



**Report
of the Expert Panel
on the Reaccreditation
of the University Postgraduate (Doctoral) Programme
History and Dialectology of the Croatian Language
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka**

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

The Report contains the following elements:

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

Members of the Expert Panel:

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

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

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

- Dr. Catherine MacRobert, Oxford University, United Kingdom,
- Dr. Ljiljana Reinkowski, Universität Basel, Switzerland.

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

- Lida Lamza, coordinator, interpreter at the site-visit and translator of the Report, ASHE.

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

- Management,
- Study programme coordinators,
- Doctoral candidates,
- Teachers and supervisors,
- Alumni.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme contained in the licence: Postgraduate university study programme History and Dialectology of the Croatian Language

Institution delivering the programme: University of Rijeka

Institution providing the programme: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka

Collaborating institution: Institute for Croatian Language and Linguistics

Place of delivery: Rijeka, Zagreb

Scientific area and field: Humanities, Philology

Number of doctoral candidates: 9 (4th generation) + 4 (3rd generation) + 3 (2nd generation) = 16

Number of funded doctoral candidates: 1

Number of self-funded and those funded by employer: 15

Number of inactive doctoral candidates (still entitled to graduate): 1

Number of supervisors: 15

Number of teachers: 15

Ratio of officially appointed supervisors and their doctoral candidates: currently, 5 supervisors / 6 doctoral students, i.e. a ratio of 1:1.2; cumulatively over past 5 years, 1:1.5.

Ratio of potential supervisors to total No. of doctoral students: not precisely definable, because supervisors are sometimes at other institutions, but not more than 1:1.5.

Classes / research ratio: 70/110 ECTS These are the allocations as defined by the HEI; but in fact many of the courses, especially the electives, are assessed through research projects, so a more realistic classes / research ratio might be 46/134 ECTS.

Classes: (70 ECTS): 46 ECTS for compulsory courses, 20 ECTS for elective courses and 4 ECTS for a research course.

Research part (110 ECTS): 65 ECTS for research obligations (consultations with the supervisor, project and other types of work) and 45 ECTS for the development and defence of PhD topic and thesis.

Learning outcomes of the study programme:

General: development of students' scientific reasoning skills and research competencies; critical thinking; skills necessary for professional advancement and research career development (independent work, planning and time management skills, organisational skills); skills in academic writing, presentation and discussion; skills in project development and teamwork; familiarity with e-tools and use of media in academic work; readiness to gain international experience.

Specific: development of competence in linguistic and textual interpretation of Croatian texts from the beginning of literacy until present day; acquisition of knowledge of basic developmental processes of organic idioms and their identification in literary texts; the ability to read language policy sub-texts; competence in linguistic and textual interpretation of Čakavian, Kajkavian and Štokavian texts; knowledge of transcription; the ability to conduct independent fieldwork research; familiarity with mechanisms and causative factors involved in linguistic change and with various research methodologies for investigating them.

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

Upon the completion of the re-accreditation procedure and the examination of the materials submitted (Self-Evaluation Report etc.), the visit to the higher education institution and interviews with HEI members in accordance with the visit protocol, the Expert Panel renders its opinion in which it recommends to the Accreditation Council of the Agency the following:

