



agency for science and higher education

**REPORT  
OF THE EXPERT PANEL  
ON THE  
  
RE-ACCREDITATION OF  
THE FACULTY OF ECONOMICS  
UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA**

**Date of site visit:**

16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018

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**MAMFORCE**



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The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of the Agency for Science and Higher Education.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Agency for Science and Higher Education (the Agency) is an independent legal entity with public authority, registered in the court register and a full member of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) and European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

All public and private higher education institutions are subject to re-accreditation, which is conducted in five-year cycles by the Agency, in accordance with the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education (Official Gazette 45/09) and subordinate regulations, and by following *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG) and good international practice in quality assurance of higher education and science.

The Agency's Accreditation Council appointed an independent Expert Panel for the evaluation of the Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka

Members of the Expert Panel:

- Professor. Mislav Ante Omazić, Ph.D., Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Zagreb, Republic of Croatia, **chair of the expert panel**
- Professor. Dirk Simons, Ph.D., Business School, University of Mannheim, Federal Republic of Germany,
- Jan Thomas Martini, Ph.D., Faculty of Business, Administration and Economics, Bielefeld University, Federal Republic of Germany
- Professor. Aleksandra Pisnik, Ph.D., Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Maribor, Republic of Slovenia
- Ivona Martinović univ. bacc. oec., student, Faculty of Economics, University Josip Juraj Strossmayer in Osijek, Republic of Croatia

During the site visit, the Expert Panel held meetings with the following stakeholders:

- Management (Dean and Vice-Deans)
- Self-evaluation Report committee
- students
- alumni
- external associates, representatives of the business sector, project partners, local self-government bodies and professional organisations
- Vice Dean for undergraduate studies
- Vice Dean for graduate studies

- Vice Dean for science and postgraduate studies
- full-time teaching staff
- assistants and junior researchers
- leaders of research projects
- Vice Rector for finance of university of Rijeka

The Expert Panel members had a tour of the library, IT classrooms, student administration office and classrooms, attended sample lectures, where they held a brief Q&A session with students and participate in short demonstration of online platform for graduate online study programme Entrepreneurship.

In accordance with the site visit protocol, the Expert Panel examined the available additional documents and study programme descriptions (learning outcomes).

The Expert Panel drafted this Report on the re-accreditation of the Faculty of Economics University of Rijeka on the basis of the Faculty of Economics University of Rijeka Self-evaluation report, other relevant documents and site visit.

The Report contains the following elements:

- short description of the evaluated higher education institution
- brief analysis of the institutional advantages and disadvantages
- list of institutional good practices
- analysis of each assessment area, recommendations for improvement and quality grade for each assessment area
- detailed analysis of each standard, recommendations for improvement and quality grade for each standard
- appendices (quality assessment summary by each assessment area and standard, and site visit protocol)
- summary

In the analysis of the documentation, site visit to the Faculty of Economics University of Rijeka and writing of the Report, the Expert Panel was supported by:

- Frano Pavić, coordinator, ASHE
- Sandra Bezjak, assistant coordinator, ASHE
- Lida Lamza, interpreter at the site visit and translator of the final report, ASHE.

On the basis of the re-accreditation procedure conducted, and with the prior opinion of the Accreditation Council, the Agency issues a following accreditation recommendation to the Minister for Higher Education and Science:

1. **issuance of a confirmation on compliance with the requirements** for performing the activities, or parts of the activities
2. **denial of license** for performing the activities, or parts of the activities
3. **Issuance of a letter of expectation** with the deadline for resolving deficiencies of up to three years. A letter of expectation can include the suspension of student enrolment within a set period.

The accreditation recommendation also includes a quality grade of a higher education institution, and recommendations for quality improvement.

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

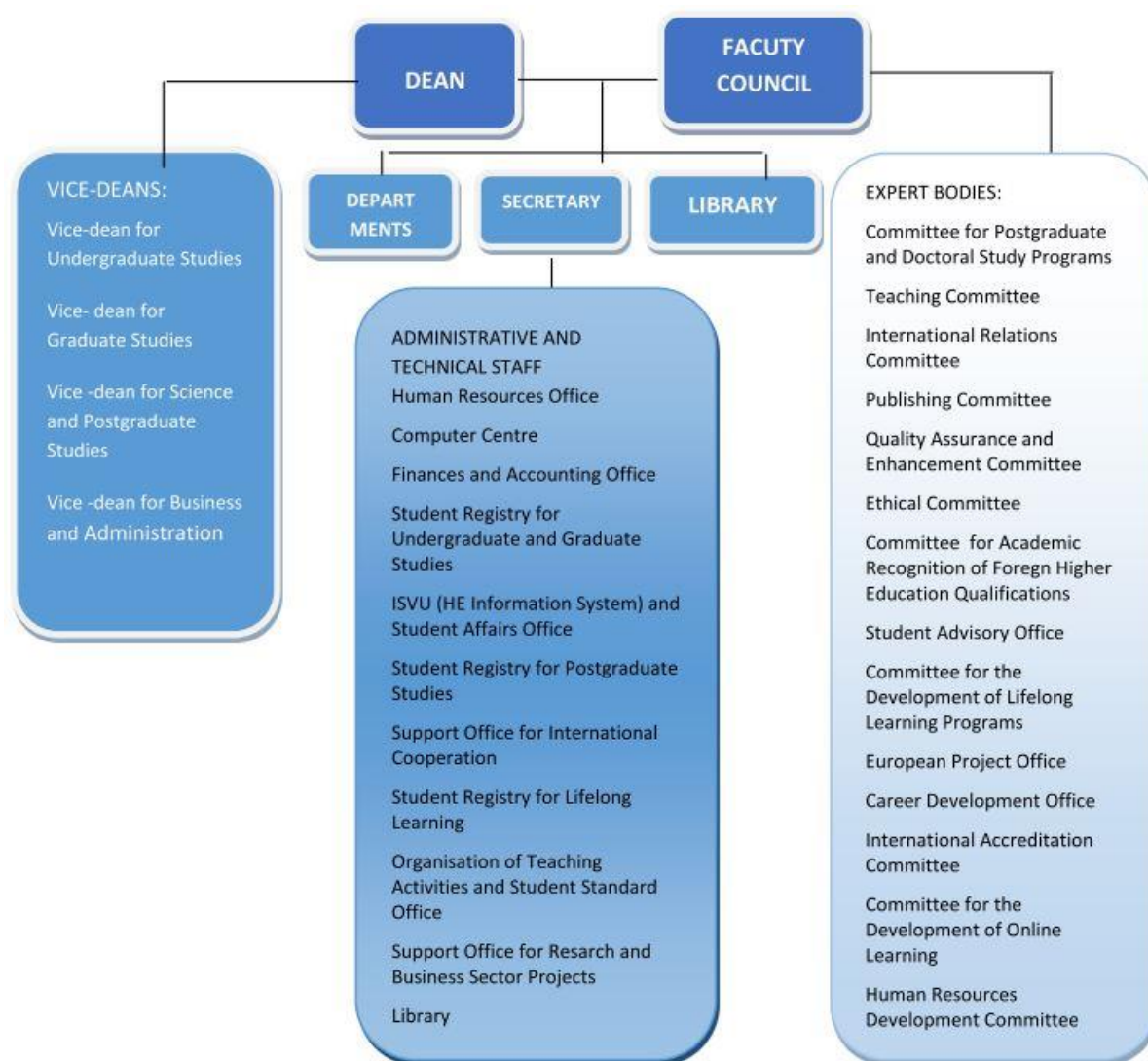
**NAME OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION:** Faculty of Economics University of Rijeka

**ADDRESS:** Ul. Ivana Filipovića 4, 51000, Rijeka

**DEAN:** associate professor. Alen Host, Ph.D.

### **ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE:**

Based on the Self-evaluation document on page 5, Scheme 1: Internal organisational structure of the Faculty of Economics in Rijeka



## **STUDY PROGRAMMES:**

### **Undergraduate university study programme**

- Business Economics; specialisation: International business (in English), Undergraduate university study programme
- Business Economics; specialisations in: Finance and Accounting, Entrepreneurship, Management, Finance and Banking, Undergraduate university study programme
- Economics, Undergraduate university study programme

### **Graduate university study programme**

- Business Economics; specialisations in: Finance and Banking, Entrepreneurship, Management, International Business, International Business in English, Information Management, Graduate university study programme
- Economics; specialisations in: Economics of Sustainable Development, European Union Economics, Graduate university study programme

### **Postgraduate (doctoral) university study programme**

- Economics and Business Economics, Postgraduate (doctoral) university study programme
- Joint doctoral study programme Governance and Economics in the Public Sector, Postgraduate (doctoral) university study programme

### **Postgraduate specialist university study programme**

- Accounting, Postgraduate specialist university study programme
- Business Success Management, Postgraduate specialist university study programme
- Controlling, Postgraduate specialist university study programme
- Doing Business with EU, Postgraduate specialist university study programme
- Energy Economics, Postgraduate specialist university study programme
- Finance, Postgraduate specialist university study programme
- Intelligent E-business, Postgraduate specialist university study programme
- Management in the Public Sector, Postgraduate specialist university study programme
- Marketing Management, Postgraduate specialist university study programme
- Security Management in EU, Postgraduate specialist university study programme

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS:**

Based on the Analytical self-analysis document on page 51, Table 3.1. Number of students per study programme for the current academic year:

<b>Study programme name</b>	<b>Full-time students</b>	<b>Part-time students</b>
Economics (67)	76	85
Business Economics; specialisations in: Finance and Accounting, Entrepreneurship, Management, Finance and Banking (68) (68)	523	463
Economics; specialisations in: Economics of Sustainable Development, European Union Economics (69)	23	9
Business Economics; specialisations in: Finance and Banking, Entrepreneurship, Management, International Business, International Business in English, Information Management (70)	266	280
Doing Business with EU (72)	0	0
Accounting (73)	0	13
Management in the Public Sector (74)	0	10
Intelligent E-business (75)	0	0
Controlling (76)	0	19
Marketing Management (77)	0	9
Business Success Management (78)	0	4
Economics and Business Economics (79)	0	121
Business Economics; specialisation: International business (in English) (80)	98	0
Energy Economics (83)	0	48
Finance (84)	0	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>986</b>	<b>1.075</b>

In terms of full-time equivalents, this amounts to 1,523.5 students in total. This number is largely not adjusted for drop-outs.



**NUMBER OF TEACHERS:**

The structure of teachers is given in Table 4.1.a in the appendix to the Self-evaluation on page 61. According to the Self-evaluation, all academic staff, including assistants and post-doctoral researchers, are involved in teaching. Counting assistants and post-doctoral researchers by 50 percent, this yields 61 full-time equivalent teachers.

<b>Staff</b>	<b>Full-time staff</b>	<b>Cumulative employment</b>	<b>External associates</b>
Assistant professors	17	-	13
Associate professors	11	-	15
Full professors	7	1	33
Teaching grades	3	-	3
Assistants	12	-	-
Research Associate	-	-	-
Senior Research Associate	-	-	-
Scientific advisor	-	-	-
Expert assistants	-	-	-
Postdoctoral researcher	8	-	-
Scientific advisor (permanent/with tenure)	-	-	-
Full professors with tenure	14	1	-
Technical staff	2	-	-
Administrative staff	24	-	-
Support staff	3	-	-
Employees on projects	-	-	-

## SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

*Short description was based on the Self-evaluation document on page 2.*

The Faculty of Economics in Rijeka was founded in mid-1961, as a constituent member of the University of Zagreb. With first lectures starting on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1961, the Faculty has been educating economic experts especially for enhancing economic development of Croatian Littoral and Istrian region. When the University of Rijeka was established in 1973, the Faculty became its member.

In 2001, the Faculty moved to the new address of I. Filipovića 4, retaining several classrooms and cabinets at the previous facilities at the address in Vukovar Street 58. The building was restored being funded by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, the City of Rijeka, Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, but the Faculty with its own resources participated in the renovation. The building has been adapted to the needs of implementing higher education programs as well as to permanently meet the needs of the Faculty.

Since the academic year 2005/2006, the Faculty of Economics of the University of Rijeka conducts university study programs in line with the Bologna Declaration for study programs of Economics and Business Economics. While enhancing the development of study programs, the Faculty has adopted an internationally recognizable model 3 + 2 + 3, so that after the completion of a three-year university undergraduate study program students obtain the title Bachelor's degree in economics, which is followed by a two-year graduate study program, and after graduation, students are awarded master's degree. Then, a completion of a three-year postgraduate doctoral studies leads to obtaining an academic title of a Ph.D. The transition to the 3 + 2 + 3 model has been based on international experience as well as on the Faculty's rich experience in performing undergraduate and postgraduate education in economics and business.

The great number of foreign universities, with which the Faculty has signed agreements on collaboration in different fields, the number of visiting professors involved within the teaching process and the number of Faculty's teachers staying at foreign universities as well as the number of incoming and outgoing students within the mobility program show the current volume of the Faculty of Economics' involvement in the international higher education and research area.

Apart from higher education, the purpose of the Faculty is to carry out scientific activities in the field of economics. In addition to a significant segment of the scientific and research activities, the Faculty's publishing activity is well-recognized for its permanent edition of its journal *Zbornik radova Ekonomskog fakulteta u Rijeci: časopis za ekonomsku teoriju i praksu* / *Proceedings of Rijeka Faculty of Economics: Journal of Economics and Business*. The additional proof of the Faculty's scientific and professional activities is that from its establishment until 2017, the Faculty has successfully

conducted research on more than forty scientific projects funded by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia, the Croatian Foundation for Science and the EU having produced over two hundred professional studies, conferences and other scientific-research activities for the needs of the real economy and local and regional self-government units.

Aligned with the Statute of the University of Rijeka in 2004, the faculties have been functionally integrated but retained their legal entity. At the University level, the decisions are made on the development strategy, the construction planning of capital facilities, international cooperation as well as the budget of the University and its constituents. The University is in charge of meeting some general infrastructure needs (e.g. information system, library system, etc.) and student standard. The Faculty's responsibility is to carry out its core activities (higher education, scientific and professional work) and other activities that are defined as those that "serve the basic activities and are carried out in a lesser extent but ensure the integrity and required standard of higher education" (e.g. library and publishing activities).

The Faculty of Economics in Rijeka adopted the Development Strategy for the period 2017-2025, the starting point of which is the Strategy of the University of Rijeka defined for the period 2014-2020. Since the University Strategy for the period 2007-2013 has set up the University quality assurance system, the University has firmly committed itself to systematically and permanently improving the quality of its activities. The Faculty of Economics as a constituent of the University has accepted and further enhanced with its efforts and activities the quality assurance policy. By entering into this system of quality assurance policy, it has created the foundation for a successful integration of higher education institutions into the European Higher Education Area.

By continuous investment in its own human, material and non-material resources, the Faculty of Economics in Rijeka guarantees the quality of its educational, scientific and professional activities. The aforementioned goal is to achieve high academic standards and quality support for students.

## ***BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES***

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

1. Young, enthusiastic and motivated management team.
2. Very dedicated supporting employees from IT personnel and international office to library and student office.
3. Loyal and motivated teaching staff.
4. Online classes on graduate level for distant students.
5. Rather big number of relationships with variety of external stakeholders from public and private organisations to social-profit organisations.
6. Clear research strategy towards internationalization that especially encourages younger researchers.
7. Rather high ratio of research project in progress compared to number of academics.
8. Highest number within University of Rijeka of outgoing and incoming Erasmus students, and a flexible system regarding their unique needs.
9. Institutionally insured support for students with disabilities.

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

1. There is no clear value proposition and specialization between different study programmes both on undergraduate and graduate level.
2. Response rate of the student survey is rather low, and there is no clear strategy to solve this problem.
3. No clear and common understanding of roles and responsibilities of assistants across different departments.
4. Big variation among faculty members regarding research output and publication of papers.
5. Access to eminent databases is limited.
6. Big discrepancy between learning outcomes on programme and course level that requires more balanced approach between different courses.

## ***LIST OF INSTITUTIONAL GOOD PRACTICES***

### ***EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE***

1. “Coffee with management” that is highly visited by student population.
2. Peer review system among teachers.
3. Fostering student and academic entrepreneurship that is in accordance with their mission.
4. Formal reward system for publishing articles in top-tier journals.
5. Formal encouragement of young academics to internationalize their professional career.
6. Huge variety of extracurricular activities, e.g. Case study competition and Business Chinese.

