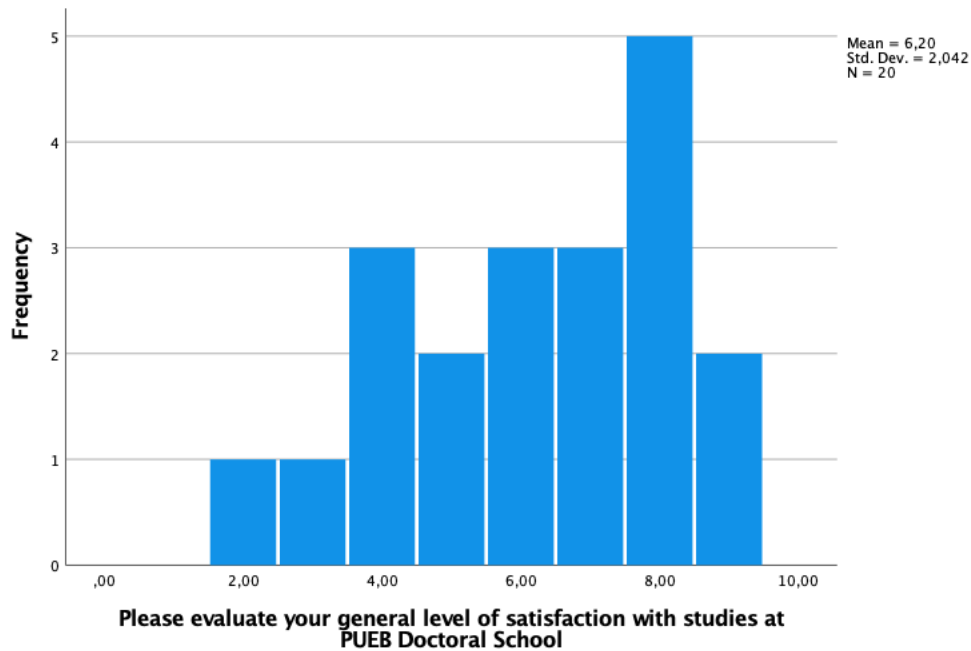
*“The same as before. In addition, we receive emails in Polish and sometimes not in English. I addressed also this issue and I got the reply that some information is not translated cause they are sending it this way, everything should be in English no matter what, we should all have access to this information as an international doctoral school”.*

*“PUEB provides access to most publications. Unfortunately, some publications are not accessible (e.g. professional journals or peer-reviewed conference proceedings). There is considerable difficulty in passive participation in conferences, i.e. without presenting a paper, as it is often impossible to get funding to attend conferences. Meanwhile, conferences are a valuable source of the latest research information and provide an opportunity to establish valuable contacts with interesting individuals within our research area”.*

#### 4. Student satisfaction

Student satisfaction was measured by a single question directly asking about the level of satisfaction. This question had a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 meant highly dissatisfied and 10 meant highly satisfied. The mean for PUEB doctoral students was **6.2 points**, with a median of **6.50 points**.

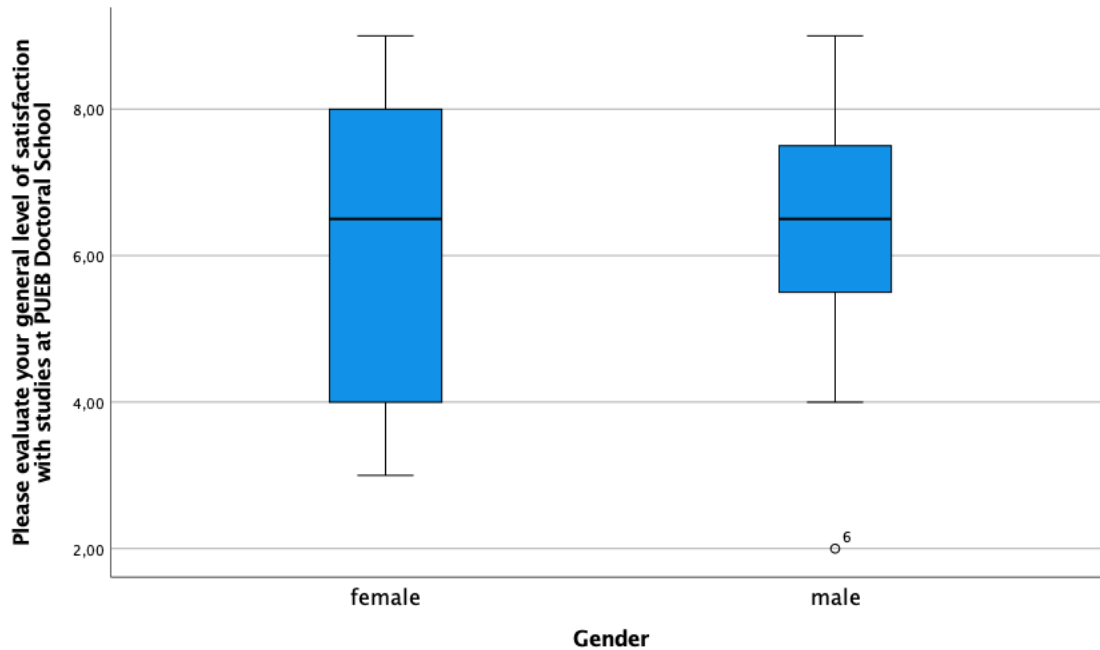
Chart 3. Histogram of student satisfaction scores



The box plots compare the responses of men and women. The blue box indicates the typical 50% scores of a given group, after cutting off the 25% lowest and 25% highest scores. The thicker line indicates the median. The whiskers, on the other hand, indicate the minimum and maximum scores, once any cases that differ strongly from the group are excluded (marked with separate dots). Male and female scores have a median of 6.5, with female scores being more diverse.



Chart 4. Student satisfaction according to gender – a box plot



<b>REASONS FOR REDUCED/LOW DOCTORAL STUDENT SATISFACTION AT PUEB (7 statements)</b>
<p><u>ADMINISTRATION</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the requirement for on-site attendance at classes</li> <li>- linguistic standardisation of classes and documentation related to the doctoral school (English)</li> </ul>
<p><u>TEACHING AND LEARNING</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the prevalence of general and non-doctoral-specific classes over classes aimed at supporting the development of the doctoral dissertation</li> <li>- too few classes related to practical skills training (e.g. using databases)</li> </ul>
<p><u>RELATIONSHIPS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- lack of equal partnership (e.g. with the doctoral supervisor)</li> <li>- lack of communication concerning the individual needs of doctoral students (e.g. in the area of specialised training or juggling doctoral studies with professional duties outside the University).</li> </ul>