

**Report  
of the Expert Panel  
on the  
RE-ACCREDITATION OF  
Business School PAR**

**Date of the site visit:**  
26 January, 2017

February, 2017

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## INTRODUCTION

This report on the re-accreditation of the Business School PAR was written by the Expert Panel appointed by the Agency for Science and Higher Education, on the basis of the self-evaluation of the institution and supporting documentation and a visit to the institution.

The re-accreditation procedure performed by the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE), a public body listed in EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education) and a full member of ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), is obligatory once in five years for all higher education institutions working in the Republic of Croatia, in line with the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

The Expert Panel is appointed by the ASHE Accreditation Council, an independent expert body, to perform an independent peer-review-based evaluation of the institution and their study programmes.

The Report contains the following elements:

- a brief analysis of the institutional advantages and disadvantages,
- a list of good practices found at the institution
- recommendations for institutional improvement and measures to be implemented in the following period (and checked within a follow-up procedure), and
- detailed analysis of the compliance to the Standards and Criteria for Re-Accreditation.

Members of the Expert Panel:

- Prof. Jaka Vadnjal, GEA College - Faculty of Entrepreneurship, Republic of Slovenia, panel chair
- doc. dr. sc. Iris Lončar, Department of Economics and Business Economics, University of Dubrovnik, Republic of Croatia
- Dr. sc. Dijana Plantić Tadić, VERN Polytechnic, Republic of Croatia
- Dr. sc. Marjeta Tomulić Vehovec, Zagreb School of Economics and Management, Republic of Croatia
- Antonia Vukušić, student, Polytechnic "Marko Marulić" in Knin, Republic of Croatia

In the analysis of the documentation, site visit and writing of the report the Panel was supported by:

- Iva Žabarović, coordinator, ASHE
- Minea Antolić, support to the coordinator, ASHE
- Ivana Rončević, interpreter at the site visit, ASHE
- Goran Briški, report translator, ASHE.

During the visit to the Institution the Expert Panel held meetings with the representatives of the following groups:

- management
- head of study programme
- teachers employed full-time and external associates
- students
- external stakeholders,
- Quality Committee and the Committee for Management and Quality Improvement

The Expert Panel also had a tour of the library, IT rooms, student register desk, and classrooms, where they held brief Q&A sessions with students.

Upon the completion of the re-accreditation procedure, the Accreditation Council renders its opinion on the basis of this Re-accreditation Report, the Assessment of Quality of the higher education institution and the Report of Fulfilment of Quantitative Criteria acquired from the Agency's information system.

1. issue a confirmation on compliance with the requirements for performing higher education activities or parts of activities (renew the licence),
2. deny the license for performing the higher education activities or parts of activities to the higher education institution, or
3. issue a letter of recommendation for the period up to three (3) years in which period the higher education institution should make the necessary improvements. The letter of recommendation may include suspension of student enrolment for the defined period.

The Accreditation Recommendation also includes an Assessment of Quality of the higher education institution as well as recommendations for quality development.

