

Internal Security as a Field of Study in Polish Higher Education

Abstract: The article presents the Polish higher education experience as regards the creation of an independent educational area, whose aim is to prepare the staff for subjects responsible for security and public order. It mainly concerns the staff demands of the government administration services such as the Police, the Border Guards, tax and customs control authorities. According to the author, the creation of such a specialized field of study in 2006 in Poland was closely connected with the demands of the labour market.

Keywords: Bologna process, higher education, internal security

1. Introductory notes

In Poland issues pertaining to higher education are regulated by the Act of 2005¹. The content of this legal act follows the standards set by the Bologna Process². Thus, Polish higher education became part of a European Higher Education Area. According to the accepted solution, Polish schools can offer three levels of studies. **First level studies** provide students with knowledge and skills in the given area of study as well as prepare them for employment in specific professions. They take six to eight semesters and lead up to the title of Bachelor's degree or an engineer's degree. **Second level studies** aim to provide students with specialist knowledge in the given area of study and prepare them for creative work in specific professions. They last for three or four semesters and lead to a Master's degree or an equivalent degree (e.g. a physician's degree)³. **Third level studies** enable students to acquire advanced knowledge in the given area or discipline of study and prepare them to carry out independent research or creative activity. They last for up to eight semesters and lead to a Doctor's degree.

Studies are provided within fields of study. These shall be understood as specified fields of education. At the same time, particular **fields of study correspond to certain standards of education** which formulate sets of educational principles to be followed by schools when designing their own study curricula. It is worth noting that only about 40% of the total number of teaching hours are regulated by standards. The remaining classes are left to the disposal of schools, and these may adopt individual solutions considering their own possibilities as well as the demands of the labour market. Designing specialized teaching curricula enables the **creation of various specializations within one field of study**⁴.

The minister with responsibility for higher education determines the names of fields of study and teaching standards by way of ordinances. It is worth emphasizing that, within the above scope, the minister cooperates with the Main Board of Higher Education⁵. Its responsibilities comprise, among others, putting forward to the minister proposals for the names of the fields of study as well as for standards of teaching.

¹ The Act of July 27, 2005 on Higher Education Law (*Dziennik Ustaw* [official journal of laws] No.164, item 365 with subsequent amendments)

² The process began with the signing of the Joint Declaration of European Ministers of Education in Bologna on June 19,1999. The Declaration stipulates that by 2010 its signatory states will have created a coherent European higher education space and a European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

³ Parallel to first and second level studies there are also uniform Master's studies. They last for nine to twelve semesters and provide specialized knowledge in the given area of study, preparing students for creative work in specific professions.

⁴ For example, within the field of study of administration Polish schools offer, among others, such specializations as public administration, economic administration, public order and security administration, tax administration and public finance, tax and customs administration, European administration.

⁵ The Board is an elective body representative of higher education.

2. The field of study of administration

Until the year 2006, the issues of internal security were not distinguished as a separate field of education and they could only be a subject of specialization within the field of study of administration. This field of study comprises the knowledge of social sciences, and in particular the sciences of law and administration, as well as basic knowledge of economy. Administration studies prepare students for clerical work in different branches of public administration and for administrative work in non-public institutions. However, the staff of government administration responsible for the maintenance of public security and order have to meet particular requirements⁶. For this reason, within the margin of discretion given by the standards of teaching in the field of study of administration, curricula of studies aimed at this category of customers were specialized. In particular, this practice could be observed at the end of '90. At that time a lot of Polish schools included public security and order into the field of study of administration.

The dynamic development of social relations, which is particularly noticeable in economic and technological spheres of life, is accompanied by the increase in the importance of the sense of security in the society. It is mainly caused by the development of new forms of crime as well as by the occurrence of major incidents (acts of terror, transportation disasters, construction disasters or natural disasters). All the phenomena cause an increasing demand for highly qualified staff who will be able to meet the requirements of institutions responsible for public security and order. In this case, specialization of studies within the field of study of administration turns out to be insufficient.⁷

3. The field of study of internal security

The passing of the act on higher education law in 2005 was correlated with activities aimed at the organization of issues relating to the fields of study and standards of education within particular fields of study. The activities were started by the Main Board of Higher Education as early as at the beginning of 2004. According to the adopted principles, decisions concerning fields of study and standards of education should be taken with the consideration of changes in higher education and scientific research in Europe as well as changes in the economy and in the labour market, with particular reference to new fields of study. At the same time, a new field of study shall encompass at least one third of the subjects not included in the standards of already existing fields of study. Furthermore, a new field of study will be introduced provided that at least two schools in the country have included it in their offer⁸.

