



agency for science and higher education

**REPORT
OF THE EXPERT PANEL
ON THE
RE-ACCREDITATION OF
RIT Croatia (Rochester Institute of Technology)**

Date of site visit: 26 and 28 March 2019



The project is co-financed by the European Union from the European Social Fund. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of the Agency for Science and Higher Education.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....3

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION.....6

BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES8

1. ADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION8

2. DISADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION8

3. LIST OF INSTITUTIONAL GOOD PRACTICES8

ANALYSIS OF EACH ASSESSMENT AREA, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY GRADE FOR EACH ASSESSMENT AREA .. 9

1. Internal quality assurance and the social role of the higher education institution9

2. Study programmes..... 10

3. Teaching process and student support 11

4. Teaching and institutional capacities..... 12

5. Professional and scientific activity..... 13

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF EACH STANDARD, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY GRADE FOR EACH STANDARD..... 15

1. Internal quality assurance and the social role of the higher education institution 15

2. Study programmes..... 22

3. Teaching process and student support 30

4. Teaching and institutional capacities..... 39

5. Professional and/or scientific activity..... 49

APPENDICES 54

1. Quality assessment summary - tables..... 54

2. Site visit protocol..... 60

SUMMARY 64

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 RIT Croatia (Rochester Institute of Technology Croatia).

Members of the Expert Panel:

- Assoc. prof. Gunnar Piho, Ph.D., Tallinn University of Technology (TalTech), School of Information Technologies, Republic of Estonia, chair,
- Prof. dr. rer. pol. Angela Wiene, University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Business Administration, Federal Republic of Germany,
- College prof. Jadranka Ivanković, Ph.D., VERN Polytechnic, Republic of Croatia,
- Assoc. prof. Marko Perić, Ph.D., Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, University of Rijeka, Republic of Croatia,
- Ivana Vitas, student, College for Management in Tourism and Informatics in Virovitica, Republic of Croatia.

During the first day of the site visit, the Expert Panel held meetings with the following stakeholders on location Zagreb:

- Management,
- Self-evaluation Report Committee,
- Students,
- Full-time teaching staff,
- Representatives of the business sector, potential employers.

The Expert Panel members had a tour of the work facilities, library, IT classrooms, student administration office and classrooms, and attended sample lectures, where they held a brief Q&A session with students on Zagreb location. The Expert Panel members also visited Megatrend Company that hosts students' internship where they talked to the representatives of employees in charge of student internship. By the site visit protocol, the Expert Panel examined the available additional documents and study programme descriptions (learning outcomes).

During the second day of the site visit, the Expert Panel held meetings with the following stakeholders on Dubrovnik campus:

- Full-time teaching staff,
- Students,
- Alumni,
- Associate dean.

The Expert Panel members had a tour of the work facilities, library, IT classrooms, student administration office and classrooms in Dubrovnik. The Expert Panel members also visited companies Hilton Imperial Dubrovnik and PHOBS that host student internship where they talked to the representatives of employees in charge of student internship. By 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 RIT Croatia (Rochester Institute of Technology Croatia) based on RIT Croatia (Rochester Institute of Technology Croatia) self-evaluation report, other relevant documents and the site visit. The Report contains the following elements:

- Short description of the evaluated higher education institution,
- A brief analysis of the institutional advantages and disadvantages,
- List of good institutional 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, a site visit to the RIT Croatia (Rochester Institute of Technology Croatia) and writing of the Report, the Expert Panel was supported by:

- Iva Žabarović, coordinator, ASHE,
- Viktorija Juriša, assistant coordinator, ASHE,
- Ivana Rončević, an interpreter at the site visit, ASHE.

Based on 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 confirmation on compliance with the requirements** for performing the activities, or parts of activities,
2. **Denial of a 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.

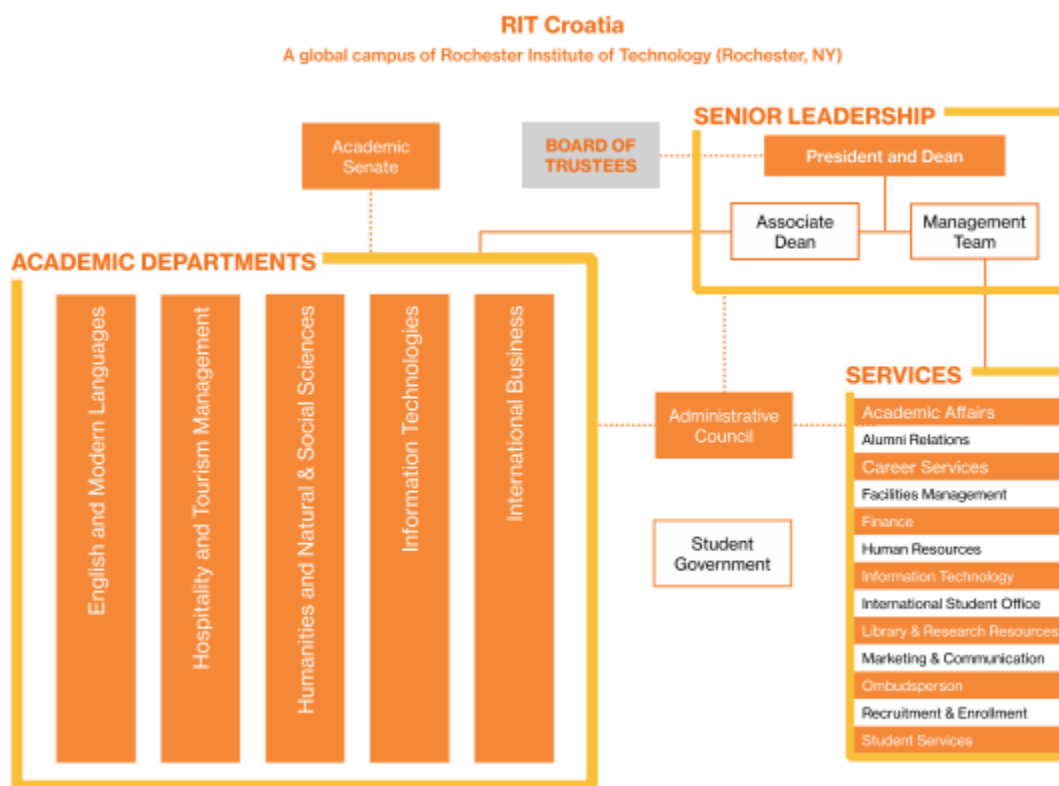
SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

NAME OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: RIT Croatia (Rochester Institute of Technology Croatia)

ADDRESS: Damira Tomljanovića Gavrana 15, 10 000 Zagreb, Croatia
Don Frana Bulića 6, 20 000 Dubrovnik, Croatia

DEAN: Mr.sc. Donald W. Hudspeth

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE:



STUDY PROGRAMMES:

- Undergraduate professional study programme Information Technology,
- Undergraduate professional study programme International Business,
- Undergraduate professional study programme Service Management.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 820

NUMBER OF TEACHERS: 28

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

RIT Croatia (until October 24, 2013, known as the American College for Management and Technology) was established in September 1997 in Dubrovnik. RIT Croatia was founded on a joint initiative of the Ministry of Science and Technology (today the Ministry of Science and Education), the Dubrovnik Polytechnics and the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) of Rochester, NY, USA, as a Croatian higher education institution. The campus in Zagreb was opened in 2011.

BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

1. ADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. Strong support from alumni, other stakeholders and especially from the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT, USA).
2. High-quality university campuses are both in Zagreb and Dubrovnik.
3. Most of the teachers have a PhD degree.
4. A friendly atmosphere and a supportive working environment.
5. They have a modern and adequate teaching methodology and support system for students.

2. DISADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. All the requirements for the Croatian educational institute must be followed in a very precise manner.
2. The workload of students must be monitored and adjusted according to the standard that 1ECTS is 25-30 hours of work for a student.
3. The quality assurance processes should be made more formal and traceable in the documents.
4. The workload of teachers should be monitored and adjusted. In some cases, and for some teachers it is too high to ensure the high quality of teaching.
5. Professional and scientific activities should be improved.

3. LIST OF INSTITUTIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

1. Ombudsman system is well organised, and students have a person appointed to help them when issues arise.
2. The Dean's List is a prestigious award for the best students in the school.
3. As an active participant in local communities, RIT Croatia promotes and initiates volunteering projects.
4. Strong and good support of students with special needs is in use.
5. RIT Croatia has well organised and mandatory cooperative education (student practice).

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

1. Internal quality assurance and the social role of the higher education institution

Analysis

As a campus of the American Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) and an accredited Croatian higher education institution, RIT Croatia's internal quality assurance system is designed to meet the requirements of both countries. Its Strategic Plan is quality oriented, but a formal quality assurance policy (statement) is missing. The implementation of the strategy and internal quality assurance system involves many stakeholders, but their feedback is sometimes informal, without follow-up documentation.

Regarding previous internal and external evaluations and their recommendations for improvement, RIT Croatia has undertaken a lot of activities in many areas, but additional improvements are possible, especially regarding balancing of the Bologna reform standards with RIT's (USA) standards, enrolment criteria, teachers' overload and scientific and professional research. RIT Croatia has analysed improvements and plans further development accordingly, but further development and autonomy are limited by the influence of the parent RIT institute. Additionally, there was no evidence of continuous review and monitoring of internal processes related to academic and educational policies and procedures by the Quality Assurance Committee.

RIT Croatia supports academic integrity and freedom and upholds ethical standards and effectively uses mechanisms for preventing unethical behaviour, intolerance and discrimination. It supports two-way communication and promotes an open dialogue with its many stakeholder groups via different formal and informal communication channels. RIT Croatia's mission, educational model and supporting initiatives and activities contribute to the development of the economy, society and democracy, local community, foundations of the academic profession and the accountability of teachers. RIT Croatia promotes life-long learning among students, alumni, faculty and staff, and life-long learning is an integral part of the RIT Croatia Strategic Plan, but RIT Croatia does not offer formal life-long learning programs.

Recommendations for improvement

1. In the Strategic Plan, articulate more clearly the need for and how to improve the internal quality assurance system.
2. Prepare an operational (action) plan for strategy implementation, which will include recommendations for quality improvement from previous evaluations and where more measurable key performance indicators would be defined. This operational (action) plan would make the RIT Croatia efforts more focused.