1. **issue of a letter of expectation** for the period up to three (3) years, in which period the higher education institution should make the necessary improvements. The letter of recommendation does **not** include suspension of student enrolment for the defined period.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. Use the new electronic platform to ensure prompt and comprehensive information about assessments and other programme requirements.
2. Collect and analyse feedback from students who drop out of the course, to find out whether any steps can be taken to reduce the drop-out rate and whether the expense of tuition fees is a contributory factor.
3. Introduce some formal training in academic presentation skills (citations and referencing, graphics, writing an abstract and keywords, a review, a paper for submission to a journal, editing papers, preparing an oral presentation etc.), if this can be done without overloading the first year of the programme.
4. As far as is compatible with doctorands' plans for publication, ensure that dissertations are accessible online.
5. Since students usually write their dissertations in Croatian, encourage them to publish articles in other languages.
6. Encourage students to participate in conferences and workshops which offer scope for comparative studies, such as the Leeds International Medieval Congress.
7. Pursue the possibility of setting up a Faculty-wide doctoral programme, in order to optimize use of financial and administrative resources and generic training.
8. Introduce more flexibility in the number and range of compulsory and elective courses and their timing over the first two years of the programme, in order to allow for the divergent interests and prior training of students, to avoid overload in the first year of the programme, to reduce their ECT weighting and to make the programme more nearly comparable to doctoral programmes in other European countries and therefore more attractive to foreign students.
9. Explore the possibility of introducing some electives in comparative studies of dialectology, development of standard languages, and multilingual cultures, again to make the programme more attractive to foreign students.
10. Explore the possibility of adjusting contractual hours of teachers and supervisors to include their contributions to doctoral programme, thus enabling a reduction in tuition fees.
11. Urge government to provide some financial support for this doctoral programme, which is needed for sustainable higher education and cultural life at the national level, but also continue to seek alternative sources of funding: EU Funds and projects, local community at different levels, private donors.

ADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. The only doctoral programme of its kind in Croatia, academically coherent, high in quality and valuable to institutions of national culture.
2. It currently attracts outstanding teachers and supervisors, including some from other countries, and students of high calibre.
3. It attracts applicants from other (Slavonic) countries.
4. There is a substantial research component in most of the class-based courses.
5. Students who have completed the programme successfully have had a high rate of success in gaining academic employment.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. The current rate of applications is not high enough to make the programme financially secure.
2. The specialized subject focus of the programme restricts numbers of applications, particularly by foreign students.
3. The quality and range of teaching and supervision are partly dependent on contributions by scholars from other institutions, and generally on staff who do not have contractual obligations to doctoral programmes.
4. Given the current moratorium on academic appointments, employment prospects may not be so good for future students: how many specialists in History and Dialectology of Croatian are needed at any one time?
5. High cost of tuition fees and other expenses (travel, fieldwork, conferences) for students.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. The substantial synopsis of the dissertation (about 40 pages) which is required for approval of the proposed research topic makes students engage fully with research at an early stage and lightens the burden of writing the dissertation up.
2. The supervisor is not a member of the committee which assesses the dissertation and does not take part in the defence.
3. Use of a detailed, anonymous student feedback questionnaire.
4. Use of Turnitin software to detect plagiarism (though this could only be of real use if it operated on a large Croatian language database).
5. An admirably clear, full and precise self-evaluation document which demonstrates good administrative control of the programme and a transparent financial basis for it.

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

Minimal legal conditions:	YES/NO notes
1. Higher education institution (HEI) is listed in the Register of Scientific Organisations in the scientific area of the programme, and has a positive reaccreditation decision on performing higher education activities and scientific activity.	YES
2. HEI delivers programmes in the two cycles leading to the doctoral programme, i.e., first two cycles in the same area and field/fields (for interdisciplinary programmes), and employs a sufficient number of teachers as defined by Article 6 of the Ordinance on the Content of a Licence and Conditions for Issuing a Licence for Performing Higher Education Activity, Carrying out a Study Programme and Re-Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions (OG 24/10).	YES
3. HEI employs a sufficient number of researchers, as defined by Article 7 of the Ordinance on Conditions for Issuing Licence for Scientific Activity, Conditions for Re-Accreditation of Scientific Organisations and Content of Licence (OG 83/2010).	YES
4. At least 50% of teaching as expressed in norm-hours is delivered by teachers employed at the HEI (full-time, elected into scientific-teaching titles).	YES
5. Student: teacher ratio at the HEI is below 30:1.	YES
6. HEI ensures that doctoral theses are public.	NO: Abstracts can be consulted online, and candidates are required to deposit electronic versions of their dissertations with the printed versions in the university repository, but not all are at present available online. However, the legal requirement for online publication through DABAR must allow enough time for doctorands to expand and publish their research in monographic form if they wish, since this may be important both for their research

