



**REPORT  
OF THE EXPERT PANEL  
ON THE  
RE-ACCREDITATION OF  
Faculty of Law  
University of Rijeka**

**Date of preliminary site visit:  
12 October 2020**

**Date of on-line re-accreditation:  
14 - 16 October 2020**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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

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

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

Members of the Expert Panel:

- Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Thomas Jaeger, LL.M., Department of European, International and Comparative Law, University of Vienna, Republic of Austria, Panel chair,
- Assoc. prof. Vedran Đulabić, PhD, Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb, Republic of Croatia,
- Assoc. Prof. Katja Filipčič, univ. dipl. prav., Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana, Republic of Slovenia
- Asst. prof. Marko Ivkošić, PhD, Faculty of Law, University of Split, Republic of Croatia,
- Lea Paulić, student, Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb, Republic of Croatia.

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

- Management,
- Working group that compiled Self-evaluation, Quality Assurance Committee and ECTS coordinator
- Students,
- Alumni,

- External Stakeholders,
- Full-time teaching staff,
- Vice–Dean for University study Affairs and Vice–Dean for Professional Study Affairs
- Teaching Assistants,
- Heads of research projects,
- Vice–Dean for Research, Vice–Dean for International Affairs and Administrative Assistant for International Affairs and Projects

Croatian Expert Panel members went to the preliminary site-visit on Monday, 12 October 2020, during which they 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.

During the preliminary site visit, 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 Faculty of Law University of Rijeka on the basis of Faculty of Law University of Rijeka self-evaluation report, other relevant documents, preliminary site visit and on-line meetings

The Report contains the following elements:

- Short description of the evaluated higher education institution,
- Brief analysis of the institutional advantages and disadvantages,
- List of institutional good practices,
- Analysis of each assessment area, recommendations for improvement and quality grade for each assessment area,
- Detailed analysis of each standard, recommendations for improvement and quality grade for each standard,
- Appendices (quality assessment summary by each assessment area and standard, and site visit protocol),
- Summary.

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

- Iva Žabarović, coordinator, ASHE,
- Viktorija Juriša, assistant coordinator, ASHE,
- Goran Briški, interpreter at the site visit, and translator of the Report ASHE,

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

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

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

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

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

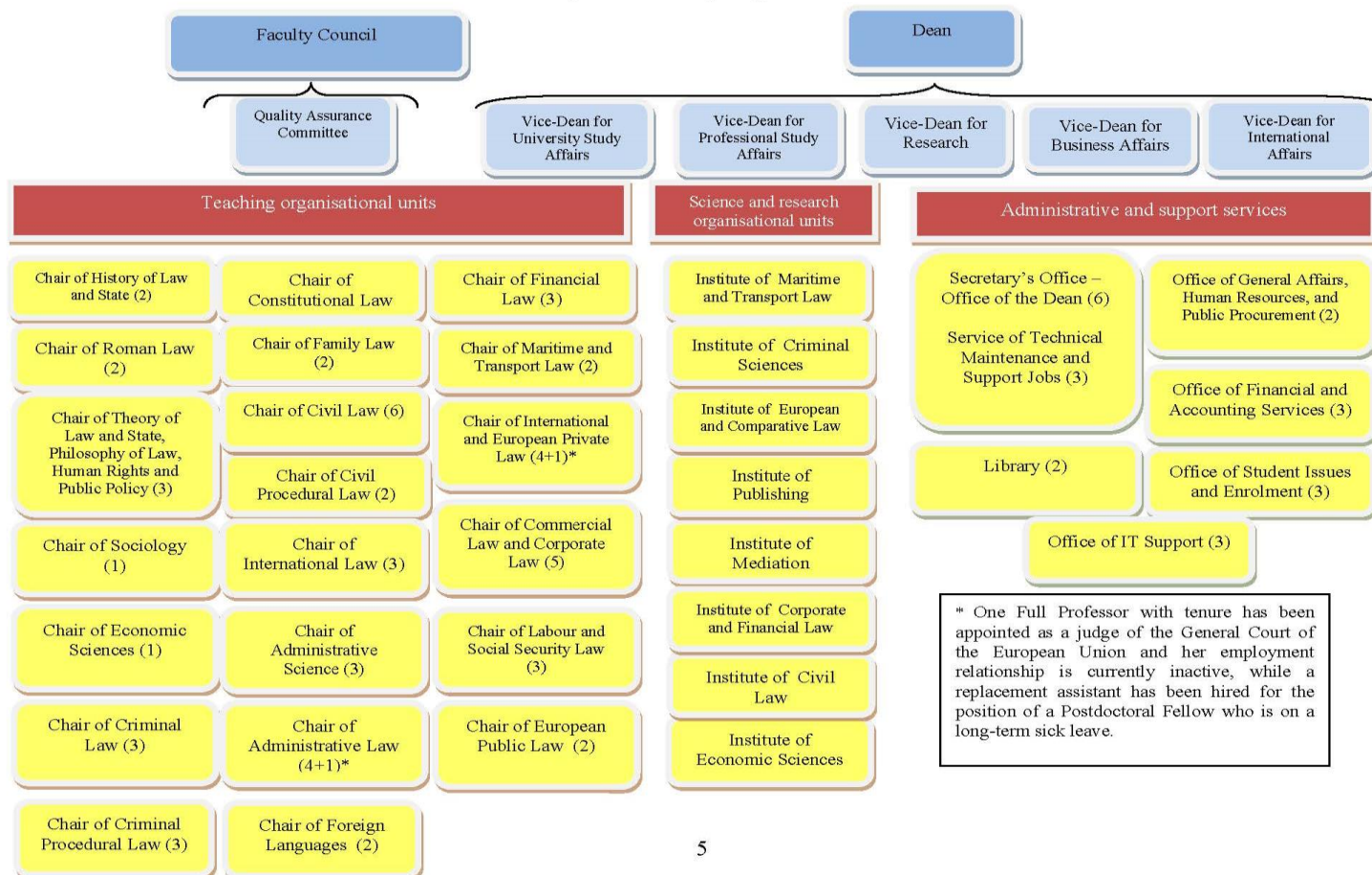
**ADDRESS: Hahlić 6**

**DEAN: prof. dr. Vesna Crnić-Grotić**

## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE:

University of Rijeka, Faculty of Law – Self-Evaluation Report 2020

Figure 1. Faculty Organisation



**STUDY PROGRAMMES:**

- Integrated undergraduate/graduate university Study of Law
- Postgraduate Specialist Study in Corporate Finance Law
- Postgraduate Doctoral Study Programme in the field of Social Sciences, the subject of Law
- Undergraduate Professional Study Programme in Administration Studies
- Specialist Graduate Professional Study in Public Administration
- Postgraduate Specialist Study in Law of European Integrations \*(programme is currently not being carried out).

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS:**

- Full-time students: 979
- Part-time students: 484

**NUMBER OF TEACHERS:**

*The structure of teachers is given in Table 4.1.a in the Analytic supplement to the Self-evaluation report*

<b>Staff</b>	<b>Full-time staff</b>	<b>Cumulative employment</b>	<b>External associates</b>
Full professors with tenure	10	1	4
Full professors	7	-	1
Associate professors	9	-	1
Assistant professors	18	-	4
Scientific advisor (permanent/with tenure)	-	-	-
Scientific advisor	-	-	-
Senior Research Associate	-	-	-
Research Associate	-	-	-
Teaching grade	2	-	-
Assistants	9	-	-
Postdoctoral researcher	3	-	-
Employees on projects	1	-	-
Expert assistants	-	-	-
Technical staff	4	-	-
Administrative staff	15	-	-



Support staff	-	-	-
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## **REGISTER OF SCIENTIFIC ORGANISATIONS**

Area of Social Sciences

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

The University of Rijeka, Faculty of Law is a public institution registered as a scientific organization and a constituent of the University of Rijeka (hereinafter: the University). The Study of Law was established in 1973, in the beginning as part of the University of Rijeka, Faculty of Economics. In 1976, the Faculty of Law University of Rijeka was established as an independent higher education institution, where the Study of Law continued to be carried out. The Faculty occupied several buildings at different locations, before having premises of its own. The present location became its home in 1980. The new, so-called "east" wing of the Faculty, was built in 2003. The organizational structure of the Faculty includes organizational units and governing bodies. The organizational units are defined in Article 11 of the Statute of the Faculty of Law, University of Rijeka. The organizational units of the Faculty are established for the purposes of conducting research, teaching and professional activities, for connecting theory to practice at the Faculty, and for conducting other activities such as those related to legal issues, human resources, accounting, and administration. The organizational units of the Faculty include chairs, institutes, and administrative and support services. Internal organization, scope of work, method of appointing heads, and other issues relevant to the functioning of these organizational units, are defined by the Regulations on Internal Organization and Systematization of the University of Rijeka Faculty of Law.

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

### **ADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION**

1. Good communication environment and personal atmosphere at the Faculty, allowing the faculty to adapt to new challenges quickly (like COVID)
2. The HEI visibly implements equal treatment between men and women as well as an inclusive approach towards persons with disabilities
3. Student-oriented and dedicated to students
4. Proactive management team leading towards a gradually better positioning of the Faculty as a high-quality institution
5. Mainstreaming of a practice-oriented approach in teaching and good stakeholder relations
6. Small, but highly motivated quality assurance Committee and dedicated to its tasks

### **DISADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION**

1. Research strategy appears vague and not sufficiently forward-looking, focus rests on quantity of research output, insufficient awareness for the importance of quality criteria to assess the research output and need yet to develop quality criteria
2. Imbalances between research and teaching assignments, insufficient awareness for over-burdening with teaching responsibilities
3. No Alumni club, therefore little knowledge about the actual employability and labour market situation of graduates
4. Problems in recruiting new students and reaching the numbers prescribed nationally
5. Recruitment of staff predominantly from local area
6. Transparency and impact of financial bonus system are hampered by absence pre-defined criteria for the distribution of the bonus

### **LIST OF INSTITUTIONAL GOOD PRACTICES: EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE**

1. Practice-oriented approach via largely increased number of law clinics
2. Quick response to COVID 19-challenges in teaching and Faculty communication

3. General responsiveness toward students
4. Vice-deans open doors policy
5. Continuous work toward assessing the status quo of quality situation and raising quality awareness through the work of the Quality Assurance Committee
6. The HEI has established a recognizable and successful practice in attracting and co- or third-party-funded international research projects.

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

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

#### **Analysis**

The HEI established a functional internal quality system. According to the evidence gathered during the reaccreditation process (strategic documents, action plans, reports) and during the several interviews with different stakeholders, the Expert panel concluded that the HEI seems to be applying considerable effort toward the improvement of its quality assurance system, yet certain improvements should be made.

#### **Recommendations for improvement:**

The external stakeholders should be more involved in the internal quality assurance system.

The reasons for low student participation in surveys should be identified. The HEI should continue the effort of increasing the participation of students and raise the awareness of its importance with a more systematic approach.

The HEI should systematically collect the information from employers about the graduate students and their competencies received during study and about their employability.

Establishing an Alumni club is recommended.

The HEI should continue with improvements based on recommendations from the previous evaluation.

The HEI should systematically collect and analyse the students' opinion on the ethical behaviour of Faculty members by designing a special survey on this issue or by including additional questions in the student survey that is already being conducted.

The English version of the HEI's website should be improved; all relevant documents should be translated in English.

The approach to communication should be more active toward external stakeholders.

A representative of the external stakeholders should be the member of the Commission for lifelong learning.

The HEI should systematically monitor the quality of the lifelong learning programmes.

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

## **II. Study programmes**

### **Analysis**

According to the evidence gathered during the reaccreditation process (strategic documents, action plans, reports) and during the several interviews with different stakeholders, the Expert panel concluded that the HEI seems to be applying considerable effort toward the improvement of study programmes. HEI delivers two study programme paths. In university-level HEI trains masters of law, postgraduate specialists of corporate finance law, postgraduate specialists in the law of European integrations and doctors of law. In professional-level HEI trains bachelors of public administration and postgraduate specialists in public administration. Study programmes; institutional documentation and analysis of study programmes provide evidence that the general goals of all study programmes are in line with institutional strategic goals and with needs of the society.

### **Recommendations for improvement:**

It is recommended to encourage a formal connection between alumni, and to design a model of cooperation between alumni and HEI that will positively affect the quality of study programmes and their delivery.

The Panel was presented with examples of good practice in improving the teaching process and evaluating student work; in some courses with lower student pass rate, the rate was increased significantly with the introduction of student exam preparation

guidelines, additional student groups and additional exam terms. The Panel recommends a further development of such practices, which should be incorporated into the institutional regulations.

The Panel believes that a systematic involvement of external stakeholders (students, alumni, professional associations and employers) cannot be ensured only through their representation in the QA Committee, but that cooperation should be established at other levels as well. Additional efforts in that direction are recommended.

HEI is recommended to invest additional efforts in reducing discrepancies between individual courses with regard to the number of ECTS credits they carry, and to use analyses of the scope and complexity of the required literature that students need to go through independently for this purpose. Good practices, such as the monitoring of alignment of ECTS credits and actual student workload through additional surveys on student satisfaction with particular forms of teaching, analyses of pass rates in individual courses, or allocating more ECTS to courses that have increased the ratio of practical classes, etc. are not sufficient to fully harmonise the actual student workload in all courses that carry the same number of ECTS credits.

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

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

#### **Analysis**

Based on the evidence gathered during the preliminary site visit, as well as the online part of the reaccreditation, the Expert Panel concluded that HEI is very student oriented and has a proactive approach towards its students. The Expert Panel is of the opinion the HEI enables the availability of information through various social media platforms (especially its Facebook page), as well as through their and other websites. HEI's openness and fast approach in implementing appropriate measures and mechanisms, especially in regards to the results of conducted student surveys aimed for improvement of student performance and progress, resulted in the increase of passage rate of the exams, as well as the decrease in average years of studying and in whole resulted in improvement of studying.

#### **Recommendations for improvement**

Although, HEI enables and takes a very pro-active approach towards the students, there is room for improvement in certain areas.

HEI needs to establish an internal system of tracking the students in other years and should ensure that the students are familiar with formal criteria and procedure for drop out of HEI.

HEI should put more efforts in encourage interactive and research-based learning for part-time students.

HEI should provide information about student organisations in which the students could participate.

HEI should analyse the reasons for the decreasing number of outgoing students and additionally motivate students to participate in mobility programmes.

HEI should use social media for direct communication with students.

HEI should develop and implement systematic and comprehensive model for evaluation of teachers grading that could be carried out periodically (e.g., at the end of each academic year or HEI could develop some other appropriate model).

HEI should contemplate the possibility of hiring some foreign personnel on a permanent basis.

HEI should inform the students about employment and internship opportunities, also through social networks and monitor the employability of its students based on established internal system of tracking and monitoring.

HEI should establish an institutional system with alumni, either an alumni club or similar organisation and should try to establish and maintain connection with students that weren't outstandingly successful in their studies and/or active in student organisations. In that way HEI could collect information from alumni about graduate students, quality of studying at HEI and the employability of graduates.

**Quality grade:** High level of quality

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

### **Analysis**

The HEI has adequate number of teachers which guarantee the execution of its study programmes (integral university law programme, professional public administration programme, and specialist postgraduate as well as PhD programme). The HEI employs enough teachers for effective delivery of its study programs. The HEI currently employs 60 teachers in various statuses. Regarding the teachers age structure, it can be noted that the HEI is quite “young” institution when it comes to future perspective. The student-teacher ratio has improved since the last accreditation process. Teaching workloads are in line with the relevant legislation. When it comes to the distribution of teaching, scientific, professional and personal development, distribution of workload represent challenge, particularly for younger employees, assistants and assistant professors. Teachers are elected in the relevant disciplines which formally qualifies them to teach courses they deliver to students.

### **Recommendations for improvement**

Due to the multidisciplinary nature of the studies offered by the HEI (law, public administration, public finance), it could consider employing or specializing teachers in particular disciplines. This is particularly the case for the courses that are not strictly in the field of law.

Connect strategic goals of the HEI with the recruitment of teachers and their advancement to the higher teaching and scientific grades. The recruitment should be in service of fulfilment of the strategic goals of the HEI.

As much as possible depart from the practice of mostly local/regional recruitment of teaching staff in order in order to get national and international visibility.

Develop transparent system of financial support for teaching staff for conferences, research and publishing (e.g., fund, fixed per capita amount, etc.).

Develop and regulate clear criteria for rewarding employees through the salary bonuses.

Increase number of outgoing and incoming mobility cases, especially incoming mobility for research.

Develop plans for professional development of teachers, especially for the junior research and teaching positions (this could be done at the level of Chairs).

Upgrade the Faculty building in accordance with financial capacity of the HEI and needs of the study process.

If possible, ensure that teachers have their individual rooms for their work and not to share rooms with other colleagues.