3. Prepare the Code of Ethics for staff as a separate document to set the rules and to formalise the procedures in case of non-ethical behaviour of teachers, associates and other employees occur.
4. The Expert Panel suggests that RIT Croatia should try to establish some official life-long learning programmes, in relevant areas, while continuing and further encouraging different informal types of life-long learning opportunities.
5. The Expert Panel suggests continuing with the practice of informing different stakeholders, on important aspects of RIT Croatia activities, via multiple communication channels. Some indicators, such as pass rate analyses, graduate employment, drop-out rates, and outcomes of previous evaluations, should be publicly available too. At the same time, stakeholders' feedback on RIT Croatia activities and future development should be documented.
6. More efforts could be made regarding more independent RIT Croatia development in future.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

2. Study programmes

Analysis

Being a Croatian higher education institution which delivers undergraduate study programmes under the auspices of RIT Rochester, RIT Croatia has, therefore, the challenge of continuous adaptation both to American and Croatian (European) higher education standards. It primarily uses American standards and practices when setting the learning outcomes for study programmes and courses, students' workload and acquired knowledge assessment. The presence of ECTS credits is more formal and less used in practice, and the expert panel found no evidence that the allocated ECTS credits are consistent with the required 25-30 hours of work per one ECTS. Student practice (cooperative education) is an integral part of all RIT Croatia study programmes, it is carried out and monitored systematically and responsibly, but learning outcomes for the student practice are not explicitly stated in any document, and students do not get ECTS credit points for this activity. RIT Croatia has built strong connections and effective exchange of information with a variety of internal and external stakeholders, but this communication is usually less structured and informal. Formal analysis of the justification for delivering any of the study programmes is missing.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The intention to deploy the study programme advisory boards is probably the best way of enhancing the quality level in the development of study programmes. Also, consider making a feasibility study, including the analysis of the needs of the labour market as well as inputs from alumni and industry, and consult with the authorised bodies for accreditation, before introducing new study programmes.
2. Course advisory boards (quite common in Europe), when introduced, could develop the content for exams and validate the results of exams and is probably also helpful in monitoring the actual workload of students.
3. All documents (e.g. study programmes, diploma supplements, learning outcomes of study programmes, same documents in different languages) should be aligned with each other in such a way that there are no discrepancies between them. More balance between study programmes learning outcomes and learning outcomes of the individual courses is needed as well.
4. The allocation of ECTS credits must be clarified. Consider re-evaluating the US credits and ECTS credits for classes to reflect better the actual workloads of students.
5. Student practice must have clear learning outcomes and, since it is students' work and increases their workload, students have to be awarded with the credit points for this as well.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

3. Teaching process and student support

Analysis

RIT Croatia has defined and published admission criteria and criteria for the continuation of studies, yet the admission criteria should be more consistently applied. The institution has several mechanisms in place for monitoring student progress and for taking necessary actions accordingly. It encourages various modes of programme delivery and teaching methods, yet some methods should be more in line with the specific course requirements.

The institution has well-organised mechanisms for supporting students. RIT Croatia is supporting students from vulnerable and underrepresented groups. Besides international students who are enrolled at RIT Croatia and contributing to internationalisation, there is strong cooperation with other campuses, predominantly with Rochester and Dubai. The institution ensures an objective and consistent evaluation of students' achievements using the American grading system and credits. Upon the completion of studies, students receive two degrees: an American degree from RIT Rochester and a Croatian degree from RIT Croatia.

Students do not write classical final papers at the end of their studies, and cooperative education (student practice) is not linked with learning outcomes and ECTS points which are highly recommended. RIT Croatia provides students with support regarding future career planning and maintains contacts with alumni.

Recommendations for improvement

1. Try to increase the number of enrolled students from Croatia with state matura or applying the entrance exam consistently to increase the quality level of enrolled students.
2. There is a parallel system of American credits and ECTS points in use, but students are not well informed about ECTS since American credits are used through the learning process. ECTS points are formally present at the study programmes, course programs and in diploma supplement. Better inform students about ECTS points. This helps them in transferring and comparing of credits as well as in the understanding of the European educational system.
3. Balance the global RIT mobility and Erasmus+ programs, by attracting students not only from the RIT community but from other European universities as well.

Quality grade

High level of quality

4. Teaching and institutional capacities

Analysis

RIT Croatia has 28 full-time faculty members, all with teaching titles. 75% of them have a PhD, and 50% are elected to the research titles. The qualifications are from professional, educational and research experience. RIT Croatia supports the professional development of the teaching staff. Teachers could use RIT Rochester professional development resources or participate in different activities within the RIT community (Rochester and Dubai). Mobility inside RIT community is 75% of all short outgoing faculty mobilities.

RIT Croatia is a not-for-profit private higher education institution which is funded dominantly from tuition fees. The institution is making efforts to ensure financial sustainability and is under RIT Rochester control. The space, equipment and the entire infrastructure of the institution are adequate for the delivery of the study programmes and ensure the achievement of intended learning outcomes. RIT Croatia library (in both campuses, Zagreb and Dubrovnik), has access to additional resources such as RIT Wallace Library and online databases to ensure the literature necessary for ensuring high-quality of study and scientific and teaching activity.

RIT Croatia recognises and rewards professional and scientific achievements of its employees on an annual basis. However, it is not clear how different achievements are validated and taken into account in the promotion of teachers into higher positions and titles. According to analytic supplement table 4.3. 20 teachers have higher workload than recommended. The external associates with academic and professional experience contribute to the quality and relevance of the study programmes.

Recommendations for improvement

1. Workload of teachers should be decreased as well as the total number of courses per teacher to boost the teaching quality and to give time for scientific activity and professional and personal development.
2. Develop clear guidelines on how to measure and compare important achievements in different areas (research, publishing, teaching) when promoting teachers into higher positions and titles.
3. Even though RIT Croatia is offering different opportunities for the professional development of teachers, the prevailing activities are related to the RIT community. Put more emphasis on improving teaching mobility within the EU, based on the ERASMUS+ program.

Quality grade

High level of quality

5. Professional and scientific activity

Analysis

As RIT Croatia is currently in the process of applying for the university license, its teachers and associates actively participate in the scientific and professional activity. In total, there were 61 scientific and professional papers published in the last 5 years. 11 papers are indexed in the Web of Science Core Collection (WoSCC) and SCOPUS database. 10 papers are professional papers. While this number of papers is quite modest (e.g. only 0.34 publications of the highest category per teacher in the last five years), the teachers and associates continue with the scientific activity, and as a result of RIT Croatia's invested efforts to encourage high-quality professional and/or scientific publication, it is expected that the number of papers will increase in future.

RIT Croatia has established efficient measures for encouraging the publishing of high-quality professional and scientific papers. These measures include Conference and Research Funding Framework, RIT's professional development grants, access to the RIT grant opportunities, the Research Seminar series and the RIThink journal. In addition, the RIT Croatia has the Research and Scholarship Committee and different annual awards. The Expert Panel conclude that although many activities to improve the quality and quantity of scientific and professional research have been done in the last five years, there is still a lot of improvements to do.

Recommendations for improvement

1. Prepare the Research Strategy as an independent document. Make the criteria (procedure) for increasing the faculty members salary (merit-based) more transparent.
2. The Expert Panel believes that RIT Croatia should focus more on business and business economics research in general and tourism and hospitality research in particular, as these are the topics of RIT Croatia study programmes.
3. The Expert Panel suggests that RIT Croatia should encourage teachers and associates to participate and apply for scientific and professional projects. It is crucial that, when participating and applying for projects, RIT Croatia teachers and associates use their affiliation to RIT Croatia.
4. RIT Croatia should encourage its teachers and associates to participate more at top ranking international conferences. Consider maintaining the continuity and indexing the RIThink journal to become a good platform to publish papers.

Quality grade

Minimal level of quality

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

1. 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

As a campus of the American Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) and a accredited Croatian institution of higher education, RIT Croatia's internal quality assurance system is designed to meet the requirements of both countries. Although there is no formal quality assurance policy (statement), all aspects, greatness indicators and objectives of the Strategic Plan – Committed to Greatness (2016–2022), are quality oriented in nature. Besides strategic plan, the quality-related policies, procedures and expectations are communicated to students and the staff primarily via the Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, and Rulebook on Election to Educational Titles and Work of Instructors. The internal quality assurance system involves all stakeholders: students, teachers, associates and staff. It is deployed in all activities conducted by RIT Croatia and the management bodies constantly monitor changes from the environment and adapt the strategy accordingly. Areas of concern are addressed immediately.

The implementation of the strategy involves many actors (e.g. Board of Trustees, Senior Leadership Team, Academic Senate, Quality Assurance Committee, teachers, staff, etc.) with defined responsibilities for implementation, monitoring and reporting. RIT Croatia's Board of Trustees reviews academic and overall RIT Croatia quality semi-annually. The Senior Leadership Team (meets every three weeks) addresses quality assurance primarily from a strategic perspective. RIT Croatia's Academic Senate (important body in the quality assurance process) proposes and approves new academic policies and procedures. The Quality Assurance Committee (the academic policy committee of the Senate) formulates and reviews all matters related to academic and educational policies and procedures, is engaged in the periodic curricular review and monitors internal processes required for maintaining accreditation and will keep abreast of changes in the national accreditation/re-accreditation processes. There is no five-year research strategy as a separate document, but research activities are part of the RIT Croatia Strategic Plan.

RIT Croatia systematically collects and analyses data on its processes, resources and results, and uses them to manage and improve its activities effectively. For instance, quality assurance in teaching is achieved with the assessment of student learning outcomes, course evaluations, and student engagement and satisfaction surveys. Course management systems and tools such as MyCourses, Starfish system and Turnitin, support teaching quality and student performance. An active and engaged alumni body and alumni association ensure feedback on employment rates, future industry trends and adjustments needed for a curriculum. Also, other external stakeholders (cooperative education partners, employers, representatives of professional organisations, etc.) provide regular feedback for the RIT Croatia. Sometimes this feedback is informal, without follow-up documentation.

RIT Croatia is committed to the development and implementation of human resource management policies by professional principles and standards. It is dedicated to the pursuit of academic excellence, consistently recognises and awards achievements in scholarship, service, creativity, teaching and learning. RIT Croatia supports the continuous professional development of all employees (Conference and Research Funding Framework, participation at conferences, workshops, research seminars, etc.), supports appointment to scientific/teaching positions and titles, etc.

Recommendations for improvement

1. In the Strategic Plan articulate more clearly the need for and how to improve the internal quality assurance system.
2. Prepare an operational (action) plan for strategy implementation, where more measurable key performance indicators could be defined.
3. Prepare the five-year research strategy as an independent document.
4. Ensure proper follow-up documentation regarding stakeholders' feedback on RIT Croatia activities and future development.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

RIT Croatia analysed the recommendations for improvement and undertook activities based on previous internal and external evaluations to a moderate extent. According to the last external evaluation from 2011, the main areas, where RIT Croatia had to make major improvements, were:

- a. To focus more on the Bologna reform standards compared to the RIT's standards;

- b. To develop strategies for student and faculty mobility;
- c. To formalise and define enrolment criteria for students;
- d. To work on informing students about learning outcomes, program loads and employment opportunities;
- e. To increase the number of staff members and in Career Services;
- f. To formalise the relationship with employers;
- g. To work on elections to teaching and research titles; and
- h. To develop strategies for scientific and professional research.

A lot of activities were done in these areas, but additional improvements are possible, especially regarding balancing the Bologna reform standards with RIT's standards, students' enrolment criteria, teachers' overload and scientific and professional research.

