



**Report  
of the Expert Panel  
on the Reaccreditation  
of the University Postgraduate (Doctoral) Programme  
in *Humanities*  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Split**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Expert Panel appointed by the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE) created this Report on the Re-accreditation of the University Postgraduate (Doctoral) Programme in Humanities on the basis of the Self-Evaluation Report of the Programme, other documentation submitted and a visit to the University in Split, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE), a public body listed in EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education) and a full member of ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), re-accredits higher education institutions (hereinafter: HEIs) and their study programmes in line with the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education (Official Gazette 45/09) and the Ordinance on the Content of a Licence and Conditions for Issuing a Licence for Performing Higher Education Activity, Carrying out a Study Programme and Re-Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions (OG 24/10). In this procedure parts of activities of higher education institutions and university postgraduate study programmes are re-accredited.

Expert Panel is appointed by the Agency's Accreditation Council, an independent expert body, to carry out independent evaluation of post-graduate university study programmes.

The Report contains the following elements:

- Short description of the study programme,
- The recommendation of the Expert Panel to the Agency's Accreditation Council,
- Recommendations for institutional improvement and measures to be implemented in the following period (and checked within a follow-up procedure),
- A brief analysis of the institutional advantages and disadvantages,
- A list of good practices found at the institution,
- Conclusions on compliance with the prescribed conditions of delivery of a study programme,
- Conclusions on compliance with the criteria for quality assessment.

Members of the Expert Panel:

- President of the Expert Panel, Dr. Igor Štikš
- Emeritus Dr. Svein Mønnesland, University of Oslo, Norway,
- Dr. Catherine MacRobert, Oxford University, United Kingdom,
- Dr. Katrin Boeckh, University of Munich, Germany,
- Dr. Ljiljana Šarić, University of Oslo, Norway,
- Dr. Ljiljana Reinkowski, Universität Basel, Switzerland,
- Dr. Rozita Dimova, Ghent University, Belgium,
- Dr. Vladimir Unkovski-Korica, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom,
- Dr. Harm Goris, Tilburg University, Netherlands,
- Dr. David Maxwell, Emmanuel College Cambridge, United Kingdom,
- Dr. Elzbieta Osewska, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland,
- Dr. Mikhail Dmitriev, Central European University, Hungary,
- Dr. Andrej Blatnik, Univerza v Ljubljani, Slovenia,
- Dr. Vincent Gaffney, University of Bradford, United Kingdom,
- Dr. Mika Vahakangas, Lund University, Sweden,
- Dr. Nicole Butterfield, Marie Curie Fellow, Szeged University, Hungary,

- Dr. Elżbieta Gajek, University of Warsaw, Poland,
- Dr. Kyle Jerro, University of Essex, United Kingdom,
- Dr. Nadia Mifka-Profozic, University of York, United Kingdom,
- Dr. Moreno Mitrović, University of Cyprus, Cyprus,
- Dajana Vasiljevicová, Charles University, Prag, Czech Republic,
- Dr. Christian Neuhäuser, Universitaet Dortmund, Germany,
- Dr. Dries Bosschaert, KU Leuven, Belgium,
- Dr. Oliver George Downing, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom,
- Dr. Hanoch Ben-Yami, Central European University, Hungary,
- Dr. Vieri Samek Lodovici, University College London, United Kingdom,
- Anna Meens, Leiden University, Netherlands,
- Kevin Kenjar, University of California, Berkeley, United States of America,
- Sonja Kačar, University Toulouse II – Jean Jaurès, France,
- Garrett R. Mindt, Central European University, Hungary,
- Mišo Petrović, Central European University, Hungary.

The higher education institution was visited by the following Expert Panel members:

- President of the Expert Panel, Dr. Igor Štikš
- Dr. Ljiljana Šarić, University of Oslo, Norway,
- Dr. Rozita Dimova, Ghent University, Belgium,
- Dr. Mikhail Dmitriev, Central European University, Hungary,
- Dr. Nicole Butterfield, Marie Curie Fellow, Szeged University, Hungary,
- Sonja Kačar, University Toulouse II – Jean Jaurès, France,

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

- Đurđica Dragojević, coordinator and interpreter, ASHE

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

- Management of the institution,
- Study programme management,
- Doctoral candidates,
- Administrative staff,
- Supervisors.