	and for their academic careers.
7. HEI launches the procedure of revoking the academic title if it is determined that it has been attained contrary to the conditions stipulated for its attainment, by severe violation of the studying rules or based on a doctoral thesis (dissertation) that has proved to be a plagiarism or a forgery according to provisions of the statute or other enactments.	YES The University has procedures for revoking academic title, which are set out in the regulations governing study at the University, articles 75-77. Software to assist the detection of plagiarism is in (limited) use.
Additional/ recommended conditions of the ASHE Accreditation Council for passing a positive opinion	YES/NO (notes)
1. HEI (or HEIs in joint programmes) has at least five teachers appointed to scientific-teaching titles in the field, or fields relevant for the programme involved in its delivery.	YES
2. In the most recent reaccreditation, HEI had the standard Scientific and Professional Activity marked as at least "partly implemented" (3).	YES
3. The doctoral programme is aligned with the HEI's research strategy.	YES
4. The candidate : supervisor ratio at the HEI is not above 3:1.	YES
5. All supervisors meet the following conditions: a) PhD, elected into a scientific title, holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position and/or has at least two years of postdoctoral research experience; b) active researcher in the scientific area of the programme, as evidenced by publications, participation in scientific conferences and/or projects in the past five years (table 2, Supervisors and candidates); c) confirms feasibility of the draft research plan upon admission of the candidate (or submission of the proposal); d) ensures the conditions (and funding) necessary to implement the candidate's research (in line with the draft research plan) as a research project leader, co-leader, participant, collaborator or in other ways; e) trained for the role before assuming it (through workshops, co-supervisions etc.);	a) YES b) YES c) YES* The draft research plan is not required upon admission, but its feasibility is checked at a later stage, during preparation and submission of the thesis proposal; see section 2.6 of the Quality Assessment. d) NO: In spite of its national importance, the programme received governmental financial support only through a partial reimbursement of fees for research assistants in the first

<p>f) received a positive opinion of the HEI on previous supervisory work.</p>	<p>intake of students. Subsequent intakes have had to fund part-time study by working, usually on academic projects. However, these also have limited funding, which does not, for instance, adequately cover students' fieldwork.</p> <p>On the HEI's efforts to find supplementary funding and on the generous provision of other support for research, see sections 2.9 and 4.8 of Quality Assessment.</p> <p>e) YES f) YES</p>
<p>6. All teachers meet the following conditions: a) holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position; b) active researcher, recognized in the field relevant for the course (table 1, Teachers).</p>	<p>a) YES b) YES</p>
<p>7. The supervisor normally does not participate in the assessment committees.</p>	<p>YES (as of 2017)</p>
<p>8. The programme ensures that all candidates spend at least three years doing independent research (while studying, individually, within or outside courses), which includes writing the thesis, publishing, participating in international conferences, field work, attending courses relevant for research etc.</p>	<p>NO: The self-evaluation document attributes 70 ECTS (out of 180) to taught courses taken in the first and second years of the programme. However, it is clear from the course descriptions that most of them, especially the electives, are assessed through research, so a more realistic calculation of the ratio between taught courses and research might be 46/134 ECTS. This is still a relatively high proportion of</p>

	<p>taught courses, but it may be justified by the need on this programme to acquire subject-specific skills (for fuller discussion see sections 3.5 and 4.1 of Quality Assessment).</p>
<p>9. For joint programmes and doctoral schools (at the university level): cooperation between HEIs is based on adequate contracts; joint programmes are delivered in cooperation with accredited HEIs; the HEI delivers the programme within a doctoral school in line with the regulations and ensures good coordination aimed at supporting the candidates; at least 80% of courses are delivered by teachers employed at HEIs within the consortium.</p>	<p>/</p>