Develop and adopt financial plan of income and expenditures for a period of at least five years, clearly stating the funding sources, with a breakdown of expenditures and the report on the implementation of the financial plan of income and expenditures for the previous of at least five years.

Increase own revenues as much as possible in order to strengthen diversification of revenues which would contribute to financial resilience of the HEI. This is especially related to the need to significantly increase revenues from domestic and international scientific and professional projects and incomes from local community (especially Town of Rijeka and Primorsko-Goranska County).

Allocate funds for research activities for teachers such as travel costs for conferences for presenting papers, publishing in international publications, etc. This could be allocated on a yearly basis with per capita amount or the HEI should develop some other model which is more suitable for the Institution.

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

## **V. Scientific activity**

### **Analysis**

The HEI's scientific activity is impressive in many respects and shows great ambition and dedication to achieving scientific excellency. Nonetheless, the Panel sees room for further improvement. The standard that deserves most attention in this regard is the commitment to high quality scientific research.

### **Recommendations for improvement**

Further intensify and mainstream top-level publication activity as a whole, and international top-level publications in journals in particular.

Break down monitored data into even more detail and different categories (type, market, provenance ...). Also, data categories should be checked for coherence and contradictions (e.g., different numbers of researchers included in publications index vs. presentations index etc.). Do utmost to avoid any doubts regarding selective or misleading representation of data.



Encourage SSRN presence for researchers and develop a common Faculty policy for SSRN presence (e.g., merging Faculty Collected Series with SSRN or disseminate via SSRN, open separate SSRN distribution channel (e.g., SSRN Research Paper Series) etc.).

Incentives should be found to render PhD studies at the HEI more attractive to improve the visibility of research conducted at the HEI and encourage PhD publications under the trademark of the HEI.

The HEI seeks to provide help in publishing and to develop incentives to publish. This work and the awareness-raising activities should be continued and continuously assessed for actual impact and improvements.

The presence of HEI researchers as invited lecturers at conferences should be intensified to better promote the HEI as a top-level research institution.

More should be done to promote the organization of conferences at the HEI by young researchers. That group in particular should be more actively encouraged to develop and organize conference formats and should be furnished, in particular, with adequate resources for this purpose particularly in terms of time and finances.

The HEI's Research Strategy should be worded in a more detailed, more committed and more forward-looking manner. More focus should be accorded to quality criteria to assess the research output as opposed to quantitative output. A preliminary exercise for this is to develop suitable quality criteria at the level of the HEI. Also, care should be taken in the Strategy to ensure equal or at least equitable contributions by all Chairs to the overall research effort of the HEI by formulating specific research or output-oriented commitments.

The HEI should make efforts to attract and employ permanent academic staff with an international background. Insofar as international hiring would indeed be limited by national laws and regulations (e.g., requiring fluency in the Croatian language from the very beginning of the engagement), the HEI should engage in an open dialogue with the responsible Ministry with a view to loosening those requirements at least for certain internationalized legal disciplines.

Consideration for the needs of society and labour market in planning the HEI's research activities could be even further improved by the establishment of an Alumni club or a similar form of institutionalized, structured and comprehensively inclusive relations with graduates of the HEI.

Research output in the form of publications and lectures at conferences constitutes a traditional form of knowledge transfer for the legal discipline. Increasing that output as suggested under 5.1 would thus also further increase the HEI's efforts in the area of knowledge transfer.

The HEI has established a recognizable and successful practice in attracting and co- or third-party-funded international research projects. This good practice should be continued.

The presence of HEI researchers as invited lecturers at conferences should be intensified to better promote the HEI as a top-level research institution.

The HEI's Research Strategy deserves more attention and elaboration in terms of detail and commitment (see, in more detail, under 5.1).

More resources should be dedicated to particularly young researchers' encouragement to engage in and organize own conference activities, e.g., by setting aside dedicated and pre-fixed funds.

The transparency of the financial bonus system should be enhanced by pre-defined criteria for the distribution of the bonus. A clear and pre-fixed correlation would improve the incentive to engage in specific activities (e.g., publications etc.).

While Faculty staff's scientific activities well translate to benefits for students in terms of teaching input, new formats and methods, scientific efforts of the HEI overall should be strengthened further as explained in more detail under 5.1. Teaching would profit accordingly from any increase in research activities.

Should the Faculty decide to regularly involve students in specific research projects beyond the general teaching agenda, guidelines governing the extent and type of involvement and recognition of involvement should be elaborated beforehand.

**Quality grade:** Minimum level of quality

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

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

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

*Internal quality assurance system includes and evaluates all activities of the higher education institution (study programmes, teaching process, student support, support to students from under-represented and vulnerable groups, learning resources, scientific/artistic activity, professional activity, etc.) and provides underlying documentation.*

The goals of the quality assurance system of HEI are formulated in several documents which are publicly available on their website (only in Croatian): Regulations on the system of quality assurance, Manual for quality assurance, and Quality policy. These documents are in accordance with strategic documents of the University and the HEI. In the Regulations on the system of quality assurance the four areas of evaluation are listed: (1) teaching, (2) research activities, (3) work of Faculty staff and (4) study programmes. The HEI evaluates activities from these areas, but there is still some room for improvement, which will be more specifically highlighted later in the report. Nevertheless, progress can be seen in efforts to upgrade and maintain the quality assurance system.

According to the above-mentioned documents, the central body for implementation and improvement of the quality assurance system is the Quality Assurance Committee. The mechanism of monitoring the implementation of planned activities is based on the yearly reports of the Committee to the Faculty Council and the report on the implementation of the three-year activity plan. At the meeting with the management, it was emphasized that each year the plan of activity is checked by the Quality Assurance Committee and the Faculty Council, and despite the numerous activities listed in the plan they think that planned activities could be fulfilled. From the different documents and from the interviews it is evident that the Committee is very dedicated to improving the quality of the different faculty activities.

Support to vulnerable and underrepresented students is not defined as a special area of the quality assurance system but this does not mean that the HEI does not pay special attention to this group of students. In order to support students with disabilities, the Faculty follows all documents and recommendations of the University, and the HEI itself has not adopted any strategic documents in this area. Nevertheless, the HEI helps them in overcoming the difficulties of studying in various ways and strives to involve them in

all faculty activities. Some examples of good practice are listed in the Self-Evaluation Report (pp. 52-55); the coordinator for students with disabilities is appointed from among the faculty members, as part of the Peer Support Project the student assistants are appointed, the HEI Library has top quality equipment for visually impaired students, several architectural adjustments of the premises in and around the HEI building have been made in the last years and even more are planned. The HEI also helps students with poor financial status; a special Faculty Fund was established in 2011 (Self-Evaluation Report, pp. 54). Although all mentioned activities are important and appreciated there is still room for improvement (as it is explained in the report in section 3 – Standard 3).

*Internal quality assurance system seeks to involve all stakeholders of the higher education institution (students and external stakeholders - employers, alumni, representatives of professional organisations, civil society organisations and internal stakeholders).*

The Quality Assurance Committee was established in 2008. It is composed of nine members and all stakeholders are represented in the Committee (senior faculty members, junior faculty members, faculty staff, students, and external stakeholders). At the time of the meeting with the Committee, the person who represented the external stakeholders was also involved in teaching as the guest lecturer.

In the Self-Evaluation Report (pp. 9) the importance of the role of an external stakeholder in the Quality Assurance Committee and the value of their contribution to the assurance and improvement of the quality of studying are emphasized. At the meeting with external stakeholders such a role was not clearly evident and it was noticed that they are not familiar with the Faculty's strategic document and the system of quality assurance. Otherwise, the external stakeholders are involved in different Faculty activities; in designing postgraduate study programs (the Faculty established the External Shareholder Committee of the Doctoral Study Programme), in teaching (as guest lecturers, and as mentors of students in legal clinics) and many of them participated in two new projects (Jurisprudentia and Providentia) with the aim to improve the study programmes. Despite the strong cooperation with external stakeholders, they should be more involved in the internal quality assurance system. The HEI is planning to establish the Alumni in the near future (this is one of the goals of the project Providentia), and this would be the opportunity to increase the involvement of external stakeholders in evaluation of faculty activities.

*The higher education institution adopted a quality assurance policy, which is a part of its strategic management and is achieved through the implementation of the strategy, including the strategic research agenda, involving a period of at least five years.*

The HEI adopted a document called the Quality Assurance Policy in which three strategic goals are defined: increasing the quality of legal education, creating a stimulating environment for study, and using all available funds for education and research in the

most optimal way. For achieving these goals, the document listed several activities, such as systematic gathering of data for evaluating the satisfaction of different stakeholders with Faculty activities, and raising interests in studying law. In the Quality Assurance Policy, it is not explained that legal education includes also the education of students enrolled in Professional Study Programme in Administration, but from the Strategy of the HEI it can be seen that special efforts are taken to improve the education of prospective law graduates as well as public administration bachelors.

The quality assurance policy also includes a Strategy of scientific research for the period from 2016 to 2020 (five years), but the research strategy appears rather vague. This will be explained in section 5 of this report (Standard 5).

*The implementation of the strategy includes SWOT or similar analysis, strategic goals, programme contract goals (where applicable), operational plan, defined responsibilities for implementation, monitoring mechanisms and the report on its implementation. The stakeholders recognize the strategy as an effective tool for improvement.*

In the observed period (from the last reaccreditation of HEI in 2014/2015) the Quality Assurance Committee has adopted two Plans of activities for the implementation of the quality assurance system; for the period from 2014 to 2017 and from 2018 to 2021. The Committee monitors the implementation of the plan; it regularly informs the Faculty Council about the progress and obstacles for achieving goals and after the three-year period prepares the report. From the report on the implementation of the plan for the previous period it is evident that most planned activities have been carried out, either completely or for the most part. Just a few of them have not been implemented (such as establishing the Alumni club), but reasons for non-implementation are not elaborated in the report. The current three-year plan is ambitious and contains 30 activities for the improvement of different quality standards, including those which have not been fulfilled in the previous period. For each activity, the measures and deadlines for achieving are set, and responsibilities for the implementation are defined. At the meetings with the different stakeholders the plan has been recognized as an effective tool for the improvement of quality, although it was noticed that the external stakeholders were not familiar with it.

*The higher education institution systematically collects and analyses data on its processes, resources and results, and uses them to effectively manage and improve its activities, as well as for further development.*

The HEI systematically conducts a variety of surveys and uses various methods for collecting data on quality. Beside the University student satisfaction survey, the HEI conducts their own surveys on student satisfaction with the clinical courses and modular courses, with the student-mentor system, and a survey of satisfaction of Erasmus+ students. The participation of students in the surveys is optional (and anonymity is

guaranteed), but the rate of students who actually participated is rather low; in the academic year 2018/2019 only the evaluation of nine courses (of the 111 courses of which the evaluation was included in the survey) had a 30% participation rate – the evaluation rate of other courses was even lower (Report of Quality Assurance Committee for the year 2018/2019). Due to the low participation rate the significance of the collected data is questionable.

All faculty members are informed of the surveys' results and they are discussed at the meetings of the Faculty Council and the chairs. Some examples of improvements in teaching based on the conducted analyses have been emphasized in the Self-Evaluation Reports.

The HEI also conducts a survey on the faculty members' satisfaction with the faculty's staff and with working conditions, and the Quality Assurance Committee has adopted recommendations of measures for improvement based on these surveys.

The survey of the HEI's graduate student satisfaction has also been conducted; the possibility of developing practical competences received the lowest average grade, so the Faculty has already expanded and intensified the internship opportunities and introduced new clinical courses.

*The higher education institution uses various methods for collecting data on quality (student satisfaction surveys, peer review, feedback from employers and/or associates, graduates etc.).*

As already mentioned above, the HEI conducts several employee and student surveys on satisfaction with different faculty activities. The information about faculty members' teaching load is gathered through individual reports which are submitted for every semester. These reports are analysed by the Quality Assurance Committee and are the basis for adopting decisions on new employment (Self-Evaluation Report, pp. 65).

A teaching peer evaluation system has not yet been established, but it is part of the Plan of activities for the implementation of the quality assurance system for the period from 2018 to 2021. The first step in this direction has already been made; a workshop on peer evaluation was conducted in 2019 and the funds for development of such a peer review system are provided in the project Provis (financed by the European Social Fund).

The HEI does not systematically collect information from employers about the graduate students and their competencies received during study at the HEI, and about their employability. The establishment of the Alumni club and good cooperation between the HEI and Alumni would increase the knowledge about the actual employability and labour market situation of graduates; the Alumni could also be involved in designing the reform of study programmes or introducing new ones (especially lifelong learning programmes).

*The higher education institution is committed to the development and implementation of human resource management policies (managerial, scientific-teaching, artistic-teaching,*

*administrative, professional and support resources), in accordance with professional principles and standards.*

The human resource management policy is included in the Faculty Strategy and in the Quality Policy. According to these documents the Faculty Council adopted career advancement plans, the HEI improved the student-faculty ratio (there has been a steady increase of faculty members), and a greater balance in the distribution of teaching was achieved.

**Recommendations for improvement:**

- The external stakeholders should be more involved in the internal quality assurance system.
- The reasons for low student participation in surveys should be identified. The HEI should continue the effort of increasing the participation of students and raise the awareness of its importance with a more systematic approach.
- The HEI should systematically collect the information from employers about the graduate students and their competencies received during study and about their employability.
- Establishing an Alumni club is recommended.

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

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

*The higher education institution analysed the recommendations for improvement and undertakes activities on the basis of previous internal and external evaluations. The higher education institution analyses improvements and plans further development accordingly.*

In 2015 the HEI was under the process of reaccreditation by the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE); in June 2015, the recommendations for improvement were given to the HEI by the Expert Panel and in February 2016 the Agency issued its Accreditation Recommendation. The HEI got 27 recommendations from the Expert Panel and an additional 3 from the ASHE. In 2017 in the process of reaccreditation of the doctoral programme, the Expert Panel also made several recommendations for improvement.

In the Self-Evaluation Report it is not clearly stated which recommendations from both accreditation processes are fully implemented and which are not (a table with analysis of

compliance with the recommendations is missing). However, the information in the Self-Evaluation Report, provided materials, and interviews with the members of the Faculty gave evidence of how the HEI analysed previous recommendations, undertook activities and made improvements. The Panel noted the HEI's good awareness of the required actions that need to be taken for quality improvement in accordance to previous recommendations.

The HEI has fully fulfilled a lot of recommendations (e.g. the Strategy of Scientific Research, and the Plan of action for improving quality have been adopted, student-faculty ratio has been significantly improved (from 1:32.79 to 1:23.37), the HEI designed a learning outcome matrix, possibilities for practical learning have been increased), some of them have been implemented at least to some extent (e.g. the number of publications in internationally acclaimed law journals has been increased but not substantially). Just a few of the previous recommendations have not been implemented, but the HEI has already taken steps to fulfil them (e.g., establishing the Alumni).

**Recommendation for improvement:**

- The HEI should continue with improvements based on recommendations from the previous evaluation.

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

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

*The higher education institution supports academic integrity and freedom, upholds the ethical standards and preserves academic integrity and freedom. The higher education institution effectively uses mechanisms for preventing unethical behaviour, intolerance and discrimination. The higher education institution carries out activities related to the sanctioning of unethical behaviour, intolerance and discrimination.*

The HEI has established different bodies (Faculty's Ethical Commission, Disciplinary Committee for Faculty Members, Disciplinary Committee for Students, Appeal Disciplinary Committee for Students) in order to prevent unethical behaviour, intolerance, and discrimination. Faculty members and students are represented in the above-mentioned commissions. All bodies function in accordance with the University's regulation. With the goal of promoting the importance and ensuring ethical behaviour within the HEI, the HEI adopted the Regulation for Internal Reporting of Irregularities. The ethics of research is encouraged through the Faculty's Directions on writing student papers.



The HEI carries out activities related to the sanctioning of unethical behaviour: in the last few years, the Disciplinary Committee for Students sanctioned students for prohibited behaviour during or after taking an exam in two cases. The HEI's Ethical Commission and the Disciplinary Committee for Faculty Members have not carried out any procedure against faculty members in the time period relevant to the reaccreditation process.

*The system for managing conflicts and resolving irregularities is functional at all levels of the higher education institution. The work of employees of the higher education institution, its students and external stakeholders, is based on ethical standards in higher education.*

During the visit to the HEI students expressed very positive opinions on the ethical behaviour of Faculty members. In the student survey conducted by the ASHE during the reaccreditation process, some students emphasized the teachers' unethical behaviour and claimed that the HEI did nothing about it. But the number of such complaints was rather small and the complaints were very general. So, the panel of experts concludes that according to documents and information provided by conducting interviews with management, employees, and students, it is evident that the HEI ensures an ethical code of conduct towards all groups of stakeholders and that the system for managing conflicts is functional at all levels of the HEI.