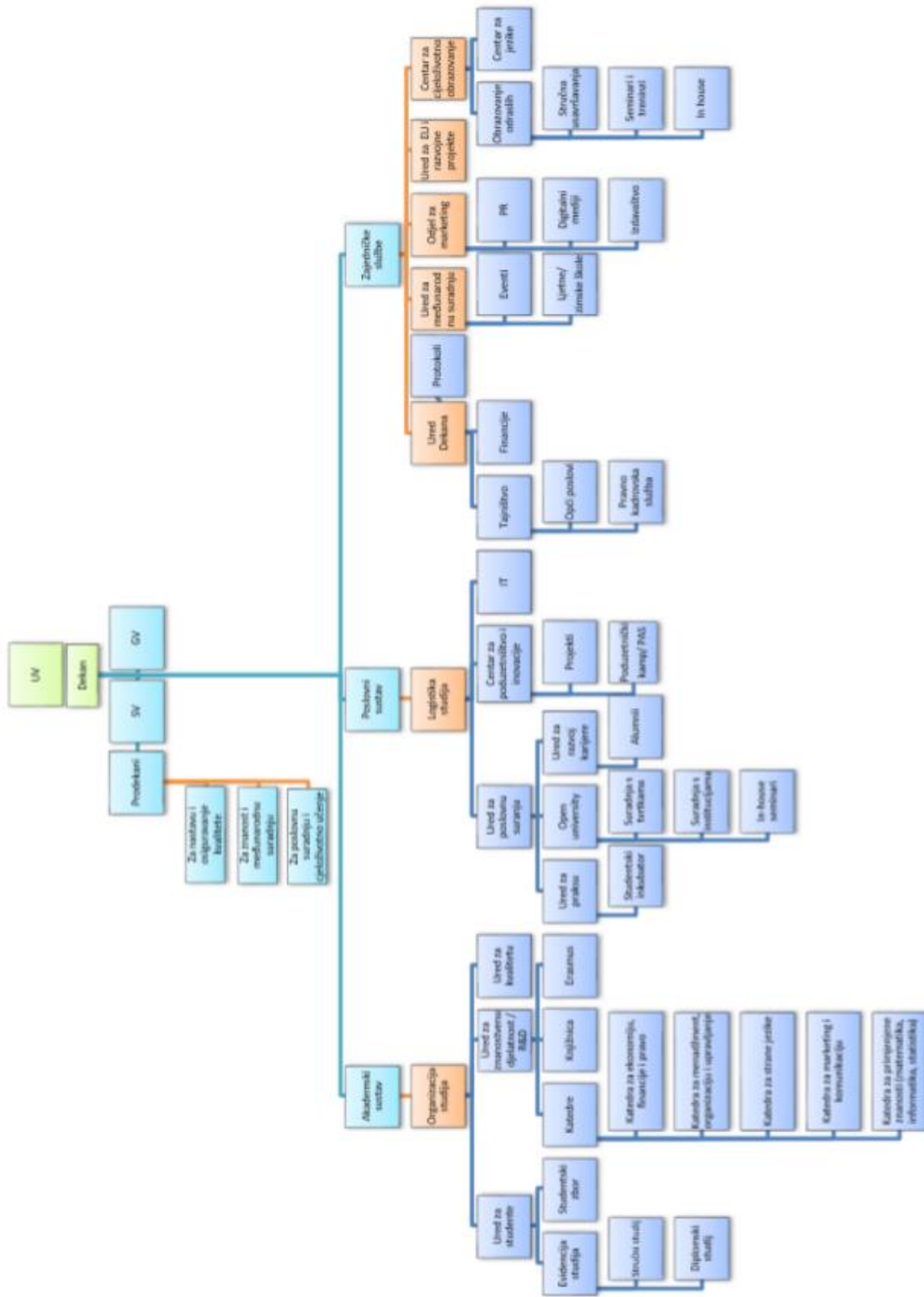
## **SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED INSTITUTION**

NAME OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: BUSINESS SCHOOL PAR

ADDRESS: Trg Riječke rezolucije 4, 51000 Rijeka

DEAN: Dean dr. sc. Gordana Nikolić

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE: From Self-evaluation report (p. 6)



STUDY PROGRAMMES:

- Business Management

NUMBER OF STUDENTS (ACCORDING TO MOZVAG):                      FULL-TIME – 49  
PART-TIME - 74

NUMBER OF TEACHERS: 6

TOTAL BUDGET: HRK 2,444,036

MSES FUNDS: /

OWN FUNDS: HRK 2,236,825.10 (92%)

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION:

Experience of the founders of the Business School PAR, P.A.R. Ltd., in the implementation of the German study programme, and partnership with the German Business school BA Nordhessen GmbH (2007 - 2011) proved to be very useful in the preparation of the professional study programme of Business Management. The programme of BA Nordhessen GmbH served as a reference for development of this professional study programme, and German experience was also helpful in writing of the programme feasibility study.

Business School PAR received permission to carry out the professional study programme of Business Management with the license from the Ministry of Science, Education, and Sports from 30 August, 2011.

P.A.R. Ltd. and Business School PAR have started their operation at the Narodno učilište at Školjić 9, however, since under the lease agreement Business School PAR could only use two offices, one classroom, staff room, toilets, and common rooms, the premises had proven inadequate with regard to the significant increase in the number of students, as well as in the teaching and administrative staff.

With moving to a new location in the centre of Rijeka (the 2nd floor at the Trg Riječke rezolucije 4) by the end of 2013, the available space was significantly improved, to a total of 238 m<sup>2</sup>, comprising a large lecture hall, conference room, library, common room and offices for teaching and administrative staff. In the spring of 2014, the School leased the former premises of the University of Rijeka (a total of 277 m<sup>2</sup>), located at the 1st floor of the same building, where today it has a large lecture hall (Aula), computer classroom, classroom for foreign language study, library with the study area, Registrar's office and technical support office. School's facilities have thus increased to a total of 515 m<sup>2</sup>. This does not include common areas like the staircase between 1st and 2nd floor, and student area located on the mezzanine. All the facilities and lecture halls are well-equipped and refurbished, and there is also a possibility of further expansion at the same address.