## **SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME**

**Name of the study programme contained in the licence:** Humanities

**Institution delivering and providing the programme:** University of Split, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

**Scientific area and field:** Humanities, Interdisciplinary humanities

**Number of doctoral candidates:** 97 (12 inactive)

**Number of funded doctoral candidates:** 6

**Number of self-funded and those funded by employer:** 91

**Number of candidates with a supervisor appointed:** 84

**Number of supervisors:** 94 potential supervisors, 49 appointed

**Number of teachers:** 94 (39 external associates, 55 full-time employees of the Faculty)

**Ratio of doctoral candidates and their officially appointed supervisors:** 84:49= 1.7:1 (<3:1)

### **Learning outcomes of the study programme:**

- 1. Evaluate and choose relevant research methods for the humanities, taking into consideration the specifics of the area / field of research;*
- 2. Evaluate the usefulness and constraints of the relevant research methods, taking into consideration the specifics of the area / field of research;*
- 3. Formulate research problems, taking into consideration the specifics of the doctoral study programme framework geared towards research of intangible cultural heritage;*
- 4. Independently plan and conduct original scientific research which will lead to new findings;*
- 5. Implement acquired knowledge of devising original concepts and theories in the area / field / branch of interest;*
- 6. Question and evaluate critically results of research in the area of interest;*
- 7. Formulate scientific research results into scientific papers which will be published in nationally and internationally recognised journals pertaining to the area of interest;*
- 8. Participate in scientific panels at national and international conferences where they will present their research results sharply and coherently;*
- 9. Critically analyse, evaluate and synthesise new and complex ideas from the area of humanities, with an emphasis on the research field within which they conduct scientific research for their doctoral dissertation;*
- 10. Present and interpret clearly and with arguments their doctoral research results; participate actively in public disputes related to their area of expertise involving a wider research community, as well as general social environment.*

### **Taught / research ratio:**

Taught component: 80 ECTS (up to 95, depending on the module)

Research component: 100 ECTS (depending on the module; the research component is also partly structured through courses and includes writing seminar papers)

## ***RECOMMENDATION BY THE EXPERT PANEL TO THE ASHE'S ACCREDITATION COUNCIL***

Upon the completion of the re-accreditation procedure and the examination of the materials submitted (SAR - Self-Evaluation Report, etc.), the visit to the higher education institution and interviews with HEI members in accordance with the visit protocol, the Expert Panel renders its opinion in which it recommends to the Accreditation Council of the Agency the following: **3. issue a letter of expectation** for the period of two (2) years in which period the higher education institution should make the necessary improvements.

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME***

1. Introduce a regular doctoral seminar at which students will present their research to other students and professors. This will enhance the integration of all students into this academic community.
2. Increase the funds for the Marulus foundation.
3. Doctoral courses should be at the highest level and not a repetition of MA courses. They should avoid a narrow approach and be substantial PhD courses offering both methodological and theoretical introduction into critical and analytical research. Specific topics should be addressed in individual mentoring sessions and research.
4. Offer research ethics training within the general methodological courses.

### ***ADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME***

1. New location will improve the organisation and the implementation of the programme. It is very close to the library and other departments.
2. The Mediterranean approach as the distinctive feature of this programme.
3. Efforts to implement a multidisciplinary approach.
4. Students are motivated to do their research.

### ***DISADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME***

1. Very small part of the collected funds is distributed to students to cover their expenses such as field work, research of sources and conference presentations.
2. Lack of integration of students within the academic community, especially those who are self-funded.
3. Often the distinction between an MA-type courses and a PhD level course is not clear.
4. Too many courses are too narrowly focused.

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

1. The Marulus foundation: tuition waivers for self-funded students (should be continued and more developed, see recommendations).
2. (Newly introduced) research proposal upon admission
3. Students get mentors from day 1 to guide them at early stages.
4. High-quality interactions between some professors and students allow for better integration within this academic team.

**COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRESCRIBED CONDITIONS FOR THE DELIVERY OF A STUDY PROGRAMME**

<b>Minimal legal conditions:</b>	
1. Higher education institution (HEI) is listed in the Register of Scientific Organisations in the scientific area of the programme, and has a positive reaccreditation decision on performing higher education activities and scientific activity.	<b>YES</b>
2. HEI delivers programmes in the two cycles leading to the doctoral programme, i.e., first two cycles in the same area and field/fields (for interdisciplinary programmes), and employs a sufficient number of teachers as defined by Article 6 of the Ordinance on the Content of a Licence and Conditions for Issuing a Licence for Performing Higher Education Activity, Carrying out a Study Programme and Re-Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions (OG 24/10).	<b>YES</b>
3. HEI employs a sufficient number of researchers, as defined by Article 7 of the Ordinance on Conditions for Issuing Licence for Scientific Activity, Conditions for Re-Accreditation of Scientific Organisations and Content of Licence (OG 83/2010).	<b>YES</b>
4. At least 50% of teaching as expressed in norm-hours is delivered by teachers employed at the HEI (full-time, elected into scientific-teaching titles).	<b>YES</b>
5. Student: teacher ratio at the HEI is below 30:1.	<b>YES</b>
6. HEI ensures that doctoral theses are public.	<b>NO*</b>
<b>*Comment: The theses are available on DABAR but only accessible by FFST students and staff.</b>	
7. HEI launches the procedure of revoking the academic title if it is determined that it has been attained contrary to the conditions stipulated for its attainment, by severe violation of the studying rules or based on a doctoral thesis (dissertation) that has proved to be a plagiarism or a forgery according to provisions of the statute or other enactments.	<b>YES*</b>
<b>*Comment: Plagiarism check does not exist.</b>	
<b>Additional/ recommended conditions of the ASHE Accreditation Council for passing a positive opinion:</b>	
1. HEI (or HEIs in joint programmes) has at least five teachers appointed to scientific-teaching titles in the field, or fields relevant for the programme involved in its delivery.	<b>YES</b>
2. In the most recent reaccreditation, HEI had the standard Scientific and Professional Activity marked as at least "partly implemented" (3).	<b>YES*</b>
<b>*Comment: The original mark was 'partly implemented'. In 2014 HEI received a Letter of Expectations for the Scientific Activity because (no research strategy), but 2015 Licence was confirmed upon submitting the Strategy.</b>	

3. The doctoral programme is aligned with the HEI's research strategy.	<b>YES</b>
4. The candidate : supervisor ratio at the HEI is not above 3:1.	<b>YES</b>
5. All supervisors meet the following conditions: a) PhD, elected into a scientific title, holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position and/or has at least two years of postdoctoral research experience; b) active researcher in the scientific area of the programme, as evidenced by publications, participation in scientific conferences and/or projects in the past five years (table 2, Supervisors and candidates); c) confirms feasibility of the draft research plan upon admission of the candidate (or submission of the proposal); d) ensures the conditions (and funding) necessary to implement the candidate's research (in line with the draft research plan) as a research project leader, co-leader, participant, collaborator or in other ways; e) trained for the role before assuming it (through workshops, co-supervisions etc.); f) received a positive opinion of the HEI on previous supervisory work.	<b>NO*</b>
<p><b>*Comment:</b></p> <p><b>a) NO (According to the tables in the SAR, 7 supervisors are retired, and 1 does not hold any scientific/academic title or position);</b></p> <p><b>b) NO (According to SAR tables, 12 people had very few or no publications in the past 5 years. Being an active researcher is not a requirement for supervision that HEI upholds.);</b></p> <p><b>c) YES but only upon submission of the proposal;</b></p> <p><b>d) NO;</b></p> <p><b>e) NO;</b></p> <p><b>f) NO.</b></p>	
6. All teachers meet the following conditions: a) holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position; b) active researcher, recognized in the field relevant for the course.	<b>NO*</b>
<p><b>*Comment:</b></p> <p><b>a) NO (According to the tables in the SAR, 6 teachers have no scientific title appointment/academic positions and 6 are retired.</b></p> <p><b>b) NO (According to the SAR tables, 5 persons had no publications in the past 5 years, and over 20 had very few publications.</b></p>	
7. The supervisor normally does not participate in the assessment committees.	<b>NO</b>
8. The programme ensures that all candidates spend at least three years doing independent research (while studying, individually, within or outside courses), which includes writing the thesis, publishing, participating in international conferences, field work, attending courses relevant for research etc.	<b>NO</b>
9. For joint programmes and doctoral schools (at the university level): cooperation between HEIs is based on adequate contracts; joint programmes are delivered in cooperation with accredited HEIs; the HEI	<b>n/a</b>



delivers the programme within a doctoral school in line with the regulations and ensures good coordination aimed at supporting the candidates; at least 80% of courses are delivered by teachers employed at HEIs within the consortium.	
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## QUALITY ASSESSMENT