Assemblies of the Student Union at the University and Faculty levels elect their student ombudspersons for a one-year term. In 2019 the student ombudsperson wrote a report on the complaints about the HEI. She received one complaint (the same complaint from many students) on the low pass level for one course; after talking to professors, it was found that there was an error in scoring and students got additional scores. In order to make the role of the student ombudsperson more visible, information about this mechanism for protecting students' rights and interest is published in the HEI's webpage (in Croatian and in English).

*The higher education institution systematically addresses issues of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating etc.).*

In order to prevent plagiarism of students' written works the HEI introduced obligatory use of the Turnitin software – all final thesis and doctoral dissertations are checked by using this plagiarism detection tool. For promoting ethical standards half the hours in the Legal writing course (obligatory course in the Integrated Study of Law and Professional study programme) are dedicated to ethical issues, academic honesty, and copyright.

**Recommendation for improvement:**

- The HEI should systematically collect and analyse the students' opinion on the ethical behaviour of Faculty members by designing a special survey on this issue or by including additional questions in the student survey that is already being conducted.

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

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

*Information on study programmes and other activities of the higher education institution is publicly available in Croatian and at least one world language.*

The primary source of information about the HEI is the HEI's website. Beside the study programme information (e.g. enrolment requirements, curriculum), the HEI website also provides the information about lifelong learning programmes, research activity (including ongoing research programs, international collaborations, guest lectures, the Collected papers of the Faculty), quality assurance documents and all relevant University's and Faculty's documents (e.g. Statute of the University, Statute of the Faculty), and other Faculty-related documents such as the Faculty Council's decisions and the outcomes of external and internal evaluations.

The HEI's webpage is available in Croatian and in English. However, some information can only be found in Croatian; the main strategic document (Strategy of the Faculty) and all relevant documents (for example Statute of the University, Statute of the Faculty, Regulations on the Quality Assurance System) are not translated and are available only in Croatian <https://www.pravri.uniri.hr/en/o-fakultetu-en/regulations.html>.

The information about the HEI's various activities is also available on Facebook and on Instagram. The dean established the Coordination for managing these social networks; the members are three faculty members and four students. The Facebook page is very informative with several posts each day. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement; the social networks could be better used for sharing the information from students about student activities and could be the place for expressing students' opinions about different issues.

*The higher education institution informs stakeholders on the admission criteria, enrolment quotas, study programmes, learning outcomes and qualifications, forms of support available to students.*

The Faculty members promote the study programmes in high schools and the HEI is regularly present at university festivals and scholarships fairs in different towns in Croatia. However, the number of students is decreasing (partly due to demographic reasons), and recruiting new students should be intensified and addressed in a more systematic way; innovative approaches should be found (e.g., Faculty Open Day, increasing visibility and presence of the HEI in social media).

*Information on the social role of the higher education institution is made available to stakeholders.*

Information on the social role of the HEI is available via the website, Facebook, Instagram, local media, and by participation of Faculty members in roundtables for the general public.

*The higher education institution informs stakeholders about other indicators (e.g. pass rate analyses, graduate employment, drop-out rates, outcomes of previous evaluations, etc.)*

The HEI informs stakeholders via the website and other reporting tools, however at the meeting with different stakeholder groups it was evident that they are not fully acquainted with the pass rates, learning outcomes, Bloom's taxonomy, as well as the methods of evaluation for each learning outcome, etc. The HEI lacks systematically conducted informing practices toward stakeholders. The establishment of an Alumni club would intensify the Faculty's cooperation with the faculty's graduates and other external stakeholders and increase the information about all key performance indicators.

#### **Recommendations for improvement:**

- The English version of the HEI's website should be improved; all relevant documents should be translated in English.
- The approach to communication should be more active toward external stakeholders.

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

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

*The higher education institution contributes to the development of economy (economic and technological mission of the university). The higher education institution contributes to the development of the local community.*

Faculty members make an active contribution toward the development of the local community and the growth of the economy by:

- holding various lectures and participating in roundtables for experts and the general public (events were organized by the Faculty, as well as other institutions),
- informing the public of many scientific and professional topics by publishing articles in print media and participating in television and radio shows,
- participating in a significant number of working groups for drafting laws and other legal regulations.

The HEI also fulfils its social role through its Library; the librarians conducted a series of workshops for legal practitioners with the goal to develop the essential information skills in the field of law and also wrote a manual on this topic (Relevant sources of information on European Union Law).

The Faculty members also increase the social role of the Faculty and the University by their active role in several national bodies (they have been appointed to bodies such as the National Council for the Judiciary and the State Prosecutor Council, committees, commissions and expert groups of the Croatian Parliament, the Government of the Republic of Croatia, the Office of the Ombudswoman of the Republic of Croatia, etc.) and in international community (one professor was elected and re-elected as a judge of the General Court of the EU, another was appointed as Croatia's agent for the International Court of Justice).

It is evident that the HEI understands and encourages the development of its social role, but mainly by transferring the knowledge of Faculty members to the broader community. And by doing this the Faculty members contribute significantly towards society, are well respected and recognized as well as integrated in civil society. Regarding the students' role, the information provided indicates a rather small number of students participating in volunteer activities (e.g., humanitarian work) and contributing to the development of a local community in such a way. At the meeting with students, it was explained by their overburden with studying.

*The higher education institution contributes to the foundations of the academic profession and the accountability of teachers for the development of the university and the local community.*

The HEI has concluded many contracts in cooperation with professional institutions and associations, such as the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Court, the Croatian Bar Association, the Croatian Notaries Chamber, and the Croatian Chamber of Economy. These contracts regulate various joint activities, such as (co)organizing professional workshops, preparing and holding courses and seminars, writing expert opinions, revised legal texts, and so on. At the meeting with external stakeholders, it was evident that such cooperation is effective and appreciated.

In order to develop its social role, the HEI registered the project Praxis Iuris (financed by the European Social Fund) the main aim of which is to establish a free legal aid clinic within which the students will provide free legal advice under the supervision of faculty members. This will raise the standard of legal protection for vulnerable and underrepresented groups and will strengthen the already recognizable social role of the Faculty.

*The development of its social role is a part of higher education institution's mission (e.g. development of civil society, democracy, etc.).*

The development of the HEI's social role is a part of the higher education institution's mission and as such it is explicitly written in the Strategy of the Faculty (2016 – 2020): “The vision of the Faculty is to contribute to the development of society based on the principles of the rule of law.”

**Recommendations for improvement:**

None.

**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.**

*There is evidence that general goals of the lifelong learning programmes are in line with the mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution.*

The Strategy of the Faculty, the Statute of the Faculty, and the current Dean's programme make evident the dedication of the HEI to lifelong learning. The Faculty has already had years of experience in running a variety of courses and summer schools.

In 2017 the HEI intensified work in this field of education by establishing a Commission for lifelong learning which recommended the introduction and accreditation of several programmes with the aim to adapt the needs of the economy and society. In the past two years the HEI accredited five new lifelong learning programmes.

*There is evidence that general goals of the lifelong learning programmes are in line with social needs.*

External stakeholders have been involved in designing or implementing some of the lifelong learning programmes; the Croatian Medical Chamber had an important role in introducing the program Law and Medicine, the National Sports program of the Republic of Croatia expressed the need for introducing the Law and Sports program, the Introduction to studying Italian Law is organized with the help of the Italian Union. Some of the programmes have already been successfully held, others will be carried out for the first time this year and the next year. Lifelong learning programmes are in line with social needs which is also evident from the fact that some of them are free for its attendees due to financial support of the external stakeholders.

However, cooperation with the external stakeholders is based on informal cooperation; the representative of the external stakeholders is not a member of the Commission for lifelong learning.

*Revision and development of lifelong learning programmes is carried out systematically and on a regular basis.*

The HEI established the Commission for lifelong learning with the task to propose introduction of new programmes. The task of the Commission should also be to set up a monitoring system to assess the quality of the programs.

**Recommendations for improvement:**

- A representative of the external stakeholders should be the member of the Commission for lifelong learning.
- The HEI should systematically monitor the quality of the lifelong learning programmes.

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

## **II. Study programmes**

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

*There is evidence that general goals of all study programmes are in line with the mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution.*

Strategic goals and institutional mission are reflected in improvements to the education of future lawyers and bachelors of public administration, improvements to the quality and efficiency of legal education, and provision of high-quality education based on learning outcomes. HEI delivers two study programme paths. In university-level HEI trains masters of law, postgraduate specialists of corporate finance law, postgraduate specialists in the law of European integrations and doctors of law. In professional-level HEI trains bachelors of public administration and postgraduate specialists in public administration. Institutional documentation and analysis of study programmes provide evidence that the general goals of all study programmes are in line with institutional strategic goals.

*The justification for delivering study programmes, with regard to social and economic needs, is provided and includes an analysis of resources of the higher education institution required for delivering study programmes.*

Delivery of both study programmes is justified with regard to societal needs, and individual study programmes clearly define the justification of their delivery. The education of Masters of Jurisprudence, University Specialists in Corporate Finance Law, University Specialists in Law of European Integrations, as well as PhDs, directly affects the quality of public administration and public authority at all levels, the judiciary in the broad sense, but also business and financial organisations. The societal need for professional bachelors and specialists of public administration is primarily related to staffing needs of the state administration, but also of judicial bodies, legal entities with public authority, and business organisations. In Chapter IV, the necessary capacities for the delivery of study programmes are discussed in more detail.

*If the higher education institution delivers study programmes leading to degrees in regulated professions, it accepts the recommendations of professional organisations that govern their licencing.*

The existing study programmes lead to regulated professions. Within the Jurisprudentia project, the conclusion was reached that study programmes need to be strengthened with a practical component. The recommendation of alumni and employers has been taken into account; the ratio of practical classes and student practice and number of legal clinics has increased, and the Free Legal Aid Clinic was established. Cooperation agreements were established with professional associations such as the Judicial Academy, the Croatian Bar Association and the Croatian Chamber of Notaries. The connection between certain "successful" alumni and teachers in certain departments is recognized.

*The higher education institution produces competitive professionals for national and international labour markets.*

University study programmes produce professionals who are competitive in both national and international labour markets, while the professional study programmes have a predominantly national scope. When designing enrolment policies, HEI takes into account the recommendations of the Croatian Employment Service, and monitors trends in the labour market.

**Recommendations for improvement:**

No recommendation.

**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.**

*The higher education institution has clearly defined the learning outcomes of the study programmes, and they are aligned with the mission and goals of the higher education institution.*

The learning outcomes of study programmes are clearly defined and harmonized with the institutional mission and goals, which is evident from curricula and syllabi of individual programmes.

*The higher education institution checks and ensures that the learning outcomes at the level of courses are aligned with the learning outcomes at the programme level.*

The institution monitors and ensures the compliance of the study programmes and courses with academic regulations, in particular the Regulations on Studies, which defines the teaching and examination methods, exam deadlines, student assessment, student progress, etc. at university and professional study programmes. Efforts are being made to avoid overlapping content at different study levels; the issue is discussed prior to the adoption of syllabi, and vice-deans for teaching and QA Committee take additional institutional measures. A special programme solution has been created that makes it easier for teachers to define the learning outcomes of their courses.

*Learning outcomes achieved in the study programme are aligned with the CroQF and EQF level descriptors.*

The learning outcomes obtained by completing the study programmes correspond to the level descriptors of the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CroQF). HEI has developed a learning outcomes matrix at the programme level, and the redefined learning outcomes were grouped into new sets that were embedded into the revised study programmes in 2019. For the Integrated Study of Law, the recommendations of the 'Tuning project' were taken into account, in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework. The analysis of the content of study programmes and tables of learning outcomes' sets at university and professional study levels shows that learning outcomes are in line with the CroQF level descriptors. The compliance is also present in the structure and content of the diploma and diploma supplement. The tables of learning outcomes' sets show that the learning outcomes are defined at both the professional and university study level.



*In defining learning outcomes, the higher education institution acts in line with professional requirements and internationally recognized professional standards, ensuring that the programme is up to date.*

While participating in the Jurisprudentia project, HEI took into account the views of various legal professional associations, as evident by changes in the 2019 revision of study programmes of Integrated Study of Law, Administration Studies and Specialist Graduate Professional Study in Public Administration. In accordance with the requirements of the profession, and feedback from current and former students, the overall ratio of practical teaching and student practice has increased. The requirements of legal professional associations are taken into account when defining the content of learning outcomes.

*The intended learning outcomes clearly reflect the competencies required for employment, continuing education or other individual/society needs.*

The intended learning outcomes for university and professional study programmes, in accordance with the sets of learning outcomes from Tables 2.1., 2.2. and 2.3., clearly reflect the competencies required for entering the labour market, continuing education or other needs.

It is recommended to encourage a formal connection between alumni, and to design a model of cooperation between alumni and HEI that will positively affect the quality of study programmes and their delivery.

#### **Recommendations for improvement**

- It is recommended to encourage a formal connection between alumni, and to design a model of cooperation between alumni and HEI that will positively affect the quality of study programmes and their delivery.

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

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

*The higher education institution ensures the achievement of intended learning outcomes of the study programmes it delivers.*

There seems to be an atmosphere of cooperation between teachers and assistants at HEI; they are evidently committed to teaching and strive to provide students with quality study experience by using a variety of didactic methods. The impression of the Panel is that HEI, i.e., its close-knit team of teachers, is open to meeting all educational and other professional needs of students, which is to be commended. Internal regulations, particularly Regulations on Studies and Regulations on Legal Research and Final Thesis formally set the basis for achieving the intended learning outcomes. Feedback from alumni and external stakeholders as to whether HEI ensures that the intended learning outcomes are achieved, is positive. However, as former students are connected with the HEI only informally, most often through close professional relations with individual teachers, this feedback cannot be taken as fully reliable. The examples of written exams, seminar and final papers and project assignments that the Panel had the opportunity to review, however, confirm that HEI ensures the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Forms for the Application of the thesis topic, Report on completed research and verification of the authenticity of the diploma / final thesis, and form Minutes of the defence of graduate/final exam on which the student did not achieve a positive grade, are good examples of ensuring objective student evaluation.

*The higher education institution continually revises and improves the teaching process on the basis of evidence on the achievement of the intended learning outcomes (for example, tests, seminar papers, presentations, etc.)*

Students' knowledge is usually evaluated by a combination of written and oral exams, and sometimes only by written exams. Based on the Regulations on Studies, HEI has adopted a strategy for evaluating students' knowledge during the year and at the final exam with the ratio of 70:30 % or 50:50 %, based on which a strong emphasis is placed on active student participation in the teaching process. Written exams contain multiple choice questions, essay-type tasks or problem-solving tasks. The Panel recommends a combination of several methods of written evaluation of students' knowledge, and although there is a "pressure" of distance learning, it is not recommended to completely exclude oral examination.

#### **Recommendations for improvement:**

- The Panel was presented with examples of good practice in improving the teaching process and evaluating student work; in some courses with lower student pass rate, the rate was increased significantly with the introduction of student exam

preparation guidelines, additional student groups and additional exam terms. The Panel recommends a further development of such practices, which should be incorporated into the institutional regulations.

**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.**

*Development activities related to study programmes are carried out systematically and regularly, involving various stakeholders.*

Recommendations of professional legal associations influenced the revision of study programmes, primarily through the participation in the Iurisprudentia project. As student internship is emphasised in the inter-institutional cooperation based on agreements with said associations, there is no larger involvement of these external stakeholders in development of study programmes outside the Iurisprudentia project.

*Planning and proposing new study programmes includes an analysis of justification for delivering a study programme, resources and alignment with the strategic goals at the local and regional level, and other needs of society.*

There is a need for more substantial involvement of professional associations in the procedures of planning, proposing and approving new programmes, and revising or closing the existing programmes. As alumni association has not yet been formally organised, there is no institutional or systematic relationship between HEI and alumni. The Panel therefore recommends that additional effort is made in formally establishing an alumni association, and ensuring its involvement in the planning procedures related to study programmes. The Panel believes that a systematic involvement of external stakeholders (students, alumni, professional associations and employers) cannot be ensured only through their representation in the QA Committee, but that cooperation should be established at other levels as well. Additional efforts in that direction are recommended. The Panel commends the good practice of revising study programmes on the basis of recommendations from previous evaluations, e.g., accepting the recommendation that allocated ECTS for an individual course should be related to student workload both in and outside the classroom (independent student work).

*The higher education institution provides evidence on the justification for delivering same or similar study programmes within the same university.*

There is no issue with justification for delivering same or similar study programmes within the same university. It is obvious there is no similar study programmes within the same university.

*The higher education institution publishes up-to-date versions of study programmes.*

HEI has not proposed nor introduced new study programme in the observed period. It publishes up-to-date version of study programm. Publicly available at web page is extract of study programmes and executive curriculum tables with informations about courses, course coordinators and ECTS. Course objectives and course deskriptions are not visible. Insight into the content of an individual subject is possible only with the password.

*The higher education institution records the changes to study programmes and analyses their fitness for purpose.*

HEI has not proposed nor introduced new study programme in the observed period. The QA Committee has a key role in the developing the study programmes and analyses their fitnes for purpose.