Among the institutions invited by the Board to works on the proposal for a new list of fields of study were National Defence Academy, Higher Police School and the Main School of Fire Service. The first of the above mentioned schools is responsible to the Minister of National Defence, whereas the two other ones – to the minister responsible for internal affairs. As a result of the cooperation, the schools proposed to create three new fields of study, namely national security (proposed by the National Defence Academy), internal security (proposed by the Higher Police School) and security engineering (proposed by the Main School of Fire Service). The cooperating schools also drew up proposals for the standards of teaching for the new fields of study.

⁶ See: LETKIEWICZ A. Zasoby ludzkie jako największy kapitał Policji [in:] *Kształtowanie potencjału kadrowego Policji wobec wyzwań przyszłości*, A. Letkiewicz (Ed.), Szczytno 2007, p. 8.

⁷ For more details, see: SZANKIN T. *Uwarunkowania wyodrębnienia nauk o bezpieczeństwie* [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo narodowe i zarządzanie kryzysowe w Polsce w XXI wieku – wyzwania i dylematy*, T. Jemioła, K. Rajchel (Ed.), Warszawa 2008, p. 115.

⁸ Document entitled *Stan prac, zasady i tryb postępowania nad przygotowaniem standardów kształcenia w Radzie Głównej Szkolnictwa Wyższego* (the state of works, principles and procedures for the creation of standards of education in the Main Board of Higher Education) which was adopted at a plenary session of the Main Board of Higher Education on February 16, 2006.

The Main Board of Higher Education accepted the solutions proposed by the uniformed services schools. Consequently, the fields of study relating to the security as well as their standards have been specified in relevant ordinances of the minister responsible for higher education⁹.

4. Standards of education for the field of study of internal security

4.1. First level studies

There are five fundamental elements within the standards of education. They refer to general requirements, a graduate's qualifications, common teaching contents, students' practice and additional requirements.

In accordance with the standards, the first level studies in the field of internal security must take 6 semesters at least. Simultaneously, the total number of classes carried out at this time cannot be lower than 2000, at least half of which ought to be seminars, workshops and communicative forms of teaching¹⁰.

The educational standards clearly specify what qualifications a graduate of the first level studies ought to have. Graduates are supposed to possess the essential knowledge of social sciences, human rights and the rules of a state functioning. They ought to be acquainted with the division of the state authority, responsibilities and principles of the national institutions' functioning. It mainly refers to public administration because maintaining internal security is one of its responsibilities. Graduates should also have a command of the legal regulations in the area of internal security and the issues of crisis management. They are expected to understand and to be able to analyse the events connected with security on a global, regional, state and local scale. Moreover, they ought to be able to solve minor professional problems, participate in team work, be able to manage teams of people, communicate with them, collect and analyse information. They are supposed to achieve the "B2" level of a modern foreign language according to the Common European Framework for Language Reference of the Council of Europe¹¹. Having the above qualifications a graduate of the first level studies is expected to be prepared to work in public administration organizational units which are responsible for the internal security of the country.

The common teaching curricula are another aspect that is regulated by the standards of teaching. The group of basic syllabuses is of an obligatory character. They cover issues from the area of psychology and sociology, organization and management, the state and law, the state's and the internal security in the European Union. The minimum number of classes in this group is 150. Taking the specialized syllabuses into account, they are not of an obligatory character. Therefore, it is possible to make the curricula of studies, which are prepared by schools on the basis of the standards, the school's needs oriented. This group includes the issues of human rights and professional ethics of state services' officials, criminology and forensic science, combatting crime, the safety in common communications and transport, social security, protection of citizens, property, facilities and regions, local communities' safety and security by design, protection of personal data and classified information, fighting terrorism and crisis management. Here the number of classes ought not to be lower than 435.

⁹ Ordinance of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of June 13, 2006 on the names of the fields of study (*Dziennik Ustaw* No.121, item 838), Ordinance of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of July 12, 2007 on the standards of education for particular field of study and levels of teaching, and on the establishment procedures and conditions for offering inter-field studies and macro-fields of study (*Dziennik Ustaw* No. 164, item 1166).

¹⁰ The total of the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) points assigned to particular groups of teaching contents during studying should not be lower than 180.

¹¹ The standards have been specified in the Council of Europe's document – the *Common European Framework for Language Reference*.