RIT Croatia analyses improvements and plans further developments accordingly. RIT Croatia senior leadership permanently monitors all the activities and their implications throughout all the areas of RIT Croatia. The Strategic Plan – Committed to Greatness (2016–2022) is reviewed on an annual basis and some of the objectives, vision and mission statements, are adjusted accordingly. However, further development and autonomy are partly limited by the influence of the parent institute - RIT.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests continuing further improvements in areas where recommendations from the previous reaccreditation were noted.
2. An official action plan, created on the recommendations of the expert panels from the previous external evaluations, would make the RIT Croatia efforts more focused.
3. More efforts should be made towards a more independent development of RIT Croatia in future.

Quality grade

Minimum level of quality

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

RIT Croatia supports academic integrity and freedom and upholds ethical standards. These issues are outlined in the Student and Faculty Handbooks, Rulebook on Election to Educational Titles and Work of Instructors, contract agreements with employees, etc. The prescribed rules and procedures from the RIT are implemented as well. RIT Croatia effectively uses mechanisms for preventing unethical behaviour, intolerance and discrimination. Faculty advisers and teachers provide students with information and advice regarding academic status, study habits and other RIT Croatia policies and procedures. In terms of student misconduct, referring to intolerance and discrimination, the RIT Croatia is required to adhere to the Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which is an American federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education. RIT Croatia Disability Policy states that RIT Croatia is committed to providing equal access to programs, services and physical facilities also to students with disabilities.

The system for managing conflicts and resolving irregularities is functional at all levels of the RIT Croatia. RIT Croatia systematically addresses issues of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, a duplicate submission, etc.). For preventing plagiarism, the plagiarism detection software is in use. The procedure for handling academic dishonesty is publicly available to both the students and staff. The Ombuds Office and the Academic Honesty Committee is established to solve conflicts and irregularities.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests continuing the same high level of quality you have done so far.
2. Prepare the Code of Ethics for staff as a separate document to set the rules and to formalise the procedures in case of non-ethical behaviour of teachers, associates and other employees.

Quality grade

High level of quality

1.4. The higher education institution ensures the availability of information on important aspects of its activities (teaching, professional and scientific and social role).

Analysis

Information on study programmes and other activities of RIT Croatia is publicly available on the web page in Croatian and English languages. RIT Croatia informs stakeholders on the admission criteria, enrolment quotas, study programmes, learning outcomes, qualifications, and different forms of support available to students. It supports two-way communication and is promoting an open dialogue with its many stakeholder groups via different communication channels such as internal communication, online communication channels, offline communication channels (both printed and event activities) and personal communication.

RIT Croatia made information on the social role of the higher education institution available to stakeholders through different communication channels. RIT Croatia also collects other indicators (e.g. pass rate analyses, graduate employment, drop-out rates, outcomes of previous evaluations, etc.) but these indicators are usually communicated to stakeholders via informal communication channels. RIT Croatia visits educational fairs and high-schools and holds presentations to potential students about studying at RIT Croatia. Potential students are also invited to come and spend one day on the campuses as students of RIT Croatia. RIT Croatia organises info sessions for parents and guardians for RIT Croatia applicants two times a year (once every semester) to inform them about all the key expectations, requirements and developments of each semester. Academic advisors, faculty mentors, career advisors, Ombudsperson and peer mentors continue to provide individual service to students.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests continuing the practice of informing different stakeholders on important aspects of RIT Croatia activities via multiple communication channels.
2. Make other indicators (such as pass rate analyses, graduate employment, drop-out rates, outcomes of previous evaluations, etc.) publicly available.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

RIT Croatia contributes to the development of the economy in several ways. Its mission is broad and fosters innovation, creativity, and an entrepreneurial spirit while creating bonds between students, alumni, faculty and industry. The educational model provides high-quality accredited study programmes, evidence of teaching-related activities exists, and graduate students find their jobs soon after leaving RIT Croatia. RIT Croatia contributes to the foundations of the academic profession and the accountability of teachers for the development of the higher education institution and the local community. It is involved in various projects (in robotics, IT, environment and ecology, psychology) and its teachers participate in renowned professional conferences and take on important roles in relevant associations.

RIT Croatia contributes to the development of the local community and civil society as well. It organises internal charity auctions where the money is collected and donated to numerous NGOs (Non-Governmental Organization). RIT Croatia also collaborates with NGOs that have interesting and engaging programs for high-school students, and it has given them its premises for free to organise different workshops. RIT Croatia in general and its teachers and students are aware that they depend on the communities they are a part of and that they need to understand and contribute to community needs. Therefore, RIT Croatia promotes and initiates many volunteering projects where students, faculty and administrative staff actively participate.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests continuing the high level of quality you have done so far.
2. Enhance research-related activities that would contribute to the development of the economy at local, regional and even (inter)national levels.

Quality grade

High level of quality

1.6. 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

RIT Croatia promotes life-long learning among students, alumni, faculty and staff, and life-long learning is an integral part of the RIT Croatia Strategic Plan – Committed to Greatness (2016–2022) and, consequently, in its mission and strategic objectives. However, RIT Croatia does not offer formal life-long learning programs, and formal general goals of the life-long learning programmes are not stipulated. Instead, RIT Croatia is providing students, alumni, faculty and staff numerous informal learning opportunities through the activities organised internally, or through the external organisations and individuals, it collaborates with (e.g. guest lectures, workshops, conferences, student clubs' activities, etc.).

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests RIT Croatia should try to establish some official life-long learning programmes in relevant areas.
2. The Expert Panel suggests continuing and further encouraging different informal types of life-long learning opportunities.

Quality grade

Unsatisfactory level of quality

2. 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 demands of the labour market.

Analysis

In the RIT Croatia strategic plan, “Committed to Greatness (2016 - 2022)”, is stated, that the vision of the RIT Croatia is to be the first choice for global-minded students in Central Europe who wish to receive an American diploma. In the Self-Evaluation Report 2019 it is stated that RIT Croatia delivers study programmes of Rochester Technical Institute (RIT), USA. RIT has five educational goals: critical thinking, global interconnectedness, ethical reasoning, integrative literacies and creative and innovative thinking (App. 54. RIT's five educational goals). The Expert Panel can conclude that there is evidence that the general objectives of all study programmes are in line with the mission and strategic goals of the RIT and RIT Croatia. RIT Croatia does not deliver study programmes leading to degrees in regulated professions.

The Expert Panel found no evidence of an analysis of the justification for delivering the study programmes or that the study programmes are based on an analysis of the demand of the local and regional labour markets. However, the supplement to the Self-evaluation shows (Table 3.7. Employment of graduates/alumni in the last three calendar years) that most of the RIT Croatia graduates are employed. This leads to the conclusion that the general objectives of study programmes are aligned with the needs of the labour market. As RIT Croatia is an operating educational institution (they have students, faculty, administration, alumni and study buildings and classes), the members of the Expert Panel may conclude that, in general, the resources are adequate for delivering study programmes and that senior management is responsible for the operating of the school.

In addition to the undergraduate studies, that are in the focus of the re-accreditation, it should be noted that since 2011 “the institution ACMT (the former name of RIT Croatia) and RIT established a Master of Science programme in Service Leadership and Innovation at ACMT in Zagreb. Upon graduation, students acquire an internationally recognised American diploma issued by RIT (App. 5 RIT Croatia Faculty Handbook, p.5). During the re-accreditation visit, members of senior leadership explicitly stated that the faculty staff from RIT Croatia are not involved in the lecturing of this graduate programme. It was unclear whether there was a feasibility study for this programme and whether an accreditation institution was consulted.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests continuing the high level of quality you have done so far.
2. Analyse the present, but also anticipate the future needs of the labour market at the national and regional level and make a feasibility study before introducing new study programmes and consult with the authorised bodies for accreditation.
3. Make consultancies with authorised bodies for accreditation to determine the legal status of the Master of Science programme.

Quality grade

High 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

RIT Croatia delivers undergraduate programmes that are aligned with the mission and goals of RIT Rochester, and therefore its focus is to fulfil requirements of US accrediting bodies. In Self-Evaluation Report 2019 (page 32) it is stated: “As RIT Croatia is delivering RIT’s study programmes, all learning outcomes are created and maintained at the RIT. Hence, when selecting a study programme to deliver, RIT Croatia receives the associated learning outcomes as an integral program part.” The Expert Panel fully agrees with this.

However, as “RIT Croatia is a Croatian higher education institution” (page 12 of the Self-Evaluation Report 2019), all the learning outcomes must be in line with Croatian and EU standards as well. Therefore, RIT Croatia has the challenge of continuous adaptation both to American and Croatian higher education standards.

The Expert Panel agrees to what is stated (page 31): “Although the levels of learning outcomes and competencies of our study programmes are well balanced, they should be used more precisely in the process of communication.” For instance, the Expert Panel was not able to put together the study outputs on page 31 (second paragraph), with the study programmes on the same page (last paragraph), as well as with the study programmes published on the web site.

Further, at the study programme level, there are 15 general and only four programme-specific outcomes, or six programme-specific outcomes in International Business study programme (MOZVAG, Table 2.1. a). In different study programmes, there are different approaches in several courses which are contributing to the specific learning outcomes. For example, at Service Management study programme, the ratio between general outcomes (covered with particular course) and specific outcomes is 71% vs 29%. At Information Technology study programme, the same ratio is 74% vs 26%. Only at the International Business study programme, this ratio is in balance: 52% vs 48% (MOZVAG, Table 2.1). In all the four study programmes, some learning outcomes (e.g. CRT 3 – Reach sound conclusions based on logical analysis of evidence) were not covered with any of the courses.

Except for the two courses, Year One and Essential Study Techniques (for students' orientation and organisation), all the other courses should have stated the learning outcomes clearly. Some courses do not contribute at all to achieving the learning outcomes of the study programme (e.g. Second Year Seminar, Global Business Environment, Organizational Behaviour, Principles of Marketing at the Information Technology study programme (391), and Second Year Seminar, Negotiation & Conflict Resolution, and Leadership Innovation in Service Industry at the Information Technology study programme (392), (MOZVAG, Table 2.1).

In the Self-Evaluation Report 2019 (page 32) is stated: "As program outlines should be in alignment with the Dublin descriptors, Bloom's Taxonomy and learning outcomes at level 6 of the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CroQF), the learning outcomes assessment is underway." The Expert Panel agrees with this statement and wishes the RIT Croatia to succeed in carrying out such conformity assessment as soon as possible and in bringing curricula into line with these mentioned above criteria. The Expert Panel also agrees with the claim that "the alignment and the process of the constructive alignment, with a focus on the course level learning outcomes, could further enhance the quality of the study programmes" (the same page 32 from the Self-Evaluation Report 2019).