#### **Recommendations for improvement**

- The Panel believes that a systematic involvement of external stakeholders (students, alumni, professional associations and employers) cannot be ensured only through their representation in the QA Committee, but that cooperation should be established at other levels as well. Additional efforts in that direction are recommended.

**Quality grade:** Minimum level of quality

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

*The higher education institution allocates ECTS credits in accordance with the actual student workload, based on the analyses of feedback from stakeholders in the teaching process, or other procedures.*

HEI makes an effort to resolve an objectively difficult problem of ECTS allocation, and systematically monitors the actual student workload in a study programme. This is

carried out via student evaluation of faculty members and classes (student survey), the analysis of pass rates in individual courses, by using constructive alignment tables for each course, and through the involvement of the management of the QA Committee; however, the allocation of ECTS does not always reflect the actual student workload. Certain courses, which is evident from the extensive reading lists, but also confirmed by the students, require more independent student work in comparison to other courses that carry the same number of ECTS credits. HEI is recommended to invest additional efforts in reducing discrepancies between individual courses with regard to the number of ECTS credits they carry, and to use analyses of the scope and complexity of the required literature that students need to go through independently for this purpose. Good practices, such as the monitoring of alignment of ECTS credits and actual student workload through additional surveys on student satisfaction with particular forms of teaching, analyses of pass rates in individual courses, or allocating more ECTS to courses that have increased the ratio of practical classes, etc. are not sufficient to fully harmonise the actual student workload in all courses that carry the same number of ECTS credits.

*Students are provided with feedback on the results of the analysis of gathered information and the implemented changes.*

By accessing HEI website students have insight in relevant documents concerning of the alignment of ECTS points with the actual student load. The implemented changes are provided, but the analysis of gathered information is provided only to student who is member of QA Committee. It seems that there is no elaborate feedback procedure on the results of the analysis of gathered information to all students.

#### **Recommendations for improvement**

- HEI is recommended to invest additional efforts in reducing discrepancies between individual courses with regard to the number of ECTS credits they carry, and to use analyses of the scope and complexity of the required literature that students need to go through independently for this purpose. Good practices, such as the monitoring of alignment of ECTS credits and actual student workload through additional surveys on student satisfaction with particular forms of teaching, analyses of pass rates in individual courses, or allocating more ECTS to courses that have increased the ratio of practical classes, etc. are not sufficient to fully harmonise the actual student workload in all courses that carry the same number of ECTS credits.

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

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

*The higher education institution allows for learning and obtaining new skills through student practice, where applicable.*

HEI enables students to learn and acquire skills through student placement, which is evident from a number of cooperation agreements with judicial institutions, public authorities and business organisations, as well as from the Plan of External Collaboration and On-Site Training.

*Where applicable, student practice is an integral part of study programmes and is organised outside the higher education institution, in cooperation with the labour market.*

HEI has placed a powerful emphasis on implementing practice learning. Students of clinical courses attend some of classes outside, in law firms, notary offices, courts, bodies of public authorities, etc. The implementation of agreements of collaboration with different partners will enable the improvement of practice learning. Student practice is part of study programmes. In Professional study programme all students in their final year take the mandatory Internship courses in some public authority body.

*Student practice is carried out in a systematic and responsible manner, ensuring the achievement of intended learning outcome regarding student practice.*

Learning outcomes are linked to student practice, and ECTS credits are allocated to different clinical courses. The evaluation of the intended learning outcomes related to student practice is carried out by evaluations within clinical courses, but also by grading of students' internship reports.

### **Recommendations for improvement**

No recommendation.

**Quality grade:** High level of quality

### III. Teaching process and student support

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

Evidence gathered during site visit and Self-Evaluation report 2020:

- Self-evaluation report
- Analytic supplement
- Become Student
- University`s Studies Regulations
- Faculty`s website
- Regulation on Studies of the Faculty of Law
- Conversation with Vice-deans
- Conversation with students

*The criteria for admission or continuation of studies are published*

*The criteria for admission or continuation of studies are consistently applied*

HEI, the criteria for enrolment or continuation of studies adopts by the decision of the Faculty Council. HEI provides such criteria to the Central Registration Office of the Agency for Science and Higher Education which then enters and publishes such criteria in the national information system Become a student, as a system through which enrolments are made and are in compliance with the University`s Studies Regulation. HEI, provides and publishes such criteria for every academic year, on its own websites (including website for each study programme), and especially in the section of its website Legal career, provided and aimed for such purpose. HEI, also informs the public through its social network pages and through different media portals such as Novi list.

HEI started also providing such criteria and information through popular student website srednja.hr, and plans to do so in the future. The students are satisfied with the availability of information regarding admission criteria and say that were well acquainted with such criteria and well prepared for enrolment or continuation of studies.

*The criteria for admission of studies ensure selection of candidates with appropriate prior knowledge, which is aligned with the requirements of the study programme*

To ensure candidates with appropriate foreknowledge, HEI evaluates the results achieved for the obligatory subjects, as well as elective subjects. The number of the potential candidates who wish to apply for the study programme at HEI, who apply and pass the elective subjects is more or less the same for each academic year. Also, HEI evaluates and takes into consideration if the potential candidate had other activities besides high school, such as competitions or other high schools' activities in duration of minimum two years.

Since the last reaccreditation, namely for the academic year 2019/2020, the Faculty changed admission criteria and attracted students with higher average grade.

The number of transfers students is approximately 10 students per year, which is in correlation with criteria for enrolment of such students – they have to accomplish at least 30 ECTS credits at their prior HEI, in that way HEI ensures appropriate selection of candidates who wish to transfer to HEI.

Also, based on the Prerequisite for enrolment in the Postgraduate Specialist Study Programme in Corporate Finance Law, the Prerequisite for enrolment in the Postgraduate Specialist Study Programme in Law of European Integrations and the Doctoral Studies procedures for such admission are clear, available and are regularly applied. Potential candidates are well informed about prerequisites and procedures involving enrolment in Specialist Study Programmes.

*The higher education institution has effective mechanisms for recognizing prior learning*

In regards to prior learning, HEI has defined the conditions for the recognition of the passed exams in the Integrated Study of Law and for the Administration Studies by the Decision of the Faculty Council from September 2017. Also, at the level of University, Regulations for the Recognition and Evaluation of Prior Learning were adopted in line with the Faculty Decision from November 2019.

Such Decision established clear system for the recognition and evaluation of prior learning, where such procedure is initiated upon applicants request and the final decision is made by the vice deans for study affairs who may appoint an expert committee or seek an opinion of individual if they consider it appropriate and needed. That provides a good system for assessment of applicants, as well as support, if needed, for making such assessments.

In terms of recognizing a foreign higher education qualification, such is carried out in accordance with University Rules of Procedure of the Office for Academic Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualification and Periods of Study. Such system is carried out in collaboration with the University and provides an objective, fair and appropriate



mechanisms for recognition of foreign higher education, as well as appropriate collaboration of HEI and University.

The students are of the opinion that HEI provided them with the needed help in regards to their admissions. They also commended administrative services for their help, and their disposal to the students, as well as fairly quick adaptation to new conditions regarding COVID-19.

#### **Recommendations for improvement**

No recommendation.

**Quality grade:** High level of quality.

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

Evidence gathered during site visit and Self-Evaluation report 2020:

- Self-evaluation report
- Analytic supplement
- Regulations on Studies at the University
- Regulation on Studies of the Faculty of Law
- Decisions on Measures of Improvement of Studying Efficiency at the University of Rijeka
- Decision on Measures to Improve Students' Passing Rates at the University of Rijeka
- Conversation with the Quality Assurance Committee
- Regulations on Rewarding Students
- Conversation with Vice-deans
- Conversation with students

#### ***Procedures for monitoring the student progress are clearly defined and available***

HEI monitors the progress of students based on the amended (in 2018) Regulations on Studies at the University and the Regulation on Studies of the Faculty of Law, which now

ensures more visibility by publishing study programmes, curriculum implementation plans and detailed Syllabi courses at the beginning of each academic year on its website, as well as e-learning system Merlin. The students are well satisfied with Merlin and are finding it to be easily used and organized.

*The information on student progress in the study programme is regularly collected and analysed*

*The higher education institution ensures adequate mechanisms for analysing student performance and pass rates and initiates necessary actions accordingly*

Based on the Decision on Measures of Improvement of Studying Efficiency at the University of Rijeka and the Decision on Measures to Improve Students passing rates at the University of Rijeka, HEI monitors students' progress up to the final exam, as well as the passing rate of each exam. That way, in case of low passing rate, HEI in collaboration with the course holders, proposes and conducts appropriate measures in accordance with said Decisions. So, the lecturers may have to organize additional lectures, additional groups for students retaking the course or organize additional exams.

Also, HEI conducts surveys with the students regarding the course holders/lecturers and the curriculum of each subject. Results of such student evaluation surveys are regularly implemented and the students commended their proactive approach in this subject.

Moreover, to ensure the continuity and completion of the study, HEI changed its admission criteria (as a result of recognizing the inability to fulfil enrolment quota). Also, by recognizing and conducting appropriate measures HEI managed to increase the number of students who achieve 60 ECTS credits in their first year of study and managed to shorten the average number of years study.

However, in Analytic Supplement, only data on the progress in the study programme from first to second year is provided.

HEI introduced new system for new students – student mentor system. In the last year such system gained more interest from the new students, and the students are more acquainted with such system. HEI managed to raise awareness of such system among the students through student organizations, such as ELSA and Student Council, as well as through social networks and its website.

HEI adopted the Regulation on Rewarding students based on which the students are rewarded either for outstanding results at the Faculty or for outstanding success at scholarly work, action, public appearance etc., and also has an Honours Classification for overall achievement in Integrated Study of Law and Administration Studies given every year, which is a good system for student's motivation. Also, for encouraging the continuation of the study, HEI exempts the best student from paying tuition fees (either in full or 50% of the tuition fee).

In regards to the monitoring of students who have dropped out, such system is not defined or published, since the students who want to drop out don't know that they need to

formally withdraw from their studies. When HEI conducted an inquiry and personally contacted the students on the reasons why the students have dropped out, only a small number of them responded. Also, it was only when HEI told them, they found out about the possibility of using service of the HEI fund for collecting funds for the underprivileged students, in case the reason of their drop out is based on the socio-economic reasons.

#### Recommendations for improvement

- HEI needs to establish an internal system of tracking the students who stop taking the exams, e.g., who drop out from their studies and needs to ensure that the students are familiar with formal criteria and procedure for drop out of HEI.
- Also, HEI should also progress and monitor the progress of students in the study programmes in other years of study (not only from first to second year – as stipulated in Analytic Supplement).

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

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

*The higher education institution encourages various modes of programme delivery, in accordance with the intended learning outcomes.*

The HEI ensures student-centre learning. In most of compulsory courses of all study programmes teaching is done not only in the form of lectures, but also through exercises and seminars. In all teaching methods discovery learning and collaborative learning are encouraged what is reflected in the learning outcomes of the Study programmes and witnessed in conversations with students.

*Various teaching methods are used that encourage interactive and research-based learning, problem solving and creative and critical thinking (for example, individual and group projects, cooperative learning, problem-based learning, field work and other interactive methods).*

Teaching methods are formally prescribed by the provisions of university regulations. In the positive-law courses, teaching is carried out through lectures, exercises and seminars, so the Panel's conclusion is that HEI encourages different teaching methods.

*The HEI continually evaluates and adapts teaching methods and different modes of programme delivery.*

Interactive and research learning is encouraged in several ways. Based on the Detailed Syllabi, it is evident that a significant part of teaching is carried out in the form of practical exercises that presuppose a stronger interaction between teachers and students. Clinical courses are organized at the level of university studies, aimed at acquiring skills necessary for legal practice. There are also field classes in the form of placements in judicial bodies, organized student visits to public authorities, internships with lawyers, notaries, various companies, etc. In addition, there are elective courses whose primary goal is student participation in Moot Court competitions. Student feedback, as well as the adopted institutional regulations, show that interactive and research learning is encouraged by HEI.

*Teaching methods are adapted to a diverse student population (non-traditional student population, part-time students, senior students, under-represented\* and vulnerable groups\*\* etc.).*

Teaching is adjusted to different student groups. Part-time students can choose their own workload and enrol in a research seminar through which they get acquainted with actual legal problems. It is recommended to encourage more interactive and research-based learning for part-time students. HEI adjust the teaching methods to students with disabilities when possible. The Panel commends the fact that special equipment has been provided for students with visual impairments, which can be used at the Library.

*The higher education institution ensures the use of state-of-the-art technologies to modernise teaching.*

As distance learning is nowadays an integral part of the teaching process, it is commendable that HEI ensures the availability of modern technologies, with the aim of keeping the teaching process up-to-date.

*Available and committed teachers contribute to the motivation of students and their engagement.*

In addition to good professional cooperation between teachers and assistants, their commitment to the needs of students is also evident. Based on the student feedback, teachers are available, and actively and professionally motivate their students.

*The higher education institution encourages autonomy and responsibility of students.*

HEI encourage students' independence and responsibility. Lectures, exercises and seminars are so shaped that students are given practical problems that need to be solved with the guidance of HEI members. Student surveyes and special Student Satisfaction Surveyes with legal Clinical Courses confirm students' independence. Students' motivation for attending classes is supported by HEI's efforts to include legal practitioners as guest lectureres in the theaching process.

**Recommendations for improvement**

- HEI should put more efforts in encourage interactive and research-based learning for part-time students.

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

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

Evidence gathered during site visit and Self-Evaluation report 2020:

- Self-evaluation report
- Conversation with Vice-deans
- Conversation with students
- Conversation with lecturers/doctorands
- Tour of the Faculty
- Examples of brochures

*The higher education institution provides guidance on studying and career opportunities to students (tutors, supervisors other advisors as a support in student learning and progress)*

HEI, at the beginning of each academic year presents to the students a Guide for the Freshmen. The students are of the opinion that HEI in that way provides them with sufficient and appropriate information in regards to their study at HEI. Also, HEI introduced new policy of the vice deans open doors, where vice deans have meetings with students that have questions or need help or certain information's, which is very commendable. HEI, at the beginning of academic year, organises a meeting with new students (first year), where they are informed about the procedure of studying at HEI, of

student organisations and bodies established at HEI that secure and protect student rights and interests.

The holders of courses, lecturers and, as mentioned - the vice deans, are available and are at the disposal of students via electronic correspondence and in the form of consultations. The panel members commend HEI and their availability to the students, as well as their quick response to the new COVID -19 situation, where the faculty members of HEI and the lecturers were at the student disposal, especially the ones from other cities and with lower socio-economic status, via their private telephones, which leads to the conclusion that HEI conducts appropriate measures to be student oriented and to be at the disposal of students.

HEI introduced the system student-mentor and a survey system conducted by the Quality Assurance Committee for better recognition of such system. The students are well acquainted with such system, and student organisations are providing support to HEI by introducing such system through their work. The number of students acquainted and enrolled in such student-mentor system is each year in an increase, which shows such efforts are pointed in a good direction. The students are satisfied with support given by the student mentors.

The student organizations are of the opinion that HEI provides them with sufficient space, in terms of the usage of the Faculty's rooms, as well as other equipment. HEI, as well as the lecturers, faculty members are at the student's disposal when preparing for Moot Court competitions, as well as their involvement in other various student activities. However, mostly the same students participate in the student organizations.

HEI also established and launched its social networks (Facebook and Instagram), which main aim is to strengthen the communication with students. Students and the faculty members are members of such organisation and are included in the making of the policy and strategies of the HEI social networks.

Facebook page is very active in posting relevant information (couple of times a day). However, Instagram pages (Student Council of the Faculty of Law and Faculty of Law) could be more active. Students have said that social networks pages are not used for informal communication with students (e.g., possible complaints, providing specified information and faster communication). At the premises of HEI, primarily at the Library, various brochures for the students are provided, on English and Croatian language.

*The higher education institution has established functional procedures for student career guidance, psychological and legal counselling, support to students with disabilities, support in outgoing and incoming mobility and library and student administration services, at university or faculty level and students are informed about them*

*and*

*Student support is tailored to a diverse student population (part time students, mature students, students from abroad, students from under represented and vulnerable groups, students with learning difficulties and disabilities etc.)*

At the disposal of the students are, at the level of University, the Psychological Counselling Centre, Career Office and the Office for Students with Disabilities. The Faculty has its own coordinator for the students with disabilities. The infrastructure of HEI is adapted to the student with disabilities.

HEI organizes lectures in three groups, where the third group is mostly intended for the part – time students or other students with certain obligations, who cannot attend regular lectures. In that way the faculty provides them with equally opportunity to attend lectures.

In regards to outgoing and incoming mobility programmes, Erasmus+ coordinator with the Office for International Mobility of the University hold info days to provide students with necessary information. During the stay of the foreign students, at their disposal at the Faculty is the vice-dean for international collaboration and other employees of HEI that provide them with help in case of any administration issues and try to include them in aspects of student life at the Faculty.