## ***ANALYSIS OF EACH ASSESSMENT AREA, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY GRADE FOR EACH ASSESSMENT AREA***

### ***I. Internal quality assurance and the social role of the higher education institution***

Here are summarized only the most important findings regarding internal quality assurance and the social role of the higher education institution. For a detailed analysis of each standard, refer to section *Detailed analysis of each standard, recommendations for improvement and quality grade for each standard* and its subsections.

#### **Analysis**

Internal quality assurance system of the Faculty of Economics University of Rijeka includes and evaluates all activities of the higher education institution (study programmes, teaching process, student support, support to students from under-represented and vulnerable groups, learning resources, scientific/artistic activity, professional activity, etc.). They involve all stakeholders of the higher education institution (students and external stakeholders - employers, alumni, representatives of professional organisations, civil society organisations and internal stakeholders). The Faculty also adopted a quality assurance policy, SWOT analysis, strategic goals and operational (action) plan. They systematically collect and analyse data on its processes, resources and results, and use them to effectively manage and improve its activities, as well as for further development. They also use various methods for collecting data on quality, and are committed to the development and implementation of human resource management policies.

According to recommendation from the first cycle of ASHE evaluation, when they receive 12 recommendations, we can find out that they analysed them and undertook a lot of activities; therefore, the Expert Panel perceives huge improvements in this area.

Faculty of Economics University of Rijeka supports academic integrity and freedom, upholds the ethical standards and preserves academic integrity and freedom. They effectively use mechanisms for preventing unethical behaviour, intolerance and discrimination and carry out activities related to the sanctioning of unethical behaviour, intolerance and discrimination. They also systematically address issues of academic dishonesty.

Regarding the availability of information for different internal and external stakeholders, the Panel found that information on study programmes and other activities is publicly available in Croatian and English language. Faculty of Economics communicates on regular basis with all relevant groups: employees, students, external stakeholders and general public. Since the previous evaluation, a big step in intensifying communication activities can be acknowledged. Also, the information on

the social role of the Faculty is available to different stakeholders. Faculty uses a variety of communication channels, e.g. web page, brochures, social media etc.

Based on many evidence, the Panel is also convinced that the Faculty contributes to the development of the local community, and develop its social role as a part of its mission.

### Recommendations for improvement

- Establish a better system for monitoring the realization of action plans.
- A better explanation of how quality loops are closed is needed.
- Continue with improvements on recommendations from previous evaluation, because 3 recommendation are still partially open.
- Revise the satisfaction questionnaire for students which is too long, with some missing questions and some too detailed.
- Strategy for improving the response rate of satisfaction survey.
- Improve English version of webpage.
- Continue with efforts focused on internal quality management.

### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**

## ***II. Study programmes***

Here are summarized only the most important findings regarding study programmes. For a detailed analysis of each standard, refer to section *Detailed analysis of each standard, recommendations for improvement and quality grade for each standard* and its subsections.

### Analysis

The Faculty objectives are generally aligned with the objectives of the University, and the programmes based on them reflect the four purposes of higher education set by the Council of Europe. There is space for improvement regarding general objectives and their alignment to the study programmes. Although study programmes are developed in a way that takes care of verticals, they have not been revised for a very long time, which is particularly dangerous for this knowledge and scientific area where changes are quite often intense and profound. This requires, among other things, a deep transformation of current educational model; the great thing is that the current leadership is well aware of this fact, and has taken certain steps in that direction.

### Recommendations for improvement

- General objectives of all programmes are not sufficiently accentuated.
- Undergraduate and graduate programs have not been revised for a very long time and no new subjects have been introduced to meet the changing needs of business and labour markets.
- There is a noticeable mismatch between programme names (at both levels of study) and their content.
- Alignment of the learning outcomes for all courses, their balance between courses and harmonization of the number of learning outcomes.
- Revision of Table 2 in the Analytical Self-analysis on pages 2-50, and a better alignment between programme and course learning outcomes; in addition, learning outcomes should be better aligned with the mission and strategic objectives of the Faculty.
- Undergraduate and graduate programmes have been the same for way too long, and should be changed in order to adjust to modern trends and market conditions; in addition, there should be clear procedures regarding students, alumni, employers and other key stakeholders' participation in program planning/tailoring.
- Defined and proactive system of contract management with various stakeholders should be implemented.
- Harmonization in the number of course outcomes with the same number of ECTS in the same program, and between the number of ECTS received between compulsory and elective course with the same workload.
- Although student progression and their average grade at the undergraduate and graduate study programs is analysed every academic year, there are no clear repercussion for under- and overachievers.
- It is necessary to strengthen the student internship, both in scope and duration.
- Level of cooperation with foreign and international companies should be improved.
- Stronger and clearer focus on business ethics related issues is expected on all programme levels.

### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**



### **III. Teaching process and student support**

Here are summarized only the most important findings regarding teaching process and student support. For a detailed analysis of each standard, refer to section *Detailed analysis of each standard, recommendations for improvement and quality grade for each standard* and its subsections.

#### **Analysis**

During the visit, the Panel concluded that the Faculty ensures support for students on all levels. Students were satisfied with professional support provided by the Faculty. They also said that, if they face any challenge, they know who they have to talk to and what they have to do. Furthermore, for the purpose of improving communication between students and the Management, the Faculty organises formal consultations with the Vice-Deans and biannual informal 'coffees with Vice-Deans'. Based on the meetings with students, they attend both these formal and informal meetings and find them really useful, saying that the Management is approachable and gives them quick replies to their problems.

The Faculty also enables students to gain international experience through study visits and student internship. As a result, the Faculty has the highest number of incoming and outgoing Erasmus students. In addition to student internship, students can connect with companies through the Career Centre, which also provides support for student entrepreneurship, organises educational lectures, workshops and counselling. Considering the openness of the Management and teaching staff to a constructive dialogue with the students, the low percentage of response to student surveys is a problem that needs to be solved.

Finally, teaching staff emphasised the Management's support for improving teaching activities. Students liked the increasing use of new teaching methods, which have the advantage of connecting theory and practice. Students also benefit from numerous extracurricular activities at the Faculty and University level, such as Case Study competition, Business Chinese course etc.

#### **Recommendations for improvement**

- Establish an internal monitoring system for student drop-outs with the aim of improving quality and achieving goals from the Strategy.
- Develop new methods for conducting student surveys in order to increase students' response and collect important information.
- Continue with the good work of the Career Centre, but with a new marketing campaign aimed at increasing student participation.
- Introduce a Buddy programme for students from vulnerable and under-represented groups from the very enrolment.

- Conduct an anonymous survey for students of International Business to determine their satisfaction with the teachers' knowledge of the English language.
- Organise more guest lectures by foreign teachers and teachers with international experience.
- Establish a formal method for collecting feedback from the alumni, employers and other external stakeholders.
- Revise the grading system, or rather abolish the final exam administered after two mid-terms and other assessments of knowledge.

### Quality grade

#### Satisfactory level of quality

#### ***IV. Teaching and institutional capacities***

Here are summarized only the most important findings regarding teaching and institutional capacities. For a detailed analysis of each standard, refer to section *Detailed analysis of each standard, recommendations for improvement and quality grade for each standard* and its subsections.

### Analysis

There are 72 employed teachers on the undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate level at EFRI, with 64 external associates who contribute to teaching, in particular on the postgraduate level. EFRI's teachers do not only meet the formal requirements for teaching qualifications, but also seem to be professional and motivated. They won the award for teaching excellence at the level of the University twice, and current students and especially alumni praised them for their competence and motivation. However, the teaching staff lacks internationalization and international research reputation. A remarkable instrument of the teachers' professional development is the peer-based improvement of teaching quality.

The number of students has declined strongly since the last re-accreditation in 2011. Now, there are about 1,365 students (full-time equivalent, net of drop-outs) in total for all study programmes. Most of them are part-time students who contribute significantly to EFRI's balanced financial situation through the tuition fees they pay. Students benefit from a more than sufficient number of teachers, ample spatial conditions, and well-equipped and well-maintained premises and classrooms. However, the library and the cafeteria offerings and sizes, as well as the restricted availability of study rooms for students, can be seen as bottlenecks. In particular, the library cannot provide broad access to international journals and textbooks.

Recruitment, advancement and re-appointment live up to the national standard. While recruitment lacks internationalization, advancement and re-appointment could be improved by means of additional performance measures.

As a state-funded institution, EFRI strongly depends on cost absorption by the University and the state. This dependency limits EFRI's financial scope, but also means financial security. At the same time, EFRI earns a considerable part of its income through tuition fees paid by part-time students. Hence, in order to maintain financial stability, EFRI should have an eye on its institutional environment as well as its attractiveness for fee-paying students.

### Recommendations for improvement

- Figures relating to the number of students, number of teachers and their workload, and EFRI's income should be revised in order to achieve more meaningful and coherent measures for assessing, influencing and controlling activities
- EFRI should keep up and intensify its efforts to increase the internationalization and calibre of its teaching staff
- The infrastructure still needs some improvements, in particular the library, the study rooms, the cafeteria and the wireless LAN.

### Quality grade

#### Satisfactory level of quality

## ***V. Scientific/artistic activity***

Here are summarized only the most important findings regarding scientific/artistic activity. For a detailed analysis of each standard, refer to section *Detailed analysis of each standard, recommendations for improvement and quality grade for each standard* and its subsections.

### Analysis

The most important output of research activities should be articles published in internationally renowned journals. EFRI puts significant effort in this process. Publication output is high, research strategy is in place and the Faculty motivates publications (financially). Above and beyond that, workloads across members are balanced in an informal way. Especially, EFRI is encouraging young and internationally-oriented researchers. Contrasting this important advantage, it became obvious that there is a significant variation in research output among the faculty

members. Moreover, many articles are published in regional journals that provide a low level of awareness.

Following its strategy, EFRI wants to increase both quantity and quality of article output, thereby accounting for the developmental needs of Croatia and the international standards for achieving visibility. Accordingly, the Faculty provides support for conference activities. Another target of the research strategy is to increasing the number of PhD defences, and first steps could be observed during the on-site visit.

Additionally, EFRI engages in research projects funded on the EU level, by the Croatian Science Foundation and by the University of Rijeka. The related application procedures and the evaluation by third parties mostly ensure relevance of the conducted research. In a similar vein, EFRI engages in professional projects to ensure transfer to society. It is particularly noteworthy that the number of research projects is high relative to the number of researchers.

Lastly, e.g. editorial activities demonstrate that faculty members' research activities are valued by the scientific community. Moreover, interaction between research and teaching activities is guaranteed by several institutional measures.

### Recommendations for improvement

- First of all, in order to shape its research strategy, the Faculty should define the top 3 or 5 journals that authors should aim for in each of its research areas. This could improve both scientific output and awareness regarding these articles. Currently, different lists of 'valuable' publications exist: for promotion, the state regulations apply, while Web of Science or SSCI are used internally. However, this results in a huge amount of eligible journals. EFRI may want to follow international benchmarks and consider Scopus (used e.g. by Times Higher Education Ranking) indexed journals. Even better, the UT Dallas list (for example) could be used to identify good journal outlets.
- Formulate a research mission that puts emphasize on globally-read international publications; further encourage faculty members to serve as editors and editorial board members on this type of journals; getting the faculty involved will significantly increase the contribution to EFRI's international visibility.
- Maintain and improve support for conference participations; it is important to implement a broad support for the view that conferences are crucial steps in the publication process, because they are important for marketing and polishing the paper.
- Introduce a milestones-concept for PhD projects through which topics, duration and expected outcomes would become more controllable and transparent to mentors, other advisors and the candidates themselves.

- Establish a Faculty advisory board for a continuous improvement process that would consist of both researchers with an international background and representatives from the local community. Regarding research agenda, the Faculty should analyse the strategic goals and measures for inconsistencies. Moreover, it is important to communicate the overarching goals to the Faculty for implementing them in daily research activities.
- Maintain and increase the practice of sending PhD students abroad for structural doctoral education

Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**

## **DETAILED ANALYSIS OF EACH STANDARD, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY GRADE FOR EACH STANDARD**

### ***I. Internal quality assurance and the social role of the higher education institution***

#### **1.1. The higher education institution has established a functional internal quality assurance system.**

##### **Analysis**

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- The Development Strategy of the Faculty of Economics in Rijeka 2017– 2025
- The Strategic Program of Scientific Research 2017-2020
- The Regulations on Quality Assurance and Enhancement of the Faculty of Economics in Rijeka adopted at the 125<sup>th</sup> session of the Faculty Council
- Quality Assurance Policy, which is aligned with ISO standards
- Quality Assurance Manual
- The Regulations on the Procedure of the Conducted Student Assessment Survey of Teachers' Work at the Faculty of Economics in Rijeka; the revised text of the Regulations was adopted at the 13<sup>th</sup> sessions of the Faculty Council
- Annual Reports on the Implementation of the University of Rijeka Strategy
- Action Plans for Implementing the Strategy of the University of Rijeka
- Example: form for Self-evaluation for professors with lower students evaluation
- Example: minutes about peer-review process

According to the Self-evaluation report, interviews and other documents presented by the Faculty of Economics of the University of Rijeka, the Panel found that:

- The Faculty has a Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee of the Faculty of Economics in Rijeka (chaired by the Dean) which is a fundamental and functional body for quality assurance. Members of this Committee (15 members), are scientific-teaching staff (11 members), administrative staff (1 member), representatives of students (2 members) as well as an external representative from the economy (1 member). The main tasks and activities of this Committee are to organize, coordinate and implement evaluation procedures and develop internal quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms at the Faculty level, especially considering the following elements: Self-evaluation, quality assurance indicators, participation of students in the quality monitoring of study program implementation, evaluation and analysis of study results.
- Faculty also has a Quality Manager (one of Vice-Dean).

- The Faculty has implemented the ISO 9001:2015 system which implies a regular annual external audit that evaluates the implementation of internal quality assurance system. External audit is carried out by Bureau Veritas Croatia and the evidence can be found in the Appendix of the Self-evaluation report.
- The internal processes and activities of the quality assurance system are documented by the Regulations on the Quality Assurance Management System of the Faculty of Economics and the Quality Assurance Manual.
- The process of internal quality assurance is also presented together with the model (Scheme 2, Self-evaluation report, p. 12).
- The Faculty collects and analyses data needed for the process of internal quality assurance from different and extensive channels:
  - Teachers' evaluation results are published in the materials for the Faculty Council and the Faculty website
  - Vice-Deans' consultations with undergraduate and graduate students: 4 hours a week - a two-hour consultation twice a week - is held by the Vice Dean for Studies in time slots defined at the beginning of the semester (topics: student issues and problems)
  - "Coffee with Vice Deans" – organized socializing with students in an informal way with the aim of obtaining feedback about studying
  - The Committee for Revision and Enhancement of Study Programs, the Faculty Council as well as at Faculty departments discuss the topical issues and put forward guidelines for enhancement
  - representatives of the Student Union discuss the issues and achievements of EFRI students at the Faculty County sessions
  - At the end of a study programme, when completing either their undergraduate or graduate studies, students are given satisfaction questionnaire to fill in
  - questionnaire on student satisfaction with the work of the library are distributed and collected in the library, and processed by the EFRI Quality Assurance Committee
  - students' satisfaction with study programs is measured and carried out after the end of the program
- The Faculty has developed examples of good practice for assuring higher levels of quality, e.g. peer review system among employees and self-evaluations of professor with lower grades in student surveys.
- The Faculty is committed to the development and implementation of human resources management policies. The strategic goals regarding human resources are defines in The Development Strategy of the Faculty 2017-2025. From the interviews with different groups of employees, the Panel discovered that they are satisfied with HR management policy, e.g. the Management supports them in their

careers, helps them with funding for their research projects and attending conferences, etc.