In the self-evaluation report is also stated, that "Program learning outcomes for RIT Croatia study programmes were defined based on the best practices and international industry standards" and that there is the "robust process of continuous curriculum improvements". Unfortunately, these claims are not clear for the Expert Panel, especially when talking about the application of these procedures as **the study programme advisory boards are not deployed today** and are only planned to introduce sometime in the future. As the employment rate of graduates is high and as graduates of RIT Croatia are studying or have gained graduate levels in other universities, the Expert Panel is convinced, that the learning outcomes reflect the competencies required for employment, continuing education or another individual/society needs.

Recommendations for improvement

1. In several places, in the Self-Evaluation Report 2019, the intention to deploy the study programme advisory boards was stated. Consider implementing this as soon as possible.
2. Planned conformity assessment of study programmes should also be carried out as soon as possible to ensure that the programme outlines are in alignment with the Dublin descriptors, Bloom's Taxonomy and learning outcomes at level 6 of the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CroQF).
3. More balance between the study programmes learning outcomes and learning outcomes of the individual courses is needed.
4. All documents (e.g. study programmes, diploma supplements, learning outcomes of study programmes, same documents in different languages) should be aligned with each other in such a way that there are no discrepancies between them.

Quality grade

Minimum 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

RIT Croatia has an opportunity to modify learning outcomes in the process of curriculum updates and process improvements (Self-evaluation, p. 32). RIT has established the practice of assessing general education learning outcomes which are monitored and compared in all international locations (App. 2.3.15.-2.3.19. GE Assessment Meetings). Each campus should make an internal assessment and prepare a progress report (App. 2.3.21.-2.3.28. Progress Reports). All the measures, currently used by RIT Croatia to assess their study programmes and courses are necessary, but the Expert Panel is not fully convinced whether they are also sufficient. The main challenge, we see here, is a five-year period in the evaluation of courses (Self-Evaluation Report 2019, page 33), which in our understanding might not be enough.

We found action plans for improving the learning and teaching only for the three courses: Math, American Literature and Writing Seminar (App. 91-93 Action Plan). These plans are based on the information, gathered from the feedback from students and faculty. Similar action plans, based on the feedback from students and faculty, should be developed for all courses.

If the Expert Panel has properly understood the matter, the questions to be asked in the examination and the home and assessment work, as well as the grades of the examination and home and assessment work, depend to a large extent on the teacher of the course. Such an assessment practice, based solely on the authority of the teacher, will, in our view, be diminishing the value of the minimum GPA requirement for graduation.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The recommendation is to deploy the quite common in Europe practice, course advisory boards, like the study programme advisory boards. Course advisory boards usually consist of three members. In addition to the course teacher, a colleague from the same educational institution and a colleague from another educational institution in Croatia, are the members. The responsibility of such a board is to develop the content for exams and assessments and to assess (validate) the results of exams and assessments.
2. Use more peer reviews and plan regular workshops with instructors on how to evaluate the learning outcomes of students.
3. Use students' feedback (e.g. from survey results) on achieving the learning outcomes of classes and how these learning outcomes are evaluated and react promptly in case of discrepancies, e.g. by adjusting the learning methods or examination and assessment questions.

Quality grade

Satisfactory 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

RIT Croatia has built strong connections and relationship with a variety of stakeholder groups; internal (within all the RIT campuses) and external. The institution has a rich network with leading domestic and international representatives of scientific and business communities where alumni and cooperatives play an important role. RIT uses two-way communication to exchange information and new ideas. It happens on all occasions, perhaps in a less structured and formal, but in a very effective way.

RIT Croatia is delivering study programmes which are aligned with RIT (USA) and RIT Croatia strategic goals. Also, planning and proposing new study programmes include an informal analysis of institution resources, and alignment with the strategic goals at the local and regional level, and other needs of society.

The Expert Panel was not provided with the document about a formal analysis of the justification for delivering any of the study programmes. Even though RIT Croatia is mostly independent in making decisions on new study programmes, a good practice is to choose from the existing RIT study programmes (over 80 existing undergraduate and over 60 graduate study programmes). “Currently, RIT Croatia is exploring two new undergraduate and one graduate study program, with the expected rollout of the first one in 2021.” (Self-evaluation, p. 36-37).

All the activities, needed to satisfy this standard, are implemented by RIT Croatia and are described in the Self-Evaluation Report 2019. Recent modifications, according to these procedures, were implemented in the Information Technology and Service Management study programmes (Self-evaluation, p. 37). On the RIT Croatia web page, there are up-to-date versions of the undergraduate and the Master of Science study programme.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The intention to deploy the study programme advisory boards is probably the best way of enhancing the quality level in the development of study programmes.
2. Involve alumni and industry in a more structured and regular way of developing study programmes (e.g. as a member of study programme advisory boards) and use this input for improvements and development of new educational programmes.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

According to the Program outline for each undergraduate study (*izvedbeni program studija*), that was presented to the Expert Panel, the RIT Croatia allocates ECTS credits in all classes in all study programmes. The Expert Panel found that ECTS credits are somehow related to the actual students' workloads. However, the Expert Panel found no evidence that allocated ECTS credits are consistent with the required 25-30 hours of student work per one ETCS. The foundation to this suspicion is the fact that in RIT Croatia, one semester is 15 weeks long and during the semester the students must take classes in a total amount of 30 ETCS. This will make students workload from 50 to 60 hours per week. How students will cope with this high workload, the Expert Panel found no answers. The other source is the Credit Hour Assignment Policies. In this document, it is clearly stated that 3 US credit points are 115.5 hours of total work for a student. At the same time, 6 ETCS credit (which is an equivalent of 3 US credits in most cases) must include at least 150 hours of work (both coursework and non-coursework) for a student.

There are some practical courses, i.e. courses where practical work by students is essential to complete the course and where students have gained ECTS credits for this. Such courses include Senior Project (HTM), Business 1 (IB), Advertising and Promotion Management (IB) and Senior Development Project II (WMC) (see study programmes' Program Outlines). However, in the Self-evaluation (p. 38-39), it is stated "Many courses in RIT Croatia study programmes have components of practical class activities. There is no formal attribution of credit hours/ECTS to those activities, which will be changed in the future..." The point of these sentences from the Self-evaluation is unclear because it is not in line with the Programme Outlines.

The Expert Panel found no evidence of monitoring the actual workloads of students. Based on the feedback from students, we can conclude that there are enormous differences in the volume of homework for different classes. Students also claimed that sometimes they get only limited feedback on the results of the analysis of gathered information and the implemented changes based on such analysis.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The allocation of ECTS credits must be clarified. Probably the competences from ENIC-NARIC Croatia (<https://www.enic-naric.net/croatia.aspx>) is helpful here to correctly transform the US credit points according to the ECTS.
2. The course advisory boards, proposed in section 2.3, should also help in monitoring the actual workload of students.
3. It is necessary to ensure that all study programmes have practical teaching in which ECTS credit points are gained.
4. Re-evaluate the US credits and ECTS credits for the classes (explicitly mentioned in the Self-evaluation), where practical work by students is essential to the entire course.

Quality grade

Minimum level of quality

2.6. Student practice is an integral part of the study programmes.

Analysis

Student practice (cooperative education), according to the Self Evaluation Report 2019, is an integral part of all RIT Croatia study programmes and is organised outside the higher education institution, in cooperation with the companies.

In the Service Management study programme, students are required to complete 1200 hours of practice. In International Business and Information Technology study programmes, students are required to complete 800 hours of practice. The number of hours of student practice is significantly higher compared to other educational institutions in Croatia. It may be a distinctive advantage of RIT, but as it creates an additional workload for students, this also affects the length of the study time. Students do not get ECTS credit points for student practice, and there is no explicitly stated learning outcomes for the student practice in RIT Croatia documents.

Nevertheless, the Expert Panel found, according to the visits to partner companies, that the student practice in RIT Croatia is carried out and monitored systematically and responsibly (they have the Career Service Office for this). In addition to the formal student practice, all of RIT Croatia's study programmes have courses, that are based on activities, where the real industry partners are involved and where the practical skills could be obtained.

Recommendations for improvement

1. Learning outcomes for student practice must be set in all study programmes.
2. Since student practice is students' work and it increases their workload, students have to be awarded with the credit points for this as well.
3. All ECTS credits earned by students should be visible in the diploma supplement.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

3. 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

According to the presented documents and following conversations with different groups, it can be concluded that RIT Croatia primarily uses American standards and practices when setting learning outcomes for study programmes and classes, students' workload and acquired knowledge assessments. Although the institution invests efforts to include ECTS credits, their presence seems to be only a formality. Both teachers and students seemed to be focused on the American credits and for calculating the GPA achievements (Ev. 1. GPA calculator at RIT Croatia web page: <https://www.croatia.rit.edu/gpacalculator>, ev. 2: App. 121. US Credit Hour Policy, ev. 3: 122. US Credit to ECTS Conversion Policy). In the Self-evaluation report it is stated, that "Given the activities, students need to complete in order to earn one credit hour, the US credit hours are converted to ECTS using the rate of one US credit hour equals two ECTS. Due to specifics of some courses (such as research, seminars, individual supervision, fieldwork, etc.), there could be exceptions and a case-by-case approach is used. This process is used in assigning ECTS points to regular program courses, but also in all student mobility situations (e.g. transfer students, student exchanges)." (Self-evaluation, p. 38).

RIT provides a well-designed website with the relevant information for admission and the continuation of studies. The website contains detailed information about the application process as well as the categories of admission. Applicants can submit the applications easily. Candidates, who submit their application before graduating from high school, and who meet the admissions criteria, are given a conditional acceptance offer. Original documents (final high school certificate, national exam results, or international equivalent) need to be submitted before the start of the first semester.

The evidence shows that a large number of students (40% to 50%, depending on the study programme) does not provide a State Matura (Analytic supplement to Self-Analysis, p. 2-3). The admission process for applicants without State Matura consists of three steps: written Math exam; written English exam; and a motivational interview in English. Interviews are either face to face interviews or Skype interviews. All the admitted students are required to take an English test before the classes start and based on that might be required to take an additional English language course. However, entrance exams are not performed in all cases, and students pointed out, that the low knowledge level of some students, affects the further quality of learning and teaching.

Criteria for the continuation of studies are described in the Student Handbook. A first-year student needs at least 27 US credits for the continuation of studies at the second-year level. 56 US credits are needed for the third-year level status, and 85 US credits are needed to attain the senior student placement (RIT Croatia Student Handbook 2018-2019, p. 23). There is a procedure for the transferring of students from other internationally recognised colleges or universities. After the appropriate departments have reviewed the passed by the student courses, the institution either accepts or rejects the courses from other universities. RIT Croatia accepts only the credits/ECTS points, and grades are not transferred. All the transferred students must complete/earn a minimum of 60 ECTS points at RIT Croatia to receive the undergraduate study diploma from RIT Croatia.

Recommendations for improvement

1. Raise the admission threshold to the school.
2. Increase the number of students admitted to the school based on State Matura.
3. Introduce mandatory Math and English exams for those enrollees, who have not passed a State Matura.
4. Introduce ECTS credits into the Student Handbook along with the US credit points.