## **CONCLUSIONS OF THE EXPERT PANEL**

### ***ADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION***

1. Due to a small number of students and staff, there is a more direct relationship between students and teachers/staff.
2. Environmental awareness and voluntary work indicate a high degree of social responsibility (of both teachers and students).
3. Innovative approach to developing additional processes (e.g. summer schools) and extracurricular (sports) activities.
4. Smaller space and interior design contribute to a pleasant working environment.
5. Motivation and commitment of teaching and non-teaching staff.

### ***DISADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION***

1. Most of the elements of the strategy are not adequately defined and/or developed, and students and external stakeholders were not involved in their development.
2. Quality assurance system as a whole is at the beginning of the initial stage of development; for the most part, still just formally defined.
3. Overlapping of organizational functions.
4. Students and external stakeholders from public and private sectors are not included in decision-making and quality assurance bodies.
5. Minimal mobility of students and staff, i.e. only for the duration of several days, for participating in conferences, summer schools and some projects.

### ***FEATURES OF GOOD PRACTICE***

1. Student incubator as a source of student projects.
2. Direct communication between management and employees, students and teachers.
3. Sponsorships of various businesses aimed at developing the teaching process and students' extracurricular activities.
4. Teacher: student ratio of 1:14.

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT***

- 1. Management of the Higher Education Institution and Quality Assurance**
  - Use appropriate methodologies to define processes and procedures, as well as lower level documentation, adopt them and then consistently apply.
  - Define more efficient mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of set strategic and operational goals.
  - Ensure the proper implementation of mechanisms for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching.



- Regularly inform all the stakeholders on the existing mechanisms for monitoring ethical behaviour.
- Adequately distribute student workload for every course, in line with allocated ECTS credits.
- Implement additional measures for encouraging international cooperation and mobility. Provide for a delivery of study programme in English language, as a precondition for the incoming mobility.
- Conduct regular, detailed analyses of the results of research carried out, in order to ensure that appropriate preventive and corrective measures are defined for improving the teaching process.
- Conduct additional testing of candidates to ensure their quality and necessary competencies for this study programme.
- Ensure the acquisition of relevant textbooks in order to update the library fund.

## **2. Study programmes**

- HEI should develop and implement an integrated system of monitoring the quality of study programme, formally including all the stakeholders.
- A systematic measuring of learning outcomes, both at the programme level and level of individual courses, needs to be introduced.
- The allocation of ECTS at the level of syllabus needs to be transparent in order to ensure appropriate student workload.
- HEI should consider applying new methods of teaching, involving contemporary principles (e.g., complementary e-learning methods).
- HEI is recommended to include additional (non-compulsory) literature and other scientific/professional sources in the syllabus.

## **3. Students**

- Considering the students enrol exclusively through *Postani student* website, HEI should reconsider the enrolment criteria so that candidates' competencies are reviewed prior to the enrolment procedure. This would help reduce the differences in prior knowledge of the enrolled students, as well as reduce the burden of teachers in organising and delivering additional bridging courses.
- Students should be included in the Professional Council and informed on the decisions that are adopted.
- Since students rarely use the Complaint and Request forms for resolving their problems, HEI is recommended to inform the students of their rights and the use of said forms.
- Further encourage students to participate in international exchange programmes, Erasmus+ in particular. It is also recommended to facilitate and enable the incoming mobility of students from other higher education institutions, especially foreign ones.
- Consider introducing courses conducted in English, in order to attract foreign students.

- Publish the results of student surveys.
- Keep records on the employment of graduates.
- Inform the public of the opportunities for employment upon the completion of study programme.

#### **4. Teachers**

- Define a plan for professional development of teaching staff, with clearly outlined rights/obligations.
- Introduce a reliable system of tracking total workload of teaching staff (not just of teaching).
- Put as a requirement and ensure the necessary training for development of teaching competencies for all persons involved in teaching process - especially the external associates.
- Formalise selection process for teachers and align it with the needs of the study programme, bearing in mind the area of individual teachers' specializations.
- Establish procedures for approving and keeping track of teachers' external engagements.

#### **5. Scientific and Professional Activity**

- Complete the strategy of the Business School PAR.
- Establish transparent mechanisms for financing research at international and national level.
- Take additional measures to encourage international cooperation and mobility, and provide financial and other support for carrying out study programme in English.
- Develop individual career development plans for every employee.
- Define clear rules for rewarding and encouraging professional work and development of employees.
- Define mechanisms for monitoring professional activity.

#### **6. International Cooperation and Mobility**

- Clearly define and publish criteria for continuation of study and transferring from other higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia.
- Put in additional effort in encouraging the students for international mobility.
- Introduce specific measures of encouraging international mobility of students and teachers.
- Although there are many formal international agreements on cooperation, it is necessary to devise measures to implement the cooperation in practice.
- Ensure delivery of study programme in foreign language.
- Ensure other necessary requirements for attracting foreign students and teachers.