What is more, it is suggested in the educational standards that the studies curricula should contain not less than 60 hours of physical education, 120 hours of foreign languages, 30 hours of information technology and 60 hours of humanities. It is also recommended to include classes of protection of intellectual property, industrial safety and ergonomics in the curricula of study.

Therefore, the educational standards determined the minimum required number of hours on the 2000 level, which refers to the first level studies. On the other hand, they regulated only 40 % of the number. Thus, it is possible to adjust the studies curricula quite freely. Colleges have also the possibility to take their staff and organizational capabilities into consideration and respond to the demands of the labour market flexibly.

It is worth indicating that students' practice is a very important element of the first level studies. It is supposed to last for 4 weeks at least. The school which conducts the studies is entitled to establish the rules and methods of doing the practice.

4.2. Second level studies

The second level studies in the field of internal security consist of 4 semesters at least. In this case the total number of classes ought not to be lower than 800¹². At the same time, as it is in the case of first level studies, seminars, workshops and communicative forms of teaching should constitute 50 % of classes.

Under the teaching standards, the second level studies' graduates ought to have the knowledge of social and psychological issues. Their skills of confronting this knowledge with practice are of great importance here because of a close connection with the state of internal security. The ability of choosing a specific and best possible method of acting in certain conditions is vital, as well. Graduates are expected to be able to assess risk and predict the results of their decisions as well as to solve serious professional problems and manage teams of people. Having the above mentioned qualifications, a graduate of the second level studies should be well prepared to work on managerial posts in public administration units which are responsible for the internal security.

The basic teaching syllabuses of second level studies include elements of the philosophy of safety, strategy of internal security, interpersonal communication and social psychology. The number of hours in this group of subjects should not be lower than 90. However, in the group of specialized programmes the educational standards include the elements of the history of internal security in Poland, protection of citizens and civil defence, management of internal security systems, current terrorist threats, strategy of crime prevention, non-governmental forms of providing security, protection against factors of mass destruction, methodology of research on security, control and audit in the area of security and quality management in institutions responsible for internal security. The minimum number of classes within this group of subjects is 225.

In case of second level studies the educational standards regulate only 40 % of the total required number of hours of the teaching contents. As a consequence, the second level studies curricula can be subject to similar modifying as it is in case of first level studies. There is no obligatory professional practice on the this level of studies.

5. Conclusions

Undoubtedly, the fact of making internal security the field of study in 2006 is closely connected with the demands of the labour market. Protection of security of citizens and of the public order call for highly specialized personnel. Teaching students based only on the field

¹² The total of the ECTS points assigned to particular groups of teaching contents should not be lower than 120.

of study of administration seems to be insufficient¹³. It mainly concerns the staff demands of the government administration services such as the Police, the Border Guards, tax and customs control authorities.

It is also important that, according to the principles of lifelong learning, finishing studies is only an introduction to further learning process and developing skills. The Law on Higher Education states that postgraduate studies are the best form of education for those who have already graduated from studies and they can be conducted by schools within their fields of study¹⁴. In case of internal security, postgraduate studies which mainly focus on the issues of crisis management, fighting organized crime and terrorism ought to be of particular significance¹⁵.

References

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Kľúčové slová: Bolonský proces, vysokoškolské vzdelávanie, vnútornú bezpečnosť

Súhrn

V článku sú uvedené skúsenosti z poľského vysokoškolského vzdelávania, pokiaľ ide o vytvorenie nezávislého priestoru vzdelávania, ktorého cieľom je pripraviť pracovníkov pre orgány zodpovedné za bezpečnosť a verejný poriadok. To sa týka predovšetkým zamestnancov služieb štátnej správy, ako je polícia, pohraničná stráž, daňových a colných kontrolných orgánov. Podľa autora, bolo vytvorenie takéhoto špecializovaného študijného odboru v roku 2006 v Poľsku úzko spojené s požiadavkami pracovného trhu.

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¹³ The first school which was given the positive opinion of the State Accreditation Committee and the approval of the minister responsible for higher education for creating the field of study of internal security was the Higher Police School.

¹⁴ In practice they take 2 semesters at least, which is 200 of teaching hours.

¹⁵ See: URBAN A., Nowelizacja ustawy – Prawo o szkolnictwie wyższym – perspektywy uruchomienia studiów podyplomowych z zakresu Zarządzania kryzysowego [in:] *Zarządzanie kryzysowe wyzwaniem dla edukacji*, A.Urban (Ed.), Szczytno 2007, p. 108.