- For each calendar year, the Faculty Council adopts a Plan for Advancement, Employment and Other Personnel Changes, which is based on the chain of advancement coefficients available to the Faculty due to the termination of some employees' work (retirement, contractual termination, etc.) that are transferred to the teachers who have fulfilled the conditions for advancement. In addition, new jobs are planned. From the interviews with different groups of employees, the Panel concluded that they are satisfied with the plans for advancement and their implementation.
- Faculty's quality assurance policy is officially adopted and available to the public on the website.
- The Faculty did a SWOT analysis and, based on its results, developed strategic goals for major areas (education, science, public function, organization) and prepared operational (action) plan of activities. However, the Panel has to stress that we missed the monitor system of activities from action plan with list of achievements. From that point of view is not clear enough how the quality loop is closed.
- The Faculty is member of many relevant international organizations.
- The Faculty uses a lot of information systems (e.g. CROSBİ, MOZVAG, etc.).

We can conclude that the Faculty's internal quality assurance system includes and evaluates all their activities (study programmes, teaching process, student support, support to students from under-represented and vulnerable groups, learning resources, scientific/artistic activity, professional activity, etc.). They involve all stakeholders of the higher education institution (students and external stakeholders - employers, alumni, representatives of professional organisations, civil society organisations and internal stakeholders). They have also adopted a quality assurance policy, SWOT analysis, strategic goals and operational plan. They systematically collect and analyse data on its processes, resources and results, and use them to effectively manage and improve its activities, as well as for further development. They use various methods for collecting data on quality and are committed to the development and implementation of human resource management policies.

### Recommendations for improvement

- Establish a better monitoring system for the realization of achievements from action plans
- Better explanation of how quality loops are closed
- Revise satisfaction questionnaire for students which is too long, with some missing questions and some too detailed



- Develop a strategy for improving the response rate of satisfaction surveys

### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**

## **1.2. The higher education institution implements recommendations for quality improvement from previous evaluations.**

### Analysis

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- improvements with evidence in Table 3, Self-evaluation report, p.21
- interviews

The Faculty participates in periodic external quality assurance procedures by the University of Rijeka, the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE), ISO audit, EDAMBA, EPAS and AACSB.

Based on the recommendation from the first cycle of ASHE evaluation (when they received 12 recommendations), the Panel found out that the Faculty analysed them, undertook activities and made improvements. All evidence is presented in a very extensive Table 3 of Self-evaluation report (Fulfilment of Internal Evaluation Recommendations of the University of Rijeka, page 21). Three recommendations were only partially fulfilled, and all other completely.

Among improvements are: Faculty of Economics University of Rijeka lowered the student/teacher ratio (50% decrease in the overall number of students), decreased group sizes for seminars and exercises, developed a clear international strategy, intensified marketing efforts, updated and focused research efforts by encouraging publishing in international scientific journals, established a students' career centre, focused on students' personal development, initiated effective cooperation with the alumni and developed a strategy for cooperating with the industry.

### Recommendations for improvement

- Continue with improvements based on recommendations from the previous evaluation while 3 recommendation are still partially open.
- Continue with efforts focused on internal quality management.

### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**

### **1.3. The higher education institution supports academic integrity and freedom, prevents all types of unethical behaviour, intolerance and discrimination.**

#### **Analysis**

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- Code of Ethics
- Ethics Committee
- Turnitin software/programme
- Examples of carried out procedures for detecting and sanctioning unethical behaviour (in the Faculty documentation)

The Faculty carries out activities related to the sanctioning of unethical behaviour, intolerance and discrimination. They have an Ethics Committee made up of scientific staff and a representative of the Student Union. The Committee acts in line with the guidelines of the Code of Ethics of the University of Rijeka. In addition, all final papers as well as graduate and postgraduate theses are run through the Turnitin software for checking the originality of student papers submitted to University of Rijeka constituents, and also entered into the Digital Academic Archives and the Repository "Dabar" in order to reduce the unethical treatment of the works. Additionally, a large number of courses within the teaching process address different ethical issues, which was also confirmed at the interview with students.

The Quality Assurance Policy supports the prevention of all forms of intolerance and discrimination as the basic principles of the adopted Code of Ethics: human rights, respect for integrity and dignity of a person, equality and equity, academic freedom, professional behaviour and compliance with laws and legal proceedings.

The regulations on studying, evaluating, completing the study program, guidelines for preparing final papers, and graduate and postgraduate theses are publicly available on the Faculty's web pages. Criteria and methods of grading and assessment are also publicly available and published in the syllabus of each course, and students confirmed that they have the access to all information and that they are aware of these regulations and rules.

For checking the originality of student final works the Faculty uses a special software called Turnitin. Among Faculty documentation, the Panel also found cases of cheating and documented procedures with consequences for the student.

Therefore, we can conclude that Faculty of Economics University of Rijeka supports academic integrity and freedom, upholds the ethical standards and preserves academic integrity and freedom. They effectively use mechanisms for preventing unethical behaviour, intolerance and discrimination and carry out activities related to the sanctioning of unethical behaviour, intolerance and discrimination. They also systematically address issues of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating etc.).

## Recommendations for improvement

No recommendations

## Quality grade

**High level of quality**

### **1.4. The higher education institution ensures the availability of information on important aspects of its activities (teaching, scientific/artistic and social).**

#### Analysis

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- website
- social networks (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube)
- brochures, flyers, etc.
- examples of public actions and practices

In this part we analysed the availability of information about study programmes, scientific achievements and supportive activities of the Faculty. In communication with all relevant stakeholders, the Faculty uses a wide range of communication channels.

One of the main communication channels is their website, which is available in the Croatian and English language. However, we should stress out that pages in Croatian and in English are not the same, and that a lot of information is missing from the English website. Croatian website contains information about the Faculty, basic legal acts such as the Statute, the Regulations on Study Programs, the Regulations on Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy, the Institution Strategy and the Annual Report on the Implementation of the Strategy, organization data and employees contact information, data on teaching and other programs (study programs, lifelong learning programs, professional training etc.), timely published information on the delivery of study programs, academic calendar, schedule of teaching, examination dates and completion of studies. Besides that, students can also find information about studies during courses and from teachers, the library and Studomat.

Furthermore, the library provides information on how to search the available databases of scientific and professional articles, as well as links to online journals that students use to expand their knowledge, and to the digital repository of final papers and graduate theses (Dabar).

The Faculty also regularly informs all stakeholders about various activities like conferences, activities of Career Centre, special achievements of students and professors, etc.

A lot of information, especially in a less formal way, is also available on the social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube channel).

Therefore we can conclude that information on study programmes and other activities are publicly available in Croatian and English language. Faculty of Economics communicates with all relevant groups: employees, students, external stakeholders and general public. Also, the information on the social role of the Faculty is available to different stakeholders.

#### Recommendations for improvement

- improve the English version of the website

#### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**

### **1.5. The higher education institution understands and encourages the development of its social role.**

#### Analysis

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- interviews
- examples (pictures from social media, etc.)
- Self-evaluation report

The social role of the Faculty of Economics University of Rijeka is incorporated in its mission. Furthermore, they developed strategic goals related to the public function of the Faculty as follows: 1) The Faculty of Economics in Rijeka is publicly responsible and socially sensitive, 2) The Faculty of Economics in Rijeka enhances economic development and, being a relevant subject and partner to the real economy, provides a two-way transfer of technology and knowledge, and 3) The Faculty of Economics in Rijeka is a factor in the region's transition to a knowledge-based society. In accordance with these goals, they developed a set of activities, presented in tables in the Self-evaluation report (p. 32-33).

The Faculty staff contribute to the development of the economy and the local community by participating in scientific and professional projects. In the last five

academic years, Faculty staff participated in a number of activities including: popularization of economic science, public lectures, round tables, panel discussions, scientific debates (well presented in the Self-evaluation report, table 5, p. 33-35). The Panel's observation is that the number of activities is growing each year.

Furthermore, the Faculty contributes to the community by lending its premises, equipment and infrastructure for holding seminars, workshops, conferences and guest lectures by domestic and foreign experts on topics relevant to the economy and local community (such as the Croatian Economy Chamber and other economic subjects, Chinese language courses, etc.).

The volunteer work of the Faculty staff and students is manifested in numerous actions such as donating blood, collecting help for Children's Home "Ivana Brlić Mažuranić Lovran", etc.

Therefore we can conclude that Faculty contributes to the development of the local community and develops its social role as a part of its mission.

#### **Recommendations for improvement**

No recommendations

#### **Quality grade**

**High level of quality**

## *II. Study programmes*

**2.1. The general objectives of all study programmes are in line with the mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution and the needs of the society.**

### *Analysis*

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- Self-evaluation report p. 36-39
- Development Strategy of the Faculty of Economics University of Rijeka for the period 2017-2025 (available at: <https://www.efri.uniri.hr/sites/efri.uniri.hr/files/cr-collections/2/strategijaefri-1508931118.pdf>)
- Strategy of the University of Rijeka for the period 2014-2020 (available at: [http://www.uniri.hr/files/staticki\\_dio/strategija/Strategija\\_UNIRI\\_2014\\_2020\\_EN.pdf](http://www.uniri.hr/files/staticki_dio/strategija/Strategija_UNIRI_2014_2020_EN.pdf))
- Structure of the National Classification of Occupations (NKZ)10 aligned with ISCO-08 (National Classification of Occupations, NN 147/2010)
- Diploma and diploma supplement
- On-site interviews

The Faculty objectives are generally aligned with the objectives of the University, and the programs based on them reflect the four purposes of higher education set by the Council of Europe:

1. Preparing students for active citizenship and future careers
2. Supporting student development,
3. Creating a broad spectrum of advanced knowledge, and
4. Stimulating scientific work and innovation.

Study programs are developed in a way that takes care of verticals: from undergraduate, graduate to postgraduate studies, where to a large degree lower levels of study create the prerequisites for enrolment to a higher level. The Faculty is the first higher educational institution to be accredited for carrying out an online university graduate study program in economics in Croatia. In this academic year, it has successfully enrolled the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation of students.

The high degree of vertical and horizontal mobility of students is one of the fundamental determinants of study programs, and evidence given by the Faculty shows that students can easily transfer their ECTS credits. Within the framework of the undergraduate studies, there is a general tendency to offer the possibility of different qualifications (seven Croatian study programmes in Business Economics, one English

study programme in International Business and one Croatian study programme in Economics), with a rather narrow span of electives while deciding which study program to take; continuation is possible at the graduate level (five different Croatian study programmes in Business Economics, one online Croatian study programme in Entrepreneurship, one English study programme in International Business and one Croatian study programme in Economics). Such a configuration of study programs (3+2) allows for optimal educational effects because the Bachelor or the Bachelor of Economics has the possibility of direct employment or continuation of studies at the Faculty graduate programs or graduate studies of other faculties in the country and abroad. Study programs are aligned with European economic and business study programs, enabling greater student exchange and transition to other study programs, which was confirmed in direct communication with outgoing and incoming students on-site during visit. In addition, the Faculty was the first HEI at the University to offer study programs in the English language (undergraduate and graduate studies in International Business). This year, it has successfully enrolled the 7<sup>th</sup> generation of students.

Depending on the chosen undergraduate studies (either Economics or Business Economics), the acquired qualification of Bachelor's degree in Economics / Business Economics enables students to be directly employed and to perform demanding professional work either in a business organisation, public enterprise, social-profit organisation or state administration. Students who have obtained a Master's degree in Economics /Business Economics are qualified for direct employment in complex environment in companies and public enterprises of various kinds, NGO's and in state administration.

The Faculty management is aware of some deficiencies of the employment analyses of the Croatian Employment Service related to the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County. Although the lack of monitoring and records of graduates from the Faculty of Economics by the Croatian Employment Service has been noted, and shortcomings pinpointed (such as the number of unemployed persons recorded as the unemployed graduates of the study programs that have never been delivered at the Faculty of Economics in Rijeka), no positive steps have been taken to detect the deficiencies of the document. In addition, it should be noted that students studying at the Faculty are from different parts of Croatia (over 50%), which also contributes to the Faculty's incomplete information on its alumni employment. Despite all this, the Faculty has conducted research on student employment in the last five generations.

The Faculty was also the leading investigator/project leader on the ECONQUAL project. The project also included variety of stakeholders and was aimed toward enhancing the quality of higher education in economics and business through the development of qualification standards in the field of economics, and enhancement of study programs by developing and applying up-to-date methods of program delivery and teaching.

A good thing is that the Faculty management is aware of certain problems within this field, which is why they organised a committee for the revision and improvement of curricula.

### Recommendations for improvement

- General objectives of all programmes are not sufficiently accentuated, although some descriptions of program goals are given in the diploma supplement.
- Faculty has an appealing mission, but it is not clear how they execute some segments e.g. developing socially responsible leaders is incorporated into their study programmes, but they do not have any courses directly connected to business ethics and/or corporate social responsibility, so clear linkage between certain parts of mission, some strategic goals and both study programmes objectives is missing.
- Although there are formal legal barriers, it is noticeable that the undergraduate and graduate programs have not been revised for a very long time, and that no new subjects have been introduced to meet the changing needs of business and labour markets. The Faculty should urgently review its undergraduate and graduate programs in line with the current market needs, and align the names and contents of the study programs.
- There is a noticeable mismatch between program names (at both levels of study) and their content, i.e. subjects that are being taught. If there is a difference between individual programs and the student orientation, then it is minimal and insufficient.
- Introduction of new elective courses at all study levels (especially at higher years). These courses should be closely related to the competences that students need in their area of specialization.
- It is great that Faculty has an inspiring mission statement because one vital element that will help us, who live in a transitional society, to achieve our development goals, is to ensure that we have leaders equipped to resolve the complex global issues that lie ahead. Therefore stronger and clearer focus on business ethics-related issues is expected on all programme levels.

### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**



## **2.2. The intended learning outcomes at the level of study programmes delivered by the higher education institution are aligned with the level and profile of qualifications gained.**

### **Analysis**

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- Self-evaluation report, pages 39-40, 91, 102-105
- Analytical self-analysis p. 2-50
- Interviews on-site during the visit

In general, learning outcomes of study programs are well designed according to Dublin descriptors and Bloom's taxonomy. While defining learning outcomes at the level of study programs, the Faculty has also taken into account that they are aligned with the CroQF and EQF descriptors for the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> level of education.

Although small revisions of programmes took place in 2014, and these changes were accepted by University Senate, to a large extent it is not enough. Learning outcomes and ECTS credits of each course are publicly available and listed. Although the intended learning outcomes on some courses do reflect the competencies that shall meet the requirements of the labour market, continuing education or other needs of an individual and society, there is a discrepancy between different courses within same study programme so the lack of consistency is obvious. In addition, related to learning outcomes on course level, additional effort is needed since they are not balanced enough; the Panel noticed a mismatch between courses names and their content, and there is also a huge overlap regarding content on different study programmes within the same level of education, in particular at the graduate level. This coincides with the feedback we got from different alumnis, stakeholders and students, who also stated that some courses are not up to date and that more practical work is needed, especially regarding some soft skills such as teamwork, critical thinking, problem solving, communication skills, creativity etc.

A good thing is that the Faculty management is well-aware of these problems and that they are willing to implement a deeper reform. That is why they established the Committee for the Revision and Improvement of Study Programs, while the Committee for Teaching is already running and it adopted the criteria for programme revision so that they can meet labour market needs and align the study programs accordingly. It is also important to create preconditions for introducing some new study programs according to needs of local market.

### **Recommendations for improvement**

- Aligning the learning outcomes for all courses and their balance between courses e.g. there is considerable discrepancy in the number of course outcomes with the

same number of ECTS in the same programme. Therefore it is necessary to harmonize the number of learning outcomes, especially on the courses in the same programme, and if necessary reduce them

- Revision of Table 2 in the Analytical Self-evaluation p. 2-50, and better alignment between programme and course learning outcomes
- Learning outcomes should be better aligned with the mission and strategic objectives of the Faculty, e.g. developing socially responsible leaders, managers and researchers.