## **7. Resources: Administration, Space, Equipment and Finances**

- Consider possibilities of providing additional space for individual and group student work.
- Clearly define infrastructure development within strategic documents.
- Library should include more professional (business) resources.
- HEI should consider a financially viable income model, as this will be crucial to the future development of the institution.

# DETAILED ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE TO THE STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR RE-ACCREDITATION

## ***1. Management of the Higher Education Institution and Quality Assurance***

**1.1.** Despite creative and clearly defined mission and vision statements, HEI does not have a comprehensive development strategy, with clearly set strategic objectives. Certain strategic guidelines are not based on logical, efficient sequence of institutional development (e.g. *emphasise the development of an integrated quality assurance system*, as HEI does not have a QAS at the moment), in addition to students and external stakeholders not participating in their preparation. Strategic and operational plans are not harmonised, and there are no mechanisms for monitoring their implementation (which is insufficient).

**1.2.** Defined organisational structure is not adequate for an institution of this size (with regard to number and names of organisational units, and overlap of functions). Processes are not methodologically analysed, and only some steps of the teaching process are described in several documents.

**1.3.** Study programme is generally in line with the institutional mission, however there is a lack of cooperation with the labour market (in the context of graduates' employment).

**1.4.** Aside from the quality policy and a few other documents on quality (which are not yet adopted), there is no other evidence of implementation of a quality assurance system. HEI has formally adopted numerous regulations, which, however, were never implemented in practice, or proved their fitness for purpose. Most of the internal documents prescribing processes are rather general in nature. Many process activities are defined very generally and do not include all the necessary segments. Quality assurance bodies have been established (Quality Committee and the Committee for Management and Quality Improvement), however, there is insufficient evidence of their efficiency or indeed functionality. Students and other stakeholders are not involved in quality assurance development.

**1.5.** The mechanisms for monitoring the quality of teaching mostly come down to student survey (there is no *peer-review*). Generally, there is a lack of institutional research and the analyses thereof that would serve to determine measures of further improvement.

**1.6.** Not applicable.

**1.7.** HEI has an Ethical Code for preventing unethical behaviour; however, there are no effective mechanisms for sanctioning unethical behaviour.

## **2. Study programmes**

**2.1.** There is insufficient evidence that the institution has effective procedures for monitoring and improving the quality of study programme. HEI is a young institution, which might be a reason why the procedures of monitoring, improving and developing the existing study programme are not systematic and seem more as an administrative burden than a tool for continuous institutional development. Requirements of the European Standards and Guidelines have not yet been met; only one procedure partially describing the teaching process has been developed so far, however there is no evidence that it has been adopted for use and therefore no grounds for assessing its efficiency. The procedures formally include students and private and public sector stakeholders, as well as representatives of civil society organisations, which - providing they are involved in the wider context of the institution-level quality assurance system - could contribute to the long-term development and sustainability of HEI.

**Based on the evidence from the documentation provided and observations made during the site visit, the Expert Panel recommends a re-accreditation of the existing study programme of Business School PAR.**

**2.2.** Taking into account the needs of society, proposed enrolment quotas are justified. Although HEI considers increasing the quota in the future, the Expert Panel believes that high tuition fee might present an obstacle: the existing study programme is considerably more expensive than comparable study programmes delivered at public HEIs, some of which are nearby.

**2.3.** The enrolment quotas are in line with the institutional resources for quality teaching; approx. 70% of teaching is conducted by guest lecturers (not employed at the HEI), which opens up various possibilities for future growth (with regard to the number of students, but also number of study programmes). As for the pass rate, it is - by some accounts - very high, in some cases reaching 100%.

**2.4.** Defined learning outcomes clearly describe the knowledge and skills students obtain upon the completion of study programme. Learning outcomes at the level of courses should, however, be better aligned with learning outcomes at the programme level. Learning outcomes are not adequately distributed between individual courses and should be revised. Performance indicators for the teaching process (i.e. mechanisms for monitoring whether set goals have been achieved) are not clearly defined.

**2.5.** There is insufficient evidence that teachers ensure that the assessment of student learning is in line with the defined learning outcomes, that the full range of learning is being assessed, and that the assessment is appropriate to the qualification level.

**2.6.** It is not clear whether the allocation of ECTS provides a realistic estimate of student workload. Although it is stated in the Self-evaluation report that 1 ECTS represents 25-30 work hours, there is insufficient evidence that this is applied at all courses. Representatives of HEI have in fact stated during the meeting with the Expert Panel that this is left for individual

teachers to decide. Also, there is no systematic measurement of the actual relative to planned workload, both at the level of individual courses and the entire study programme. Although some international standards are considered, there is no written benchmark analysis that would include study programmes of Croatian and foreign HEIs. Although there are set rules for the distribution of ECTS, this was not carried out at the level of courses. Since no information was provided on the realistic estimate of student workload, it is open to question whether ECTS were adequately allocated at the level of courses.