However, the number of outgoing students, is still very small due to economic reasons.

*The higher education institution employs and adequate number of qualified and committed professional administrative and technical staff*

The expert panel commends the Library and the work of its employees. It introduces new modern technologies (QR codes for the reservation of books or seats at the library) and working hours are adapted to the needs of students. The employees are increasing the number of data bases available to the students, as well as the lecturers and are providing number of books for loan in regards to the needs of students, which was also recognized by the students.

HEI, also has well prepared administrative and technical staff, that provide them with information and help in person or via Internet communication. The students are well satisfied with their work; however, they have expressed that for a certain period during the beginning COVID-19 quarantine had issues in obtaining wanted information within reasonable period.

### **Recommendations for improvement**

- HEI should inform the students about the student organisations in which they could participate, as well as to encourage and include other (non-active) students

to participate in student organisations and other activities organised by HEI and/or student organisations. If possible, fulfil positions in student and other organisations firstly with new students.

- HEI could try to increase the mobility of students and try to provide them with appropriate financial support (try to establish a financial collaboration with University).
- HEI should provide the students with direct communication via social networks, in terms of providing them with not only information's, but to conduct also their opinions, suggestions or complaints and should increase the activity on other social media platforms (and follow good example of proactive activity on Facebook page).
- Proceed with good practice and activity in regards to student-mentor system.

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

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

Evidence gathered during site visit and Self-Evaluation report 2020:

- Self-evaluation report
- University Protocol for Care and Monitoring of Students with Health Problems, Disabilities and Chronic Diseases
- Peer Support Project
- Decision od Payment of Compensation

*The higher education institution monitors various needs of students from vulnerable and under-represented groups*

At the disposal of the students are (*see 3.4.*) at the level of University, the Psychological Counselling Centre, Career Office and the Office for Students with Disabilities. HEI has its own coordinator for the students with disabilities. The infrastructure and equipment of HEI are adapted and provided to students with disabilities. Also, HEI currently has an ongoing project on adapting movement to the students with disabilities between the main entrance and ground floor.



*Teaching process is adjusted to the individual needs of students from vulnerable and under-represented groups*

HEI adjusts the lectures and exams to such students according to their disabilities. They are granted part – time status in case of 60% disability and are also supported in selection of the best student with disability at the Faculty.

Through the Peer Support Project, other students are involved in providing more accessible education for students with disabilities, whereby they help the student with disabilities upon their arrival at HEI, facilitate their movement while on the premises of HEI and assist them in administrative procedures.

*The higher education institution invests resources in the support the students from vulnerable and under-represented groups*

They have support in terms of programs and scholarships at the level of University, as well as the Fund of the Faculty that is financed on voluntary donations, that can be granted to the students with disabilities for co- financing their tuition fees.

At the University level there is Aleksandr Abramov Fund, provided for scholarships and financial help for students with lower socio-economic status.

**Recommendations for improvement**

- Proceed with on-going projects.

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

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

*Students are informed about the opportunities for completing part of their study abroad.*

Students are well informed about the possibility of attending part of their studies abroad. On the HEI's website all crucial information is published (<https://pravri.uniri.hr/hr/medunarodna/erasmus.html>): Guidelines for outgoing Erasmus students, templates of agreements for study visits and professional practice, the link to the website of the University Mobility Office, along with answers to the most common questions.

*The higher education institution provides support to students in applying for and carrying out exchange programmes.*

The address of the Faculty's Erasmus coordinator is available on the HEI's website and they are continuously available to students, providing them with all kinds of information on opportunities to spend part of their studies abroad as well as support in completing the application and during the realisation of the student mobility program. At the HEI, the Office for International Affairs and Projects operates and provides support to students. There have been 84 cases of outgoing student mobility in the last 5 years, as evident in Table 3.6 in the Analytic supplement to self-analysis (in the Self-Evaluation Report the number of outgoing students is 86, pp. 56). A detailed insight into student mobility shows that the number peaked in 2017/18 (32) and in the next two years the number fell sharply (16). The opinion of the management is that the reason for decreasing interest in applying to study abroad is insufficient financial support from the Erasmus programme. But the HEI has not conducted any survey on that issue.

*The higher education institution ensures the recognition of ECTS credits gained at another higher education institution.*

The HEI assures the recognition of ECTS credit points gained at another higher education institution in accordance with the Faculty guidelines for outgoing Erasmus+ students.

*The higher education institution collects information on student satisfaction with the quality of HEI's support regarding practical matters of student mobility.*

The HEI collects information on student satisfaction with the quality of higher education support via the University survey. Also, upon their return all students are required to complete a final report in which, among other things, they express their satisfaction with the realised mobility.

*Students gain competencies required for the employment in an international environment.*

The opinion of the Panel is that students gain professional competencies required for the employment in an international environment.

#### **Recommendations for improvement:**

- The HEI should analyse the reasons for the decreasing number of outgoing students and additionally motivate students to participate in mobility programmes; it is recommended to publish (on the Faculty's web page or Facebook) testimonials of students who have participated in the Erasmus programme and organise lectures where students could share their positive experiences, or maybe the Faculty could offer students financial help.

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

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

*Information on the opportunities for enrolment and study is available to foreign students in a foreign language.*

International students have all relevant information on enrolment and study opportunities available in English on the Faculty's website (<https://pravri.uniri.hr/en/study-programmes/integrated-study-of-law.html>, accessed on 19/10/2020). Contact information, Incoming Student Mobility Guidelines, Instructions for Completing the Learning Agreement and the possibility of modifying it, are published along with an academic calendar. An updated catalogue of courses offered in English for the winter and summer semesters of the current academic year is also published on the website, containing more than 30 courses offered (see Self-Evaluation Report, pp. 56 et seq.). The name, goals and description of courses, as well as faculty members and the number of ECTS credits are visible in the catalogue. At the University's Mobility Office website, the Erasmus+ Charter and other relevant acts are presented. The information made available to foreign students in English thus leaves nothing to be desired.

*The HEI provides support to foreign students in enrolment and study at the Croatian higher education institution.*

The University Mobility Office's website (available at <https://uniri.hr/en/about-university/international-relations-and-erasmus/incoming-erasmus-students/>, accessed on 19/10/2020) provides ample information and support to foreign students in enrolment and study at the HEI.

The website clearly states when and where support staff can be reached on site. What is missing in that context however is a clearly visible link for online support, via e-mail or at least telephone. This would particularly aid students who are not yet in the country.

*The higher education institution collects feedback on satisfaction and needs of foreign students.*

According to the Self-Evaluation Report (p. 11) one survey of satisfaction of Erasmus students was just recently conducted in 2019/20. Regarding the previous periods, no information was given regarding any collection of feedback specifically for courses attended by foreign students. The general picture of student feedback at the Faculty level was that student surveys were regularly and widely conducted, but that participation in those surveys was generally limited.

*Foreign students have the opportunity to attend classes delivered in a foreign language (English).*

The HEI generally encourages courses held in English for both international and domestic students (see also Self-Evaluation Report, p. 57). The hearings however revealed that foreign language courses are mostly taught by visiting lecturers on an ad hoc basis. The courses offered thus seem to vary from semester to semester and appear to be, to some extent, determined by availability of visiting lecturers and, therefore, eventually chance. By contrast, there is, currently, no international staff employed at the HEI. Accordingly, there is no permanent in-house staff to provide foreign language classes on a regular basis and/or with a fixed curriculum. The hiring of some international staff would seem not only improve the international exposure and recognition of the HEI, but also its attractiveness for foreign students in terms of the range, scope and foreseeability of the foreign language courses offered each semester.

*Croatian language courses are delivered for foreign students at the level of the university or university constituent.*

International students are given the opportunity to learn the Croatian language as part of a collaboration with the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (see Self-Evaluation Report, p. 57). The Office for International Affairs and Projects, when making the schedule for courses in the English language, takes into account the schedule of the Croatian language course targeted specifically at Erasmus students in order to encourage as many students as possible to learn the language.

**Recommendations for improvement**

- The information made available on the website for Erasmus students should be amended to include a clearly visible link for online support, via e-mail or at least telephone.
- The HEI should more seriously contemplate the possibility of hiring some foreign personnel on a permanent basis. This could not only improve the international exposure and recognition of the HEI, but also end the current ad hoc approach to foreign language classes and thereby enhance the HEI's attractiveness for foreign students in terms of the range, scope and foreseeability of the foreign language courses offered each semester.

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

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

*The criteria and methods for evaluation and grading are clear and published before the beginning of a course.*

The critical issues regarding the studying process, including criteria and methods of evaluation of student knowledge are regulated both by regulations of University of Rijeka and by regulations of Rijeka Law Faculty. The curricula and requirements of each course are developed by each individual course holder and formally adopted by the Council of the HEI. These are then published on the website in the Moodle online learning system (called Merlin in Croatian) for each academic year.

*The criteria and methods for evaluation and grading are aligned with the teaching methods used.*

Teaching methods that are used by the HEI are mostly lectures, seminars, where student knowledge is assessed through the oral and written exams and student papers. However, students are also evaluated through the practical aspect such as clinical courses and professional practice where they have obligation to submit a work diary and a written portfolio.

*The higher education institution provides support to the assessors in the development of skills related to the testing and assessment methods.*

HEI organized several workshops on various aspects of strengthening of the teachers' capacity to develop their teaching skills. Topics covered on these workshops were the following: "... understanding and application of the CQF, drafting learning outcomes, methods of teaching focused on students, methods of knowledge evaluation adjusted to learning outcomes, distance teaching and design of e-courses, peer evaluation, teaching in English and writing research and professional papers in English, ethics in research, management in higher education, etc." (Self-assessment, pg. 68).

*The higher education institution ensures objectivity and reliability of grading.*

The objectivity and reliability of grading is ensured through the both oral and written exams. There are several types of questions used for the written exams, namely multiple choice, essay and problem-solving assignments. Also, practical skills of students are developed and assessed through the practical aspects (e.g., clinical courses and professional practice). There is formal regulation of the students right to see the test he/she has taken. This could be done within the eight days of taking the exam. Also, there is a regulated procedure of complaint put in place in case a student is not fully satisfied with the grade achieved on the exam.

*If possible, the higher education institution carries out the evaluation of grading.*

It is stated in the Self-assessment that "... a comprehensive evaluation of student monitoring and grading procedures following the 2018 amendment of the Regulations on Studies of the University of Rijeka." (pg. 58). As a result, distribution of assessment points could be done equally for lectures and the final exam (each carries 50 assessment points), or it can be distributed in a way that student engagement during lecture is graded 70 and the final exam 30 assessment point. However, it's not clear whether this exercise was *ad hoc* experience or is part of the periodical endeavor to evaluate grading process nor how many courses implement such system. Student opinion on grading is collected through the surveys and Graduate Student Satisfaction Surveys.

*The evaluation procedures take into account special circumstances of certain groups of students (modifying examination procedures to suit e.g., students with disabilities), while at the same time ensuring the achievement of intended learning outcomes.*

Special circumstances of certain group of students such as students with disabilities are particularly taken into consideration through several activities. At the level of the HEI exist a special coordinator with persons with disabilities. it is worth noting that "... the Faculty Library contains state-of-the-art equipment for visually impaired students, available to all University students." (Self-assessment, pg. 47). Measures directed towards students with disabilities can take various forms, such as adjustment of the exam according to the individual needs of particular disabled student, extended time for writing the exam, exemption from the written exam, preparation of special materials, etc. Finally, it has to be noted and positively emphasized that among teaching staff there are visually impaired persons who are holding teaching positions.

*The students receive feedback on the evaluation results, and if necessary, guidelines for the learning process based on these evaluations.*

Evidence of this element of the standard is not presented in the Self-assessment nor during the week of assessment.

#### **Recommendations for improvement**

- Develop and implement systematic and comprehensive model for evaluation of teachers grading that could be carried out periodically (e.g., at the end of each academic year or HEI could develop some other appropriate model)

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

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

Evidence gathered during site visit and Self-Evaluation report 2020:

- Self-evaluation report
- Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education
- Regulation on the Content of Diplomas and Diploma Supplements
- Regulations on the Form of Diploma and the Content and Form of Certificate and Confirmation of the University
- Example of Diploma and Diploma Supplement (English and Croatian Language)

*Upon the completion of their studies, students are issued appropriate documents.*

*Diplomas and Diploma supplements are issued in accordance with relevant regulations.*

Act of scientific activity and higher education prescribes the issuance of a diploma. The content of diploma and diploma supplement are issued in accordance with the Regulations of the Content of Diplomas and Diploma supplements which is in accordance with the Regulations of the Form of Diploma and the Content and Form of Certificate and Confirmation of the University.

*The higher education institution issues the Diploma Supplement in Croatian and English, free of charge*

The Faculty issues the Diploma supplement in Croatian and English free of charge.

#### **Recommendations for improvement**

No recommendation.

**Quality grade:** High level of quality

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

Evidence gathered during site visit and Self-Evaluation report 2020:

- Self-evaluation report
- Analytic Supplement
- Faculty's Facebook Profile

- Faculty’s website
- Conversation with alumni

*The higher education institution provides students with support regarding future career planning.*

*The higher education institution maintains contacts with alumni.*

HEI, in collaboration with Student Council and student organization ELSA, organised Career Days, as well as Legal Career Fair in 2019, with next one to be held in 2020.

Within the Providentia project, HEI plans on establishing a Career Centre, as a student support in their career planning. Within the same project HEI plans on establishing the Alumni club, as a module focused on the systematic collection of data from alumni of HEI and employers.

However, HEI still does not have already institutionalized Alumni club; the contacts with alumni are more of an informal collaboration when and if necessary. Mostly, the alumni are former students with outstanding results at HEI or were a part of student organisations that have been able, through their work in such organisations, to establish certain collaboration with faculty members during their education at HEI.

Also, the alumni were not contacted by HEI in terms of suggestions of employability of its students or suggestions in terms of implementing certain practices in their study programmes.

*The higher institution informs prospective students about the opportunities to continue education or find employment after graduation.*

Through its website, HEI informs the students about vacancies, employment and internship opportunities.

*The higher education institution analyses the employability of its graduates*

In terms of employability of student data after graduation, HEI collects such data on the basis of CEI data, which shows a decrease of unemployed students.

No other data is collected or analysed by HEI.

*Admission quotas are aligned with social and labour market need and available resources*

HEI recognized the need to adjust the enrolment quota with labour market, which resulted in reduction of enrolment quota at the Integrated Study of Lay and Administrative Studies for the year 2019/2020.

#### **Recommendations for improvement**

- HEI, could inform the students about employment and internship opportunities, also through social networks.



- HEI monitors the employability of its students based solely on data provided by the CEI. The recommendation is to establish an internal appropriate system of tracking and monitoring of the employability of its graduates.
- HEI should establish an institutional system with alumni, either an alumni club or similar organisation and should try to establish and maintain connection with students that weren't outstandingly successful in their studies and/or active in student organisations. In that way HEI could collect information from alumni about graduate students, quality of studying at HEI and the employability of graduates.
- Proceed with on-going plans and projects.

**Quality grade:** Minimum level of quality

## IV. Teaching and institutional capacities

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

*The number and qualifications of teachers are appropriate for the delivery of study programme and achievement of the intended learning outcomes and performing scientific activity.*

The HEI employs enough teachers for effective delivery of its study programs. The HEI currently employs 60 teachers in various statuses (Full, Associate and Assistant professors; Postdoctoral Fellows, Assistants, Senior Lecturers and Lecturers). Regarding the teachers age structure (Table 4.1a of the Analytical Supplement), it can be noted that the average age of full tenured professors is approximately 60 years, while the average of other teacher categories is below 50 years. Average age of full professors is approximately 49 years, associate professors 48 years and assistant professors 39 years, which makes the HEI quite “young” when it comes to future perspective.

*The ratio of students and full-time teachers at the higher education institution ensures a high quality of study.*

The student-teacher ratio has improved since the last accreditation process. From 1:32 in the previous accreditation process to 1:24 today. This shows a positive trend towards the improvement of the overall quality of the studying experience at Rijeka Law Faculty. This is due to several reasons. One is decrease in the number of students and proactive

employment policy in the previous period. The HEI employed 16 new teachers in the 2015-2019 period.

*Teacher workload is in line with relevant legislation and policies, regulations of competent bodies, collective agreements, etc.*

According to Table 4.3. of the Analytical Supplement teaching workloads are in line with the relevant legislation. The workload in teaching varies from 65 and 76 hours for some teaching assistants to 492 and 531 hours for Senior Lecturers/Lecturers. Most teachers are fully employed by the HEI and at the Institution realize their full working engagement (100 percent) at the Rijeka Faculty of Law. Reports on teaching loads of employees are submitted after every semester. "These reports are gathered and processed by the Quality Assurance Committee, and subsequently notified to the Faculty Council, and used as a basis for adopting decisions on new employment." (Self-assessment, pg. 65).