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

	Quality assessment (“high level of quality” or “improvements are necessary”) and the explanation of the Expert Panel
1. RESOURCES: TEACHERS, SUPERVISORS, RESEARCH CAPACITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE	
1.1. HEI is distinguished by its scientific/ artistic achievements in the discipline in which the doctoral study programme is delivered.	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The HEI is very active in the region and especially in Rijeka. Besides the well-established scientific conference “Rijeka Philology Days”, there is a reputable journal “Fluminensia” (A1) and its book series “Biblioteka časopisa Fluminensia” – all products of the work of the researchers engaged in the PhD program. It should also be mentioned that teachers of the programme are the cofounders of <i>Centar za jezična istraživanja Filozofskog fakulteta</i> and generally very active in the cultural public life of the region and the whole country.</p>
1.2. The number and workload of teachers involved in the study programme ensure quality doctoral education.	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>According to the lists of workload per person, a slight over-workload can be seen. This is due unfortunately to the fact that the work hours for the PhD programme are not counted towards the teachers’ working norm. This situation makes the whole programme more expensive for students. The program, as the only one of this kind in the country, would need in the future more financial support from the Ministry of Education (primarily grants). The programme is at the moment based on the huge enthusiasm of the teachers, who invest a lot of private time in order to guarantee the high quality of the program.</p> <p>We recommend that the contractual hours of teachers and supervisors should be adjusted to include their contributions to doctoral programmes.</p>
1.3. The teachers are highly qualified researchers who actively engage with the topics they teach, providing a quality doctoral programme.	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The teachers in the programme are among the highly esteemed scientists in the country. They are also very active researchers and specialists in the fields they teach. Since the programme is in fact a joint venture between the Faculty in Rijeka and the <i>Institut za hrvatski jezik i jezikoslovlje</i> in Zagreb, the programme provides a very positive intellectual and working synergy, and therefore an optimal framework for the research in specific fields, such as linguistics, history of language and dialectology.</p>

	<p>In the past five years the academic staff have published 55 books and about 400 scientific papers in national a1 and a2 journals, as well as in foreign journals.</p> <p>In addition, some of the teachers participated in workshops on how to teach academic methodology and academic writing.</p>
<p>1.4. The number of supervisors and their qualifications provide for quality in producing the doctoral thesis.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>Due to the long-standing tradition of research in Language History and Dialectology and especially due to the fact that all researchers in Croatia who are involved in these two fields support the program, there are enough highly qualified researchers. Most of the teachers are full-time professors and well-known scientists.</p> <p>The supervisors are in most cases motivated not by financial benefits, but by academic esteem and the possibility of being promoted in their working place (point system). Teachers also pointed out that they enjoy working in the programme because of their own scientific curiosity, since they widen their knowledge with each new doctoral project.</p> <p>Like the students, the teachers face the problem of financing their scientific work: attending foreign conferences and buying expensive books is often difficult. The lack of access to international data bases due to the bad financial situation is a problem teachers have to cope with as well.</p> <p>The number of supervisors is more than adequate – also because the number of students has unfortunately been shrinking during the last few years.</p> <p>Some teachers’ work load is over limit due to the fact that their working hours for the PhD programme are not counted towards their working norm (see section 1.2).</p>
<p>1.5. The HEI has developed methods of assessing the qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>Teachers follow the national requirements for promotion which are implemented at all Croatian scientific institutions. Since the prolongation of the working contract depends on the fulfilment of these conditions, teachers are highly motivated to follow them. The publication lists are proof of lively activity. The general impression was that the teachers showed a high level of enthusiasm to develop further their knowledge and competences in their own field.</p> <p>FFRI also offers workshops on mentoring. Teachers can also use the book <i>Priručnik za mentoriranje</i> which has been</p>