### Quality grade

#### Satisfactory level of quality

### **2.3. The higher education institution provides evidence of the achievement of intended learning outcomes of the study programmes it delivers.**

#### Analysis

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- Self-evaluation report p. 40
- Regulations of studies and studying (available at: <https://www.efri.uniri.hr/sites/efri.uniri.hr/files/cr-collections/2/regulationsonstudiesandstudying.pdf>)
- Regulations on Grading/Assessment (available at: <https://www.efri.uniri.hr/sites/efri.uniri.hr/files/cr-collections/2/regulationsonassessment.pdf>)
- Quality Assurance Manual of the University of Rijeka, 2016, p. 60-64
- on-site interviews
- cross-check of course syllabus and exams across all undergraduate and graduate programmes during the-site visit

The Regulations on Studies and Studying and the Regulations on Grading/Assessment issued by the Faculty prescribe the procedures applicable to teaching, learning and assessment. These regulations prescribe methods of assessment in which the value is expressed in the reference/grade points that can be assigned to a particular form of student evaluation. The syllabus form for each course contains the learning and assessment methods that are applied in teaching. In line with the provisions of the Regulations on Studies and Studying of the University of Rijeka and the Regulations on the Assessment of Student Progress at undergraduate and graduate level, the

assessment of students is carried out through the usage of ECTS credits and numerical grading system.

Furthermore, starting from the academic year 2017/2018, peer review is carried out in accordance with the defined procedures set by the University of Rijeka, which prescribe that the participants involved in peer review shall hold the same scientific-teaching or teaching rank, and recommend that the reviewer and the reviewee are not members of the same department. Peer review is an integral segment of teachers' first appointment into a scientific-teaching or teaching rank. Peer review is conducted by the respective Expert commission and Faculty council members. The peer review process includes four main phases: preparation, observation, follow-up meeting, and reviewee's self-reflection.

#### Recommendations for improvement

No recommendations

#### Quality grade

**High level of quality**

### **2.4. The HEI uses feedback from students, employers, professional organisations and alumni in the procedures of planning, proposing and approving new programmes, and revising or closing the existing programmes.**

#### Analysis

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- Self-evaluation report p. 40-42
- on-site interviews during the visit with different stakeholders and Faculty management
- Ordinance on formal procedures for study programmes accreditation and forms of University of Rijeka (available at: [http://www.uniri.hr/files/staticki\\_dio/propisi\\_i\\_dokumenti/Pravilnik\\_o\\_akreditiranju\\_studijskih\\_programa\\_Procisceni\\_tekst\\_14\\_svibnja\\_2015.pdf](http://www.uniri.hr/files/staticki_dio/propisi_i_dokumenti/Pravilnik_o_akreditiranju_studijskih_programa_Procisceni_tekst_14_svibnja_2015.pdf))

The institution has a clear procedure for making any changes to study programs, while a proposed new study programs should be adopted at the Faculty Council, but this procedure is extremely slow and hard for execution.

Therefore all current study programs are adopted at the Faculty Council's sessions, which include representatives of students, postgraduate representatives and administrative staff. In addition, the same groups are also represented in other working bodies of the Faculty, where the Quality Assurance Committee has a

representative from the real economy as its member. The other stakeholders are included in the current revision cycle of the study programmes through extensive research conducted within the framework of the ECONQUAL project.

After the adoption, the decision is submitted to the Expert council of the Centre for studies of the University of Rijeka. The University of Rijeka has prescribed the Ordinance on formal procedures for study programmes accreditation and forms that are being implemented.

Pursuant to the decision on changes and/or modifications of study programmes of the University of Rijeka, all changes to study programs are submitted to the Committee for accreditation and evaluation of study programmes of the Senate of the University of Rijeka. After adoption of study program changes, the Senate should adopt them before Faculty is allowed to implement and execute it.

The Faculty management and its members have pointed to the problem of modifying study programmes which, in their opinion, is extremely slow and does not reflect the speed of changes in the labour market, but this does not justify the complete absence of any changes or modernization of the program.

Although the Faculty has over 60 agreements with different companies, there is no clear understanding on both sides of what those agreements cover (besides internships) and how they are managed.

### Recommendations for improvement

- Undergraduate and graduate programmes have been the same for too long, which makes them outdated to certain extent. If the Faculty wants to maintain its status and reputation in the region, it should undertake a complete modernization of its curriculum and change both programs according to the current needs of the labour market and trends in higher education.
- Introduce a defined and proactive system of contract management with various stakeholders.
- The Faculty has not documented it, and the Expert team is not convinced that students, alumni, employers and wider community participate enough in program planning / revision. There is certain evidence to that, but it is sporadic and based on personal relations when it should be systematic in order to be sustainable. Our opinion is supported by the absence of an international advisory board or/and some sort of wisdom board (people whose expertise has been developed through distinguish careers in business and public service, but they have a passion for education and a deep commitment to serve the Faculty). This type of vehicle should assist the Faculty in planning and reviewing the program but also in anticipating future challenges.
- Improved processing of student opinion poll results and reporting on individual questionnaire categories.

## Quality grade

### Satisfactory level of quality

#### 2.5. The higher education institution ensures that ECTS allocation is adequate.

##### Analysis

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- Self-evaluation report p. 40
- on-site interviews
- Quality Assurance Manual of University of Rijeka (available at: [http://www.uniri.hr/files/kvaliteta/Prirucnik\\_za\\_kvalitetu\\_studiranja\\_2016.pdf](http://www.uniri.hr/files/kvaliteta/Prirucnik_za_kvalitetu_studiranja_2016.pdf))
- Cross-check of course syllabus and exams across all undergraduate and graduate programmes during on-site visit
- Internal documents for constructive course alignment

Majority of courses do have a clearly elaborated student workload that is expressed in ECTS forms. All ECTS forms are an integral part of the study program proposed to, and then adopted by the Faculty Council. Student surveys that are defined by the Quality Assurance Manual at the University level check the compliance of ECTS credits with actual workload for individual courses. In addition, a separate constructive alignment was recently done for each course by teachers that are involved.

Every academic year, student progress and their average grade at the undergraduate and graduate study programs is analysed. The questionnaire on teaching assessment by students examines the workload of students with a statement: "The course assignments are aligned with the allocation of ECTS credits", which is not sufficient, but the Faculty does not have the power to change this since all surveys are created on the University level. Although ECTS load is checked within the University survey, it is still not clear whether students are satisfied. So, the analysis of student survey results to a limited extent determines whether the actual student workload of each course is aligned with the allocated ECTS credits. The Student office conducts an analysis of student progress and study program completion for the needs of the Ministry of Science and Education and the implementation of the strategy of University of Rijeka. The implementation of the action plan aligned with the University Strategy is being adopted in March at the Faculty Council and delivered to the University.

### Recommendations for improvement

- There is considerable discrepancy in the number of course outcomes with the same number of ECTS in the same program; on the other hand, there is a difference between the number of ECTS credits between compulsory and elective course for the same syllabus (e.g. Microsystem EU). For the same workload, same number of ECTS should be awarded.
- Although every academic year the Faculty analyses students' progress and their average grade at the undergraduate and graduate studies, there are no clear repercussions for underachievers and there is no material incentive for overachievers.

### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**

## **2.6. Student practice is an integral part of study programmes (where applicable).**

### Analysis

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- Self-evaluation report p. 44-45
- agreements signed with different type of organisations
- on-site interviews with various stakeholders
- promotional material from the Career centre

Internship is incorporated into all study programs, on undergraduate and graduate level, as an elective course. The Faculty has over 60 formal agreements for internships with local companies, social-profit and public organisations. In addition, students have been provided with extracurricular opportunities for internship positions at the national and international level through EFRI partnership with the Croatian Employers Association (through the Youth Initiative Portal) and foreign international institutions such as EFMD (HigherED Internships Portal). Although students are informed about internship positions through EFRI social media network, in direct communication the Panel came to the conclusion that some students aren't aware of all opportunities they have at their disposal. Nevertheless, students are also encouraged to apply for positions through direct communication with EFRI Career centre with the aim of gaining practical competencies at the very source, and that goes for both domestic and foreign companies. Practitioners are also involved in shaping students' practical skills as guest speakers within different courses and as separate events. Well-known

managers and entrepreneurs lead workshops and case studies, and encourage business problem solving approach and development of critical thinking.

### Recommendations for improvement

- It is necessary to strengthen student internship both in scope and duration (around 2 weeks); the Panel recommends that student internship becomes a compulsory subject (esp. on all Business Economics program), and that students receive more than 4 ECTS.
- Although some employers mentioned that feedback regarding student performance during internship is rather informal, formal documents were presented at the site. Therefore it is clear that there is no universal policy that is applicable to all students.
- The level of cooperation with the local and regional stakeholders is at a satisfactory level, but unfortunately there is a lack of cooperation with foreign and international companies which would be particularly important for the International Business programme in English. Even if such an opportunity exists, it is not communicated to students in an adequate manner.

### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**

**2.7. Lifelong learning programmes delivered by the higher education institution are aligned with the strategic goals and the mission of the higher education institution, and social needs.**

### Analysis

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- Self-evaluation report p. 45-46
- on-site interviews with various stakeholders
- Strategy of the University of Rijeka for the period 2014-2020 (available at: [http://www.uniri.hr/files/staticki\\_dio/strategija/Strategija\\_UNIRI\\_2014\\_2020\\_EN.pdf](http://www.uniri.hr/files/staticki_dio/strategija/Strategija_UNIRI_2014_2020_EN.pdf))

According to the Strategy of the University of Rijeka for the period 2014-2020, lifelong learning aims to raise the level of education of general and specific populations in order to raise individual and social awareness, increase the quality of life by raising the general level of motivation and improving social inclusion, bring research results closer to the non-academic community (and especially to the economy), and contribute

to the dynamism of the labour market through rapid adaptations (upgrading and retraining) and thus increase employability and reduce unemployment. Following the market trends, labour market needs and guidelines in higher education, the Faculty has recognized the importance of lifelong learning, which became part of their strategic orientation. Several lifelong learning programs are being implemented at the Faculty that are adapted to the contemporary needs of the regional, economic and social development. There is also a LLL Committee that has 11 members of scientific and teaching staff and a student representative, and a LLL Registry /Office is available for all enquiries dealing with LLL programs.

In addition, in collaboration with its students, and based on their ideas and business plans, the Faculty launched the Student enterprise project aimed at encouraging its students towards entrepreneurship, fostering self-employment of young individuals and promoting entrepreneurial thought, which is in alignment with the institutional mission. Through this LLL programme, they managed to help with the foundation of 6 enterprises. Hereby students/young entrepreneurs are supported throughout all phases of an enterprise, from its establishment to management. In accordance, the Faculty organizes workshops aimed at raising individual's awareness of entrepreneurial competencies and their further development. Here the Faculty's teaching staff and successful entrepreneurs together provide support in drafting and developing business plans; the Faculty offers support in managing administrative affairs and financing the initial capital of the new enterprise. It is also important that project (enterprise) proposals are assessed and approved by Evaluation board that is composed of representative from the Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development and two faculty members. The Board carefully assesses the submitted business plans, suggests improvements and jointly analyses the market opportunities. The type of business activity to be conducted by student enterprises is not constrained in any sense as far as it has unique value proposition, market viability and it is self-sustainable.

#### **Recommendations for improvement**

- Continue with the development of life-long-life programs in line with the needs of the labour market.
- Further development of the Student enterprise project.

#### **Quality grade**

**High level of quality**



### *III. Teaching process and student support*

**3.1. Admission criteria or criteria for the continuation of studies are in line with the requirements of the study programme, clearly defined, published and consistently applied.**

#### *Analysis*

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- Self-evaluation report
- Ordinance on Studies of the University of Rijeka
- Regulations on Studies and Studying of the Faculty of Economics
- minutes of the Committee for Academic Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications and Periods of Study
- minutes of the Commission for the Recognition of Prior Learning
- discussion with students

Faculty of Economics in Rijeka bases its Admission procedures, recognition of prior learning and completion of studies on the Ordinance on Studies of the University of Rijeka and the Regulations on Studies and Studying at the Faculty of Economics in Rijeka. The collected data and the Self-evaluation report (page 46) show that the criteria for the admission and continuation of studies are clear and published on the Faculty website. The Faculty also has clearly defined procedures for making decisions on admission criteria, which it publishes through various channels. Admission criteria for undergraduate studies are available at [www.postani-student.hr](http://www.postani-student.hr), and through calls for enrolment that are published on the Faculty and University websites. Admission criteria for graduate studies, which are conducted via a public call for enrolment, are available on the Faculty and University websites. Additionally, the Faculty informs the public on the admission criteria and procedures through official channels like the Faculty social media, and in newspaper supplement for high school graduates, like the Novi list portal.

Furthermore, according to the meetings of the Committee for Academic Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications and Periods of Study and the Commission for the Recognition of Prior Learning, the Faculty defined and published clear procedures, which it successfully implements.

Students stated that they did not have any problems with these procedures, except some administrative ones in cases when their previous HEI did not send them the required documentation on time. Despite the delays, those students successfully enrolled into the Faculty of Economics.

On the other hand, the Faculty is missing an analysis of student progress that would take into account the criteria for enrolment or a continuation of study. According to the Self-evaluation report (page 48) and the collected information, this procedure is conducted partly via a single comprehensive classification of qualifications (classification of honours), but this classification is not used as a tool for monitoring study progress. The Expert Panel recommends the introduction of such a system in order to increase quality and improve the admission criteria.

#### Recommendations for improvement

- Conduct an efficient analysis of students' study progress.

#### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**

### **3.2. The higher education institution gathers and analyses information on student progress and uses it to ensure the continuity and completion of study.**

#### Analysis

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- Self-evaluation report
- Regulations on the Assessment
- Regulations on Studies and Studying, chapters V Progression during the course of studies, VI Assessment of student progress, and VII Completion of studies and overall student progress
- meeting with the Management
- meeting with the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee members
- meeting with the teaching staff
- meeting with students

Student progression during the course of studies is defined by the Regulations on Studies and Studying, chapters V Progression during the course of studies, VI Assessment of student progress, and VII Completion of studies and overall student progress, and the Regulations on the Assessment.

According to the Self-evaluation report (page 49) and the collected information, the Faculty collects data on student pass rates. In case of lower pass rates, the Faculty has a prescribed mechanism that is controlled by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Committee. The teachers confirmed that this mechanism is implemented and that it is efficient.

In order to foster student progress and graduation, the Career Centre publishes information of EFRI stars - students who have achieved excellence in different areas related to student development. The aim is to motivate student excellence, which was confirmed during the discussion with the students. Students think that publishing these information is motivating and that it gives them additional information on extracurricular activities. Some unnamed students' message to EFRI stars is that they too would like to find themselves on that list one day. Finally, this gives students information on who else, except the Career Centre, they can turn to in connection with extracurricular activities.

On the other hand, information on drop-outs are not sufficiently defined (Analytical Self-evaluation, page 55). In collecting additional data, the Faculty Management counts on the national system for monitoring students. Since student progression is one of the goals of the University and Faculty Strategies, the Expert Panel recommends the introduction of an adequate internal system for monitoring students who drop out in order to contribute to improved quality and achieving the Strategy goals.

#### Recommendations for improvement

- Establish an adequate internal system for monitoring students who drop-out from a programme.

#### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**

### **3.3. The higher education institution ensures student-centred learning.**

#### Analysis

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- Self-evaluation report
- Regulations on the Assessment of Student Progress at Undergraduate and Graduate University Studies at the Faculty of Economics in Rijeka
- Regulations on Studies and Studying of the Faculty of Economics
- meeting with the teaching staff
- meeting with students
- tour of the Faculty and the attended sample lectures

The Faculty has the Regulations on the Assessment of Student Progress at Undergraduate and Graduate University Studies at the Faculty of Economics in Rijeka and the Regulations on Studies and Studying of the Faculty of Economics.

Based on the information from the Self-evaluation report (page 50), meeting with the teaching staff and class attendance, the Panel determined that the Faculty uses different modes of programme delivery that are in line with the learning outcomes. The Faculty encourages the usage of these modes of delivery, which include group projects, problem-based learning, field work, mentorship, use of multimedia and guest lectures. Students cited the increasing use of new teaching methods and their advantages, one of them being that they connect theory and practice. Students also emphasised the increasing frequency of this trend during the years. In addition, the Faculty organises a number of workshop for teachers with the aim of improving the quality of teaching, especially with regard to teaching in virtual environments.

All learning sources, such as teaching materials from the courses/exercises/seminars and textbooks, are available 24/7 via the e-learning platform Merlin. In discussion with the students, the Panel confirmed the availability of all necessary materials and a regular updating of this system.