**2.7.** The content of study programme covers to a large extent the standard elements of undergraduate business studies, including a solid basis of generic knowledge from all major disciplines (mathematics, microeconomics) and foreign languages. Considering that this is a relatively new study programme, its quality cannot be compared to relevant international standards.

**2.8.** Teachers use teaching methods that are appropriate for subject matter (mostly traditional lectures, as well as lectures by guest lecturers and field work), and encourage independent student learning.

**2.9.** According to the Self-evaluation, teachers ensure appropriate amount of supplemental resources, including (national) electronic databases and other sources that facilitate knowledge acquisition. Unfortunately, the Panel was not able to check the accessibility of databases due to technical difficulties with HEI's IT system.

**2.10.** As appropriate to learning outcomes, students have opportunities to reinforce and apply their learning in the context of practical applications, mostly through student incubator, but also through work in partner institutions, etc.

### ***3. Students***

**3.1.** Candidates enrol through *Postani student* website, i.e. via state graduation examination. At state graduation examination, their knowledge in Croatian language, mathematics, and English language is assessed. Said assessment of candidates' knowledge is not aligned with the demands and expectations of their future careers, considering that upon finishing the professional study programme Business Management, students are expected to have acquired skills for lower and middle management, i.e. knowledge in the field of economics and logistics. The competencies of applicants necessary for their future careers are evaluated, but only after the enrolment. Due to the consequent differences in candidates' prior knowledge, there is an additional burden on teachers. There is no evaluation/testing of candidates' competencies prior to the enrolment (a completed 4-year secondary school and state graduation examination are the only preconditions for enrolment), and there is no evidence of an evaluation of candidates' competencies relative to competencies of graduated students.

**3.2.** From the interviews conducted with students, management and teachers during the site visit, the Expert Panel found that HEI provides adequate support to students and encourages them to participate in extracurricular activities. Information on how the extracurricular activities are financed was not provided to the Panel.

**3.3.** Through its Assessment Centre, centre for support and counselling, HEI offers professional orientation in order to ensure students' professional development. Mentoring and counselling provided by teachers and external associates is also commended. Students are informed on teachers' consultation hours at the beginning of each academic year, and they can also contact them via e-mail or Moodle. HEI has appropriate resources to ensure students' professional development.

**3.4.** Students are informed on the knowledge assessment procedures and methods at the beginning of each academic year or semester. Teachers provide all necessary feedback. It should, however, be noted that students are not sufficiently informed about the possibility of appeal (formally, via existing forms), but take their appeal directly to teachers. HEI is recommended to inform the students on these forms, and their rights in this respect.

**3.5.** Through interviews conducted with the management and the head of study programme, the Panel found that HEI maintains contacts with its former students once a year (via e-mail, *PAR alumni* Facebook group, by telephone or a personal meeting). Croatian Employment Service (HZZ) keeps statistics on student employment; however it should be noted that this only applies to those who enter the labour market and not those who continue their education at other higher education institutions. It could be concluded therefore that these statistics are insufficient. Communication with alumni is not systematic.

**3.6.** HEI regularly informs the public about its study programme, learning outcomes and qualifications, but does not publish information on employment opportunities upon the completion of the study programme. HEI organises various promotional activities involving current and former students, such as visits to secondary schools.

**3.7.** Students can express their opinions on the conditions of study and work of professional services through student survey conducted once per semester for each course. During the site visit, the Panel noticed special boxes installed for students to provide their complaints and opinions in writing. During the meeting with students, it was confirmed that students have the opportunity to personally contact the management, teachers and other staff to help them solve their problems. The students are not, however, informed about the formal complaint and request procedures, and are not included in the Professional Council where they would have the most opportunity to influence the decision making process, etc.

**3.8.** Students receive feedback on the measures that have been taken on the basis of their opinions and suggestions for improvement of the quality of studying. Students are satisfied with

the way in which their problems are resolved, as well as with the quality of feedback, however, it is recommended that the survey results are published.

#### **4. Teachers**

**4.1.** Since the beginning of its operation, Business School PAR has a steady increase to the number of its teachers. It currently employs 6 younger teachers (average age of 36) and 12 external associates, which represents the optimum ratio and a good potential for future development. The Panel noted, however, that some teachers head multiple courses, in some cases even outside of their area of expertise. The Panel was not given clear explanation on whether the teachers in question are only formal heads of courses or if they actually deliver them. In addition, some teachers do not have the pedagogical/methodological/didactic education required for teaching; this issue is particularly present with external associates.