	written as a theoretical and practical support for work with doctoral candidates.
1.6. The HEI has access to high-quality resources for research, as required by the programme discipline.	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The HEI has access to high-quality resources only partly due to the unsatisfactory financial situation of the HEI. The biggest problem is the lack of appropriate access to important data bases.</p> <p>On the other hand, the HEI has a database of special dialectological in-field work. Many important (older) books have been scanned and are accessible.</p> <p>The programme needs more financial support in order to provide access to high-quality data bases. The main support could and should come from the Ministry but we recommend that alternative ways should be considered as well: EU Funds and projects, local community at different levels, private donors.</p>
2. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE PROGRAMME	
2.1. The HEI has established and accepted effective procedures for proposing, approving and delivering doctoral education. The procedures include identification of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social and economic needs.	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The University of Rijeka has detailed guidelines and templates for proposing, approving and delivering doctoral programmes, including a rationale for the programme in terms of academic, social, economic and cultural needs (supplied at http://uniri.hr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=362%3Aobrasci&catid=44%3Apropisi-i-dokumenti&Itemid=108&lang=hr).</p> <p>The particular importance of the doctoral programme in History and Dialectology of the Croatian Language in the context of the national strategic interests of Croatia and of UNESCO recommendations for preserving 'small' languages is explained in the self-evaluation document.</p>
2.2. The programme is aligned with the HEI research mission and vision, i.e. research strategy.	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The Faculty has a detailed and specific research strategy (http://www.ffri.uniri.hr/files/dokumentifakulteta/Strategija%20FFRI 2016-2020.pdf), which sets out general strategic goals, in particular academic excellence and quality assurance, interdisciplinarity, mobility and cooperation with other institutions, international networking, conferences and projects, non-academic partnerships, high levels of publication and visibility. The doctoral programme is clearly aligned with it in organizational and academic terms. The national uniqueness of this programme gives it a special place within</p>

	<p>the institutional strategy, which is acknowledged in four of the research themes adopted by the Faculty for the period 2016-20. The specific subject focus of the programme inevitably presents some challenges for the strategic goals of interdisciplinarity, mobility and international visibility and networking. These challenges are being addressed actively and with some success, for instance through the Erasmus scheme and through collaboration with teachers and supervisors from other institutions, including foreign ones.</p>
<p>2.3. The HEI systematically monitors the success of the programmes through periodic reviews, and implements improvements.</p>	<p>Minor improvement is necessary</p> <p>The programme has undergone two independent reaccreditation reviews, one organized by the University in 2010, the other by AZVO in 2014, and has implemented their suggestions for improvement, for instance by reducing the number and ECT weighting of taught courses and by removing the supervisor from the committees which assess the dissertation proposal and the dissertation itself (as of 2017).</p> <p>The Faculty has a number of procedures for monitoring doctoral programmes, including annual reports by supervisors and students, and detailed anonymous feedback forms from past and present students (examples were supplied with the self-evaluation document).</p> <p>The HEI was able to produce quantitative information about the numbers of dissertations (11) completed under this programme and of articles (15) published jointly by students and their supervisors, and about full academic employment achieved by the students who had completed the programme.</p> <p>However, the drop-out rate from this programme should be noted: 6 out of 16 in the first intake, 2 out of 7 in the second, 3 out of 7 in the third withdrew after the first year, apparently because their academic interests had changed or because they found the work-load too heavy. We recommend that feedback should be collected from students who leave the programme before completion, to see whether any steps can be taken to reduce the drop-out rate, and in particular whether the expense of tuition fees is a contributory factor.</p>
<p>2.4. HEI continuously monitors supervisors' performance and has mechanisms for evaluating supervisors, and, if necessary, changing them and mediating between the supervisors and the candidates.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The Faculty's regulations for doctoral programmes (http://www.ffri.uniri.hr/files/dokumentifakulteta/2014-07-17%20-%20Pravilnik%20o%20poslijediplomskim%20sveucilisni)</p>