The Self-evaluation report (page 13) states that students are reluctant to fill in student surveys, and the discussion with the Management and the teaching staff confirmed that they are aware of this problem. Teaching staff pointed out that they inform the students about the need to fill this survey during their classes, but student response has continued to drop. The results of these student surveys serve as a tool for the evaluation and adjustments of methods of delivery and pedagogical measures; however, the low response rate throws doubt on the relevance of the collected data. Furthermore, teaching staff emphasised that feedback from students is crucial for the readjustment and improvement of teaching methods. The discussion with students revealed that they have an open communication with teachers in their satisfaction with courses, study programmes etc. This is precisely why the Panel feels that a revision of tools for collecting student feedback is necessary, as is the development of new and efficient methods. Considering students' opinion that, regardless of their age, the teachers are very open towards a constructive dialogue, the Panel recommends including students in the development of new methods.

#### **Recommendations for improvement**

- Develop new methods for collecting student feedback.

#### **Quality grade**

**Satisfactory level of quality**

### **3.4. The higher education institution ensures adequate student support.**

#### **Analysis**

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- Self-evaluation report
- examples of guidebooks and leaflets
- meeting with students
- meeting with the Management
- meeting with the representative of the Office for Students with Disabilities
- tour of the Faculty

At the beginning of each academic year, an introductory lecture is organized for all newly enrolled students providing the basic information on the way the Faculty is organized, the way it functions and the rules and procedures governing studies. In order to facilitate freshmen's orientation in the new surroundings, the Faculty publishes: Study Guide for Newly Enrolled Students (Freshmen's Guide), A Study Guide for ONLINE Graduate Study Program. Information are also available through guides and leaflets such as: International Business Study Guide, Information on Postgraduate Specialist Studies, Information on Doctoral Studies, Information on Joint Doctoral Studies, Summer School Brochure and Where after the graduate degree?

In order to improve the support and communication between students and the Management, the Faculty organises formal consultations with the Vice-deans, and a biannual informal social gathering, the so-called Coffee with the Vice-deans. Discussion with students revealed their attendance of both the formal and informal events. Students also pointed out the efficiency of those meetings, the Management's approachability and their speedy and efficient reaction to the indicated problems. For example, students asked for a room for creative work, or rather a room where they can study and work, but they do not need to be silent. At students' request, the Management secured the requested area.

Students also expressed their satisfaction with the Faculty's professional support, and said that they know who to turn to and how to solve any potential problems. In addition to consultations with the Vice-deans, teaching staff is also available at pre-arranged consultation slots, which the students confirmed. Students also said that the teaching staff can be reached via email or the Merlin platform, and that they regularly reply to queries. Furthermore, the students confirmed the approachability of the Faculty Student Union, whose doors are "always open". Yet another type of support is the system of student teaching assistants.

For direct communication, the Faculty uses social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, which the Panel finds commendable. Seeing how the site visit revealed the ambition of the Marketing students, the Panel recommends that they (and other students) be included in the creation of content and management of the Faculty's social media accounts in order to increase their reach and interaction. The Faculty also has a Frequently Asked Questions column that provides an overview of the most frequently asked questions and the related answers.

Moreover, students can receive counselling and support at the level of the University: psychological counselling at the University Psychological Counselling Centre, legal counselling from the Student Ombudsman Office, and support from the Office for Students with disabilities.

The site visit also established the Faculty's support (through the Career Centre) for student associations in organising student conferences, workshops and similar events. In addition to financial support (if necessary), students can use Faculty premises and equipment, they can ask for advice or any other form of support.

The Self-evaluation report, meetings and the site visit showed that the Faculty employs qualified and committed professional, administrative and technical staff, whose work is regulated by the Regulations on Institutional Organization of Working Positions. For example, at students' request, the library is now open every working day from 09:00 a.m. till 08:00 p.m. and on Saturdays from 08:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m.

#### Recommendations for improvement

- No recommendations

#### Quality grade

**High level of quality**

### **3.5. The higher education institution ensures support to students from vulnerable and under-represented groups.**

#### Analysis

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- Self-evaluation report
- tour of the Faculty
- meeting with the Management
- meeting with the coordinator
- meeting with the representative of the Office for Students with Disabilities within the University Counselling Centre

- meeting with students with disabilities

Based on the Self-evaluation report (page 56), discussions and the site visit, the Panel determined that the Faculty provides support to students from vulnerable and under-represented groups.

The Faculty grants five scholarships to children from social institutions / homes enrolling the study program in International Business (held in English) and to the first three placed candidates enrolling the study program in International Business within the first call for enrolment.

Also, based on the information in the Self-evaluation report (p. 56), the Faculty ensures support for war veterans from the Croatian Homeland War, Croatian wartime military disabled veterans (HRVI), children of killed, detained or missing Homeland War veterans, children of the Croatian Homeland War defenders with a 1<sup>st</sup> degree disability (100%), children of the persons killed, dead or missing under the circumstances defined under Art. 6, 7 and 8 of the Act on the Protection of Military and Civilian War Invalids (Official Gazette No. 33/92, 77/92, 58/93, 2/94, 76/94, 82/01, 103/03, 148/13).

The Self-evaluation report also states that the costs of studying for students with an established 60% or higher disability will be subsidized for the duration twice as long as the regularly prescribed duration of study. Student support to students with disabilities is ensured through the coordinator working in the Student Affairs Office at the Faculty. At the University level, the students may turn to the Office for Students with Disabilities within the University Counselling Centre. The discussions showed that students with disabilities have modified studying conditions, e.g. classes for study groups in which there are students which have difficulty moving around are organized in classroom on floors reachable by elevators. Students who have some motor or visual difficulties are allowed a longer time to write their examinations.

The Faculty has removed all possible architectural barriers that could impede students with disabilities (the Management said that the remaining barriers cannot be removed), and adjust the water closets. The Management also stated that it did not encounter any resistance from the teaching staff when it came to making the adjustments to the teaching process or the assessment of knowledge for such students.

The Expert Panel recommends the introduction of a buddy programme for students from vulnerable and under-represented groups from the time of their enrolment. That way, they would also have support from their peers, people closer to their age group, with whom they could discuss issues they would not raise with someone else. It is recommended that this buddy programme includes members of the Student Union whose involvement in decision-making Faculty bodies gives them a unique opportunity to answer certain questions.

Feedback from a student with disabilities confirms the availability of such support. This student did not face any difficulties or lack of support, and was very grateful for the Faculty's efforts-

#### Recommendations for improvement

- Introduce a buddy programme for students from vulnerable and under-represented groups from the time of their enrolment.

#### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**

### **3.6. The higher education institution allows students to gain international experience.**

#### Analysis

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- Self-evaluation report
- meeting with the Management
- meeting with outgoing Erasmus students
- meeting with students
- meeting with the employee of the International Cooperation Office

The Faculty has an International Cooperation Committee and the International Cooperation Office that provide institutional support to the mobility of students and teachers. Information on possibilities for studying abroad through mobility programmes CEEPUS and ERASMUS are publicly available on the Faculty website. During the discussion with the International Cooperation Office employee, it has been determined that the Faculty has 60 bilateral agreements on cooperation and that it continuously works on increasing that number.

Based on the information from the Self-evaluation and the collected data, the Faculty has a procedure for the recognition of grades and ECTS credits awarded through mobility programmes. Discussion with students revealed that they did not have any problems with this recognition procedure.

In the period between 2012/2013 and 2016/2017, a total of 174 students spent a period of their studies abroad. The Management said that the Faculty was the University leader in outgoing and incoming mobility, which is commendable. Moreover, discussion with students who have not been abroad showed a big interest in studying in another country.



After completing their study period abroad, students write a report by receiving an email containing the final report form to be completed within the Mobility Tool base. Students also write a Mobility Report within the CEEPUS programme, which is activated three days prior to the completion of their mobility within the CEEPUS on-line application. Once the student returns from the outgoing mobility, the Erasmus / CEEPUS-Coordinator of the Faculty conducts the recognition of the ECTS credits obtained at the foreign institution. The recognition of ECTS credits is done based on the documents such as the Learning Agreement and the Transcript of Records issued by the foreign institution. On the basis of these documents, the Coordinator issues a certificate / table on the recognition of ECTS credits which is forwarded to the Student Registry to be entered into the ISVU system.

#### Recommendations for improvement

- No recommendations

#### Quality grade

**High level of quality**

### **3.7. The higher education institution ensures adequate study conditions for foreign students.**

#### Analysis

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- Self-evaluation report
- meeting with the Management
- meeting with the employee of the International Cooperation Office
- meeting with students
- meeting with incoming Erasmus students

The Self-evaluation report, additional information, and meetings with incoming Erasmus students and the employee of the International Cooperation Office showed that the Faculty ensures adequate conditions for foreign students.

Foreign students can find information on the Faculty website in the English language. Since the English version of the current website does not feature all the content available in Croatian, the Faculty developed a new website. The Expert Panel was shown this new website, which will be up soon, during the site visit and could see that all deficiencies have been resolved. The new website is also suitable for usage on mobile phones.

The Faculty has an International Cooperation Committee and the International Cooperation Office that provide institutional support to the mobility of students and teachers. Information on possibilities for studying abroad through mobility programmes CEEPUS and ERASMUS are publicly available on the Faculty website. During the discussion with the International Cooperation Office employee, it has been determined that the Faculty has 60 bilateral agreements on cooperation and that it continuously working on increasing that number.

Since 2011/2012, the Faculty has been offering a full-time study program in International Business completely taught in the English language. The program has an international dimension and is enrolled by both domestic and foreign students, especially by those coming through international exchange programs. The Expert Panel thinks that this study programme represents a big advantage in attracting foreign students, but also in providing international experience for domestic students. In addition to the study programme in English, the Management said that they have a Croatian learning programme for foreign students at the University. According to the incoming mobility records, in the period between 2012/2013 and 2016/2017, a total of 174 students spent a period of their studies at the Faculty of Economics in Rijeka. On the other hand, the Panel got the impression that some members of the teaching staff were not really confident in their knowledge of English. Some staff members, even among the youngest, communicated only in Croatian. That is why the Panel recommends that the Faculty establish the real level of the teachers' knowledge of English, especially those that teach at the International Business study programme; if there is a need, the Faculty should organise additional education. The Panel also recommends an anonymous survey of students of International Business in order to determine their satisfaction with the teachers' knowledge of English. The Management stated that one of the five main Faculty determinants is internationalisation, which requires knowledge of foreign languages.

There are welcome and orientation info days organised for foreign students (from EU, but also non-EU countries) at the start of each semester (University's Welcome Day and the Faculty's Welcome-Info). On enrolment into a semester, each foreign student is given a password allowing access to student information and materials needed to follow enrolled courses (Merlin), to access the platform for applying for examinations (Studomat), or to access exam results.

Discussion with incoming Erasmus students showed that the Faculty provides support for applying and studying, and that the students are satisfied with the study programmes, especially because they are studying together with their Croatian colleagues. They also stated that study programmes, teaching methods and continuous assessments foster continuous learning, but do not constitute an excessive burden. Erasmus students further stated that information provided prior to their arrival

coincides with the situation at the Faculty, and that they did not encounter any difficulties. It also seems that the teaching staff is highly flexible about special queries and needs of incoming students, which is highly commendable. For all these reasons, incoming students said that they would recommend the Faculty of Economics to their colleagues. Nevertheless, the Panel's recommendation is to have more (as much as possible) guest lectures by foreign teachers.

#### Recommendations for improvement

- Determine the real level of teachers' knowledge of the English language.
- Conduct an anonymous survey among students of International Business in order to determine their satisfaction with the teachers' knowledge of English.
- Organise guest lectures by foreign teachers.

#### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**

### **3.8. The higher education institution ensures an objective and consistent evaluation and assessment of student achievements.**

#### Analysis

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- Self-evaluation report
- Regulations on studying
- Regulations on the Assessment of Student Progress
- Regulations on studies and studying of the Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka (Article 39)
- examples of written exams
- meeting with the Management
- meeting with the teaching staff
- meeting with students

Based on the Self-evaluation report and additional information, it was established that the Faculty publishes the criteria and methods for the evaluation and assessment before the start of courses. Regulations on Studies and Studying and Regulation on Assessment prescribe the procedures connected with teaching, learning and

assessment. These regulations prescribe the amount of grade points that can be assigned for particular modes of assessment. The published course curricula provide information on: the contents to be dealt in lectures, seminars / exercises, the learning outcomes, literature, schedule of individual activities, continuous assessments/ mid-terms, office hours and course holder contact information. However, the Expert Panel thinks that the final exam, administered after students already passed two mid-terms and other assessments of knowledge, is unnecessary; especially when the final exam consists solely of multiple choice questions that are not appropriate for determining whether students acquired all learning outcomes of a particular course. The Panel recommends cancelling these final exams in cases when students have passed other forms of knowledge assessment. The final exam, when it follows all other administered assessments, puts an unnecessary burden on students. Instead of final written exams, some courses can have oral exams as an additional assessment of knowledge. This will assure adequate assessment of the achieved learning outcomes, and contribute to the development of students' critical thinking and communication skills. Only when students do not meet the minimal criteria should they have to take the final exam in order to pass a course. However, the Panel again stresses that the final exam should not consist only of multiple choice answers.

The discussion with the teaching staff showed that the Faculty provides support to the assessors in the development of skills related to the testing and assessment methods. The teaching staff develops their skills through various forms of teacher training, which are organised by the Faculty and other institutions; in addition to the Faculty, other trainings take place at the Center for Teacher Education within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka, the University of Rijeka and the Agency for Science and Higher Education. The meeting with the teaching staff also revealed that they use double grading to ensure objectivity and reliability.

They also adjust exam terms for students with disabilities; for example, exams for students with sight impairments were written in larger fonts.

Students get feedback on assessment results within 5 working days, although some exceptions have been noted. Students also have the possibility to appeal a grade directly, through their Student Union representatives, through consultations with Vice-deans, or in a written form that can be submitted to the Student Registry, the Dean's Office or through the Dean's Letter Box. The procedure for dealing with student complaints is prescribed by the Regulations on Studies and Studying of the Faculty of Economics (Art. 39). The discussion with students revealed that assessments are fair and consistent, and that there have not been any appeals.

### Recommendations for improvement

- Revise methods for conducting final exams.
- Respect the rules on publishing students' assessment results.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

### **3.9. The higher education institution guarantees the issuance of Diploma Supplements and adequate qualification information.**

#### Analysis

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- Self-evaluation report
- Regulations on the Layout of Diplomas and the Content and Layout of Certificates and other Certified Statements (consolidated text as of January 26, 2015) adopted by the University of Rijeka
- Ordinance on the Content of Diplomas and Diploma Supplements (Official Gazette no. 77/2008) of the Ministry of Science and Education
- Ordinance on the Amendments of the Regulations the Content of Diplomas and Diploma Supplements (Official Gazette no. 149/2011)
- examples of diplomas and diploma supplements

The Self-evaluation report and the examples of diplomas and diploma supplements showed that the Faculty issues appropriate documents (diploma and diploma supplement) that describe the qualification, its level and content, and status of the study programme.

The diploma and diploma supplement are issued in accordance with relevant regulations - Regulations on the Layout of Diplomas and the Content and Layout of Certificates and other Certified Statements (consolidated text as of January 26, 2015) adopted by the University of Rijeka, the Ordinance on the Content of Diplomas and Diploma Supplements (Official Gazette no. 77/2008) of the Ministry of Science and Education, and the Ordinance on the Amendments of the Regulations the Content of Diplomas and Diploma Supplements (Official Gazette no. 149/2011).

#### Recommendations for improvement

- No recommendations

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

### **3.10. The higher education institution is responsible for the employability of graduates.**

#### **Analysis**

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- Self-evaluation report
- meeting with the Management
- meeting with the head of the Career Centre
- meeting with the alumni
- meeting with students
- attending a Career Centre event

The Career Development Office at the Faculty of Economics in Rijeka was founded in 2013, and in 2016, it changed its name to Career Centre. The main objectives of the Career Centre is to promote employment and career development of students, but also the alumni. The Career Office also enables contacts between students and prospective employers, encourages and supports student entrepreneurship, and organizes educational lectures, workshops and counselling. The Centre currently has one full-time employee, and is in the process of employing another. All mentioned facts were confirmed in discussions with the Management, the head of the Career Centre, alumni and students. The Panel also attended one Career Centre event, which demonstrated the quality of their work. After such events, participants are asked to fill a satisfaction survey whose goal is to determine the event advantages and disadvantages, and write additional comments that form the basis of the Centre's future development. The Panel commends the use of such surveys, especially their goals.