	Quality assessment (“high level of quality” or “improvements are necessary”) and the explanation of the Expert Panel
<b>1. RESOURCES: TEACHERS, SUPERVISORS, RESEARCH CAPACITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b>	
1.1. HEI is distinguished by its scientific/ artistic achievements in the discipline in which the doctoral study programme is delivered.	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p> <p>The panel recommends significant improvements in all of these areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of international publications of students and staff;</li> <li>- Diversity of publication outlets, especially international and well-recognized journals;</li> <li>- Hiring people who have already established international academic records.</li> </ul> <p>Additionally, the program is interdisciplinary, however currently interdisciplinarity is interpreted as an umbrella that can have anything under it, a mishmash of various disconnected activities rather than a rigorous and structured program of work.</p>
1.2. The number and workload of teachers involved in the study programme ensure quality doctoral education.	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p> <p>A significant number of people have excessive workloads (above 360 norm hours) and a number of them even have more than 500 norm hours. This was identified as a problem in the previous evaluation and although the Faculty did manage to employ new staff since then, the situation is still problematic.</p>
1.3. The teachers are highly qualified researchers who actively engage with the topics they teach, providing a quality doctoral programme.	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p> <p>The panel received additional tables with this information for the SAR during the site visit. On the basis of the documentation submitted, both the original and the updated tables, it can be stated that at least 3 of teachers have had 0 publications and projects in the past 5 years, 3 are retired and 1 has never been elected into a scientific-teaching title.</p>
1.4. The number of supervisors and their qualifications provide for quality in producing the doctoral thesis.	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p> <p>The number of supervisors is more than sufficient. The Faculty has no additional conditions to become a supervisor – anyone with the title of Associate Professor or higher can be a supervisor. We recommend the Faculty to introduce additional conditions for supervisors, such as experience in</p>

	<p>co-supervision, internationally relevant publications and ongoing projects, etc.</p> <p>While the situation is acceptable overall, there are some concerns that the conditions for producing quality theses should be improved, including introducing a plagiarism check etc. (as noted in other parts of the Report).</p>
<p>1.5. The HEI has developed methods of assessing the qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p> <p>Except for the centralised elections into scientific and teaching titles, there are no methods of assessing the qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors - as already mentioned above - and they need to be introduced. Therefore, we suggest that conditions for becoming a supervisor include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Publishing at least 1 paper in a Q1 journal in the relevant field;</li> <li>- Participating in at least 1 international research project;</li> <li>- Being a member of an editorial board of an internationally recognized peer-reviewed journal;</li> <li>- International experience, such as spending longer periods of study or research at internationally recognized research institutions or HEIs;</li> <li>- Currently participating in a research project, etc.</li> </ul>
<p>1.6. The HEI has access to high-quality resources for research, as required by the programme discipline.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p> <p>There is distance access to databases provided at the national level.</p> <p>The students claim that they do not have access to most recent literature while the librarian was able to list a number of databases they are able to access. Students may need to receive additional information and the library may look into this in cooperation with students and acquire additional subscriptions.</p>
<p><b>2. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE PROGRAMME</b></p>	
<p>2.1. The HEI has established and accepted effective procedures for proposing, approving and delivering doctoral education. The procedures include identification of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social and economic needs.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>There are strict administrative procedures that include identification of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social and economic needs which the Faculty seems to follow. These procedures are generally fine, however the program needs to be additionally thought through to identify comparative advantages of the programme and what makes it special internationally.</p>

<p>2.2. The programme is aligned with the HEI research mission and vision, i.e. research strategy.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p> <p>The program is aligned with the strategy, however both need to be improved. The program has grown out of an interdisciplinary research project on Mediterranean. However, as is also visible from the research strategy, there is no clear development of this research topic in terms of interdisciplinarity and defined disciplines such as area studies. Instead, it looks like the Mediterranean and interdisciplinarity are just used as umbrella terms for various disconnected topics of individual teachers. Mediterranean is used descriptively and not discussed critically, and the studies are limited to Split and Adriatic area without real connections to the rest of the Mediterranean. An obvious advantage of the programme is the location in Split, however, the faculty need to forge connections with other Mediterranean countries and universities, and a good basis for this are the existing cooperation agreements with universities such as the University of Catania. Also, broader research topics need to be defined in the strategy which should not just be a list of small individual research topics and projects.</p>
<p>2.3. The HEI systematically monitors the success of the programmes through periodic reviews, and implements improvements.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p> <p>The programme is currently being revised but the panel has received no evidence on a periodic review which was used as a basis for this revision. There are no systematic evaluations of the programme and the satisfaction of the candidates is monitored informally through private discussions. The University plans to establish a Doctoral School which is supposed to improve the monitoring of the programme, and the panel supports this idea.</p>