	<p>m%20studijima.pdf) define the duties of study advisors and supervisors, as well as students' obligations towards them. A training workshop for supervisors was run in 2016. There is no formal procedure for rewarding successful supervision, but as payment to supervisors is made after the defence of the dissertation proposal, it presumably has to some extent the function of an incentive. For evidence of monitoring through annual feedback forms and of effective supervision, see section 2.3 above.</p> <p>The Faculty regulations allow for a single change of supervisor and indicate the procedure for this. Mediation between supervisor and student would be undertaken by the head of programme, but apparently has not so far been necessary. Both current and former students emphasized that their supervisors were readily available, devoted substantial time and effort to consultation and guidance and encouraged open critical discussion.</p>
<p>2.5. HEI assures academic integrity and freedom.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>Academic integrity is assured informally through example and guidance, and formally through the Ethics Committees of the University; it publishes an Ethical Code which deals, <i>inter alia</i>, with academic independence and with issues of discrimination, harassment, plagiarism and falsification. Electronic checking for plagiarism is available, though of limited usefulness because it requires a database in the relevant language, which is usually Croatian. Academic integrity is also guaranteed by the requirement for an external member on committees which evaluate proposals for dissertations and the dissertations themselves.</p>
<p>2.6. The process of developing and defending the thesis proposal is transparent and objective, and includes a public presentation.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>Most students who follow this specialized programme do not have a defined research proposal when they start and have to choose and formulate it with the help of their study advisor and prospective supervisor. They have a maximum of 2 years in which to do this (4 years for part-time students), while they acquire the knowledge and specific skills needed for research in the subject area, and within that time are required to produce a comprehensive dissertation proposal (about 40 pages, see sections 3.4 and 4.1).</p> <p>The University and Faculty regulations outline the procedures for assessing and defending the proposal, with templates for presentation and assessment which are available online; as indicated in section 2.5, the assessment committee includes at least one external member. The</p>

	Expert Panel had the opportunity to see examples of such documentation on its site visit.
2.7. Thesis assessment results from a scientifically sound assessment of an independent committee.	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The Faculty regulations outline the procedures for assessing the dissertation and for its public defence, with templates for presentation, assessment and recording the defence, all of which are available online; as indicated in section 2.5, the assessment committee includes at least one external member from a different university or institution. Candidates are expected to have at least one publication in an internationally or nationally competitive journal, and in practice have on average two such publications. The dissertation is usually in the form of a monograph and in Croatian, but permission may be granted to write in another language, and the 'Scandinavian model' of PhD on the basis of articles is mentioned as a possibility in the regulations. The Expert Panel had the opportunity on its site visit to see examples of records from the defence of dissertations.</p>
2.8. The HEI publishes all necessary information on the study programme, admissions, delivery and conditions for progression and completion, in accessible outlets and media.	<p>Minor improvement is necessary</p> <p>Full information about the programme is available online, and current students confirmed that they had no difficulty in finding what they needed online and through circular e-mails about academic and funding opportunities, as well as from their supervisors. However, the student feedback questionnaire indicates occasional failure in advance communication, for instance about arrangements for examinations, possibly because some teachers are based at other institutions. We recommend timely checks that information about assessments and other programme requirements is complete and accurate. The planned new platform for communication with students may assist with this.</p> <p>Calls for application to the programme are published on the sites of the University and of the Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics in Zagreb, in the daily press and by e-mail abroad. However, the number of foreign students has so far been limited to 4, either of Croatian origin or from other Slavonic countries. This may be inevitable, given the specific focus of the programme.</p>
2.9. Funds collected for the needs of doctoral education are distributed transparently and in a way that ensures sustainability and further development of doctoral education (ensures that candidates'	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The self-evaluation document contains a clear and detailed breakdown of the current use of tuition fees: to pay for class equipment, basic administrative costs, teaching, supervision and assessment. Teachers and supervisors</p>