Students who used the Centre services said that it was the best thing that happened at the Faculty. On the other hand, the discussions revealed a lack of awareness with the Centre's work in a certain number of students, although they expressed interest in the Centre's services. That is why the Panel recommends that the Centre promotes its work more strongly and that it develops a marketing strategy in cooperation with the students (for example, by organising focus groups with the aim of creating a new strategy).

The Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka partnered with the Croatian Employers' Association in the Private Sector Youth Initiative, which allows students to acquire practical knowledge and skills within internships during their studies in order to increase their chances for employment. At the moment, the Initiative includes over 139 companies, 40 educational institutions and over 600 internship openings.

Through the Career Office and the Entrepreneurship study programme, the Faculty fosters entrepreneurial tendencies and competencies via student companies and student entrepreneurship, which is in line with the Faculty mission. During the site

visit, the Panel found out about 2 spin-off companies (Centre for Local Economic Development and the Centre for Innovation and Knowledge Transfer) as well as several student companies. At the level of the University, there is a STEP RI Science and Technology Park as an entrepreneurial support institution. The Faculty of Economics, in cooperation with the Primorsko-Goranska County, organized a business education and training project for the University students entitled "BEST-Business Education for Students". The goal of the project was to prepare students completing their studies (final year students) for the world of entrepreneurship through a specially designed training program.

The ALUMNI EFRI Association was founded in 2017, and originated from the ALUMNI EFRI Club. Older alumni members are often called to the Faculty as guest lecturers, while younger ones get the Faculty's support in finding jobs, and are invited to seminars, workshops and similar events. The discussion with the alumni revealed that some of them were not aware that they too were alumni, which is why the Panel asked for an additional explanation from the Management. The Management explained that the cooperation with the alumni has gone through several models, none of which was completely efficient. Based on this information, the Panel recommends the establishment of a new model and a clear definition of who is an alumni member and how do you become one.

Meetings with the alumni and employers also revealed the lack of a formal method for providing feedback. In other words, the only way for employers to provide formal feedback on students' internship is through the final report. All other feedback related to the improvement of teaching content or skills that students need is related in an informal way. The Panel feels that there is a need for a formal way of providing feedback from the alumni, employers and other external stakeholders. The current systems seems non-transparent because there is a risk of important information being confined only to the people engaged in an informal conversation, and not reaching other staff members who might find it very useful.

Also important for this standard is the fact that the University and the City of Rijeka organise a Job Fair. The Fair takes place at the University Campus and enables direct presentation of prospective employers to unemployed persons. The Faculty of Economics in Rijeka participates in the fair as a support to those who have graduated in finding options offered to them upon graduation, and presents opportunities for pursuing further education at postgraduate studies or through lifelong learning programs. Furthermore, student conferences like "FocusOn - Career at Hand" included major employers such as Plodine, Jadrolinija, Convergent Media Group Croatia, etc. Besides presenting business opportunities, these companies got a chance to hear the opinions of student-participants about the possibilities of improving professional practices and internships. Based on these views, businesses will be able to improve their professional practice/internship programs.

The Faculty analyses the employability of its graduates by using a University survey on the satisfaction with study programmes, conducted at the end of a course of study. The surveys are processed by the University Centre for Studies, which sends the final, comparable results to all university constituents. In March 2017, a survey was conducted on students who obtained their degrees in International Business (English taught program) in the academic year 2015/2016, which included questions about their employability. Notwithstanding this and the University surveys, the Panel found that the Faculty lacks exact data on employability of its graduates. According to the Management, the Faculty gets in touch with students some 6-8 months after their graduation and asks about their employment prospects. The Panel thinks that this system is not efficient enough and that information obtained in this way cannot serve as the basis for further interpretations and decision-making.

### **Recommendations for improvement**

- Additional promotion of the Career Centre and developing a marketing strategy in cooperation with students.
- Establish a new model of cooperation with the alumni, and develop a clear definition of who is an alumni member and how do you become one.
- Introduce a formal way of providing feedback from the alumni, employers and other external stakeholders.
- Introduce a more efficient model for analysing graduate employability.

### **Quality grade**

**Satisfactory level of quality**



## *IV. Teaching and institutional capacities*

### **4.1. The higher education institution ensures adequate teaching capacities.**

#### **Analysis**

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- percentage of courses delivered by teachers employed at EFRI
- qualifications of teachers for the course (courses) they teach (appointment to grade in an appropriate field or area)
- student-teacher ratio and alterations thereof over time
- information on teacher workload
- tables 4.1.a, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 from the MOZVAG database
- explanations in the Self-evaluation report
- interviews

There are 72 persons appointed to scientific and teaching grades at EFRI - 2 hold part-time positions and 12 are assistants without a PhD degree. In addition, 12 external associates contribute to teaching on the undergraduate and graduate level. The number of external associates increases to 64 when postgraduate specialist and PhD studies are also taken into account. A small portion of teaching is done by PhD students who are not assistants or by guest lecturers.

Concerning the teachers' qualification, the Panel observed that the legally required teaching qualifications are met, and that the structure of seniority is adequate. Moreover, teachers are obliged by law to do research, which they do (as discussed below in standard 5), and which should have a positive impact on teaching qualification. Teachers from EFRI won the award for teaching excellence on the level of the University twice. The provided evidence and interviews with current students and in particular with alumni indicate that the teachers' qualification and motivation is more than adequate.

The following table gives an overview of the structure of student numbers.

	Number of students		
Study programme	Full-time	Part-time	Total
Undergraduate	697	548	1,245 (60%)

Graduate	289	289	578 (28%)
Postgraduate specialist	0	117	117 (6%)
PhD	0	121	121 (6%)
Total	986 (48%)	1,075 (52%)	2,061 (100%)

From the table, the Panel observes that teaching takes place mainly on the undergraduate level, and that most students are part-time. In comparison with the previous re-accreditation in 2011, the total number of students (without PhD students) has decreased by more than 50 percent, and the number of teachers has increased.

With respect to the number of teachers in relation to the number of students, the ratio of the number of employed teachers (full-time equivalent) to the number of students (full-time equivalent) must not be worse than 1:30, as required by Article 6 of the Ordinance on the Content of Licence and Conditions for Issuing Licence for Performing Higher Education Activity, carrying out a Study Programme and Re-accreditation of Higher Education Institutions. Based on the MOZVAG database, EFRI's ratio is 1:29.3, which corresponds to 50 teachers and 1,463 students. Hence, the required ratio is just met.

The Panel has concerns regarding this ratio. First, we cannot infer the number of 50 full-time equivalent teachers from Table 4.1.a. This may be due to different dates to which the ratio and the table refer. Second, the number of students does not comprise PhD students, although teaching on the PhD level cannot be separated from other teaching on the basis of the given data. Third, the number of teachers does not include assistants nor postdoctoral researchers, although EFRI states that they are involved in teaching. Fourth, provided student numbers largely neglect drop-outs. During the site visit, EFRI calculated the drop-out rate to be less than 20 percent for the undergraduate level, and less than 5 percent for the graduate level. In the following analysis, the Panel assumes that these rates are 15 and 3 percent, respectively, and 0 percent for postgraduate students.

With these changes, the number of full-time equivalent teachers increases to 61, where assistants and postdoctoral researchers are accounted for by 50%. The inclusion of the full-time equivalents of PhD students and the drop-out rates reduces the number of students to 1,364.85. This leads to a ratio of 1:22.4, which is clearly more favourable than that of 1:29.3.

With respect to the provided data on teachers' workloads, the Panel observed that workload varies significantly across teachers. This can be explained to some extent by different levels of teaching obligations. Unfortunately, the Panel does not have data on teaching obligations. More importantly, the data reflects a high workload in general,

and occasionally excessive workloads. This is remarkable in view of the favourable teachers-to-students ratio. One explanation is that there might be an incentive for working overtime, since overtime is paid. A more relevant explanation seems to be that the definition of the workload figure aims at offered courses, not at courses actually conducted.

Overall, the provided figures are not useful for evaluating the actual workload in absolute terms. Moreover, it is not evident from the provided figures on total workload how they break down into the different study levels. In particular, it is Table 4.3 in the Appendix to the Self-evaluation that is not only confusingly lengthy, but also rather useless with respect to teachers' actual workloads. However, during interviews with the teachers, the Panel got the impression that teaching workload is not excessive, but bearable.

Lastly, we shall point out that the future redesign of study programmes (see standard 3 above) should impact on the required specializations of future teaching staff. For example, accounting seems to be underrepresented in the current study programmes, and pursuing the goal of internationalization should result in a more international teaching staff.

In total, the Panel's impression is that teaching capacities are adequate, in particular for undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate specialist levels. However, the data available for assessing and controlling capacities and workloads is insufficient.

### Recommendations for improvement

- The figures with respect to the number of teachers, the number of students and drop-outs as well as teachers' workloads should be revised and broken down to study levels and programmes; otherwise it is not possible to assess and control capacities and workloads.
- It should be taken into account that future study programmes will call for a restructuring of the teaching staff.

### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**

## **4.2. The higher education institution has an objective, transparent and excellence-based procedure of teacher recruitment.**

### Analysis

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- internal regulations prescribing the teacher recruitment procedure

- advertised teacher vacancies
- an example of completed employment procedures (copies of job advertisements, composition of the selection committees, their reports and decisions)
- explanations in the Self-evaluation
- interviews

Recruitment procedures followed by EFRI seem to live up to national standards, which newly include research output. However, internationalization of the teaching staff is negligible. EFRI states to be active in hiring internationally, but this does not seem to be done on a regular basis. An alleged difficulty is that salaries are not competitive.

#### Recommendations for improvement

- While job offers are communicated through different channels, it seems promising to add more targeted channels with European coverage such as Akadeus.
- EFRI should seek funds to attract at least a small number of professors of international rank.

#### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**

### **4.3. Teacher advancement and re-appointment is based on objective and transparent procedures.**

#### Analysis

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- examples of procedures of appointment and re-appointment to scientific/teaching grades
- regulations or procedures for assessing and rewarding teacher excellence
- strategic goals of the higher education institution
- explanations in the Self-evaluation
- interviews

Advancement and re-appointment procedures followed by EFRI seem to live up to the standards. However, given that the number of different rank levels is regulated, it is not clear who is actually advanced or re-appointed.

### Recommendations for improvement

- Additional, performance-based criteria for advancement and re-appointment should be considered, designed, communicated and applied.

### Quality grade

**High level of quality**

## **4.4. The higher education institution provides support to teachers in their professional development.**

### Analysis

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- information on the teachers' actual participation in teaching competencies development programmes (workshops, seminars)
- information on the teachers' actual participation in international mobility programmes (study visits at foreign higher education institutions, etc.)
- information on the use of sabbatical leave and teachers' rights thereof
- information on the manner in which the teachers are motivated for scientific activity (e. g. relevant trainings, reward system for scientific/artistic productivity, etc.), and data on the increase of scientific productivity
- tables 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 from the MOZVAG database
- explanations in the Self-evaluation
- interviews

The Self-evaluation mainly speaks of professional training in the form of workshops and guest lectures, which are aimed at methodological education with some focus on statistics and administrative training. It should be noted that the teachers also gain professional experience through numerous commercial projects.

From the interviews, we learned that teachers with particularly high grades from student questionnaires present their approach to the other teachers, in particular to those with much lower grades. Exams with excessively low pass rates trigger a self-evaluation, peer reviewing and additional training of the respective teacher; the Panel finds these to be good practices. However, EFRI should pay close attention that this is done in a careful and constructive manner in order to avoid detrimental effects on teachers' motivation.

In the interviews, the Panel observed a number of teachers feeling uncomfortable about speaking English.

The Panel feels that it is even more important to look at EFRI's support for teachers' research. From the Self-evaluation and in particular from interviews with the teachers, the Panel learned that the teaching workload is such that research is feasible, and that there is some financial support for travel and publication expenses. However, most costs are covered by third-party funds on a project-by-project basis. At the same time, teachers praised the Management's cooperation and flexibility in cases when third-party funding is insufficient.

In total, the Panel's impression is that professional development at EFRI takes place, but it could be more systematic and targeted.

### Recommendations for improvement

- EFRI should proceed with its peer-to-peer approach with respect to teaching, and eventually extend it to fund raising.
- EFRI should take measures to improve its English language skills.

### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**

**4.5. The space, equipment and the entire infrastructure (laboratories, IT services, work facilities etc.) are appropriate for the delivery of study programmes, ensuring the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and the implementation of scientific/artistic activity.**

### Analysis

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- examination of resources during the site visit
- information on space, equipment and infrastructure
- feedback from students and teachers on their satisfaction with spatial resources for study and student activities
- tables 4.8 and 4.9 from the MOZVAG database
- explanations in the Self-evaluation
- interviews

During the site visit, the Panel found clean, well-maintained and well-equipped premises, classrooms and offices. The main building can be cooled and is accessible for people with walking disabilities.

In the aftermath of the previous re-accreditation, EFRI reduced student numbers by a large degree, and disposed of a smaller remote building. Therefore, it does not surprise

that the reported 2 square meters per student clearly exceed the legally required 1.25 square meters per student. Unfortunately, the Panel cannot verify these figures because they obviously do not only refer to the given information on the space in classrooms, lecture halls and offices.

Here, the Panel would like to take an additional approach. To do so, we made the following rough calculation: for the capacity available, we assumed that teaching rooms are used from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. for five days a week, and from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. for one day of the week. This gives 55 hours per room and per week. For two contact hours per course and per week this yields 27.5 time slots for courses per room and per week. There are 17 classrooms and lecture halls at EFRI, one of which should be reserved as a study room for the students. For 16 teaching rooms, there are 440 slots available per week. For the capacity needed, we assume that each (full-time) student attends 6 courses per week. The number of students is 1,364.8 as derived in the analysis in §4.1. This results in 8,189.1 slots per week. Under the assumption that not all seats are occupied during classes, we divide this number by 75 percent of the average room size. The average room size is calculated without the distance learning studio. This yields 78.1 seats as the approximate average room size. Consequently, about 139.9 slots are needed per week, which is far less than the 440 slots available.

In spite of the favourable spatial conditions, students wish there were more study rooms for their own preparation, as well as more parking space. In fact, the Panel observed during our visit that the existing study room was also occupied by classes. Moreover, we heard of complaints over the cafeteria's size and offer, in particular that there is neither vegetarian nor gluten-free food.

### Recommendations for improvement

- EFRI should take care that there are one or two dedicated study rooms, in particular in view of the ample spatial capacities.
- The coverage of the wireless LAN should be improved. For instance, the signal in the "Vijecnica" room is not always reliable.
- Door labels and signs should be bilingual, Croatian and English.
- The cafeteria's offer should be restructured and, if possible, the capacity of the cafeteria increased.
- The students' records of study are publicly accessible in the hallway to the student administration office on the ground floor. EFRI should remove this lack of privacy protection.

### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**

**4.6. The library and library equipment, including the access to additional resources, ensure the availability of literature and other resources necessary for a high-quality study, research and teaching.**

**Analysis**

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- review of library resources during the site visit
- availability of up-to-date teaching materials
- subscriptions to appropriate bibliographic databases and databases with full-text access
- availability of the network library catalogue of the evaluated higher education institution
- adequate number of archived final, graduate, specialist, and PhD theses in the institutional repository (corresponding to the number of graduates of the evaluated higher education institution)
- availability of teaching materials via protected website
- adequate number of copies of required reading, relative to the number of enrolled students
- student feedback regarding the availability of the library (e.g. longer working hours) and the availability of Croatian and international literature (including remote access)
- table 4.10 from the MOZVAG database
- explanations in the Self-evaluation
- interviews

EFRI has its own library, which is open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Students in the online study programme can have books sent to them by post. The library's yearly budget amounts to about HRK 275,000, and is set at the university level. Procurement of literature is closely coordinated with teachers. As a state-run academic institution, EFRI participates in the interlibrary loan between all state-run academic libraries in Croatia. Similarly, the state provides for the access to journal databases.

While the small library made the impression of being functional and well-organised, teachers expressed their wish for a broader and timely access to international journals; we share the view that this is crucial, in particular to research. From the students we learned that they do not often go to the library because they feel that the materials provided in class are sufficient.