<p>2.4. HEI continuously monitors supervisors' performance and has mechanisms for evaluating supervisors, and, if necessary, changing them and mediating between the supervisors and the candidates.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b> The students are able to discuss issues with the administrative staff and programme leaders, and the candidates employed at the Faculty are able to evaluate the work of their supervisors. The Faculty expects from the University to establish an evaluation system for supervisors for all candidates. Again, the establishment of the Doctoral School should also include identifying clear procedures for solving issues and evaluating supervisors, which is necessary. The mechanisms for solving issues should be independent of the program and the Faculty. There should also be additional criteria for appointing supervisors, as noted under 1.5.</p>
<p>2.5. HEI assures academic integrity and freedom.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b> The panel is concerned with the information they have received on potential plagiarism in a doctoral thesis which was apparently identified but not processed. The panel had no possibilities to check the truthfulness of such claims, however this does cause concern when taken into account that there is no plagiarism check at the institution. The Faculty has an Ethics Committee, however it also needs to provide sufficient training and instruction to students on ethics when conducting research.</p>
<p>2.6. The process of developing and defending the thesis proposal is transparent and objective, and includes a public presentation.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b> The Faculty follows an established procedure for thesis proposal defence. The program also plans to introduce submitting a research proposal upon admission, which is supported by the panel. While the Faculty did mention a course on academic writing, probably within the introductory Methodology Course, the panel was not able to establish if there is specific training on writing and developing a proposal. The Faculty should pay specific attention to differentiate between academic writing, proposal development skills for students, and project proposal development training for staff.</p>
<p>2.7. Thesis assessment results from a scientifically sound assessment of an independent committee.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b> Currently the supervisor can be a member while not a president of the thesis committee – the Faculty plans to change this, which is commendable, as the supervisor should not be a member of the committee. The Faculty should consider changing the rules so that a higher number of external experts are appointed to the committee and that they present the majority, possibly also including international members. To decrease costs,</p>

	<p>videoconferencing tools can be used for the defence when appointing international members.</p> <p>The theses should be available on DABAR to everyone with an email address, not only FFST staff. Also, see point 2.5.</p>
<p>2.8. The HEI publishes all necessary information on the study programme, admissions, delivery and conditions for progression and completion, in accessible outlets and media.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p> <p>Please also see 3.4. The administrative staff, especially in the International Office, would need additional resources and support to be able to work more on promoting the call for applications internationally. More diverse outlets can be used to reach potential applicants, such as social media, both in Croatian and English.</p> <p>Currently all students come from the Split area, and surely the location and the focus of the program would be attractive to students from a wider area.</p>
<p>2.9. Funds collected for the needs of doctoral education are distributed transparently and in a way that ensures sustainability and further development of doctoral education (ensures that candidates' research is carried out and supported, so that doctoral education can be completed successfully).</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p> <p>While the distribution of funds is described in documents and thus transparent, the students were not aware of what their tuition fees were spent on. The budget presented in the documents could also be better explained, e.g. 'Developmental Activities' cannot possibly involve only buying books, as mentioned in the self-evaluation document, as much more than books is needed to develop a quality doctoral program. Also, as already mentioned, students complained on the availability of new books.</p> <p>The Marulus foundation is a very commendable initiative as it provides tuition waivers for self-funding students, however more than current 2% of tuition fees should be allocated for this foundation and it should also fund participation in conferences, field research costs etc. The panel suggests allocating at least 10% to the Marulus foundation for tuition waivers, and then allocating additional funding for research and travel costs of self-funding students.</p> <p>About 60% percent of the funds are spent on external associates. While it is necessary to include external associates in the program, costs can be cut by using videoconferencing and developing an online framework for students to collaborate with external associates.</p> <p>The SAR also mentions that Faculty employees are paid additionally for participation in the PhD program and the panel recommends that this practice is discontinued as they already have their salaries.</p>

<p>2.10. Tuition fees are determined on the basis of transparent criteria (and real costs of studying).</p>	<p><b>N/A</b> The panel does not have relevant information to assess the criteria for tuition fees or the real costs of studying. However, the distribution of funds collected should be improved as noted under 2.9.</p>
<p><b>3. SUPPORT TO DOCTORAL CANDIDATES AND THEIR PROGRESSION</b></p>	
<p>3.1. The HEI establishes admission quotas with respect to its teaching and supervision capacities.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b> The program currently has 97 enrolled PhD students and a sufficient number of mentors (94) to assist these students throughout their PhD studies. In the last two rounds of admissions, the program allotted 10 free spaces to each of the 6 modules in the program with a call for applicants every 3 years. However, due to changing University regulations, they plan to admit students every year.</p> <p>Regarding course workload, some faculty have an excessive teaching workload. Moreover, one clear limitation to the enrolment process is that although there have been 97 students enrolled since 2012, only 9 students have completed their doctoral studies by successfully defending their dissertations. One reason for this may be that a majority of the applicants whom are accepted must pay tuition and are self-funding throughout their studies resulting in a lack of time and resources for research and professional development throughout the studies. Another possibility may be that the program requires too much course work, which does not allow sufficient time for the candidates to focus on research and writing the doctoral dissertation.</p> <p>We recommend that the Faculty provides more funding to the students or enrol fewer self-funding students. Less general course work should be required and students should be allowed students to focus more on specific research tasks and writing tasks that contribute to the dissertation project.</p>
<p>3.2. The HEI establishes admission quotas on the basis of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social, economic and other needs.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b> The admission process stipulates that the student applying to the program should have a grade average of 4.0 and 1 research or 3 expert works published in a scientific/expert journal or a successful interview process with the Council of Studies. However, exceptions can be made for those who</p>