<p>research is carried out and supported, so that doctoral education can be completed successfully).</p>	<p>have to be paid out of tuition fees because their contributions to the programme are extra-contractual. As long as this is the case, it must add to the cost of the programme. Implementation of the recommendation in section 1.2 would automatically make the programme less expensive.</p> <p>Much effort on the part of supervisors and organizers of the programme is devoted to helping students to secure supplementary funding through scholarships of Rijeka University or other local or national institutions and through Erasmus and other mobility programmes in various countries of Western and Central Europe. Additional funding is also needed on this programme for fieldwork, which is an essential part of dialectological research. We recommend that government should be urged to provide some financial support for doctoral programmes, in the interests of national sustainability of higher education and international academic competitiveness.</p>
<p>2.10. Tuition fees Rare determined on the basis of transparent criteria (and real costs of studying).</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The tuition fees are not as high as on some other doctoral programmes in Croatia and are carefully calculated to meet the costs of delivering the programme, but on the basis of larger intake numbers than are currently achieved. Consequently there is a shortfall in funding for fieldwork and for administrative support. This must be disadvantageous to students who specialize in dialectology, and in the long run must create problems for the sustainability of the programme. We recommend that ways should be explored to increase the number of students who take the programme, in order to ensure its financial viability, and to reduce administrative costs by including it in a Faculty-wide doctoral programme.</p>
<p>3. SUPPORT TO DOCTORAL CANDIDATES AND THEIR PROGRESSION</p>	
<p>3.1. The HEI establishes admission quotas with respect to its teaching and supervision capacities.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The quotas meet approximately the needs within the country. The enrolment statistics show that the numbers of students in fact have been decreasing from the beginning of the programme (2007). This is due to the fact that the working possibilities for such a specialised qualification are rather limited in the country. The best employers are the</p>

	scientific institutes which at the moment not allowed to open new positions.
3.2. The HEI establishes admission quotas on the basis of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social, economic and other needs.	High level of quality The same as above (3.1).
3.3. The HEI establishes the admission quotas taking into account the funding available to the candidates, that is, on the basis of the absorption potentials of research projects or other sources of funding.	Improvements are necessary Unfortunately, the funding at the PhD level is the weakest part of the possibilities for qualification within Croatia. There are almost no funds devoted to education on the PhD level, and if so, they are very small and do not even cover tuition fees. Only the research assistants are in a better position: they pay only half of the fees and get their salary from their institute where they are employed. All the other students have to pay the full tuition fee. Generally speaking, all students work on a full-time basis so that studying takes place in their “free time”. In international comparison (compared to most Western European countries) Croatian students are in a much more difficult situation. Funding of doctoral students is a major problem that in the future should be seriously taken care of on the national level, see recommendation in section 2.10.
3.4. The HEI should pay attention to the number of candidates admitted as to provide each with an advisor (a potential supervisor). From the point of admission to the end of doctoral education, efforts are invested so that each candidate has a sustainable research plan and is able to complete doctoral research successfully.	High level of quality There is a sustainable research plan for every student – though not from the very beginning. However, students are well taken care of by the advisor in the first year and by the supervisor from the second year onwards. Students are also obliged to write a big synopsis that provides them with a solid framework for their research project. It makes them also work regularly and develop clear ideas for their thesis. Students are also constantly encouraged and supported through intensive contact with their respective supervisor to develop and mature scientifically.
3.5. The HEI ensures that interested, talented and highly motivated candidates are recruited internationally.	Improvements are necessary The HEI does its best to attract all interested candidates from the country, but also from abroad: via internet it sends all the necessary information to potentially interested institutions within the country as well as abroad. The HEI strives to increase to increase in the future the percentage of international students by publicizing the programme beyond Croatia. There are no obstacles to enrolling foreign speakers and the thesis may be written in a language other than Croatian, e.g. English. However, since the programme is specialised and expects students to have solid Croatian language skills, the