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 the study.

Analysis

Several channels are available that provide information about the progress of the students; Student Information System (SIS), Starfish-Early Alert, Student Handbook. Academic advisors use several progress tracking methods. SIS is used to monitor all students and finally allow them to be certified. The dean performs the certification audit, reviewing all documents for a group of randomly selected students (Self-evaluation, p. 47). The results of a program, named Early Alert, are sent by e-mail to the students.

The Academic Actions occur at the end of each term when all grades are posted and when GPA is available. If a student does not have a specific cumulative GPA, he/she will be placed on an academic warning.

Despite all measures that RIT Croatia is using, the ratio of students' graduations is different per study programmes and for different years of entry. Of students, who entered RIT Croatia in 2014, 70% of students graduated at Service Management, 28% at Information Technology (391), 42% at Information Technology (392) and 55% at International Business (MOZVAG, Table 3.5).

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests continuing the same high level of efforts to ensure continuity and completion of the study.
2. Implement the suggestions mentioned in the previous standard.

Quality grade

High level of quality

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

Analysis

The RIT Croatia encourages various modes of programme delivery and teaching methods, according to the intended learning outcomes. A flipped classroom is often mentioned both in the Self-evaluation report as well as by the interviewed teachers during the site visit. Furthermore, the field trips, case studies and multimedia group work, etc. are also used — some of them in cooperation with international partners, e.g. with Rochester. Evidence also confirms that teaching methods are adapted to vulnerable groups as well (e.g. for deaf students). Students also participate in various projects. They have to prepare projects on their own as well as in groups. Some student projects are so good that teachers are encouraging students to write papers, to present their project outcomes. There are examples, where the MIPRO conference has accepted papers of RIT Croatia students.

The interviews with teaching staff during the site visit showed that teachers of RIT Croatia could design the course according to their best discretion. However, they have to use the content from Rochester. In the classes, students are motivated to ask questions. Students are also enabled to evaluate teaching methods continually, and teachers adapt the teaching methods according to the feedback from students. According to the interviewed students, most teachers of RIT Croatia are committed. Some students pointed out that the Polycom system is not appropriate for foreign language classes.

RIT Croatia does not offer part-time studies.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests continuing the same high level of quality you have done so far.
2. Reduce Polycom usage in the language classes and wherever a teacher's presence in the class would be more appropriate.

Quality grade

High level of quality

3.4. The higher education institution ensures adequate student support.

Analysis

In addition to peer mentors, academic and faculty advisors and ombudsperson, each faculty member hold several weekly office hours, where students can receive individual, one-to-one assistance. Also, the system of tutors is in use. The tutors are the students selected by the faculty. Tutors help other students to get better achievements in learning. According to the vice dean, there are numerous measures in use to estimate students' satisfaction. The examples are: on class evaluations, coffee with the dean and an annual studies satisfaction report. RIT Croatia is taking a student satisfaction survey every year.

Students with difficulties in studying, specifically those from being suspended, are required to take the Essential Study Techniques Course to get a greater understanding of key elements of academic success and learning. Students from abroad have no special treatment except specific cultural classes for incoming students. Regarding vulnerable groups, there is the Equal Access Policy that each faculty member is expected to follow in their courses. The site visit offered evidence that RIT Croatia supports vulnerable students. Career Services, Alumni Relations and International Student Office support and assist students who plan to study abroad, at either one of the RIT campuses or through the Erasmus program. Students course materials are available on the MyCourses platform, and all students have access to the Wallace Library.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests continuing the same high level of quality you have done so far.

Quality grade

High level of quality

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

Analysis

RIT Croatia is supporting students from vulnerable and underrepresented groups. Elements of that support include measures for students with disabilities, Equal Access Policy, financial support to students of lower socioeconomic status (in compliance with Title IX of the American federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education, Self-evaluation, p. 58).

The site visit showed that studies are tailored for disabled students. RIT Croatia provides a Disability Services Agreement (DSA), with the lists of recommended academic accommodations developed by the Ombudsperson. The ombudsperson distributes the DSA to faculty members each term to verify that RIT Croatia recognises the student as a disabled person who requires accommodation. The Ombudsperson also checks the academic progress of the disabled student. The institution is well equipped with elevators and appropriate restrooms.

The institution is providing financial support to students of lower socioeconomic status, before enrollment and during their studies at the school. Financial aid is deducted from the student's annual tuition. Students could apply for additional financial aid before the start of each semester. From the 2014/15 academic year, there were approximately 25 students who used additional financial support (Self-evaluation, p. 59).

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests continuing the same high level of quality you have done so far.

Quality grade

High level of quality

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

Analysis

RIT Croatia carries out all study programmes in the English language which enables students to adapt to the international environment. In the current academic year, 10.67% of active students are international students (Self-evaluation, p. 60), which enrich international and cross-cultural experience within the class. Another advantage of the classes in English is the possibility to visit RIT campuses abroad (Dubai and Rochester) without difficulties.

Global Scholar program was founded in 2012 to enable the easy and transparent support for study in Rochester and Dubai. Since then, 73 students have used this opportunity, out of which five went to Dubai and 68 to Rochester (Self-evaluation, p. 61). The program offers full support like advising, pre-departure meetings, arrival, housing, and cultural field trips. RIT Croatia also takes part in the Erasmus+ program. Since 2014, the institution has signed 16 partnerships with various educational institutions in Europe, and since then, 34 students have been used the Erasmus+ mobility.

Global mobility with Dubai and Rochester is always higher than the mobility with Erasmus; it is more convenient gaining foreign experience within RIT since all institutions uses American credit points and rely on current infrastructure. Since 2018 the International Student Office conducts outreach activities like classroom presentations, study abroad fairs as well as promotion campaigns together with the marketing department.

Career Service Office promotes international cooperative education opportunities to the students. Since 1997, 716 students and graduates did mandatory cooperative education only in the USA, while many did it in other countries worldwide (Self-evaluation, p. 62). The interview with alumni, especially in Dubrovnik, showed interest to have business activities abroad or rather to work for a company abroad.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests continuing the high level of students' international experience within the class and through the cooperative education.
2. Balance Global mobility and Erasmus+ programs.

Quality grade

High level of quality

3.7. The higher education institution ensures adequate study conditions for international students.

Analysis

RIT Croatia carries out all study programmes in the English language. And all communication, as well as information, either printed or on the web, are in the English language. Therefore, the English speaking international students have no problems in joining RIT Croatia.

The International Student Office at RIT Croatia is responsible for assisting, supporting and guiding all incoming international students. According to the MOZVAG (Table 3.6), in the last five academic years, 147 international students studied at RIT Croatia for up to 3 months, and 109 international students stayed for more than three months. Majority of incoming international students are from the other RIT universities. International students can evaluate the stay at RIT Croatia and make suggestions for improvement. The Expert Panel found no evidence of how many international students are using this possibility.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests continuing the high level of international students' mobility.
2. Attract students not only from the RIT community but from other European universities as well.

Quality grade

High level of quality

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

Analysis

RIT Rochester uses the American grading scale, and the same grading scale is applied in RIT Croatia as well. The American grading system is described in detail in the Student Handbook (pp. 28-32) and in Regulations on Study 2018-2019 (Regulations on Study 2018-2019, pp. 4-6). Students have access to a GPA calculator on the RIT Croatia website. The final grade scale is shown in Table 4. (Self-evaluation, p. 65). Criteria and methods of evaluation and assessment of students are stated in the study syllabus. The Self-evaluation report states that RIT Croatia finances the professional training of its teachers and that the Effective Teaching Committee organises workshops on the use of modern teaching and evaluation tools.

According to the interviewed students, teachers use a variety of teaching methods and are using different ways to assess students' knowledge. They have different exercises, quizzes, and projects to evaluate and assess the students' knowledge and performance. In case when the students are not happy with the exam results, the exam results can be sent to double-checking on demand of the student. Students have possibilities to comment on the assessments their teachers give them. The site visit confirmed that the students are mostly satisfied with their teachers and how the feedback system is organised and applied. Students mentioned the case of a bad assessment, where the teacher in question was fired. Students also stated that some teachers do not provide evaluation feedback on time.

RIT Croatia evaluates the achievement of learning outcomes of students so that some elements of the programme can be improved. The site visit showed that most students are satisfied with the evaluation of learning outcomes and that these evaluations are consistent with their learning outcomes of courses. Evaluation procedure at RIT Croatia also considers special circumstances of certain groups and simultaneously ensures the achievement of the intended outcomes. For example, based on medical records, students can request testing at accommodations, using an alternative location for taking the test, taking the test on the computer or using a calculator. Students receive feedback on the evaluation results, and their ratings are communicated individually via electronic means (MyCourses). The students also confirm that consultations with the professors are available. However, there were some complaints to professors, who are late with gradings.

Recommendations for improvement

1. Inform students about ECTS points better. This helps them in transferring and comparing of credits as well as in the understanding of the European educational system.
2. Downsize teachers' workload to enable accurate and on-time assessments.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

3.9. The higher education institution issues diplomas and Diploma Supplements in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Analysis

The requirements for the graduation of RIT Croatia undergraduate study programme are as follows (Self-evaluation, p. 67):

- a. Successful completion of all required courses, including cooperative education;

- b. A cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0 or above (US system), which is the equivalent of Croatian 3.0 or above;
- c. Completion of 240 ECTS for the Croatian four-year degree (123-126 US credits depending on the study program); and
- d. A completed online Application for Graduation through the Student Information System (SIS).

In the Diploma Supplement the graduation requirements are mentioned as follows (e.g. Diploma Supplement IB): a) cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0; b) completion of 122/126 credits for the four-year B.S. degree (240 ECTS for the Croatian four-year degree); c) satisfactory completion of cooperative education (co-op); d) senior project. In Diploma Supplement on the Croatian language, instead of the senior project it is mentioned that the students “create and defend the graduate thesis”.

The Diploma Supplement of RIT Croatia in the Croatian language states that one of the conditions for obtaining a diploma is “the design and defence of a graduate thesis. The English version refers to a senior project (or senior development project for IT). Furthermore, from the same document, it is not visible during which course the senior project was done, and how many ECTS credits the students get for it (Sources: Diploma Supplement, Program Outline, Regulations on Study). The conclusion is that students do not write a classical graduate thesis at the end of their studies, and cooperative education (student practice) is not linked with learning outcomes and ECTS points (Sources: Diploma Supplement, Program Outline, Regulations on Study).

Upon the completion of their studies, students receive two degrees: an American degree from RIT (USA) and a Croatian degree from RIT Croatia. From RIT, graduates receive an internationally recognised Bachelor of Science (BS). From RIT Croatia they receive a degree of Baccalaureus/Baccalaureate. RIT is printing diplomas at their campus in Rochester, USA, and is posting them to RIT Croatia. RIT Croatia issues the Diploma Supplement both in Croatia and in English, free of charge (Self-evaluation, p. 68).