**4.2.** As stated in the documentation that was provided to the Expert Panel, HEI plans to employ new, prospective associates in the future, taking into account their competencies as well as academic degrees, as per national legal requirements. It is recommended to formalise the system of selection and awarding and inform all the stakeholders, in order to ensure the transparency of employment and that human resources are aligned with the needs of the study programme.

**4.3.** HEI has a significantly better ratio of students and full-time teachers than legally required 30:1. This criterion is, therefore, fully met.

**4.4.** HEI ensures the professional development of their teaching staff through in-house trainings. In-house trainings are organised 2-3 times a year, and their topics are aligned with the needs of improving the teaching process (e.g. developing learning outcomes, selecting teaching methods, writing of project proposals etc.)

However, there is no plan for professional development of teaching staff, planned conferences, trainings etc. that teachers would have a right/obligation to attend; this is left to individual initiative. The Panel noted that only a small number of teachers pursue opportunities for professional development i.e. competence building, such as study visits abroad. This lack of initiative is reflected in syllabi, which emphasise literature that does not follow current trends in science and business.

**4.5.** In addition to teaching and research, majority of fully-employed teachers perform other functions (as members of the management, heads of chairs, etc.). Panel is somewhat concerned that these functions occasionally overlap, and that the additional burden can hinder individual performance / quality of work within the set time frame.

Total workload is also not adequately formalised or documented. There is no written evidence on the fulfilment of obligations (apart from teaching). Teachers' consultation hours are not clearly displayed, neither on their office doors nor on the website. Students explained to the



Panel that consultations are held only by prior appointment, at hours agreed upon via e-mail. It is strongly recommended to define set weekly consultations hours for every teacher.

**4.6.** As stated by teachers during the site visit, there are no external teaching commitments of full-time staff (which is understandable given their workload), however, there is no monitoring system in place and no records are kept regarding this issue.

## ***5. Scientific and Professional Activity***

**5.1.** Business School PAR has regulations concerning the existing and planned professional research activities - Statute, Regulations on professional, scientific and research work, Regulations on professional development and education of non-teaching staff, Regulations on conditions and procedure of appointment to scientific and professional grades for teachers and associates, and Regulations on international mobility. The rules and regulations are aligned with the institutional mission that reads as follows: "PAR connects people with knowledge, providing unforgettable experience of positive changes. With cooperation of the academic community with the labour market and innovation in education, we are creating competent individuals within the society and encourage an entrepreneurial culture". HEI's strategy is still not completed, so it is not possible to determine whether all the rules regarding existing and planned professional and research activities have been adopted. Basic formal prerequisites for conducting professional activities are met, but such activities are not planned. Article 10 of the Regulations on professional, scientific and research work stipulates that vice dean for research and international cooperation submits suggestions and plans regarding professional, scientific and research work to Professional Council, based on decisions of the heads of chairs. However, the Panel did not receive any such plans or suggestions.

In addition, there are no transparent mechanisms for financing research at international and national level. It is our general conclusion that Business School PAR has adopted a number of rules and regulations concerning different activities - including professional activities - but that these are of very general nature and would better suit a much larger organisation. HEI's management explained that these documents were developed with future institutional growth in mind. These intentions notwithstanding, some of the regulations are similar to those of major faculties that are constituents of even larger universities; Panel's recommendation is to align them with the realistic framework in which Business School PAR operates.

**5.2.** HEI has mechanisms which ensure that research and professional activities are efficiently carried out. This is fairly evident from the activities listed under 5.3. All the employees (both teaching and non-teaching staff) are offered opportunities to attend seminars and trainings within the scope of their work, personal interests and career plans. HEI has organised a couple of in-house seminars for its employees and external associates. However, there is no efficiency analysis of the implemented professional activities and their contribution to the economy and profession. It is strongly recommended to implement additional measures for encouraging international cooperation and mobility. HEI should ensure resources for a delivery of study

programme in English language, as a precondition for the incoming mobility. It is stated in the Self-evaluation report that heads of chairs are also responsible for advancement of the profession, and professional and scientific development at the level of chair. A small number of employees have multiple functions, which could potentially affect the quality of their work. It is unclear how often are the chair meetings organised, since the information provided was contradictory.

The Self-evaluation report states that, based on Regulations on professional, scientific and research work, and Regulations on professional development and education of non-teaching staff, individual professional development plans are defined for non-teaching staff, who are then directed to specific formal and informal education accordingly. The Panel did not have the opportunity to examine these plans since HEI does not have them in written form.

