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Habilitation degrees in the Polish People's Republic
Part 1. The requirements and conditions of habilitation proceedings under
the law on schools of higher education

Summary

Until 1965 the requirements and conditions of habilitation proceedings in Poland were governed by the law on schools of higher education. The solutions adopted under that law showed a relatively high degree of stability. In the first years after WWII the habilitation qualification was based on the solutions governing in Poland in the 1930s, with only slight changes introduced in the first month after the end of the war. The first reform of higher education of 1947 left the right to confer habilitation degrees with schools of higher education then in existence and retained the existing order of the habilitation proceedings. However, it implemented a number of rather significant amendments in the area of the requirements needed to be fulfilled at each stage of these proceedings. The right to lecture remained inherent to the habilitation qualification and degree. What changed was the scope of influence of the minister of education supervising schools of higher education regarding habilitation proceedings and the appointment of the Main Council of Higher Education with the right of final say and consent to the opening of the habilitation qualification and to run the habilitation proceedings.

Habilitation was abandoned by the reform of 1951 and replaced, following the Soviet model, with a higher degree of a doctor of science. Further changes followed in 1958 when it was restored by relevant provisions of the Act on higher education. It was then that more than forty years after Poland regained independence, the habilitation degree was for the first time tied to a successful completion of the habilitation proceedings and earning the degree of a 'docent'. The Main Council of Higher Education continued to function but its role in habilitation proceedings was reduced to issuing opinions before the minister of higher education decided on habilitation matters. Apart from schools of higher education, the right to confer habilitation degrees was granted to the Polish Academy of Sciences and academic institutions operating outside schools of higher education.

Keywords: the People's Poland – habilitation procedure – the Polish People's Republic – habilitation proceedings – conditions entitling to open habilitation proceedings