### Recommendations for improvement

- EFRI should consider allocating more funds to the access to electronic textbooks.
- EFRI should define its most relevant journals and strive for electronic access to them.
- Both these measures involve, at least to some extent, getting involved in decisions on the university or even on the national level. EFRI might consider to try to contribute to these decisions through the Dean or a Vice Dean.

### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**

## **4.7. The higher education institution rationally manages its financial resources.**

### Analysis

Evidence gathered during the site-visit and indicators from the Self-evaluation Report:

- data on income and expenditures
- data on sustainability and transparency of funding
- rationale for distribution of funds from subsidies and tuition fees
- regulations or decisions on the manner of use of own or dedicated funds
- tables 4.11 and 4.12 from the MOZVAG database
- explanations in the Self-evaluation
- interviews

EFRI is mainly state-funded, as approximately two thirds of its income come from the state or the University, respectively. This income is mainly spent on salaries. The rest of the income stems essentially from tuition fees and also from third-party funds. It is noteworthy that tuition fees per student are comparatively low, namely HRK 8,000 for the English study programmes per year and per student, and HRK 5,000 for the part-time and online study programmes. They are set on the level of the University and the state, although these bodies do not contribute to the costs of these programmes as much as they do for the Croatian full-time programmes. Employments account for about three quarters of EFRI's expenses. Income and expenses are planned by EFRI primarily for the next five years.

In reaction to the previous re-accreditation, the number of students has been reduced substantially. In addition, the cost absorption by the University has changed in the past. Nevertheless, EFRI managed to accrue approximately a 10 percent surplus on a yearly budget until 2016. This has been achieved mainly through salary cuts.

The financial position of EFRI is balanced, stable and slightly improving over the last years. The most important financial threat to EFRI is a decline of tuition fees. Given EFRI's positive development since the last re-accreditation, there is little reason to expect this to happen. Even if this happened, we must bear in mind that EFRI is state-funded, so that deficits would and should be financed by the University or the state, the more so as tuition fees are regulated by these bodies. This advantage comes at the price that EFRI cannot, at least currently, significantly extend its activities.

### **Recommendations for improvement**

- We recommend keeping a close track of future income and expenses, and performing cost-volume-profit analysis with respect to the number of different types of students in order to maintain and even increase the accrued surplus.
- The net cash flow calculation in Table 4.11 in the Appendix to the Self-evaluation is driven by EFRI's regulatory environment; it should be extended and restructured to get meaningful measures for the drivers of EFRI's financial performance.
- Given that EFRI is a state-funded institution of significant size and quality among the University's constituents and that Croatia is a state in transition, it should actively monitor regulatory changes and contribute to them on the level of the University through its Dean.

### **Quality grade**

**Satisfactory level of quality**

## *V. Scientific/artistic activity*

### **5.1. Teachers and associates employed at the higher education institution are committed to the achievement of high quality and quantity of scientific research.**

#### **Analysis**

Evidence gathered generally comes from:

- Self-evaluation report
- Appendix to the Self-evaluation report
- interviews during site-visit

Of particular importance are:

- table 5.1 of the appendix to the Self-evaluation report
- additional documents provided by the Vice-dean of Research
- supplementary material provided by the Faculty

According to Table 5.1 of the Appendix to the Self-evaluation report, members of the Faculty published 172 articles in journals of the highest category according to the Ordinance on Appointment to Scientific Grades (OASG). Of these publications, 46 have been published in cooperation with authors who are member of another HEI. This accounts to an average per capita and year of 0.84. Additionally, 165 other publications according to the Ordinance on Appointment to Scientific Grades were achieved. Thereof, 68 have been in co-operation with members of another HEI. In total, an average per capita and year of 0.9 results. Above and beyond that, members of the Faculty published books (22), book chapters (130), professional papers (138) and other publications. In total, these publications generated 326 citations (WoSC), and scored an h-index of 9.

Additional documents provided by the Vice-dean of Research show that, over the period 2012 – 2015, the number of papers published in journals referred to in Web of Science (WoS) increased in both relative and absolute terms. Absolutely, the number of publications increased from 15 to 47. In relative terms, the ratio increased from 7.97% to 27.01%. This is in line with the Faculty's strategy to improve quality and international visibility. Furthermore, the decision of the Faculty to incentivise scientific activities [mostly publishing articles] stipulates rewards ranging from 5.000 HRK to 16.000 HRK. This fact is particularly appreciated as salaries had to be cut back due to budget constraints resulting from the decline in student numbers from 4.200 to 1.900. A further motivation should result from the Faculty-specific requirements to qualify for participating in PhD education. Potential teachers in PhD classes or potential PhD

mentors have to prove the existence of high ranked publications. This is documented in a decision of the University.

Another indicator for dedication to research is the number of PhD defences: according to supplementary material provided by the Faculty, there were 31 defences in the last five years. However, some of the PhD students spent more than six years on completing their dissertation.

Lastly, lists of conference participations have been provided by the Faculty. There is a significant group of researchers participating in scientific conferences. The Faculty supports researchers without own project funds with Faculty funds for attending conferences. This needs to be emphasized as conference participation should be regarded as the first step to a publication. Furthermore, building up an individual network of peer researchers is an especially important task for younger, internationally-oriented researchers, as discussion papers will benefit from peers' comments. Moreover, an individual network will efficiently broaden their perspective on the research field. It is crucial for the success of a research strategy that participation in international conferences is considered as a means of networking and polishing the discussion paper.

The number of publications in the highest grade (172) and other grades of OSAG (165) looks impressive. However, some remarks are in place: first, taking into account individual lists of publications (either generated by CROSBİ or provided in supplementary information of the Faculty), it reveals a skewed distribution of research output over faculty members.

Second, regarding high quality output in terms of international rankings, the observation diagnosed above has to be qualified. Restricting papers to those indexed in Scopus, which is the database used by the e.g. Times Higher Education ranking for the subjects of Business and Economics, the number of indexed articles reduces to 83. Dividing by the current number of research staff (49 - 17 assistant professors, 11 associate professors, 7 full professors and 14 full professors with tenure according to Table 4.1a of the Self-evaluation report), results in an average high-profile output of 0.34 articles per year and capita. Including assistants and postdoctoral researchers in the scientific staff, this number decreases to 0.24. In case EFRI wants to become an internationally visible, research-driven institution it needs to improve quantity and quality of globally-evaluated publications.

Considering the research goals of the Faculty, a potential conflict could exist. On the one hand, publications focusing on Croatian topics are encouraged; on the other hand, a greater international visibility requires more generalizable topics that would be of interest for US- or UK-based journals. This potential conflict explains why a significant amount of papers is published in geographically-limited journals. A further explanation could be that the national rules for teacher promotion do not pay attention

to international quality benchmarks. Throughout the on-site interview with the Vice-dean of Research it became obvious that he is aware of this issue.

Third, regarding PhD defences - 31 is a fair amount; however, contrasting this number with 112 current PhD students, this either implies that 75% of PhD students do not succeed in their project or that there will be a significant increase in output in the near future.

### Recommendations for improvement

- Evaluation could be simplified if CROSBİ links would work better. Random tests revealed that, for some faculty members, the link resulted in ill-specified publication lists. Furthermore, some links listed articles which were not authored by the researcher in question.
- In order to shape its research strategy, the Faculty should define the top 3 or 5 journals that authors should aim for in each of its research areas. This could improve both scientific output and awareness regarding these articles. Moreover, by defining this more exclusive set of target journals, the Faculty could signal its ambitions. A starting point for this task could be Scopus or internationally accepted, field-specific rankings, provided by the University of Texas at Dallas-ranking (for example). Proceeding that way would simplify agreeing on target journals, because it would cancel out individual preferences and base the discussion on an internationally-accepted notion of quality.
- Table 5.1 should be structured differently for purposes of the Self-evaluation. Articles could be ordered as follows: In the first category, show peer-reviewed journals classified as internationally renowned top journals, other international journals and national top journals, other national journals. In the second category show non-peer-reviewed publications.
- The Faculty should encourage the internationally-oriented researchers to publish more strongly. Potential measures could be (as far as allowed by legislation) financial support, reduced teaching loads, support by research assistants, funds for acquiring data etc.
- By introducing a milestones-concept for PhD projects, duration of these projects would become more controllable and transparent to mentors, other advisors and the candidates themselves.

### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**

## **5.2. The higher education institution provides evidence for the social relevance of its scientific / artistic / professional research and transfer of knowledge.**

### **Analysis**

Evidence gathered generally comes from:

- Self-evaluation report
- Appendix to the Self-evaluation report
- interviews during site-visit

Of particular importance are:

- table 5.1 of the appendix to the Self-evaluation report
- table 5.3 of the appendix to the Self-evaluation report
- additional documents provided by the Vice-dean of Research
- supplementary material provided by the Faculty

Faculty members published 138 professional papers (see Table 5.1), and were involved in 25 professional or commercial projects. This is supposedly the strongest indicator for relevance of the conducted research and the effort spent to transfer generated knowledge to the public.

Additionally, third-party funding as indicated in Tab. 5.3 of the appendix or in Table 15 of the report demonstrates the public/societal appreciation. The latter lists 7 EU projects with EFRI as principal investigator or project partner. Similarly, 5 Croatian Science Foundation projects are listed. Moreover, projects funded by the University of Rijeka play an important role. Here, project leaders can focus on current topics.

Furthermore, according to the meetings, the Faculty supports student initiatives aimed at setting up a start-up. In collaboration with the students, EFRI initiated a 'Student Enterprise Project' for fostering entrepreneurship among students. This initiative is a novel project and a noteworthy improvement compared to the last re-accreditation. The Faculty provides support on different levels: in the earliest phase, workshops are offered to identify and develop students' individual competencies; in the next stage, support by professors and experienced professionals is organized for formulating business plans; later projects becoming enterprises may receive funds from the Faculty. For this purpose, projects are evaluated by a board consisting of faculty members and representatives from the Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Lastly, the resulting student firm will be monitored and assisted for its initial steps in the market.

Research appears to be socially relevant, and the Faculty engages in transfer activities. Taking into account interview statements regarding the composition of teaching

programs and students' need for internship, it could be worthwhile to intensify ties to the stakeholder community even from the research perspective.

#### Recommendations for improvement

- Establishing a Faculty advisory board that would consist of both researchers with an international background and representatives from the local community could -- among other outcomes-- generate ideas for research projects funded by the corporate world.

#### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**

**5.3. Scientific/artistic and professional achievements of the higher education institution are recognized in the regional, national and international context.**

#### Analysis

Evidence gathered generally comes from:

- Self-evaluation report
- Appendix to the Self-evaluation report
- interviews during site-visit

Of particular importance are:

- table 5.3 of the Appendix to the Self-evaluation report
- table 5.4 of the Appendix to the Self-evaluation report
- additional documents provided by the Vice-dean of Research
- supplementary material provided by the Faculty

From Table 5.3 it can be concluded that both the scientific outcome as well as the transfer activities are valued by the regional community. This has been stated in the previous subsections already. Additionally, faculty members have been awarded prices from external institutions like the Croatian Marketing Association, the Small Enterprise Association of Australia and New Zealand, the University of Ljubljana, the Croatian Chamber of Economy and the Association of Technical Culture Rijeka.

Moreover, Table 5.4 indicates that faculty members engage in organizing conferences. This is a reputation indicator, because unexperienced researchers will not be nominated to a conference committee. A prominent example to be highlighted is the bi-annual conference on Economic Integrations, Competition and Cooperation organized in co-operation with several other institutions from all over Europe. Furthermore, the

Faculty repeatedly organizes workshops. It is debatable to which extent the latter increase the visibility of the Faculty but, admittedly, they are a promising first step. Finally, Table 5.5 shows that several faculty members serve as editors or editorial board members. Likewise, this is an indicator of scientific reputation, which also demonstrates dedication to the scientific community.

It becomes obvious that the faculty is motivated and dedicated to provide timely, relevant and progressive research output. Nevertheless, a second glance reveals some potential for improvement. In Table 5.3.b, 7 out of 25 projects (28%) exceed a grant size of 150.000 HRK. Table 5.4 reveals that a significant fraction of conferences is organized in Rijeka or nearby. In a similar vein, Table 5.5 demonstrates that for the editor positions, roughly one third is on a global level, one third is on an international but regionally limited level, and one third is on the national level. The same is true for editorial board memberships. Overall, this indicates a regionally-restricted recognition of EFRI activities.

### Recommendations for improvement

- For increasing the Faculty's international reputation, focusing on regional outcomes might come with limited success. Thus, further integrating into a broader community, striving for EU or other prestigious funding, and aiming for editorial positions in globally-read journals promises a stronger increase in international visibility.

### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**

## **5.4. The scientific / artistic activity of the higher education institution is both sustainable and developmental.**

### Analysis

Evidence gathered generally comes from:

- Self-evaluation report
- Appendix to the Self-evaluation report
- interviews during site-visit

Of particular importance are:

- EFRI's research strategy statement



The Self-evaluation report identifies two core strategies for enhancing scientific research at EFRI (see p. 86). The first one is to increase volume and quality of the research output, especially its connection to the development needs of the economy and society and better international visibility. The second is to increase the number of PhD defences.

Admittedly, the Faculty's strategy to connect research to the development needs of the society is in line with its mission. However, this goal might be --at least partially-- inconsistent with the aim of increasing international visibility. This is particularly true given the Faculty's vision to integrate more strongly into the European research area.

Increasing the number of PhD defences is the second strategic long-term measure. Funding conference attendances and -- more importantly -- funding structural doctoral education abroad are promising measures to generate visibility and to improve research quality in the long run.

### Recommendations for improvement

- Regarding the research agenda, the Faculty should analyse the strategic goals and measures for inconsistencies. Particularly, serving for the development needs of regional and national importance contrasts with international visibility. Moreover, it is important to communicate the overarching goals to the faculty for implementing them in daily research activities.
- Regarding PhD students, sending them abroad is a very good measure. Potentially, increasing the number of PhD students abroad and extending the geographical dispersion could be next steps. In the long run, EFRI should strive for implementing methodology-based classes and setting up a consortium for structural PhD education in the region. From that, a broader visibility of EFRI and a decrease of costs could be expected.

### Quality grade

**Satisfactory level of quality**

## **5.5. Scientific/artistic and professional activities and achievements of the higher education institution improve the teaching process.**

### Analysis

Evidence gathered generally comes from:

- Self-evaluation report
- Appendix to the Self-evaluation report

- interviews during site-visit

Of particular importance are:

- lecture visit
- Table 5.4 of the Appendix to the Self-evaluation report
- Table 16 of the Self-evaluation report
- supplementary material provided by the Faculty

Lectures visited during the on-site visit revealed that contents and form of presentation meet current scientific standards; for a more detailed evaluation of the teaching process, refer to Assessment Area III 'Teaching process and student support'. The focus of this section is to comment on the integration of students (from all levels) into HEIs scientific and professional projects. Furthermore, doctoral theses simultaneously represent input to and output of the teaching process. The latter holds true, because postdocs and PhD students that participate in teaching transfer the most recent research results to students. The former is true, because structural doctoral education and scientific mentoring during the writing phase of papers are important input factors for high quality PhD papers. The most important problem here is to balance PhD students' workload from their teaching activities with appropriate independent research time.

Table 16 reveals 22 dissertations that resulted from projects within the last five years. Moreover, the Self-evaluation (p. 89) lists 40 postgraduate students who participated in the Faculty's scientific and professional projects. Furthermore, student interviews revealed that they participated in these projects as well. On a more detailed level, the Faculty provided a list of all PhD students' scientific papers from 2010 onwards; it shows 72 PhD students and provides information on the year of enrolment, and year and title of the papers published. Furthermore, it distinguishes between single-authored papers and co-authored papers. Without checking for double entries, the list exhibits 79 single-authored papers and 508 co-authored paper. This gives 0.16 single-authored paper and 1 co-authored paper per capita per year.

The input of young researchers (PhD students and postdocs) into teaching has been demonstrated in supplementary material provided by the Faculty. For the academic years 2014/15 to 2017/18, lists are provided showing in which courses PhD students are active. In most cases, PhD students provide seminar-like formats of length from 2 to 6 hours. They do so on the undergraduate as well as on the graduate level. Overall, the Faculty lives up to standard 5.5.