**5.3.** Business School PAR has a successful cooperation with other professional organisations and businesses in Croatia and abroad. In a relatively short period of time, HEI has established numerous partnerships with professional organisations and businesses in Croatia and abroad. The Panel does not see any reason why this trend would not continue in the future with even more success. HEI's strategy for the period 2016-2020 is not yet completed; some parts are still missing and are purportedly being developed. The strategy contains strategic goals and tasks for the period 2012-2016 (which is probably a mistype, but considering the overall objectives, this cannot be determined with complete certainty). The strategic document does not clearly state the number of already signed international agreements for the following period, although - as evident from the list provided - there is a basis for successful international cooperation. There is, however, a question on whether the formally defined plan is sustainable in reality. One of the main problems with the plan for mobility of students and teachers is that there are no courses in English.

The following projects are the result of the cooperation so far:

- Annual scientific and professional conference on leadership: PILC (PAR International Leadership Conference)
- Annual Summer School SenZations (in the field of information and telecommunication technologies focused on IoT)
- Annual Winter School on Event Management INCASO (International Carnival School)
- Annual event Fortress of Knowledge – PAR entrepreneurship camp
- Annual event Women With No Excuses (Žene bez PARdona)
- Organization of the Startup Europe Week and Startup Europe Awards, events designed to promote the startup community and entrepreneurial culture
- PAR Forum – Startup Clinic
- Student Business Incubator

The following agreements on cooperation form the basis of the listed (and future) projects:

- with Croatian Chamber of Economy, regarding support to CCE Rijeka members
- with Croatian Association for Project Management (CAPM), regarding training for certification of project leaders, for International Project Management Association certificate
- with the city of Rijeka, on cooperation in *startup* incubator project

- with the University Library in Rijeka on paying the student member fee.

Also, HEI has agreements with the following organisations regarding the student practice (internship):

- Jadrolinija
- Croatia Osiguranje
- Makol marketing Ltd.
- Marine diesel Ltd.
- Tri Mare Ltd.
- Sablić & Zorc Plc.
- Gradex Ltd.
- Računovodstvo i savjetovanje Mesić Ltd.
- Nomen Ltd.
- Goya Ltd.

In conclusion, as an evidence of existing or planned international cooperation, HEI lists the following agreements:

- Erasmus Charter for Higher Education, signed in December 2014, and including: ERASMUS Inter-Institutional agreement 2016-2020– Mobility for learners and staff – Business School PAR (for student exchange); ERASMUS Inter-Institutional agreement 2017-2021– Mobility for learners and staff – Business School PAR (student/staff exchange); ERASMUS Inter-Institutional agreement 2014/15-2020/21– Mobility for learners and staff – Business School PAR (student exchange);
- Memorandum of Understanding between Iacocca Institute of Lehigh University (Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA) and Gordana Nikolic (Business School PAR) – in order to promote the participation of students from the Western Balkans in the Iacocca Institute «Global Village for Future Leaders of Business and Industry» project, and financing thereof;
- Agreement on Co-operation between Modern Business School (Belgrade, Serbia) and Business School PAR – in order to establish cooperation with regard to organising student internships; organising research seminars and symposia; meetings of business organisations, institutions and entrepreneurs; conducting joint research; issuing joint publications; conducting joint promotional activities; etc.
- Memorandum of understanding between Business School PAR and College of Business and Technical Education Dobož, (BiH) - in order to establish professional and academic cooperation;
- Agreement on Cooperation between Business School PAR and Slobomir P University (Dobož, Bosnia and Herzegovina), for the purpose of student and teacher mobility, improving the quality of study programmes, lifelong learning programmes, research and development, organising professional conferences and developing publishing activities;
- Protocol of Academic/Scientific Cooperation Between Giresun University (Giresun – Republic of Turkey) and Business School PAR - for establishing academic and research cooperation, academic mobility, exchange of teachers, researchers and students, developing joint distance learning programmes, joint academic and research projects, etc.;

- Memorandum of understanding between Business School PAR and JADE – European Confederation of Junior Enterprises – in order to establish professional and academic cooperation.

**5.4.** HEI supports the professional activity and development of teaching competencies of its staff, by encouraging teachers to participate in scientific and professional conferences, to publish articles in renowned journals, and attend various trainings. HEI has recently launched the first issue of its own journal, *Journal of Business PARadigms*, with the aim of further encouraging professional activities and development. When asked how the teaching staff is encouraged for professional development, the representatives of HEI answered that no one is refused if wanting to participate in a professional or scientific conference. It is stated in the Self-evaluation report that rewarding and acknowledging excellence is important for motivation; thus, relevant Regulation defines that teachers with highest grades in student survey are rewarded. However, the regulations do not clearly specify the amount of the reward, nor what are the mechanisms for encouraging employees for professional activity and development. It is stated that the dean approves stimulations/rewards at her discretion.