Recommendations for improvement

1. Introduce the individual final diploma work as a condition for completing the study.
2. Introduce the learning outcomes and ECTS credits for cooperative education (student practice).
3. Please consult with the competent authorities regarding the statement of final theses or senior project in the Diploma Supplement and harmonise them.

Quality grade

High level of quality

3.10. The higher education institution is committed to the employability of graduates.

Analysis

RIT Croatia is highly interested in the employability of their students. All the RIT Croatia study programmes are based on the employability potential. Potential students and their parents are informed about employability rates and of statistics about the alumni during the individual meetings. The Career Service organises the Career Education Day for all students, and to this event, they invite alumni to assist students in obtaining positions in companies for cooperative education or full-time employment. This Day also enhances networking with employers.

Since 2019, a recruitment and enrolment specialist was appointed to inform students about graduate studies. In workshops topics like writing a motivational letter, looking for scholarships and looking for the right school and study programme for continued studies are covered. Support is given by the recruitment and enrolment specialist, by the RIT Croatia Career Service Office and by the RIT Croatia Alumni Office (Self-evaluation, p. 69). Evidence showed quite a strong relation between the school and alumni. Since 2001 the Alumni Office organises the database of all alumni and publishes an online alumni newsletter. An alumni-senior student dinner is arranged as well as one major and some smaller get-together events are organised.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests continuing the same high level of quality you have done so far.

Quality grade

High level of quality

4. Teaching and institutional capacities

4.1. The higher education institution ensures adequate teaching capacities.

Analysis

76% of RIT Croatia undergraduate students are studying social sciences (International Business and Service Management), and 24% of students are studying Information Technology (MOZVAG, Table 3.1). All study programmes have a mandatory general education component.

RIT Croatia had a total of 28 full-time faculty members: 18 lecturers, six senior lecturers, three college professors and one college professor has a permanent title (MOZVAG, Table 4.1b). Twelve faculty members are of social sciences, 4 of technical sciences, 9 of humanities, and 3 of natural sciences (MOZVAG, Table 4.3). RIT Croatia recruited eight new teachers over the last five years (MOZVAG, Table 4.2) and has a plan to hire four new full-time teachers by the end of the academic year 2018/2019: 2 for computing, 1 for mathematics, and 1 for economics (Self-evaluation, p. 72). Still, the institution has more technical, administrative and support staff (56%), than full-time teaching staff (44%), (MOZVAG, Table 4.1.b).

The qualifications of the faculty members are appropriate for the delivery of existing undergraduate programmes and intended learning outcomes for the current number of enrolled students. Qualifications of faculty members to teach a course come from professional, educational or the research experience. Twenty-one faculty members have got PhDs, and six are currently enrolled in PhD programs. Although faculty members are not required to be elected to research positions, there are currently 14 faculty members elected to research positions (*znanstvena zvanja*): 1 senior research associate (*viši znanstveni suradnik*) and 13 research associates (*znanstveni suradnik*). Five faculty members have research positions in social sciences, 3 in technical sciences, 3 in humanities, 2 in natural sciences, and 1 in the interdisciplinary field (Self-evaluation, p. 75 Croatian ed.) .

In RIT Croatia, the current faculty/student ratio is 1:29, which is close to a maximum ratio of 1:30 according to 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 (OG 24/10).

This indicates the need to increase the number of faculty members soon, especially in the case of a higher number of enrolled students. Minimum coverage by the faculty own staff at professional study programmes need to be at least 0.33 of the HEI staff. RIT Croatia study programmes are all covered by they own staff; Service Management is covered 0.76; Information Technology (391) 0.52; in Information Technology (392) 0.68; and International Business study programme is covered 0.65 (MOZVAG).

The number of courses per teacher in one study programme varies from 1 to 7. In Service Management programme eight teachers hold 4 or more courses, in Information Technology 8 teachers hold 4 or more courses, in International Business 3 teachers hold 4 or more courses (MOZVAG, Table 4.4). It might create even more burden for some cases when considering that some teachers teach in more than one study programme.

The Expert Panel found that the workload of the faculty members is higher than the official authorities recommend. Data are showing that 20 full-time faculty members have workload exceeding 540 standardised hours (for 15 members even from 720 to 990 hours); 5 have less than 540 hours, and 3 have exactly 540 standardised hours (MOZVAG, Table 4.3). Teachers are obliged to hold one hour of consultations for every two hours of teaching and participate in the work of committees, teaching councils, workshops, seminars, etc. Five full-time teachers have faculty and administrative duties with the workload in the range from 540 to 930 standardised teaching hours. It all leads to the conclusion that the workload of teachers is probably too high and that full-time teaching staff lack time for professional and scientific activities and professional and personal development.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests continuing with the same high-level qualification (both academic and professional) of teachers.
2. Lower the workload of teachers and if possible, decrease the total number of courses per teacher.
3. Enable more time for conducting scientific activity and professional and personal development for the full-time faculty members.
4. Recruit more full-time faculty members.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

4.2. The higher education institution ensures the appropriate quality of external associates.

Analysis

RIT Croatia employs associates with different professional backgrounds and relevant work experience. The external associates contribute to the richness and the quality of the RIT Croatia study programmes. Currently, RIT Croatia has 32 external associates, out of which 19 came from research or education institutions, and the rest came from the business sector. For 12 cases, the evidence, for the elections to the scientific or teaching titles, were presented to the Expert Panel.

External associates come from distinguished international companies which help the transfer of the latest research and industry trends to the students. They bring a different perspective to teaching. Besides that, the institution also expects from the full-time faculty members to continuously follow the latest trends to modernise their courses. In the self-evaluation report, RIT Croatia declared to support the involvement of external associates in mentoring students and supporting Senior Projects (e.g. in the Service Management – HTM study programme), when the topics were appropriate.

There are examples of good cooperation between RIT Croatia and local business organisations. Over the years there were 10 students who did their registered cooperative education at KING ICT, 11 students did their cooperative education at ENUM, seven students at Hilton Imperial Dubrovnik, 15 at Adriatic luxury hotels, four at Dubrovnik Riviera Hotels (Sheraton), and four at Top Digital Agency (Source: feedback from alumni and external associates).

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests continuing the same high level of quality concerning hiring external associates.
2. Continue with the good practice of cooperation between RIT Croatia and institutions where the external associates are employed.

Quality grade

High level of quality

4.3. Teacher recruitment, advancement and re-appointment are based on objective and transparent procedures which include the evaluation of excellence.

Analysis

The practice of teacher appointment is in line with the development goals of the institution. The recruitment practice is in place and aligned with the legislation and internal regulations. Faculty members go through the annual performance appraisal process with their supervisors. The process involves the report of the faculty member, supervisor's feedback and evaluation, and a review meeting. The supervisor's evaluation includes information from student evaluations, peer observation sessions, feedback from the faculty and staff, and level of the plan realisation. Integral categories of evaluation are teaching, research and scholarship, service and professional engagement. If an opportunity for improvement is recognised in any of the categories, the plan for improvement is included in the plans for upcoming terms.

However, it is not clear how the research activities are evaluated in comparison with the teaching activities. It is also not clear what happens in case a clear negative feedback from the students' is given to the faculty member. It is also not clear how the achievements of teachers (e.g. successful projects, authorship of textbooks, publishing activities, teaching, etc.) are accounted when teachers are promoted into higher positions and titles.

Employment of the new faculty is carried out based on the needs of the study programmes. The appointment to full-time positions is carried out through a public competition, and the availability of vacancies is communicated to interested parties through public channels. In general, the main employment criteria for a new full-time faculty member are PhD degree in the teaching area, three double-blind peer-reviewed journal publications, evidence of successful teaching experience in college, commitment to research and publication, excellent communication skills in English and the ability to work in an international environment. To hire the best possible candidates, RIT Croatia tries to engage new faculty members as associates before hiring them on a full-time basis.

Introducing new faculty members into RIT Croatia systems is a responsibility of the Area Head. There is a New Faculty Checklist which stated all important areas which a new person needs to overcome (App. 236. New Faculty Checklist). For a new faculty member or a course instructed by a faculty member for the first time, early course evaluation is administered in week 5 of the semester so that that teacher could make the corrections (Self-evaluation, p. 77).

RIT Croatia recognises and rewards professional and scientific achievements of its employees by awarding the Excellence in Teaching, Scholarship in Service, Discovery in Scholarship Award and Outstanding Achievement awards (Appendix 246. RIT Croatia Faculty Awards). Promotion of teachers into higher grades reflects the strategic goals of RIT Croatia.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests continuing with the high internal policy and standards in hiring, retaining and promoting teacher's excellence.
2. Develop clear guidelines on how student evaluations, peer review sessions, feedback from teachers and staff, etc. are considered during the evaluation process of teachers.
3. Develop clear guidelines on how to measure and compare important achievements in different areas (research, publishing, teaching) when considering the promotion of the teachers into higher positions and titles.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

RIT Croatia supports the professional development of faculty members in different ways. Financing and other activities are there to provide support for attending different external events and funding institutional memberships in various organisations. Internal opportunities for the improvement of teaching competencies are organised through Faculty and Staff Days, special events and guest lectures. Orientation and training days are organised for new faculty members. RIT Croatia faculty members can also use various RIT Rochester professional development resources through the Centre for Professional Development, Innovative Learning Institute and Faculty Career Development.

A faculty member who started PhD studies could apply for financial support. Supporting funds for participating conferences up to 1,500 EUR are available for a faculty member through the Conference and Research Funding Framework. A faculty member can also apply for the professional development grants from RIT (USA). In 2014 until 2019, eight faculty members used RIT grants for professional development (App. 242. List of faculty professional development grants).

19 out of 28 full-time faculty members (68%) were using mobility opportunities. Faculty are predominantly directed to use and participate in different activities and development programs within the RIT Rochester community (Rochester and Dubai) which made 75% of all short outgoing mobility. There were only 4 cases of mobility in other institutions in Turkey, Island, Poland and the Czech Republic (App. 239. List of faculty visits to RIT and other institutions). In short outgoing mobility (up to 3 months), there were 18 teachers and eight non-teaching staff involved in the last five academic years (MOZVAG, Table 4.5, Table 4.6). One teacher completed a longer stay (4,5 months for research within Fulbright scholarship), according to the List of faculty visits, to RIT and other institutions (App. 239. List of faculty visits to RIT and other institutions).

Faculty on Service Management study programme did not participate in scientific or professional projects. Majority of the scientific or professional projects were executed by faculty members from the Information Technology study programme. Five full-time faculty members from technical or natural science were involved. From International Business study programme, there are seven full-time faculty members involved in several social sciences scientific or professional projects (MOZVAG, Table 4.4). List of research projects of RIT Croatia faculty members shows that ten faculty members were involved in 21 projects. However, the duration and involved institutions are not shown in this list (App. 254. List of research project RIT Croatia faculty).