	<p>have recommendations and detailed explanations from recommending professors arguing for the exception. During the site visit, the panel was told that starting with the next round of admission, applicants will be required to submit an outline of the PhD research that the applicant plans to conduct during their PhD studies, which is an important and necessary step to ensuring that the program accepts suitable applicants whose work contributes to the stated goals of the program.</p> <p>The panel in the previous institutional evaluation was worried about the employability of candidates, and during the site visit all candidates confirmed to hope for employment at the University. The program could benefit from improved assessment of needs, possibly through establishing an Advisory Committee comprising potential employers, such as representatives of the Tourist Board, regional museums, libraries and cultural institutions, etc.</p>
<p>3.3. The HEI establishes the admission quotas taking into account the funding available to the candidates, that is, on the basis of the absorption potentials of research projects or other sources of funding.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary:</b></p> <p>The program admits more students than it is able to fund and, therefore, a majority of the students are self-funding. This results in the fact that candidates often work full time while completing their doctoral studies. This has clearly resulted in having longer periods of study for the many candidates.</p> <p>The Faculty should provide more funding to the students for tuition, perhaps even tuition waivers, and/or enrol fewer self-funding students. It should also provide additional funds to the candidates for professional development, including funding for the conferences and other such activities.</p>
<p>3.4. The HEI should pay attention to the number of candidates admitted as to provide each with an advisor (a potential supervisor). From the point of admission to the end of doctoral education, efforts are invested so that each candidate has a sustainable research plan and is able to complete doctoral research successfully.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The Faculty provides a temporary mentor during the first semester of study and assigns a permanent supervisor in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, which are an important and necessary steps towards ensuring the students begin their studies with adequate support and assistance from the very beginning. The panel was also told that the students produce developed PhD proposals during the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of their studies, which is a positive step towards encouraging students to begin their research and focus their work towards completing their research and developing their dissertations in a timely manner.</p>
<p>3.5. The HEI ensures that interested, talented and highly motivated</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p>



<p>candidates are recruited internationally.</p>	<p>The Faculty has enrolled highly motivated and ambitious candidates to the program, including two Americans who have successfully defended their dissertations. However, most students are from Croatia and the international coordinator is overwhelmed with administrative work and cannot actively promote the program.</p> <p>The Faculty should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide more support for the international coordinator</li> <li>• In future employments, increase the internationalization of staff and/or support international mobility for current faculty.</li> </ul> <p>Also see 2. 8. for another suggestion for improving international outreach.</p>
<p>3.6. The selection process is public and based on choosing the best applicants.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p> <p>The selection process is public. It was said at the site visit that all applicants are admitted. Once the research proposal becomes part of the admission process, the Faculty will be able to choose only those applicants with feasible research proposals that fit in the overall goals of the program and existing research projects.</p>
<p>3.7. The HEI ensures that the selection procedure is transparent and in line with published criteria, and that there is a transparent complaints procedure.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The procedure is transparent and in line with published criteria, and the complaints procedure is in place. The complaints procedure can be improved so that complaints are directed towards the University and not the Dean personally, which is something that can be introduced with the development of the Doctoral School.</p>
<p>3.8. There is a possibility to recognize applicants' and candidates' prior learning.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>It is possible that publications/summer schools etc. replace ECTS from obligatory courses up to 90 ECTS, and there have been examples of transfer students having their prior education fully recognized.</p>
<p>3.9. Candidates' rights and obligations are defined in relevant HEI regulations and a contract on studying that provides for a high level of supervisory and institutional support to the candidates.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p> <p>Formal contracts on studying should be introduced. During the site visit we learned that while some supervisors are fully available there may be issues in this regard. Students asked for specific office hours for PhD students only, and connections with external associates can be improved as also mentioned under 2.9. The panel recommends that the students have formal contracts as an additional mechanism for ensuring legal protection on all sides.</p>