The Strategy envisages further strengthening of publishing activities; for this purpose, HEI established the Publishing Department. It is believed that this strategic decision will improve the publishing of own textbooks, which HEI itself recognises as insufficient at this moment. The Panel is not entirely certain that these plans are feasible, given that HEI has no mechanisms for monitoring the professional activity.

The Self-evaluation lists 10 most important articles published in the last 5 years. The list contains articles from 2011, which should not be included in the list.

## ***6. International Cooperation and Mobility***

**6.1.** Institutional efforts with regard to attracting students from other higher education institutions are insufficient, or almost non-existent, although there is an International Cooperation Office established at the HEI. There are no courses delivered in English - i.e. the preconditions for student and teacher mobility within the ERASMUS programme are not met. HEI has bilateral agreements with foreign higher education institutions, and within the Erasmus+ programme, but does not encourage students to participate. Business School PAR does not currently have any foreign students; this is partly due to lack of courses in English, and partly to institutional inactivity in that respect. There are also no regulations on conditions for enrolment/transfer from other study programmes.

**6.2.** Students have the opportunities to complete a part of their programme abroad, which they do not use. Only one student used the opportunity to spend some time abroad in order to complete student practice and improve her language competencies. HEI does not stimulate or encourage students to take that step. As they lack encouragement, support, and information, students are not interested in studying abroad, which renders the signed cooperation agreements on student mobility rather pointless.

**6.3.** Teaching staff also lacks initiative to participate in the academic exchange programmes. Only one teacher - the dean and founder of Business School PAR - has participated in such a programme, for duration of 3 days, which is insufficient to gain international experience. It is necessary to introduce measures for stimulating international mobility of teachers and students.

**6.4.** The Self-evaluation report states: "In November 2016, the Business School PAR became a member of the Businet network, a network of internationally oriented higher education institutions, the cooperation of which is based on mutual strengthening of internationalization, providing opportunities for international networking and organizing workshops and cooperation programs in improvement of activities of higher education institutions within an international context." As a partner in a prominent association, HEI plans to extend its international cooperation in the following period. However, since it only recently became a member, there are still no implemented activities in this respect.

**6.5.** Despite all bilateral agreements and agreements within the Erasmus+ programme, the HEI does not make enough effort to attract foreign students. Also, conditions for attracting foreign students are not met, since all the courses are delivered in Croatian language. HEI attracts foreign students only for short periods of time, for winter and summer schools, which cannot be considered international cooperation.

**6.6.** There are no cases of a foreign lecturer staying and teaching at PAR for a longer period of time (e.g. a minimum 3-6 months). According to the management, there were some visiting lecturers coming from partner institutions such as Lehigh University and Iaccoca Institute, who held lectures at PAR. However, since these activities were carried out in June and July, students with whom the Panel talked to did not know anything about it. It can be concluded that potential opportunities arising from HEI's international cooperation agreements are not adequately exploited.

**6.7.** Signed agreements are a prerequisite, but not a practical step in the realization of international cooperation. A good sign that things are improving in this respect is the EU project application for a Key Action 2 (KA2) - Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices – Strategic Partnerships for youth, the results of which are still pending.

## ***7. Resources: Administration, Space, Equipment and Finances***

**7.1.** The institution provides appropriate learning resources (classrooms, library, computers) for all enrolled students. It is necessary, however, to consider possibilities of providing additional space for individual and group student work.

**7.2.** Considering the number of enrolled students, the ratio of teaching and non-teaching staff is adequate.

**7.3.** During the site visit, the Panel had the opportunity to see that HEI has appropriate rules for professional development of non-teaching staff, which, however, are not formalised or clearly stated in strategic documents.

**7.4.** As this is a business school, there isn't much need for laboratory equipment. There are some computers available for students in the library.

**7.5.** Considering that HEI is a business school, there isn't much need for special equipment: it can be stated that sufficient equipment is made available, and that it is utilized in accordance with the mission.

**7.6.** Size, usability and availability of the library and equipment ensure adequate support for learning. During the site visit, however, the Panel observed that many books are practically new - teachers should additionally motivate students to use the books for learning and research. Library resources are scarce, and access to databases is restricted to Hrčak database.

**7.7.** Financial sustainability is ensured in accordance with HEI's mission, enabling all students to successfully complete their study programmes. Sources of funding, which mostly come from the tuition fees (about 90%) are transparent and do not restrict the autonomy of HEI. However, economies of scale are a challenge that will have to be addressed with an increase in the number of enrolled students.

**7.8.** Institution's own funds are used to improve the quality of teaching and research, in line with HEI's mission and other documents. The challenge in the following period is to enable systematic improvement of teaching and non-teaching activities.