*Teacher workload ensures appropriate distribution of teaching, scientific/artistic activities, professional and personal development and administrative duties.*

According to the new Collective Agreement, the HEI adopted *Decision on Actual Apportionment and Composition of Workload of Employees for the Academic Year of 2019/20*, which distributes the working engagement 45 % to teaching and 45 % to research and science. "For Assistants, the standard apportionment of workload consists of 22.5% of workload in teaching and 67.5% of workload in science, for Postdoctoral Fellows this apportionment consists of 33.8% of workload in teaching and 56.2% in science, while for the persons appointed to Lecturer titles, this amounts to 67.5% workload in teaching and 22.5% of workload in research and professional work. 10% of workload of all employees who teach is dedicated to institutional contribution and administrative tasks." (Self-assessment, pg. 65).

According to the new Collective Agreement, the HEI adopted *Decision on Actual Apportionment and Composition of Workload of Employees for the Academic Year of 2019/20*, which distributes the working engagement 45 % to teaching and 45 % to research and science. "For Assistants, the standard apportionment of workload consists of 22.5% of workload in teaching and 67.5% of workload in science, for Postdoctoral Fellows this apportionment consists of 33.8% of workload in teaching and 56.2% in science, while for the persons appointed to Lecturer titles, this amounts to 67.5% workload in teaching and 22.5% of workload in research and professional work. 10% of workload of all employees who teach is dedicated to institutional contribution and administrative tasks." (Self-assessment, pg. 65). However, when it comes to the distribution of teaching, scientific, professional and personal development, distribution of workload represent challenge, particularly for younger employees, assistants and assistant professors

*Teachers are qualified for the course/courses they deliver.*

Teachers are elected in the relevant disciplines which formally qualifies them to teach courses they deliver to students. The vast majority of teachers have been elected in the field of law with only four teachers from other disciplines (one from political science, philology, sociology and economics). Due to the multidisciplinary nature of the studies offered by the HEI (law, public administration, public finance), it could consider employing or specialising teachers in particular disciplines, especially for the courses that are not strictly in the field of law.

**Recommendations for improvement:**

- Due to the multidisciplinary nature of the studies offered by the HEI (law, public administration, public finance), it could consider employing or specializing teachers in particular disciplines. This is particularly the case for the courses that are not strictly in the field of law.

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

#### **4.2. Teacher recruitment, advancement and re-appointment is based on objective and transparent procedures which include the evaluation of excellence.**

*Teacher appointment (recruitment) procedures arise from the development goals of the higher education institution and they are aligned with the legislation and internal regulations in effect.*

Recruitment of teachers and lecturers is based on the *Plan of Employment and Advancement* which is adopted by Faculty council on an annual basis. Also, the HEI adopted the *Regulations on the Evaluation of Work of Assistants, Postdoctoral Fellows and Mentors of the University* which regulates special formal procedure of evaluation of Assistants' and Postdoctoral Fellows'. However, there is no clear connection of the recruitment procedure and strategic goals of the HEI.

*In selecting, appointing and evaluating teachers, the HEI takes into account their previous activities (teaching activity, research activity, feedback from students, etc).*

Procedure of appointment and evaluation of teachers is mostly regulated by national laws and regulations, as well as by the Statute of the University of Rijeka. However, the HEI states that in the recruitment procedure "... special attention is given to the grade average that the candidate achieved during studies, as well as the grades achieved in courses which are directly linked to the area of activity of the Chair for which the candidate is being selected, as well as to previously published research and professional papers, lectures and work experience. Likewise, the Faculty takes into account awards and accomplishments from the area of the candidates' professional activity during and after

the completion of their studies. A passed bar exam is required for prospective candidates to be employed at Chairs that perform Clinics.” (Self-assessment, pg. 66).

*The higher education institution has adequate methods for the selection of the best candidates for each position and, in addition to the prescribed national minimum conditions for each position, it has prescribed competitive criteria ensuring the selection of excellent candidates.*

The methods of selection of the best candidates are not additionally prescribed by the HEI but are result of unwritten academic tradition and composition of a particular selection committee.

*Promotion of teachers into higher grades is based on the evaluation and rewarding of excellence and the HEI takes into account important achievements (such as international contribution to the scientific discipline, high-impact publications, significant scientific discoveries, successful projects, success in securing additional funds, supervision of final and graduation theses, authorship of textbooks / study materials, popular lectures, etc.).*

Promotion of teachers to higher grade is mostly regulated by national laws and regulations and the HEI does not have special requirements for the promotion of their teaching staff. Nevertheless, in accordance with the national law which regulate the promotion in higher scientific grade, one case of fast-track promotion to higher teaching and scientific grade was made in the last five years in the HEI.

*Indicators of excellence include scientific/artistic, teaching and professional work and contribution to the development of the higher education institution.*

The requirements for recruitment and advancement of the teaching staff are prescribed universally by national level regulation (relevant legislation and formal decision of the Council of rectors). There is no special regulation of the HEI regulating additional indicators of excellence. Teachers regularly advance to higher scientific position upon the fulfilment of prescribed criteria. However, in the last five years “... two procedures of re-appointment to the same scientific-teaching titled have been carried out, due to the lack of coefficients required for advancement to a higher scientific-teaching title, although in both cases the Faculty members satisfied the criteria for advancement.” (Self-assessment, pg. 67).

*Additional criteria for the promotion of teachers into higher grades reflect the strategic goals of the higher education institution.*

All recruitment and advancement to higher grades are carried out on the basis of publicly published tenders. Teaching staff is mostly regionally recruited and mostly from the students of the HEI. There is no evidence of the recruitment of teaching staff from other parts of the country. Also, there is no evidence of additional criteria for the promotion of

teachers that would be developed and formally adopted by the HEI. There is no visible connection of the promotion of teachers to higher grades and the strategic goals of the HEI. Previous accreditation report advised the HEI to recruit international candidates, particularly for the courses that could be taught in English language.

#### Recommendations for improvement

- Connect strategic goals of the HEI with the recruitment of teachers and their advancement to the higher teaching and scientific grades. The recruitment should be in service of fulfilment of the strategic goals of the HEI.
- As much as possible depart from the practice of mostly local/regional recruitment of teaching staff in order in order to get national and international visibility.

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

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

*The higher education institution provides opportunities for the improvement of teaching competencies at the level of the university or university constituent.*

University of Rijeka as well as the Rijeka Law Faculty organizes workshops and other activities for the improvement of teaching competences. According the Self-evaluation, the topics of the were the following: “understanding and application of the CQF, drafting learning outcomes, methods of teaching focused on students, methods of knowledge evaluation adjusted to learning outcomes, distance teaching and design of e-courses, peer evaluation, teaching in English and writing research and professional papers in English, ethics in research, management in higher education, etc.” (pg. 68).

Nevertheless, there are no proofs of individual plans for professional development of teachers, especially for junior positions that would motivate professional development of staff. Such plans could serve as an instrument for overall professional development of a teacher (research, mobility, conferences, publications, etc.).

*The higher education institution encourages the assessment and improvement of teaching competencies based on the peer-review recommendations and the results of student satisfaction surveys.*

Student satisfaction surveys are conducted regularly through the Student Information System (SIS) or through the poll system in order to improve the quality of teaching. The role of Quality Assurance Committee is particularly important in this regard. Some positive cases of improving the teaching process through the student surveys have been recorded on the courses of the first year of law program.

At the level of University of Rijeka there is annual reward for excellence in teaching which is based on predefined criteria such as results of student evaluations, cooperation with the students, etc. Also, in 2019 the HEI developed and enacted its own additional criteria for rewarding teaching and scientific excellence of its employees.

*Teachers participate in international mobility programmes, projects, network, etc.*

There is formal obligation for teaching assistants to spend at least four months on other institution in Croatia or abroad. In the last five years there were 66 outgoing mobilities which lasted up to three months. There were 20 outgoing mobilities for teaching, 31 outgoing mobilities for research, and 15 cases of professional mobility. There were also 45 cases of incoming mobilities reported, out of which 39 were for teaching, 5 professional and only one for research (Table 4.5, Analytical Supplement).

**Recommendations for improvement**

- Develop transparent system of financial support for teaching staff for conferences, research and publishing (e.g. fund, fixed per capita amount, etc.)
- Develop and regulate clear criteria for rewarding employees through the salary bonuses
- Increase number of outgoing and incoming mobility cases, especially incoming mobility for research
- Develop plans for professional development of teachers, especially for the junior research and teaching positions (this could be done at the level of Chairs)

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

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

*The higher education institution plans and improves the infrastructure development, in line with the strategic goals.*

The HEI functions in its own building constructed in 1980 and extended in 2003 by construction of an annex. The HEI has around 2.300 square meters of functional space for delivery of its programs and other activities. Lecture rooms are adequately equipped for the teaching process and the Faculty adjusted its premises for work in the COVID circumstances. Teacher mostly share rooms with one or more colleagues which is due to the construction limits of the HEI. Access for students with disabilities is secured into the

main lecture rooms and in the reading room there is equipment for visually impaired students.

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

The HEI has two IT classrooms with 23 computers, as well as newly renovated room with up to ten computers which was renovated under the auspices of a faculty advancement project. All in all, physical environment for study and other student activities at the HEI is quite pleasant and satisfactory.

When it comes to allocation of funds for purchasing the new IT equipment there has been significant increase of allocated funds for this purpose in 2019 in comparison to 2018. In 2019 the HEI allocated 457.250 kn (1,9 percent of 2019 operating budget) to purchase of the IT equipment in comparison with only 22.401 kn (0,09 percent of the 2018 operating budget) invested in 2018.

*The space, equipment and the entire infrastructure (laboratories, IT services, work facilities etc.) are appropriate for the implementation of scientific/artistic and professional activities.*

For the time being it seems that the HEI does not have significant difficulties in conducting its activities. The building if the HEI is its ownership which represents significant benefit in conduction all necessary activities for studying, research and other extra-curricular activities of the Institution.

#### **Recommendations for improvement**

- Upgrade the Faculty building in accordance with financial capacity of the HEI and needs of the study process.
- If possible, ensure that teachers have their individual rooms for their work and not to share rooms with other colleagues.

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality



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

*The library and library equipment, including the additional resources, meet the conditions for a high quality of study.*

The library of the HEI encompasses 400 square meters of space out of which 320 square meters is dedicated to the reading room with 48 sitting places. There are 12 computers in the Library for searching the web catalogue as well as a connection port for personal laptops. There is also printer available for users of the Library. Overall, the Library has almost 31.000 of book volumes, and 450 titles of compulsory literature textbooks (8.937 copies) which is approximately 20 copies of each compulsory textbook. The Library has 244 printed journals out of which 108 are foreign and remaining 136 are national printed journals. According the data presented in the Table 4.10 of the Analytical Supplement, the HEI provides 18.920 electronic journals with full texts and five bibliographic databases. The final, master, specialist and doctoral theses of students, as well as theses of the scientific-teaching staff have been stored in the DABAR (Digital Academic Archives and Repositories) system. There are almost 1.100 different type documents currently online stored in this system.

The Library has two full time employed staff, while students help with the work of the Library. The staff of the Library seems very agile and proactive in their endeavors to create attractive learning and research environment at for students as well as for teachers of the HEI. The Library is open during working days from 8:00 to 20:00 and on Saturdays from 9:00 to 14:00. It has good cooperation with other libraries at law faculties in Croatia as well as with other libraries.

*The library and library equipment, including the additional resources, ensure a high quality of scientific-teaching / artistic-teaching activities.*

The Library serves as a support for teachers and students in their research activities. Through various and rich activities, the Library fulfils its role of ensuring a high quality environment for research. It provides training for students and teachers in "... the field of research information, open science, valuation of research, etc." (Self-assessment, pg. 76). When it comes to investment in research materials, particularly resources for books and journals, the HEI allocates 146.700 kn (approximately 0,6 percent of its 2019 operating budget) on acquiring these materials. This is decrease of the funds allocated for this purpose in caparison with 2018 in which the HEI allocated 199.524 kn (approximately 0,9 percent of 2018 operating budget) for the same purpose.

#### **Recommendations for improvement**

None.



**Quality grade:** High level of quality

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

*Financial sustainability and efficiency is evident in all aspects of the higher education institution's activity.*

Income of the HEI comes from two main sources, national budget (approximately 75 to 80 percent) and own activities (remaining 20 to 25 percent). National funds are mainly used for salaries of the HEI employees, while own resources are dedicated to other obligations of the HEI. In the previous period mainly due to the decreasing number of enrolled students (prescribed enrolment quota is not being fulfilled for 2020/21 academic year), the HEI introduced several austerity measures such as "... the reduction of the variable part of salaries, acquirement of discounted books, reduction of representation costs, etc." (Self-assessment, pg. 78).

Although the HEI adopts several documents that state its financial activities, these documents (e.g., Public Procurement Plan) are legal obligation and not the HEIs' intention towards the advancement of its financial management. The overreaching Financial Plan for the medium term (for at least future five years) is missing. Such plan should serve as an efficient tool for sound financial management of the overall incomes and expenditures of the Institution. The Financial Plan should foresee major trends in incomes and expenditures and should serve as main instrument of the HEIs' financial management in the future.

*HEI manages its financial resources transparently, efficiently and appropriately.*

There are several legal acts of the HEI which regulate various aspects of financial management of the Institution. According the Self-assessment (pg. 78) there are following regulations: "Regulations on salaries, other revenues and expenses and disposal of revenues acquired independently of the budget, Regulations on the payment of the variable part of the employee's salary, Decision on methodology of revenue distribution acquired by performing special study programmes and programmes of training and qualification, Decision on the procedure of claim recovery, Decision on the procedure of creating contractual obligations, Decision on the procedure of acquiring and reviewing accounts and payment per accounts, Decision on expenses for official travel, Guidelines on opening, calculation and payment of travel orders." All these documents regulate different issues connected with financial management of the institution and contribute to sound financial management. However, some issues are not regulated such as clear and transparent criteria for bonuses on employees' salaries. That should be done in the future in order to stimulate better performance of staff and boost additional motivation of employees. The biggest expense is on staff salaries, which amounts to 81 percent of total operating expenditures both in 2018 and 2019. The second biggest expenditures were

that for intellectual and personnel services, which amounts to 1,1 million kn in 2018 (4.4 percent of total operating expenses in that year) and 948.458 kn in 2019 which is 4 percent of the total operating expenses.

*Additional sources of funding are used for institutional development and improvement.*

Additional sources of funding are used for financing of various activities. The Self-assessment states that the HEI finances "... travelling expenses for international scientific and professional conferences, expenses of proofreading papers in scientific journals, expenses of training and study visits, expenses of training administrative-technical staff, expenses of guest lecturers' stays, expenses of external collaboration and on-site training, expenses of acquirement of research and professional literature and online databases, expenses of acquirement of computer equipment, co-financing student activities (in cooperation with the Student Association), increasing standards of employees (rewarding their work), improving standards of studying and creating a stimulating work environment." (pg. 78, 79). If travel costs expenses presented in the Table 4.12 of the Analytical Supplement are broke down according to the number of employed teachers the conclusion can be drawn that the HEI allocated up to 4.900 kn per capita for travel costs in 2019 and 4.700 kn per capita in 2018. Despite of that there is no regulation on the amount per employee for travel costs and participation on scientific conferences. However, this is not the case with the training costs, which were quite low in 2019 (only 723 kn per capita) and significantly lower in previous year (only 440 kn per capita in 2018).

*Additional sources of funding are secured through national and international projects, cooperation with the industry, local community, etc.*

Project component of the overall operating income is very weak. While there is no income form the scientific projects in 2018 and 2019, situation with income from professional projects is slightly better. In 2018 income from professional projects was 309.885 kn which is only 1.3 percent of the total operating income for that year. Income from professional projects in 2019 was 297.828 kn which is also 1.3 percent of the total operating income. While there has been income from National Science foundation in 2018 (192.650 kn which is 0.8 percent of the total operating income in 2018), in 2019 there were no recorded income from this source. Furthermore, income from local community such as City of Rijeka and Primorsko-Goranska County is unfortunately completely missing. During two analyzed years (2018 and 2019) there has been no recorded income from those sources.

**Recommendations for improvement**

- Develop and adopt financial plan of income and expenditures for a period of at least five years, clearly stating the funding sources, with a breakdown of

expenditures and the report on the implementation of the financial plan of income and expenditures for the previous of at least five years.

- Increase own revenues as much as possible in order to strengthen diversification of revenues which would contribute to financial resilience of the HEI. This is especially related to the need to significantly increase revenues from domestic and international scientific and professional projects and incomes from local community (especially Town of Rijeka and Primorsko-Goranska County).
- Regulate clear and transparent criteria for employees' bonuses (variable part of the salary).
- Allocate funds for research activities for teachers such as travel costs for conferences for presenting papers, publishing in international publications, etc. This could be allocated on a yearly basis with per capita amount or the HEI should develop some other model which is more suitable for the Institution.