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests expanding development opportunities for improving teaching competencies within and outside the institution.
2. Introduce regular internal workshops for improving or refreshing didactics and methodology of teaching.
3. Even though RIT Croatia offered different opportunities for development, prevailing activities were participation in different programmes within RIT Rochester community. Put more emphasis on improving teaching mobility within the EU, based on the ERASMUS+ program.
4. Downsize the workload of teachers to create more time for participating in scientific or professional projects and for professional development.

Quality grade

High level of quality

4.5. Space, equipment and the entire infrastructure (laboratories, IT service, work facilities etc.) are adequate for the delivery of the study programmes and ensure the achievement of intended learning outcomes and the implementation of professional or scientific activity.

Analysis

RIT Croatia made significant effort to ensure the facilities and infrastructure can support the curriculum and learning outcomes, providing a distinguished educational environment, in line with strategic goals. RIT Croatia has campuses in Zagreb (new building) and Dubrovnik (recently completely renovated). Both campuses are in stable long-term leases. Both campuses together have 2.262m², 14 classrooms, six computer classrooms, 12 rooms for students' activities and 20 teaching-shared offices (MOZVAG, Table 4.8). All classrooms are equipped with modern computers and LCD projectors, and two classrooms on each location are equipped with video conferencing solutions. RIT Croatia has in total three teaching labs (one in Dubrovnik, two in Zagreb) and three open-access labs (two in Dubrovnik and one in Zagreb). There are 135 computers in Zagreb and 86 computers in Dubrovnik. Equipment is replaced every 4-5 years, depending on technology upgrades and curriculum needs. At both locations, there is a fitness centre for students, faculty and non-teaching staff.

Information Technology Services support office employs three full-time technicians and several part-time student employees that are available to assist students, faculty and staff every day during working hours. Network infrastructure and security are managed in coordination with RIT's Network Services team. All computer labs operate a set of software applications that are required by the curriculum and licenses are either obtained locally in Croatia or via RIT as part of their global licensing agreements. RIT Croatia has invested in video-conferencing solutions that enable knowledge sharing, collaborative research and accessibility. Two classrooms and one meeting space at each of the campuses are equipped with Polycom RealPresence technology. Polycom and Cisco video-conferencing platforms are used daily to conduct live online lectures, conferences, presentations, and meetings (1,269,000 HRK investment since 2013).

RIT Croatia recognises the importance of investing in new technological solutions and plans further to upgrade them in the future. Although students are satisfied in general with the availability and usage of technology while studying, there was also a strong statement against Polycom usage in courses like computer programming or foreign languages. According to RIT Croatia ambition to become a university, there should also be a plan for expanding the space for more enrolled students in more study programmes.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests continuing the same high level of quality of the provided infrastructure.
2. Reduce the usage of the Polycom in classes where teacher's presence is necessary (e.g. computer programming, foreign languages).
3. Evaluate the need for space for conducting new study programmes with more enrolled students.

Quality grade

High level of quality

4.6. The library and library equipment, as well as access to additional resources, ensure the literature necessary for ensuring high-quality study and scientific and teaching activity.

Analysis

On both campuses, in Zagreb and Dubrovnik, there is a library. They are not big (only 60m²), and there is no professional library staff employed, but they manage to provide functionality and access to the resources for the students and teachers (MOZVAG, Table 4.10). Instead of full-time library staff, there is a responsible teacher and students on practice who assist the users of the library. Within libraries, there is reading space with 11 seats in total. The library is equipped with modern computers. The library has 45 compulsory literature textbooks (titles) in 249 volumes, in total 5.242 of book volumes (MOZVAG, Table 4.10).

Besides, a huge source of information can be found through the RIT Wallace Library, available to RIT Croatia students, faculty and staff. RIT Wallace Library provides access to many resources: books, journal articles, newspaper and magazine articles, streamed media, image collections, etc. The RIT Wallace Library collection consists of 74,670 electronic journal subscriptions, 483 print journal titles (from where articles can be scanned and sent to students and faculty in Croatia), more than 545,025 electronic books, approximately 428,699 printed books and journals, and 256 databases (Self-evaluation, p. 83).

The library supports students and faculty members by providing a variety of online tools. Summon (a search discovery tool), NoodleBib and EndNote (to assist with citations and citation linker) are examples. Online Global Librarian from the Rochester campus also offers services to both students and the faculty in the form of navigating the library's system. If the RIT Wallace Library contains materials or books needed by students in Croatia, they can send it to students and the faculty through Interlibrary Loan and express mail.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests continuing the same high level of quality concerning the library, library equipment, and additional resources for ensuring high-quality study and scientific and teaching activity for professional and scientific activity.
2. Increase the library space and seats for easier learning and student research.
3. Engage non-teaching staff to work in the library to relieve teachers.

Quality grade

High level of quality

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

Analysis

RIT Croatia is a not-for-profit private higher education institution which does not receive state budget funding, and almost all of the funding is secured through tuition income. In the case of surplus at the end of the fiscal period, it will be invested in education activities.

The main expense category is faculty and staff salaries (60%), followed by operating expenses of two campus buildings (leasing cost 13%), marketing expenses (4%) and travel expenses (2,5%). There are also expenses for IT equipment, and other material required for study programmes delivery (MOZVAG, Table 4.12). In 2018 the institution increased income and decreased expenses thus achieving a positive result (in 2017 the result was negative). In 2018, the income was higher than the expenses. The reason for that was carrying the losses from the last years over to the 2018 results. (MOZVAG, Table 4.11, 4.12).

The institution provides yearly budgeting and long term budget reflecting five-years revenue projections by each study programmes and projections of expenses. Financial plans (budgets) are prepared before the start of the academic year and approved at the Board of Trustees. RIT Croatia makes significant efforts to ensure financial sustainability and efficiency, as well as to ensure that expenditure occurring is in line with the budget and the Strategic Plan. As a global campus and a part of RIT, RIT Croatia has an assurance that RIT will support its activities in case of financial issues or external factors (force majeure).

RIT Rochester participates as additional control of all financial functions every week and consolidates RIT Croatia's financial statements into their system monthly. RIT Croatia is subject to an annual external audit of financial statements, which was done by KMPG Croatia until now. Annual audited financial statements are kept on the RIT Croatia website which contributes to the transparency of the institution (last available on the web: Financial Statement 2017). RIT Croatia had no income from additional sources of funding: from budget income, or other public budget income in 2017 and 2018 (MOZVAG, Table 4.11). Additional sources were used only for financing mobility, exchange programs which cover expenses of faculty and staff mobility (MOZVAG, Table 4.7). No evidence of income from scientific projects.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests continuing with efforts to ensure financial sustainability and efficiency ensuring that expenditure occurs in line with the budget.
2. Introduce new sources of revenues like life-long learning educational programs, international scientific projects, cooperation with the industry, etc.

3. Consider introducing the business rationale for expenses of campuses in two locations.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

5. Professional and/or scientific activity

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

Analysis

As RIT Croatia is currently in the process of applying for the university license, its teachers and associates actively participate in the scientific and professional activity. RIT Croatia keeps records on publications and encourages teachers and associates to publish. Although the records on publications are not kept by academic departments, RIT Croatia is quite a small academic community, and publications are easily assigned to departments. Also, RIT Croatia teachers and associates participate at conferences in other roles as well. For instance, as members of conference advisory boards, chairing conference programs, delivering keynote addresses, serving as reviewers, etc. According to Table 5.1. from the MOZVAG database and CROSBI report (appendix 253. CROSBI report on RIT Croatia publications 2014-2018), there were 61 scientific and professional papers published in the last 5 years. 11 papers are indexed in the Web of Science Core Collection (WoSCC) and SCOPUS database. 10 papers are professional papers. While this number of papers is quite modest, the teachers and associates continue with the scientific activity, and it is expected that the number of papers will increase in future.

RIT Croatia has established efficient measures for encouraging the publishing of high-quality professional and scientific papers. These measures are (a) Conference and Research Funding Framework (Appendix 241. Conference and research funding framework); (b) RIT's professional development grants (which may be used for research projects and attending conferences) (Appendix 242. List of faculty professional development grants); (c) access to the RIT grant opportunities; (d) the Research Seminar series (Appendix 243. List of Research Seminars); and (e) the RIThink journal (an online journal of professional and scientific peer-reviewed papers from a broad range of fields). In addition, the RIT Croatia has the Research and Scholarship Committee and different annual awards (Appendix 246. RIT Croatia Faculty awards 2014 - 2018). Criteria for applying to the grants that RIT Croatia provides are clear and transparent, but teachers and associates are not completely familiar with the criteria for salary (merit-based) increases and annual awards. The Expert Panel noted a discontinuity in publishing the RIThink journal.

The Expert Panel conclude that although many activities to improve the quality and quantity of scientific and professional research have been done in the last five years, there is still a lot of improvements to do.

Recommendations for improvement

1. Prepare the Research strategy as an independent document.
2. Continue with providing support to teachers and associates to increase the quantity and quality of scientific and professional research and papers.
3. Make the criteria (procedure) for increasing the faculty members salary (merit-based) more transparent.
4. Establish a system of keeping records on publications by RIT Croatia academic departments.
5. Continue with publishing the RIThink journal and indexing efforts. This could become a good platform to publish papers.

Quality grade

Minimum level of quality

5.2. The higher education institution proves the social relevance of its professional and/or scientific research and transfer of knowledge.

Analysis

RIT Croatia communicates with its stakeholders in different ways (e.g. Career Education Day, guest lectures, workshops, Ideathon, company visits, cooperative education, career advising, support for Careers in Business courses, etc.) and uses gathered information for planning professional and scientific research activities. Professional and scientific research activities are socially relevant and applicable in practice and are relevant for the local community and labour market. RIT Croatia has efficient support measures for research and transfer of knowledge and technologies (look for the previous section). Moreover, regarding the transfer of knowledge, RIT Croatia cooperates with industry and public sector (e.g. HUB385, City of Dubrovnik, DURA, ENUM software) in different joint initiatives and projects. These are aimed to the transfer of knowledge, promotion of entrepreneurship and the development of start-ups among students.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests continuing with monitoring the needs of society, the local community and the labour market in planning the professional and scientific research activities.
2. The Expert Panel believes that RIT Croatia should focus more on business and business economics research in general and tourism and hospitality research in particular as these are the topics of RIT Croatia study programmes.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

5.3. Professional and/or scientific achievements of the higher education institution have been recognised in the regional, national and international context.

Analysis

RIT Croatia teachers and associates take part in national and international conferences in different roles, as co-organisers, participating in conference advisory boards, chairing conference programs, delivering keynote addresses, presenting and publishing papers (Table 5.1. from the MOZVAG database and appendix 253. CROSBİ report on RIT Croatia publications 2014-2018) and serving as reviewers. Teachers and associates are also active members of various professional and scientific associations and organisations (Appendix 248. List of faculty affiliations) and several faculty members are members of editorial boards of journals (Table 5.5. from the MOZVAG database).