### Recommendations for improvement

- Balance of young researchers' workload between teaching and research should be better. From interviews it becomes evident that PhD students are treated

differently across mentors. EFRI should work towards a direction of formalized rules for PhD students' teaching activities.

- Based on the list of PhD papers, an average student does have one single-authored and several co-authored papers. To increase the value of PhD students in teaching, the Faculty should emphasize the importance of at least one single authored paper for each PhD. Moreover, given sometimes high numbers of co-authored papers, young researchers' freedom to work on their own agenda potentially needs to be secured.

**Quality grade**

**Satisfactory level of quality**

## ***APPENDICES***

**1. Quality assessment summary**

**2. Site visit protocol**

<i>Quality grade by assessment area</i>				
<i>Assessment area</i>	Unsatisfactory level of quality	Minimum level of quality	Satisfactory level of quality	High level of quality
<i>I. Internal quality assurance and the social role of the higher education institution</i>			X	
<i>II. Study programmes</i>			X	
<i>III. Teaching process and student support</i>			X	
<i>IV. Teaching and institutional capacities</i>			X	
<i>V. Scientific/artistic activity</i>			X	

<i>Quality grade by standard</i>				
<i>I. Internal quality assurance and the social role of the higher education institution</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory level of quality</i>	<i>Minimum level of quality</i>	<i>Satisfactory level of quality</i>	<i>High level of quality</i>
1.1. The higher education institution has established a functional internal quality assurance system.			X	
1.2. The higher education institution implements recommendations for quality improvement from previous evaluations.			X	
1.3. The higher education institution supports academic integrity and freedom, prevents all types of unethical behaviour, intolerance and discrimination.				X
1.4. The higher education institution ensures the availability of information on important aspects of its activities (teaching, scientific/artistic and social).			X	
1.5. The higher education institution understands and encourages the development of its social role.				X

<i>Quality grade by standard</i>				
<i>II. Study programmes</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory level of quality</i>	<i>Minimum level of quality</i>	<i>Satisfactory level of quality</i>	<i>High level of quality</i>
2.1. The general objectives of all study programmes are in line with the mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution and the needs of the society.			X	
2.2. The intended learning outcomes at the level of study programmes delivered by the higher education institution are aligned with the level and profile of qualifications gained.			X	
2.3. The higher education institution provides evidence of the achievement of intended learning outcomes of the study programmes it delivers.				X
2.4. The HEI uses feedback from students, employers, professional organisations and alumni in the procedures of planning, proposing and approving new programmes, and revising or closing the existing programmes.			X	
2.5. The higher education institution ensures that ECTS allocation is adequate.			X	
2.6. Student practice is an integral part of study programmes (where applicable).			X	
2.7. Lifelong learning programmes delivered by the higher education institution are aligned with the strategic goals and the mission of the higher education institution, and social needs.				X

<i>Quality grade by standard</i>				
<i>III. Teaching process and student support</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory level of quality</i>	<i>Minimum level of quality</i>	<i>Satisfactory level of quality</i>	<i>High level of quality</i>
3.1. Admission criteria or criteria for the continuation of studies are in line with the requirements of the study programme, clearly defined, published and consistently applied.			X	
3.2. The higher education institution gathers and analyses information on student progress and uses it to ensure the continuity and completion of study.			X	
3.3. The higher education institution ensures student-centred learning.			X	
3.4. The higher education institution ensures adequate student support.				X
3.5. The higher education institution ensures support to students from vulnerable and under-represented groups.			X	
3.6. The higher education institution allows students to gain international experience.				X
3.7. The higher education institution ensures adequate study conditions for foreign students.			X	
3.8. The higher education institution ensures an objective and consistent evaluation and assessment of student achievements.			X	
3.9. The higher education institution guarantees the issuance of Diploma Supplements and adequate qualification information.			X	
3.10. The higher education institution is responsible for the employability of graduates.			X	



<i>Quality grade by standard</i>				
<i>IV. Teaching and institutional capacities</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory level of quality</i>	<i>Minimum level of quality</i>	<i>Satisfactory level of quality</i>	<i>High level of quality</i>
4.1. The higher education institution ensures adequate teaching capacities.			X	
4.2. The higher education institution has an objective, transparent and excellence-based procedure of teacher recruitment.			X	
4.3. Teacher advancement and re-appointment is based on objective and transparent procedures.				X
4.4. The higher education institution provides support to teachers in their professional development.			X	
4.5. The space, equipment and the entire infrastructure (laboratories, IT services, work facilities etc.) are appropriate for the delivery of study programmes, ensuring the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and the implementation of scientific/artistic activity.			X	
4.6. The library and library equipment, including the access to additional resources, ensure the availability of literature and other resources necessary for a high-quality study, research and teaching.			X	
4.7. The higher education institution rationally manages its financial resources.			X	

<i>Quality grade by standard</i>				
<i>V. Scientific/artistic activity</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory level of quality</i>	<i>Minimum level of quality</i>	<i>Satisfactory level of quality</i>	<i>High level of quality</i>
5.1. Teachers and associates employed at the higher education institution are committed to the achievement of high quality and quantity of scientific research.			X	
5.2. The higher education institution provides evidence for the social relevance of its scientific / artistic / professional research and transfer of knowledge.			X	
5.3. Scientific/artistic and professional achievements of the higher education institution are recognized in the regional, national and international context.			X	
5.4. The scientific / artistic activity of the higher education institution is both sustainable and developmental.			X	
5.5. Scientific/artistic and professional activities and achievements of the higher education institution improve the teaching process.			X	

# **Reakreditacija Ekonomskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Rijeci/Re-accreditation of the Faculty of Economics University of Rijeka**

## **PROTOKOL POSJETA/VISIT PROTOCOL**

**Ponedjeljak, 15. siječnja 2018./  
Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

**Agencija za znanost i visoko obrazovanje**

Agency for Science and Higher Education

Adresa / Address: Donje Svetice 38/5, Zagreb

**10:00 – 13:00** Edukacija članova Stručnog povjerenstva – kratko predstavljanje Agencije, upoznavanje sa sustavom visokog obrazovanja u Republici Hrvatskoj, upoznavanje s Postupkom reakreditacije, Standardima za vrednovanje kvalitete, pisanjem završnog izvješća, priprema za posjet, rasprava/ *Training for the expert panel members – short presentation of ASHE, introduction to the higher education system in Croatia, introduction to the re-accreditation procedure, standards for the evaluation of quality and writing the final report, preparation for the site visit, discussion.*

**13:00 – 13:30** Pauza za ručak / *Lunch break*

**13:30 – 15:00** Priprema za posjet po samoanalizi i standardima, diskusija / *Preparation for the site visit based on Self-evaluation document and standards for assessment, discussion*

**15:00 – 17:30** Polazak za Rijeku organiziranim prijevozom s kratkom pauza, smještaj u hotelu / *Departure for Rijeka with organize transportation and short brake, accommodation in hotel*

**18:00 – 20:00** Priprema za posjet po samoanalizi i standardima, diskusija / *Preparation for the site visit based on Self-evaluation document and standards for assessment, discussion*

**Utorak, 16. siječnja 2018./**  
**Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

**8:45 - 9:00** Kava s Upravom – neslužbeno / *Coffee with the Management - informal*

**9:00 - 10:00** Sastanak s dekanom, prodekanima i tajnikom (bez prezentacija) / *Meeting with the Dean, Vice Deans and secretary (no presentations)*

**10:00 - 10:45** Sastanak s radnom grupom koja je priredila Samoanalizu / *Meeting with the working group that compiled the Self-evaluation*

**10:45 - 12:00** Sastanak članova Stručnog povjerenstva (**Analiza dokumenata**) / *Internal meeting of the panel members (**Document analysis**)*

**12:00 - 13:00** Sastanak sa studentima (otvoren sastanak za sve studente) / *Meeting with the students (open meeting)*

**13:00 - 14:30** Radni ručak Stručnog povjerenstva / *Working lunch*

**14:30 - 15:15** Sastanak s Alumnima / *Meeting with the Alumni*

**15:15 - 16:00** Sastanak s vanjskim dionicima - predstavnicima strukovnih i profesionalnih udruženja, poslovna zajednica/poslodavci, stručnjaci iz prakse, organizacijama civilnog društva, vanjski predavači / *Meeting with external stakeholders -representatives of professional organisations, business sector/industry sector, professional experts, non-governmental organisations, external lecturers*

**16:00 - 17:00** Organizacija dodatnog sastanka o mogućim otvorenim pitanjima prema potrebi / *Organisation of additional meeting on potential open questions if it is needed*

**Hotel u Rijeci / Hotel in Rijeka**

**17:30 - 20:00** Sastanak Stručnog povjerenstva – refleksija o viđenom i priprema za idući dan posjeta, pisanje nacrtu završnog izvješća / *Joint meeting of the expert panel members – reflection on the day and preparation for the next day of the site visit, drafting the final report*

**Srijeda, 17. siječnja 2018./**  
**Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

**9:00 - 10:00** Sastanak s prodekanom za preddiplomske i prodekanicom za diplomatske sudije / *Meeting with the Vice Dean for undergraduate study programme and Vice Dean for graduate study programme*

**10:00 - 11:30** Sastanak članova Stručnog povjerenstva (**Analiza dokumenata**) / *Internal meeting of the panel members (Document analysis)*

**11:30 - 12:30** Sastanak s nastavnicima (u stalnom radnom odnosu, nisu na rukovodećim mjestima) / *Meeting with full-time employed teachers (open meeting)*

**12:30 - 14:00** Radni ručak članova Stručnog povjerenstva / *Working lunch*

**14:00 - 15:30** Obilazak Fakulteta (knjižnica, uredi studentskih službi, ured međunarodne suradnje, informatička služba, učionice), prisustvovanje nastavi, demonstracija online platforme / *Tour of the Faculty (library, student services, international office, IT services, classrooms), participation in teaching classes, demonstration of online platform*

**15:30 - 16:30** Organizacija dodatnog sastanka o mogućim otvorenim pitanjima prema potrebi / *Organisation of additional meeting on potential open questions if it is needed*

**Hotel u Rijeci / Hotel in Rijeka**

**17:30 - 20:00** Sastanak Stručnog povjerenstva – refleksija o viđenom i priprema za idući dan posjeta, pisanje nacrtu završnog izvješća / *Joint meeting of the expert panel members – reflection on the day and preparation for the next day of the site visit, drafting the final report*

**Četvrtak, 18. siječnja 2018./**  
**Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

**9:00 - 9:45** Sastanak s prodekanom za znanost / *Meeting with the Vice Dean for research*

**9:45 - 10:45** Sastanak članova Stručnog povjerenstva (**Analiza dokumenata**) / *Internal meeting of the panel members (Document analysis)*

**10:45 - 11:30** Sastanak s voditeljima znanstvenih projekata / *Meeting with the heads of research projects*

**11:30 - 12:15** Sastanak s asistentima / *Meeting with teaching assistants*

**12:15 - 13:45** Radni ručak članova Stručnog povjerenstva / *Working lunch*

**13:45 - 14:30** Organizacija dodatnog sastanka o mogućim otvorenim pitanjima prema potrebi / *Organisation of additional meeting on potential open questions if it is needed*

**14:30 - 15:30** Sastanak članova Stručnog povjerenstva / *Internal meeting of the panel members*

**15:30 - 15:50** Završni sastanak s dekanom, prodekanima i tajnikom / *Exit meeting with the Dean, Vice Deans and secretary*

**Hotel u Rijeci / Hotel in Rijeka**

**17:30 - 20:00** Sastanak Stručnog povjerenstva – refleksija o viđenom i priprema za idući dan posjeta, pisanje nacrt završnog izvješća / *Joint meeting of the expert panel members – reflection on the day and preparation for the next day of the site visit, drafting the final report*

**Petak, 19. siječnja 2018./**  
**Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

**Hotel u Rijeci / Hotel in Rijeka**

**9:00 - 11:30** Sastanak Stručnog povjerenstva - Izrada nacrt završnog izvješća i rad na dokumentu Standardi za vrednovanje kvalitete / *Joint meeting of the expert panel members - Drafting the final report and working on the document Standards for the evaluation of quality*

**12:00 - 13:00** Ručak / *Lunch*

**13:15** Polazak za Zagreb organiziranim prijevozom s kratkom pauza / *Departure for Zagreb with organize transportation and short brake*

## ***SUMMARY***

Faculty of Economics University of Rijeka has young, enthusiastic and highly motivated team that is well aware of problems and issues they are currently facing. The Expert Panel team is under impression that they are willing to execute their strategy in effective and efficient way being aware of all constraints they could face in the future. Management did good job regarding identification of key stakeholders and it seems that they have good stakeholder communication.

Internal quality assurance and the social role of the Faculty of Economics University of Rijeka is well defined and implemented. They have adopted a quality assurance policy, SWOT analysis, strategic goals and operational (action) plan. They systematically collect and analyse data on its processes, resources and results, and uses them to effectively manage and improve its activities. They also use various methods for collecting data on quality and are committed to the development and implementation of human resource management policies. They have loyal and dedicated employees who are satisfied with their work and work conditions. Faculty is continuously working on quality improvements, e.g. they have peer review system among teachers, and some innovative approaches to strengthen relationships with students, e.g. coffee with Vice-deans. Regarding the availability of information, the Panel found out that all relevant informations are publicly available and a big step in intensifying communication activities can be acknowledged. They also use mechanisms for preventing unethical behaviour, intolerance and discrimination. Based on many evidence, the Panel is also convinced that Faculty contributes to the development of the local community and develop its social role as a part of its mission. Internal quality assurance and the social role of the Faculty of Economics University of Rijeka has the satisfactory level of quality. Although there are formal legal barriers on both national and university level it is noticeable that the undergraduate and graduate programs have not been revised for a very long time and that no new subjects (both compulsory and elective) have not been introduced to meet the changing needs of changing market. Therefore the Faculty should urgently review its undergraduate and graduate programs in line with the current market needs and align the names and contents of the study programmes on all levels. Furthermore it is necessary to harmonize the number of learning outcomes, their alignment across all programmes and between different courses.

It is not enough to just have a plan; it is critical to seek to understand what your stakeholders desire both spoken and unspoken. The expectations must be carefully managed from beginning to end. Every team and project varies in its rate of change, so pick the most advantageous communication channel, frequency and make sure it's effective. Just as having the plan is important, monitoring its effectiveness, adding and cancelling supplemental ways of communicating will be required.

During the site visit, it was confirmed that Faculty ensures adequate student support on all levels. As a result of that, for example, Faculty achieved highest number within University of Rijeka of outgoing and incoming Erasmus students. Also, Faculty insures support for student with disabilities and removed all architectural barriers for them. Moreover, students have variety of extracurricular activities provided within Faculty or on University level, e.g. Case study competition, Business Chinese, Students national and international Internships. Regarding Faculty mission, it is clear that is carried out by fostering students and academic entrepreneurship. Furthermore, students highly appreciate informal meetings with management and all opportunities to have conversation with them. Since students are open to discussion with management and teaching staff, Faculty should solve problem of low response rate of student survey.

Regarding teaching and institutional capacities, EFRI is competitive at a national level. The teaching staff is well-educated, motivated, active, loyal and helpful; the same holds true for the non-teaching staff. Following the decrease in the number of students over the last years and the fact that capacities remained roughly at the same level, workload and especially spatial requirements are easily met. The library, i. e. the broad and timely access to journals and textbooks, the cafeteria, the study rooms and the wireless LAN can be seen as bottlenecks. As a state-funded institution, EFRI benefits from financial security, but is limited in its financial scope. Tuition fees are an important source of revenue for EFRI and should be closely monitored.

Regarding scientific output, EFRI is competitive at a national level. The majority of articles is published in journals with regionally limited outreach. Moreover, publication activities vary significantly across faculty members. Particularly, research output achieving global attention is limited to a minority of faculty members. However, encouraging developments exist. Most importantly, the strategy of PhD education is convincing. Sending PhD students abroad to benefit from an internationally oriented structured doctoral education is an important step to broaden the research perspective. Beyond that, the (recent) implementation of a research strategy will foster research output and help to overcome traditional publication patterns. Lastly, several transfer activities, like scientific and professional conferences ensure the transfer of the output to the public.

Overall, the Faculty met all requirements on a satisfactory level of quality and provided necessary evidence for that.