	<p>While the Doctoral School is expected to do this, the Faculty is also able to organise some form of focus group discussions with students about their needs for support.</p>
<p>3.10. There are institutional support mechanisms for candidates' successful progression.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p> <p>There is a problem in integrating all candidates as a group, which is especially important for the self-funded students and those not employed at the institution. We strongly recommend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introducing regular doctoral seminars for students to present their ongoing research to other students and professors;</li> <li>● Additional funding for conferences and study visits abroad;</li> <li>● Continue informing students about potential conferences and funding opportunities and further encourage such activities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. PROGRAMME AND OUTCOMES</b></p>	
<p>4.1. The content and quality of the doctoral programme are aligned with internationally recognized standards.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p> <p>The panel considered that improvements should be made to align the program with internationally recognized standards. The program has to critically reflect on the stated Mediterranean focus which is currently purely descriptive, romantic and exceedingly localized. A possible direction would be aligning the program with programs in other critical area studies (Southeast European/Balkan Studies) paying attention to how power is articulated with the specific locations of Split, Croatia, the EU vis-à-vis the rest. The program has to take into account the critical theoretical approaches that focus on location and space - for comparison see programs such as those of University of Catania or University of Aegean (Lesvos) which look at issues such as Orientalism, EU-fortress, borders guarded by Frontex, inequality in terms of freedom of movement, militarization of border states, power and contemporary migration, etc.</p> <p>Doctoral courses need to be aligned with the objectives of conducting research and developing critical research. Thus, courses which are on a PhD level need to be developed, primarily the Doctoral Seminar (not only for the first-second year students but also for the advanced ones who are writing up and are feeling left out and alienated from the program). Additionally the Faculty can consider courses like Critical Ethnography, Critical Discourse Analysis, New</p>

	Materialisms (Aesthetics, Materiality, and Agency), "Borders, Migrations, Cultures," critical tourism studies, critical approaches to heritage studies, etc.
4.2. Programme learning outcomes, as well as the learning outcomes of modules and subject units, are aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF. They clearly describe the competencies the candidates will develop during the doctoral programme, including the ethical requirements of doing research.	<b>Improvements are necessary</b> The competencies are clearly defined in the course specifications as following the Bologna recommendations. The panel however finds many of the courses repetitive from the lower levels that don't develop PhD skills, as discussed above. Also, the high teaching load means that students need to study longer than 3 years to be able to conduct the necessary 3 years of independent research.
4.3. Programme learning outcomes are logically and clearly connected with teaching contents, as well as the contents included in supervision and research.	<b>Improvements are necessary</b> In addition to numerous problems with taught courses discussed above, the reading lists of the courses are overtly specific – instead of providing a comprehensive overview of relevant literature, they seem to be focused on the work and narrow research interests of individual teachers.
4.4. The doctoral programme ensures the achievement of learning outcomes and competencies aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF.	<b>Improvements are necessary</b> As discussed above, teaching methods could be more appropriate for PhD level. Currently the course content is too specific and narrow. Instead of having pre-defined courses on specific, narrow topics the panel recommends that the supervisors design directed readings and tutorials for the students who have specific topics. There is no need to have courses on a PhD level apart from general courses focused on developing research (e.g. discipline-specific methodological workshops) and other transferable skills, and doctoral seminars discussed above.
4.5. Teaching methods (and ECTS, if applicable) are appropriate for level 8.2 of the CroQF and assure achievement of clearly defined learning outcomes.	<b>Improvements are necessary</b> While some courses are similar to those on the MA level, the class size is smaller which makes the teaching more interactive. However, as already discussed, each module needs to develop a specific methodology course specific for their disciplines. Continuous assessment needs to be introduced such as regular response papers or position papers on selected readings, book reviews etc. The teaching methods can be significantly improved by using modern communication and co-working technologies.
4.6. The programme enables acquisition of general (transferable) skills.	<b>Improvements are necessary</b> The PhD students can acquire some additional generic/transferable (either academic or business) skills.