According to MOZVAG tables 5.3.a and 5.3.b there is no scientific and professional/commercial projects at all in the last five years. All projects and activities, the faculty have taken part in, are conducted in collaboration with other institutions as main partners, and RIT Croatia teachers and associates take part in these projects on an individual basis, and rarely use RIT Croatia affiliation. Recently, the positive thing is that some new project proposals have been prepared and submitted.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests keeping on establishing and maintaining partnerships at peer and the institutional level in Croatia and internationally in all areas of RIT Croatia expertise.
2. The Expert Panel suggests that RIT Croatia should encourage teachers and associates to participate and apply for scientific and professional projects.
3. It is crucial that, when participating and applying for projects, RIT Croatia teachers and associates use their affiliation to RIT Croatia.
4. RIT Croatia should encourage teachers and associates to take part in professional organisations in business economics.
5. RIT Croatia should encourage its teachers and associates to participate more at top ranking international conferences.

Quality grade

Minimum level of quality

5.4. Professional and/or scientific activities and achievements of the higher education institution improve teaching.

Analysis

The RIT Croatia research equipment is used in teaching at the undergraduate level. Students are involved in RIT Croatia projects to a moderate extent. They contribute to faculty projects, are engaged in research (i.e. working on research about stress and anxiety in students), are co-authors of papers (15 papers co-authored by students – proof: appendix 255. List of publications with students) and are presenting at conferences. Faculty professional and research interests also frequently coincide with the topics and activities of student clubs (Investment Club or Robotics Club). Another example of a student’s engagements is workshops. Research activities and achievements of RIT Croatia are socially relevant and are implemented in the teaching process. As already mentioned in section 5.1, RIT Croatia recognises and rewards professional and/or scientific achievements of its employees.

Recommendations for improvement

1. The Expert Panel suggests continuing with the involvement of students in RIT Croatia projects.

2. Continue with recognising and rewarding professional and scientific achievements of RIT Croatia employees.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

APPENDICES

1. Quality assessment summary - tables

<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. Professional and/or scientific 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, professional and/or scientific and social role).			X	
1.5. The higher education institution understands and encourages the development of its social role.				X
1.6. 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>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 demands of the labour market.				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 the study programmes.			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 international 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 issues diplomas and Diploma Supplements in accordance with the relevant regulations.				X
3.10. The higher education institution is committed to 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 ensures the appropriate quality of external associates.				X
4.3. Teacher recruitment, advancement and re-appointment is based on objective and transparent procedures, which include the evaluation of excellence			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 service, work facilities etc.) are adequate for the delivery of the study programmes and ensure the achievement of intended learning outcomes and the implementation of professional and/or scientific activity.				X
4.6. The library and library equipment, as well as access to additional resources, ensure the literature necessary for ensuring high-quality of study and scientific and teaching activity.				X
4.7. The higher education institution rationally manages its financial resources.			X	

<i>Quality grade by standard</i>				
<i>V. Professional and/or scientific 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 professional and/or scientific research.		X		
5.2. The higher education institution proves the social relevance of its professional and/or scientific research and transfer of knowledge.			X	
5.3. Professional and/or scientific achievements of the higher education institution have been recognised in the regional, national and international context.		X		
5.4. Professional and/or scientific activities and achievements of the higher education institution improve teaching.			X	

2. Site visit protocol

**Reakreditacija
RIT Croatia (Rochester Institute of
Technology Croatia)**

**Re-accreditation of the
RIT Croatia (Rochester Institute of
Technology Croatia)**

Edukacija Stručnog povjerenstva

Training of Panel members

Mjesto događanja:

Agencija za znanost i visoko obrazovanje

Venue:

Agency for Science and Higher Education

Donje Svetice 38/V, Zagreb

	Ponedjeljak, 25. ožujka 2019.	Monday, 25th March 2019
11:00 –	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predstavljanje AZVO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of ASHE
11:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustav visokog obrazovanja u RH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher education system in Croatia
11:30 –	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postupak reakreditacije 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the re-accreditation procedure
13:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardi za vrednovanje kvalitete • Pisanje završnog izvješća 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards for the evaluation of quality • Writing the final report
13:00 –	<i>Ručak</i>	<i>Lunch</i>
13:45		
13:45 –	Priprema povjerenstva za posjet (rasprava o Samoanalizi i popratnim dokumentima)	Preparation of the expert panel members for the site visit (discussion on the Self-evaluation and supporting documents)

PROTOKOL POSJETA
Utorak, 26. ožujka 2019
Mjesto događanja:
Damira Tomljanovića Gavrana 15,
10000 Zagreb, Hrvatska

SITE VISIT PROTOCOL
Tuesday, May 26th 2019
Venue:
Damira Tomljanovića Gavrana 15,
10000 Zagreb, Croatia

	Utorak, 26. ožujka 2019.	Tuesday, 26 th March 2019
10:00 - 11:00	Sastanak s dekanom i prodekanicom	Meeting with the dean and vice-dean
11:00 - 11:15	<i>Interni sastanak članova Stručnog povjerenstva</i>	<i>Internal meeting of the panel members</i>
11:15 - 12:00	Sastanak s radnom grupom koja je priredila Samoanalizu	Meeting with the working group that compiled the Self-evaluation
12:00 - 13:00	Sastanak sa studentima (otvoren sastanak za sve studente)	Meeting with the students (open meeting)
13:00 - 14:00	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
14:00 - 15:30	<i>Radni ručak Stručnog povjerenstva</i>	<i>Working lunch</i>
15:30 - 17:00	Obilazak visokog učilišta (knjižnica, informatička služba, učionice, laboratoriji) i prisustvovanje nastavi, obilazak poduzeća u kojima studenti obavljaju praksu (Megatrend, Imago reklamna agencija d.o.o.)	Tour of the Faculty (library, international office, IT services, classrooms, laboratories) visit to the companies that host students' traineeship (Megatrend, Imago reklamna agencija d.o.o.)
17:00 - 18:00	Sastanak s nastavnicima (u stalnom radnom odnosu, nisu na rukovodećim mjestima)	Meeting with full-time employed teachers (open meeting)
18:00 - 19:00	<i>Sastanak članova Stručnog povjerenstva (Analiza dokumenata)</i>	<i>Internal meeting of the panel members (Document analysis)</i>

Zagreb airport		
21:10	<i>Let za Dubrovnik</i>	<i>Flight to Dubrovnik</i>

	Srijeda , 27 ožujka 2019.	Friday , 27 th March 2019
10:00 - 13:00	- Rasprava članova stručnog povjerenstva, refleksija o prvom danu i priprema za posjet na lokaciji Dubrovnik	Discussion between members of the expert panel, reflection on the first day of the site visit and preparation for the site visit in Dubrovnik
14:00 - 17:00	- Izrada nacrtu završnog izvješća	Drafting the Final report

Četvrtak, 28. ožujka 2019

Mjesto događanja:

**Don Frana Bulića 6, 20000
Dubrovnik Hrvatska**

Thursday, March 28th 2019

Venue:

**Don Frana Bulića 6, 20000 Dubrovnik,
Croatia**

	Četvrtak, 28. ožujka 2019.	Thursday, 28th March 2019
9:00 - 10:00	Sastanak članova Stručnog povjerenstva (Analiza dokumenata)	Internal meeting of the panel members (Document analysis)
10:00 - 11:00	Sastanak s nastavnicima (u stalnom radnom odnosu, nisu na rukovodećim mjestima)	Meeting with full-time employed teachers (open meeting)
11:00 - 12:00	Sastanak sa studentima (otvoren sastanak za sve studente)	Meeting with the students (open meeting)
12:00 - 12:15	Interni sastanak članova Stručnog povjerenstva	Internal meeting of the panel members
12:15 - 13:15	Sastanak s Alumnima	Meeting with the alumni
13:15 - 14:45	Radni ručak Stručnog povjerenstva	Working lunch
14:45 - 16:00	Obilazak visokog učilišta (knjižnica, informatička služba, učionice, laboratoriji) i prisustvovanje nastavi, obilazak poduzeća u kojima studenti obavljaju praksu (Hilton Imperial Dubrovnik, PHOBS i Villa Dubrovnik)	Tour of the Faculty (library, international office, IT services, classrooms, laboratories) visit to the companies that host students' traineeship (Hilton Imperial Dubrovnik, PHOBS i Villa Dubrovnik)
16:00 - 16:30	Sastanak s prodekanicom za nastavu	Meeting with associate dean
16:30 - 17:00	Interni sastanak članova Stručnog povjerenstva	Internal meeting of the panel members
17:00 - 17:15	Završni sastanak s dekanom i prodekanicom	Exit meeting with the dean and vice-deans
18:00 - 20:00	- Izrada nacrtu završnog izvješća	Drafting the Final report

	Petak , 29 ožujka 2019.	Friday , 29 th March 2019
10:00 – 13:00	<i>Izrada nacrtu završnog izvješća</i>	<i>Drafting the Final report</i>
16:20	Let za Zagreb	Flight to Zagreb

SUMMARY

The Accreditation Council of the Agency for Science and Higher Education Croatia appointed an independent Expert Panel for the re-accreditation of the RIT Croatia (Rochester Institute of Technology Croatia). Based on the RIT Croatia Self-Evaluation Report, other relevant documents and the site visit, the Expert Panel drafted this Report.

The Expert Panel found that the RIT Croatia has strong support from alumni, other stakeholders and especially from the Rochester Institute of Technology (Rochester, USA). RIT Croatia also has high-quality campuses both in Zagreb and Dubrovnik, a friendly atmosphere and supportive working environment, as well as modern and adequate teaching methodology and a strong and good support system for students. Examples of good practice, used in RIT Croatia for supporting the students, are the ombudsman's system, support of students with special needs and the Dean's List. RIT Croatia also has a well organised and mandatory cooperative education (student practice) system. RIT Croatia, being an active participant in local communities, promotes and initiates volunteering projects.

The Expert Panel found that the main challenges of RIT Croatia are:

- Improving professional and scientific activities;
- Monitoring and adjusting workloads of teachers;
- Monitoring and adjusting workloads of students to get the 25-30 hours of student work per one ECTS;
- Formalising and precisely documenting quality assurance processes; and
- Punctually following all the requirements that are in place for educational institutes in Croatia.

The Expert Panel found that the Teaching Process and Student Support (Standard 3) and the Teaching and Institutional Capacities (Standard 4) of RIT Croatia are both at a high level of quality. The Internal Quality Assurance and the Social Role of the Higher Education Institute (Standard 1) are at a satisfactory level of quality. The same satisfactory level of quality is also the Study Programmes (Standard 2). And, finally, the Professional and/or Scientific Activity (Standard 5) is at a minimum level of quality.

RIT Croatia is an operating educational institution (they have students, faculty, administration, alumni and study buildings and classes) and most of the RIT Croatia graduates are employed. Based on this, the Expert Panel may conclude, that the resources are adequate for delivering study programmes and that the senior management acts responsibly. The Expert Panel found that the performing activities are generally in compliance with the requirements. Most of the issues can be improved during the normal operation of the RIT Croatia.