**Quality grade:** Minimum level of quality

## V. Scientific activity

The analysis of this section closely follows the structure and content of the AZVO Standards for quality evaluation. It is therefore restricted to checking the sub- and sub-sub-elements for each standard and their fulfilment, taking into account in particular the evidence examples proposed. Reasoning is kept brief and concise in language.

Out of the five individual elements of standard no. V), only 5.1 is a so-called 'key standard' which, if not fulfilled, lowers the quality of the entire HEI. Accordingly, it receives relatively more attention in terms of an elaboration of reasoning to explain the findings for this report.

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

*Teachers and associates publish an appropriate number of high-quality scientific publications.*

One of the elements criticised in the 2015 Re-Accreditation Report had been a relatively "low number of publications in internationally acclaimed law journals" (2015 Report, p. 7).

As a consequence of that criticism, the scientific production of faculty members was more systemically monitored and presented to them in the form of reports on bibliometric indicators (Self-Evaluation Report, p. 80). According to the HEI, monitoring showed that publication output doubled in the period under review as compared to the status quo ante: “[T]he annual faculty productivity at that time was 92 papers, while at present it has nearly doubled and amounts to an average value of 191.6 papers. Productivity per a faculty member then was 11.22 published papers, in contrast to the present 20.82. Accordingly, annual productivity per a faculty member was 2.24 papers at the time, as opposed to 4.45 at present. These figures show an important quantitative increase within only a few years” (Self-Evaluation Report, p. 81).

The details for these publications left some desirable level of detail missing even based on the information given in the Self-Assessment Report, the Analytic Supplement (sect. 5.1 in particular) and the hearings. In particular, information remained somewhat vague and difficult to assess regarding the numbers of publications domestically vs. internationally and, within these two categories, a further breakdown into the different publication types, particularly into top journals vs. Other journals and other types of publications, would have been helpful. Likewise, a breakdown of those output figures per Chair or at least per level of employee (full professors, associate professors etc.) would have been very informative. Overall, the figures could have been presented by the HEI in a more accessible, more coherent and more informative manner. Also, it would have been helpful, here as well as in other parts of the report, to flank plain quantitative data by the percentage of increase or decrease compared to the previous assessment period (e.g., publications in international journals of the highest quality according to Ordonnance total number X, being an increase of X% compared to previous period).

As regards papers actually published in journals, the number is 400 (Self-Evaluation Report, p. 81), which includes peer-reviewed and non-peer reviewed items. 341 publications were in top level volumes or journals according to the Ordonnance (Analytic Supplement, 5.1.), roughly thus totalling 1,4 top-level publications per year for each of the 50 researchers (number given by Vice Dean during hearings) included in those figures. Also, it remains unclear how those two figures relate to one another (i.e., how many top publications are in journals and, more specifically, in international journals). Out of the 400 items, publications in international journals were at 73 over the full five-year period (information provided by Vice Dean during hearings). On average for the 50 researchers (number given by Vice Dean during hearings) included in that figure, the average yearly publishing rate in an international law journal is therefore 0,292 papers per annum or, put differently, 1 paper approximately every 3,5 years. What is more, these figures include all foreign law journals and are not broken down according to the status of the journal. It must thus be presumed that the portion of international journal publications in “internationally acclaimed” or reputed journals is even somewhat lower.

It must further be noted that, as compared to international law journals, the overall number of international publications for other types (e.g., collected volumes, published conference papers etc.) is markedly higher at 178 publications for the full review period information provided by Vice Dean during hearings). Together with the international journal publications, this brings the total of international publications to 251 for the five-year review period – an average of roughly 1 international publication per researcher per year. The Self-Evaluation Report speaks of “historical and discipline-related” barriers in this regard. Yet it must be emphasized that it is all the more imperative to continuously strive to overcome those obstacles with a view to playing a more visible and more decisive role in international scientific discourse.

In sum: While, therefore, the HEI’s publication output seems to have significantly increased overall, the increase seems to be predominantly due to domestically published items. Only about one third of the total number of publications (1,4 publications p.a. per person) were in a top-level publication as classified by the Ordonnance. Publications in international books or journals and in languages other than Croatian may also have increased, but apparently not as much as domestic publications. It must thus be said that the 2015 Report’s finding that publication activity as a whole, and international top-level publications in particular, should be further intensified at the HEI still holds true for the period assessed here. Teachers and associates still do not seem to publish an appropriate number of high-quality scientific publications.

The predominantly national orientation of the HEI may be due to history and traditional approaches to certain areas of law, but it must clearly be designated as a thing of the past. The HEI should strive to overcome these traditional perceptions and seek to more strongly participate in the international legal discourse. One way of doing so would be to more seriously look at the possibilities of employing international staff: Currently, no foreign nationals are employed as researchers at any level of the HEI. This seems to be part of the problem why the HEI’s efforts for more international visibility and impact in terms of publications, conferences seem to have borne little fruit in the past few years. Insofar as international hiring should (as was argued during the hearings) indeed be limited by national laws and regulations (e.g. requiring fluency in the Croatian language from the very beginning of the engagement), the HEI should engage in an open dialogue with the responsible Ministry with a view to loosening those requirements at least for those fields of law and research, where knowledge of Croatian is not of the essence any more today, because the scientific discourse is significantly internationalized (e.g. tax law, international public law, European law, Legal theory, Philosophy of law, Roman law, comparative law etc.).

*The HEI has efficient procedures for encouraging high-quality scientific publication.*

High-quality research is encouraged both in teaching through various workshops and by formulating Guidelines (see Self-Evaluation Report, p.84). In addition, an award was instigated in 2018 for papers published internationally in a foreign language.

Given that the number of top-level publications in international formats is still not sufficiently high, it is unclear in how far those various quality-inducing activities and initiatives have had actual impact. However, they show that the HEI is aware of the quality and internationalization issues and that it seeks to provide help in publishing and to develop constant incentives to publish. This work and the awareness-raising activities should be continued.

The HEI's research strategy appears somewhat vague and not sufficiently forward-looking: Its current focus rests on quantity of research output, insufficient awareness seems to be raised for the importance of quality criteria to assess the research output – both for publications and conferences. Also, the various Chairs do not seem to take on an equal share of the research output commitment and/or such individual contributions to the research output are at least not systematically monitored and requested from Chairs. There is a clear need for the HEI yet to develop quality criteria for publications and conferences and to communicate them in particular through its research strategy. The Strategy should strive to actively include commitments for specific outcomes or contributions by all of the HEI's Chairs.

*The higher education institution keeps records of publications (publication index, citation impact, h-index, if applicable).*

The Self-Evaluation Report (pp. 82 et seq.) extensively documents how publication data is assembled and monitored. Track is being kept of publications and citations on databases / search engines such as HeinOnline, WoSCC, Scopus and Google Scholar. H-indexes are monitored and stated in the Self-Evaluation Report.

By contrast, SSRN entirely remains out of the picture and the Faculty has not yet come to recognize SSRN as an important platform for scientific discussions and open access. Copyright concerns stated in the hearings as a reason for not being present on SSRN fail to convince as the institutions present on SSRN (e.g., numerous German Max Planck Institutes) have demonstrated how to overcome them.

*The HEI's scientific activity is evident in PhD theses.*

As PhD enrolment is notoriously low at the HEI (4 doctoral students for the entire review period; see Self-Evaluation Report, p. 85), publication output in terms of published PhD theses is also low. In fact, the Faculty's own staff pursuing a PhD at another Croatia HEI outnumbers the HEI's own PhD students (total number of 6). Albeit perhaps understandable from the *individual* researchers' perspectives (see Self-Evaluation report, p. 85), these choices of young academic staff at the HEI are regrettable from the

point of view of visibility and relevance of the HEI's own research output. Incentives should be found to render PhD studies at the HEI more attractive, in particular for in-house researchers.

*Teachers and associates of the higher education institution actively promote scientific achievements at national and international conferences.*

In the observed period, faculty members have actively promoted their research results at 200 invited lectures at conferences and 362 other types of presentations at scientific conferences and 71 professional conferences (Self-Evaluation Report, p. 86). For the 61 faculty members included in this collection of data, the average for invited lectures (as the top level of presentation types) is thus 0,65 per person per annum – i.e., roughly 1 every 1,75 years. Overall presentation frequency, according to this data, is 2 per person per year (Self-Evaluation Report, p. 86).

It seems from this data that particularly the presence of researchers at invited conferences could be intensified: One invited lecture (almost) every 2 years does not seem to be a sufficiently high number to successfully promote the HEI as a top-level research institution.

In addition, information obtained at the hearings suggests that more should be done to promote the organization of conferences at the HEI, particularly at the level of young researchers. They should be more actively encouraged to develop and organize conference formats and should be furnished, in particular, with adequate resources for this purpose particularly regarding time and finances.

**Recommendations for improvement**

- Further intensify and mainstream top-level publication activity as a whole, and international top-level publications in journals in particular.
- Break down monitored data into even more detail and different categories (type, market, provenance ...). Also, data categories should be checked for coherence and contradictions (e.g., different numbers of researchers included in publications index vs. presentations index etc.). Do utmost to avoid any doubts regarding selective or misleading representation of data.
- Encourage SSRN presence for researchers and develop a common Faculty policy for SSRN presence (e.g., merging Faculty Collected Series with SSRN or disseminate via SSRN, open separate SSRN distribution channel (e.g., SSRN Research Paper Series) etc.).
- Incentives should be found to render PhD studies at the HEI more attractive to improve the visibility of research conducted at the HEI and encourage PhD publications under the trademark of the HEI.

- The HEI seeks to provide help in publishing and to develop incentives to publish. This work and the awareness-raising activities should be continued and continuously assessed for actual impact and improvements.
- The presence of HEI researchers as invited lecturers at conferences should be intensified to better promote the HEI as a top-level research institution.
- More should be done to promote the organization of conferences at the HEI by young researchers. That group in particular should be more actively encouraged to develop and organize conference formats and should be furnished, in particular, with adequate resources for this purpose particularly in terms of time and finances.
- The HEI's Research Strategy should be worded in a more detailed, more committed and more forward-looking manner. More focus should be accorded to quality criteria to assess the research output as opposed to quantitative output. A preliminary exercise for this is to develop suitable quality criteria at the level of the HEI. Also, care should be taken in the Strategy to ensure equal or at least equitable contributions by all Chairs to the overall research effort of the HEI by formulating specific research or output-oriented commitments.
- The HEI should make efforts to attract and employ permanent academic staff with an international background. Insofar as international hiring would indeed be limited by national laws and regulations (e.g., requiring fluency in the Croatian language from the very beginning of the engagement), the HEI should engage in an open dialogue with the responsible Ministry with a view to loosening those requirements at least for certain internationalized legal disciplines.

**Quality grade:** Minimum level of quality

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

*The higher education institution monitors and takes into consideration the needs of society and labour market in planning its research activities.*

The HEI prides itself of a credible practice-oriented approach and excellent stakeholder relations (see also Self-Evaluation Report, p. 86 et seq.). The hearings essentially confirmed this impression.

Nonetheless, societal relevance of the HEI's activities, including consideration the needs of society and labour market in planning its research activities, could be even further



improved by the establishment of an Alumni club or a similar form of institutionalized, structured and comprehensively inclusive relations with graduates of the HEI.

*The higher education institution has an efficient support system for research and transfer of knowledge and technologies.*

The Faculty has set up an efficient research support system by various means, all listed in more detail at pp. 87 et seq. of the Self-Evaluation Report. The hearings essentially confirmed this depiction of support measures.

As regards knowledge transfer, the Faculty members as recognised experts in their fields of interest regularly engage in activities involving transfer of their knowledge and competences to both private and public sector (see Self-Evaluation Report, p. 88). The hearings also showed that the HEI is regularly present in popular media, such as TV, radio and newspapers, thereby contributing to knowledge transfer.

However, as was shown under 5.1, publication output and presence at national and international conferences, which are both traditional and effective contributions to knowledge transfer and knowledge dissemination to society for the legal discipline, could be significantly stepped-up.

*Teachers and associates participate in the activities of scientific, arts and professional organisations.*

The faculty members are very active in many scientific and professional associations, both nationally and internationally. In total, they are members to more than 50 scientific associations (see in detail Self-Evaluation Report, p. 89).

However, participation in such organisations is not limited to membership and administration, but should also be supported through active research input. As was shown under 5.1, publication output and presence at international conferences in particular, could be significantly intensified. The membership of Faculty staff in the various organizations could facilitate this task by more actively contributing to the conferences and publications under the auspices of such organizations.

**Recommendations for improvement**

- Consideration for the needs of society and labour market in planning the HEI's research activities could be even further improved by the establishment of an Alumni club or a similar form of institutionalized, structured and comprehensively inclusive relations with graduates of the HEI.
- Research output in the form of publications and lectures at conferences constitutes a traditional form of knowledge transfer for the legal discipline. Increasing that output as suggested under 5.1 would thus also further increase the HEI's efforts in the area of knowledge transfer.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

*Teachers, associates and professional staff have received university, national and international awards for their scientific / artistic / professional achievements.*

In the period under review, 20 Faculty members have received a total of 22 awards for their research and professional excellence (see Self-Evaluation Report, p. 90). 10 of them relate to research, 8 to teaching and 4 awards to professional achievements. However, only two of these awards appear to be international, while the rest seem to be national or even local awards.

Awards and prizes for publications are typically targeted towards young researchers, so they are predominantly an indicator for the research output on that junior level. For more senior research staff, a better indicator would be honorary doctorates and similar degrees and awards by other research institutions. No information was provided by the HEI regarding any such awards for senior staff.

*The higher education institution is a holder of an adequate number of scientific / artistic / professional projects (university, national and international projects).*

The Faculty is the leading or participating partner in a large number of research projects of different categories and both national and international (see Self-Evaluation Report, pp. 91 et seq.). Some of these projects are indeed quite prestigious such as the Horizon 2020 project Supporting and Implementing Plans for Gender Equality in Academia and Research – SPEAR, the ESF 2014-2020 project Praxis Iuris – Free primary legal aid and practice learning at the Faculty of Law in Rijeka and six different international research projects co-financed from the EU Justice Programme (where the HEI is a co-participant). This appears quite prolific in view of the small size of the HEI.

*Teachers, associates and professional staff participate as invited lecturers in an adequate number of national and international conferences.*

It was elaborated already under 5.1, above, that and why the current situation regarding invited lectures by Faculty staff, particularly regarding the international arena, appears dissatisfactory. The presence of HEI researchers as invited lecturers at conferences should be intensified to better promote the HEI as a top-level research institution.

*Teachers and associates are members of the scientific / artistic / professional boards of conferences, and editorial boards of scientific journals.*

Faculty members regularly served as members of 83 conference programmes and/or organisation committees over the five-year period under review here (see Self-Evaluation Report, p. 94). It is expressly not stated (although perhaps it might, with some considerable effort, be deferred from an analytic cross-reading and extra research invested in the Analytic Supplement's base data) in the Self-Evaluation or Analytic Supplement which number of researchers is included in this data. Even under the most favourable (smallest) presumption of group size, which is 44 (the number stated as active teachers in the short description of the HEI for this Report, p. 6 et seq. above), this only amounts to 0,38 appearances per person per annum – roughly 1 every 2,5 years on average. It was elaborated already under 5.1, above, that and why conference activities by Faculty staff in general, and by young researchers in particular, should be stepped-up. The average number obtained here reiterates this conclusion.

61 Faculty members acted as editors or members of the editing, programme or advisory board in 37 journals. More than two-thirds of those journals are international, 7 journals are indexed in the legal database HeinOnline, 6 in Scopus and/or WoSCC. Although the actual activity of Faculty members for each of these engagements cannot be assessed (notoriously, some editorial or other functions may involve no or only occasional activities), this appears sufficiently prolific.

#### **Recommendations for improvement**

- The HEI has established a recognizable and successful practice in attracting and co- or third-party-funded international research projects. This good practice should be continued.
- The presence of HEI researchers as invited lecturers at conferences should be intensified to better promote the HEI as a top-level research institution.

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

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

*The research development strategy is aligned with the vision of development of the HEI.*

It was elaborated already under 5.1, above, that and why the HEI's Research Strategy deserves more attention and elaboration in terms of detail and commitment: This concerns several levels, namely that Strategy's wording, the elaboration and mainstreaming of qualitative over quantitative elements, its forward-looking orientation and the comprehensive character of commitments made.

*Scientific activities are established by the strategic programme of the HEI.*

It was elaborated already under 5.1, above, that and why the HEI's Research Strategy deserves more attention and elaboration in terms of detail and commitment: In view of largely missing details and hard commitments therefore, the Strategy's prescriptive or even just incentive effect for research programs it cannot be assessed here.