	<p>The course content can include skills such as digital humanities, project proposal writing, presentation skills, etc. More advanced skills of academic writing might be needed for PhD students, such as foreign language academic writing and so on, especially when considering that most of the students want to remain in the academia. Applied skills applicable for some of the industries — e.g. tourism or cultural heritage - could be more developed, but not at the expense of academic rigour.</p>
<p>4.7. Teaching content is adapted to the needs of current and future research and candidates' training (individual course plans, generic skills etc.).</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b>  Students can choose between elective courses, but, as already discussed, they are too narrow and at the same time not detailed enough to get the real sense of the literature and the content necessary to conduct further research within topics or methodologies studied.  Many of the courses currently on offer should be removed or, when necessary, replaced by directed readings (individual tutorials).</p>
<p>4.8. The programme ensures quality through international connections and teacher and candidate mobility.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b>  The panel recommends the program to invest more effort in bringing in international faculty recruitments as well as institutional support to students going abroad and getting international funding for it, attracting foreign doctoral students and integrating them through organised exchange of ideas. This should be done in relation to the redistribution of tuition fees as discussed in chapter 2. Supervisors should do more to share their international connections and networks with their doctoral students and the institution should be pro-active in establishing necessary links. While the Office for Research and International Cooperation is trying the best it can to disseminate information, more resources should be secured to assist students and staff members in writing proposals and preparing research projects.  The panel recommends more theses to be written in English and more international members to be included in the defence committees.  The Faculty should also invest efforts to attract postdocs and more senior researchers from other institutions and from abroad to open positions.</p>

**\* NOTE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXPERT PANEL TO THE ASHE'S ACCREDITATION COUNCIL AND QUALITY LABEL**

The role of the Expert Panel in the re-accreditation of doctoral study programmes is manifold. The Expert Panel or part of the Expert Panel visiting a higher education institution drafts a report on the basis of a self-evaluation report, the accompanying relevant documentation, and a site visit to HEI. The draft report is adopted by all members of the Cluster Expert Panel, while the president of the Cluster Expert Panel is responsible for coordinating the assessment levels.

The report contains an assessment on whether a doctoral study programme delivered at a higher education institution complies with the prescribed laws and by-laws, as well as any additional/recommended requirements defined by the Agency's Accreditation Council, and whether a higher education institution can obtain a positive, i.e. satisfactory quality assessment according to the criteria set out in this document. Moreover, the Expert Panel must make recommendations for quality improvement.

Based on the assessment of all these elements, the Expert Panel may propose to the Accreditation Council of the Agency to issue either a confirmation on compliance, a letter of expectation for the period up to three (3) years in which period the higher education institution should eliminate the identified deficiencies, or to deny the license.

If the Expert Panel has assessed that a doctoral study programme delivered by a higher education institution does not meet legal and other requirements or that the quality of a study programme is not ensured (i.e. that HEI does not meet additional requirements or recommendations made by the Accreditation Council, or has a very poor quality assessment), they should propose to the Accreditation Council to deny the license.

If the Expert Panel considers that the relevant laws and bylaws have been met by a higher education institution, but that certain elements mentioned above do not meet the quality requirements, while they consider that the identified shortcomings can be corrected within a time frame of three years, they should issue a letter of expectation.

If the Expert Panel considers that all legal and additional/recommended requirements have been met and the quality assessment is satisfactory, i.e. that a study programme fulfils the learning outcomes appropriately defined for that level and scientific area, they may propose the issuance of a certificate and have a HEI commit to quality improvement and reporting to the Agency during the follow-up period.

Finally, if the Expert Panel has, in accordance with the criteria mentioned above, proposed issuing the certificate of compliance and assessed that, in addition to meeting the minimum quality requirements – i.e. the qualification framework level - for a study programme, the programme should be identified as a doctoral programme of a 'high level of quality', the Expert Panel may propose to the Agency's Accreditation Council that such a doctoral study programme be awarded the 'high quality label'. Thus the Agency, with the consent of the Accreditation Council, grants a higher education institution the right to use the label for their academic and promotional purposes.

The 'high quality label' cannot be proposed or awarded to a programme or a higher education institution that does not comply with the requirements laid down by the laws and bylaws mentioned in this document, and any additional requirements recommended by the Accreditation Council. Moreover, the quality assessment awarded to a study programme should reflect a high level of quality inasmuch that at least half of the sub-criteria in each of the quality assessment criteria are assessed as being of high

quality. The Accreditation Council of the Agency issues a final opinion on the label awarded. The content and form of the quality labels shall be prescribed by the Agency in a relevant general act.

The Accreditation Council of the Agency discusses the final report with all recommendations and suggestions, and issues their opinion on the report. Based on a prior opinion of the Accreditation Council, the Agency issues an Accreditation Recommendation to the minister responsible for science and higher education, and upon receipt of the minister's final decision on the outcome of the procedure, awards the 'high quality label' to a higher education institution.