*The HEI has appropriate resources for its scientific activities.*

The data provided (e.g., Self-Evaluation Report, pp. 96 et seq.) and the hearings revealed no major shortcomings in terms of the resources available to research. Funding seems adequate overall. Some funds are even – partly specifically (e.g., the financial recognition associated with the published papers award, also the research awards) and partly collaterally (e.g., the financial bonus on top of the salary) - set aside to aid the goal of constantly improving the quality of research at the HEI.

Improvements could however be made at the levels of (particularly) young researchers' encouragement to engage in and organize own conference activities, particularly by setting aside dedicated and pre-fixed funds for that purpose. Also, the transparency and impact of the financial bonus system seems currently hampered by an absence of pre-defined criteria for the distribution of the bonus. As one result, the correlation between scientific achievements and the payment of the bonus is unclear both ex ante and ex post.

*The HEI recognizes and rewards scientific achievements of its employees.*

Several awards are in place to recognize and reward scientific achievements by Faculty members (see, inter alia, Self-Evaluation Report, p. 97). This evidences that the HEI in principle recognizes and rewards scientific achievements by its employees.

The bonus system under which up to 30% of the basic salary can be paid out as an additional bonus serves as a further stimulus for quality research. However, because of the current lack of transparency of the financial bonus system, the correlation between scientific achievements and the payment of the bonus is currently unclear both ex ante and ex post. This should be remedied.

*The HEI continuously improves its scientific activities by appropriate financing, human resource management, investing in spatial resources, equipment and appropriate literature, supporting dissemination of results and development of doctoral theses.*

The data provided (e.g., Self-Evaluation Report, pp. 96 et seq.) and the hearings revealed no shortcomings in terms of financing, human resource management, investing in spatial resources, equipment and appropriate literature, supporting dissemination of results and development of doctoral theses. The excellent library equipment and professional and highly able library staff in particular were very positively noted by this Commission at the occasion of the site visit to the HEI.

### Recommendations for improvement

- The HEI's Research Strategy deserves more attention and elaboration in terms of detail and commitment (see, in more detail, under 5.1).
- More resources should be dedicated to particularly young researchers' encouragement to engage in and organize own conference activities, e.g. by setting aside dedicated and pre-fixed funds.
- The transparency of the financial bonus system should be enhanced by pre-defined criteria for the distribution of the bonus. A clear and pre-fixed correlation would improve the incentive to engage in specific activities (e.g. publications etc.).

**Quality grade:** Satisfactory level of quality

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

*Space and equipment for scientific research and professional activities is used in teaching at undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate level.*

The data provided (e.g., Self-Evaluation Report, pp. 97 et seq.) and the hearings credibly communicated that students profit from equipment used in research. One example is the excellently equipped and excellently staffed library (see also 5.4.), which is in 'dual use' for students as well as for the Faculty staff's research.

*Undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students are involved in scientific / artistic / professional projects of the HEI.*

Although the Self-Evaluation Report (p. 99) states that students at the graduate study level are commonly involved in project research when they write seminar papers or final or master theses under the supervision of Faculty members, our Commission does not consider these examples, which really seem to be rather a part of the regular teaching agenda, suitable to demonstrate student-specific project involvement. We would, instead, be looking for instances of co-publications between students and Faculty staff, co-organization of conferences or events or other project-specific involvement which includes an own input on the students' part. No hints for activities of this kind could be detected.

It should be stated however that student involvement in projects by Faculty staff might be a two-sided sword: There is an inherent risk of an unfair exploitation of the (unpaid or otherwise unrewarded) work students in such projects. Should the Faculty thus decide to more specifically and regularly involve students in actual research beyond the regular

teaching agenda, general guidelines governing the extent and type of involvement and recognition of involvement should be elaborated beforehand by the HEI.

*Both teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and doctoral theses reflect the scientific research and professional activities and achievements of the higher education institution.*

The hearings in particular highlighted the HEI's student-oriented and practice-oriented approach. It was credibly communicated that the engagement of Faculty staff in scientific activities translates to benefits for students in terms of teaching input, new formats and methods.

However, it was shown under 5.1. that and why the scientific efforts of the HEI overall should be strengthened further. The number of doctoral theses is notoriously low. If therefore those general weaknesses in the area of research of the HEI were remedied, teaching would profit accordingly.

#### **Recommendations for improvement**

- While Faculty staff's scientific activities well translate to benefits for students in terms of teaching input, new formats and methods, scientific efforts of the HEI overall should be strengthened further as explained in more detail under 5.1. Teaching would profit accordingly from any increase in research activities.
- Should the Faculty decide to regularly involve students in specific research projects beyond the general teaching agenda, guidelines governing the extent and type of involvement and recognition of involvement should be elaborated beforehand.

**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. 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, scientific/artistic and social).			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 needs of the society.				X
2.2. The intended learning outcomes at the level of study programmes delivered by the higher education institution are aligned with the level and profile of qualifications gained.			X	
2.3. The higher education institution provides evidence of the achievement of intended learning outcomes of the study programmes it delivers.			X	
2.4. The HEI uses feedback from students, employers, professional organisations and alumni in the procedures of planning, proposing and approving new programmes, and revising or closing the existing programmes.		X		
2.5. The higher education institution ensures that ECTS allocation is adequate.			X	
2.6. Student practice is an integral part of study programmes (where applicable).				X

<i>Quality grade by standard</i>				
<i>III. Teaching process and student support</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory level of quality</i>	<i>Minimum level of quality</i>	<i>Satisfactory level of quality</i>	<i>High level of quality</i>
3.1. Admission criteria or criteria for the continuation of studies are in line with the requirements of the study programme, clearly defined, published and consistently applied.				X
3.2. The higher education institution gathers and analyses information on student progress and uses it to ensure the continuity and completion of study.			X	
3.3. The higher education institution ensures student-centred learning.			X	
3.4. The higher education institution ensures adequate student support.			X	
3.5. The higher education institution ensures support to students from vulnerable and under-represented groups.			X	
3.6. The higher education institution allows students to gain international experience.			X	
3.7. The higher education institution ensures adequate study conditions for foreign students.			X	
3.8. The higher education institution ensures an objective and consistent evaluation and assessment of student achievements.			X	
3.9. The higher education institution 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. Teacher recruitment, advancement and re-appointment is based on objective and transparent procedures which include the evaluation of excellence.			X	
4.3. The higher education institution provides support to teachers in their professional development.			X	
4.4. The space, equipment and the entire infrastructure (laboratories, IT services, work facilities etc.) are appropriate for the delivery of study programmes, ensuring the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and the implementation of scientific/artistic activity.			X	
4.5. The library and library equipment, including the access to additional resources, ensure the availability of literature and other resources necessary for a high-quality study, research and teaching.				X
4.6. The higher education institution rationally manages its financial resources.		X		

### *Quality grade by standard*

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

## 2. Site visit protocol

<b>Reakreditacija Pravnog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Rijeci</b>	<b>Re-accréditation of the Faculty of Law University of Rijeka</b>
<b>Hahlić 6, Rijeka</b>	<b>Hahlić 6, Rijeka</b>

### *Edukacija članova stručnog povjerenstva u virtualnom okruženju/Education of panel members in virtual form*

	Ponedjeljak, 28. rujna 2020.	Monday, 28 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
<b>9:45 -10:00</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spajanje na poveznicu</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joining the ZOOM meeting via the</li> </ul>
<b>10:00 -</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Predstavljanje AZVO-a</li> <li>• Predstavljanje sustava visokog obrazovanja u RH</li> <li>• Postupak reakreditacije</li> <li>• Standardi za vrednovanje kvalitete</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pauza</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kako napisati Završno izvješće</li> <li>• Priprema povjerenstva za posjet visokom učilištu (rasprava o Samoanalizi i popratnim dokumentima)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of ASHE</li> <li>• Overview of the higher education system in Croatia</li> <li>• Re-accréditation procedure</li> <li>• Standards for the evaluation of quality</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Break</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to write the Final report</li> <li>• Preparation of the Expert Panel members for the site visit (discussion on the Self-evaluation report and supporting documents )</li> </ul>

**Ponedjeljak, 12. listopada 2020.**

**Monday, 12 October 2020**

**7:00 Polazak u Rijeku**

**7:00 Departure for Rijeka**

**Preliminarni posjet Stručnog povjerenstva visokom učilištu**

**Preliminary site-visit of Expert Panel members to the HEI**

	<b>Ponedjeljak, 12. listopada 2020.</b>	<b>Monday, 12 October 2020</b>
<b>9:50-10:00</b>	Spajanje na poveznicu ZOOM i kratki interni sastanak stručnog povjerenstva	Joining ZOOM meeting via the link and a short internal meeting of the Expert Panel
<b>10:00 – 11:00</b>	Sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstava s dekanicom i prodekanima	Meeting with the Dean and Vice-Deans
<b>11:00 – 12:00</b>	Sastanak s Odborom za osiguravanje kvalitete	Meeting with the Quality Assurance Committee
<b>12:00 – 13:30</b>	<i>Radni ručak</i>	<i>Working Lunch</i>
<b>13:30 – 15:00</b>	<b>Obilazak fakulteta</b> (predavaonice, informatičke učionice, knjižnica, prostorije za studente, nastavnički kabineti, knjižnica) i <b>prisustvovanje nastavi</b>	<b>Tour of the Faculty</b> (classrooms, computer classrooms, library, student services, rooms for student activities,) <b>and participation in teaching classes</b>
<b>15:00-17:00</b>	<i>Analiza dokumenata</i>	<i>Document analysis</i>

**Virtualni sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstva, diskusija o zapažanjima i impresijama s preliminarnog posjeta/Virtual meeting of Expert Panel members, discussion on observations and impressions from the preliminary site-visit**

	<b>Utorak, 13. listopada 2020.</b>	<b>Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2020</b>
<b>12:00 – 14:00</b>	Sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstava, diskusija o zapažanjima i impresijama s preliminarnog posjeta, pripreme za sastanke s dionicima visokog učilišta	Meeting of Expert Panel members, discussion on observations and impressions from the preliminary site-visit, preparation for the meetings with stakeholders of the HEI

**Prvi dan reakreditacije  
u virtualnom okruženju**

**First day of re-accreditation  
in virtual form**

	<b>Srijeda, 14. listopada 2020.</b>	<b>Wednesday, 14 October 2020</b>
<b>8:30 – 8:50</b>	Spajanje na poveznicu ZOOM i kratki interni sastanak stručnog povjerenstva	Joining ZOOM meeting via the and a short internal meeting of the Expert Panel
<b>8:50 – 9:00</b>	Spajanje na poveznicu ZOOM s upravom Visokog učilišta	Joining ZOOM meeting with the Management Board of the higher education institution
<b>9:00 – 9:30</b>	Sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstava s dekanicom i prodekanima	Meeting with the Dean and Vice-Deans
<b>9:30 – 9:45</b>	<i>Interni sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstava</i>	<i>Internal meeting of the panel members</i>
<b>9:45– 10:15</b>	Sastanak s: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Predsjednicom Odbora za osiguravanje i unaprjeđivanje kvalitete,</li> <li>• voditeljem Ureda za međunarodnu suradnju i</li> <li>• ECTS koordinatorom.</li> </ul>	Meeting with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chairperson of the Quality Assurance Committee</li> <li>• Head of the Office for International Affairs</li> <li>• ECTS coordinator.</li> </ul>
<b>10:15 – 10:30</b>	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
<b>10:30 – 11:30</b>	Sastanak sa studentima (otvoreni sastanak za sve studente)	Meeting with students (open meeting)
<b>11:30 – 12:30</b>	<i>Pauza za ručak</i>	<i>Lunch break</i>
<b>12:30 – 13:15</b>	Sastanak s alumnijima (bivši studenti koji nisu zaposlenici visokog učilišta)	Meeting with Alumni (former students who are not employed by the HEI)
<b>13:15 – 13:30</b>	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
<b>13:30 – 14:15</b>	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

14:15 - 14:30	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
14:30-15:00	<b>Organizacija dodatnog sastanka o otvorenim pitanjima - prema potrebi</b>	<b>Organisation of an additional meeting on open questions, if needed</b>
15:00 -	Interni sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstva - osvrt na prvi dan i priprema za drugi dan	Internal meeting of the Expert Panel members - comment on the first day and preparation for the second day

### Drugi dan reakreditacije u virtualnom okruženju

### Second day of re-accreditation in virtual form

	Četvrtak, 15. listopada 2020.	Thursday, 15 October 2020
9:30 - 9:50	Spajanje na poveznicu ZOOM i kratki interni sastanak stručnog povjerenstva	Joining ZOOM meeting and a short internal meeting of the Expert Panel
9:50 - 10:00	Spajanje na poveznicu ZOOM - VISOKO UČILIŠTE	Joining the Zoom meeting - HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION
10:00 - 11:00	Sastanak s nastavnicima, u stalnom radnom odnosu, osim onih na rukovodećim mjestima	Meeting with full-time employed teachers, except those in managerial positions
11:00 - 11:20	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
11:20 - 12:00	Sastanak s prodekanicom za sveučilišni studij i prodekanom za stručni studij	Meeting with the Vice-Dean for University Study Affairs and Vice-Dean for Professional Study Affairs
12:00 - 12:20	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
12:20 - 13:00	Sastanak s predstojnicima katedri	Meeting with Heads of Chairs
13:00 - 14:00	<b><i>Pauza za ručak</i></b>	<b><i>Lunch break</i></b>
14:00 - 14:45	Sastanak s asistentima i poslijedoktorandima	Meeting with Teaching Assistants and postdoctoral researchers
14:45 - 15:15	<b>Organizacija dodatnog sastanka o otvorenim pitanjima - prema potrebi</b>	<b>Organisation of an additional meeting on open questions, if needed</b>



<b>15:30 -</b>	Interni sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstva – osvrt na drugi dan i priprema za treći dan	Internal meeting of the Expert Panel members – comment on the second day and preparation for the third day

**Treći dan reakreditacije  
u virtualnom okruženju**

**Third day of re-accreditation  
in virtual form**

	<b>Petak, 16. listopada 2020.</b>	<b>Friday, 16 October 2020</b>
<b>9:30 – 9:50</b>	Spajanje na poveznicu ZOOM i kratki interni sastanak stručnog povjerenstva	Joining ZOOM meeting and a short internal meeting of the Expert Panel
<b>9:50 – 10:00</b>	Spajanje na poveznicu ZOOM – VISOKO UČILIŠTE	Joining the Zoom meeting – HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION
<b>10:00 – 11:00</b>	Sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstava s prodekanicom za znanost i prodekanicom za međunarodnu suradnju	Meeting with the Vice-Dean for Research and Vice-Dean for International Affairs
<b>11:00 – 11:20</b>	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
<b>11:20 – 12:00</b>	Sastanak s voditeljima znanstvenih projekata	Meeting with the Heads of research projects
<b>12:00 – 12:20</b>	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
<b>12:20 – 13:30</b>	<i>Pauza za ručak</i>	<i>Lunch break</i>
<b>13:30 – 13:45</b>	Završni sastanak s dekanicom i prodekanima	Exit meeting with the Dean and Vice-Deans
<b>13:45 – 15:00</b>	Sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstva – ocjenjivanje prema standardima kvalitete	Internal meeting of the Expert Panel members – assessment according to quality standards

## SUMMARY

The Panel is very impressed by the commitment, professionalism and propensity shown by the HEI in the pursuit of its manifold academic and teaching activities. The Panel would also like to express its gratitude to the HEI for the uninhibited support shown by its staff throughout the evaluation process which has greatly aided the performance of the Panel's tasks.

The Panel acknowledges the HEI's determination to positioning itself among the nation's top institutions for legal and paralegal teaching and research and notes the clear gradual progress that is visibly being made in that respect. The Panel had no difficulty in identifying and noting with satisfaction a number of good practices which are particularly distinctive for the HEI. The Panel is convinced that the strategic decisions taken towards the fulfilment of the HEI's commitments are promising and will bear fruit.

The Panel also acknowledges HEI's pro-active approach and readiness for improvements, as well as its determination for positioning itself as a student-oriented institution. Such efforts have been recognized, not only by the Panel but also by the student body, and have yielded positive results in terms of the quality of studying. The Panel also found that HEI's approach on increasing modernisation and thereby providing easily accessible services, data and information, are commendable and a good basis for further improvement.

Given that striving for excellency is never a static condition but a naturally continuous process, the Panel's analyses have yielded a number of areas for improvement and bundling of the HEI's efforts and formulated according recommendations. The Panel sees its role in that regard as a partner for dialogue and reflection together with the HEI and has taken accordingly strict care to devise recommendations which are both constructive and realistic.

Against this background, in sum, the Panel has found that in most of the areas relevant for the HEI's assessment, the HEI's overall performance yields a satisfactory level of quality and for some areas even a high level of quality. By contrast, the finding of a minimum level of quality is restricted to a handful of distinct areas. Not a single area was assessed as having an unsatisfactory level of quality.