	<p>programme might be difficult for candidates who are not native speakers.</p> <p>The programme might be also unattractive for students coming from countries where obligations in doctoral studies are much less (e.g. in Switzerland and Germany between roughly 10 and 30 ECTS). In such contexts candidates are expected to do much more independent work based on their scientific skills acquired during their undergraduate and graduate studies rather than attending additional (specialised) courses.</p> <p>See recommendations in section 4.7.</p>
<p>3.6. The selection process is public and based on choosing the best applicants.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The HEI has clear criteria on choosing their future students. Besides formal criteria (high-grade level, recommendations etc.), the candidates have to be already specialised in their field of study through their previous master's thesis. Since most of the students already work at scientific institutions, some of them have already published scientific papers as well.</p>
<p>3.7. The HEI ensures that the selection procedure is transparent and in line with published criteria, and that there is a transparent complaints procedure.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>In the enrolment process the HEI provides a three-member committee for candidate selection, who decide about the admission of candidates. The list of selected applicants is public and makes up part of the documentation sent by the Postgraduate Study Programme Board for the Faculty Board's approval. The students who do not fulfil the conditions cannot be accepted for the program.</p>
<p>3.8. There is a possibility to recognize applicants' and candidates' prior learning.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>Based on the regulations of the HEI it is possible to acknowledge applicants' prior learning record. The programme is open to students who have completed other philological studies and is not reserved only for those who have studied Croatian language.</p>
<p>3.9. Candidates' rights and obligations are defined in relevant HEI regulations and a contract on studying that provides for a high level of supervisory and institutional support to the candidates.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The candidates' rights and obligations are clearly defined and transparent. Besides the supervisor each student gets an advisor in the first study year who guides the student through all the challenges of the first two semesters. All interviewed students appreciate this structure very much. In this way the change to their respective supervisors is made easy and natural.</p> <p>Feedback and consultations based on HEI regulations are available. In fact, the students were generally very</p>

	<p>appreciative of their teachers' cooperation and readiness to help and support them.</p> <p>The students are especially encouraged to take part in conferences and acquire experience that will help them to mature scientifically.</p> <p>Unfortunately, here also the finances are the biggest obstacle to achieving this goal. In most cases the candidates finance their study themselves (see section 3.3). New possibilities in funding are partly offered by the Erasmus program.</p> <p>Given these conditions the biggest problem is that all students have full-time jobs and can hardly afford longer periods out of their paid work.</p>
<p>3.10. There are institutional support mechanisms for candidates' successful progression.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>Students' feedback was very positive about the Administration Office as well as about the whole organisation of the program, which is rather complex since it takes place at different locations. All important information is given on time. It was also emphasised that all supervisors take extra time to discuss the candidates' problems – organisational as well as those concerning the doctoral work itself.</p> <p>There was a suggestion by the students that the conditions and terms of examinations should be defined more precisely (see section 2.8).</p> <p>The HEI also strives to inform the students about all relevant and interesting conferences and encourage the students to take part.</p>
<p>4. PROGRAMME AND OUTCOMES</p>	
<p>4.1. The content and quality of the doctoral programme are aligned with internationally recognized standards.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The self-evaluation document states explicitly that class-based study is an integral part of this doctoral programme, amounting to about a third of it; this is consistent with the interpretation of ECTS suggested by the Expert Panel in section 8 of the additional/recommended conditions for accreditation. The justification for this feature of the programme is the range of highly specific skills which are prerequisites for research in the subject area. Parallels are offered from similar postgraduate programmes in the advanced study of national languages at other European universities, such as Cambridge, Krakow, and Prague. The course structure also is comparable to that of doctoral programmes in the USA. However, the ECT weighting of course work is significantly greater than it is for comparable</p>

	<p>programmes in German-speaking and Scandinavian countries, where a maximum requirement of 30 ECTs is usual; see recommendation in section 4.7.</p> <p>In addition to training in relevant skills, each student is required by the end of the second year of study to produce an extensive synopsis of the proposed doctoral research (about 40 pages), which discusses methodology, includes a literature review and presents a case study of data. Both current and past students emphasized the value of this preliminary written work, which is one indication of the substantial amount of time devoted to research in the initial years of the programme.</p>
<p>4.2. Programme learning outcomes, as well as the learning outcomes of modules and subject units, are aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF. They clearly describe the competencies the candidates will develop during the doctoral programme, including the ethical requirements of doing research.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The course descriptions include as their learning outcomes specific competences clearly relevant to research in the subject area (listed in the short description of the programme). Supervisors from the programme expressed the view that one of the purposes of the class-based component was to move students on beyond the level of the MA courses which they had taken, since these tended to focus on preparation for teaching and offered limited opportunities for critical discussion and research training. This view was supported by the students and alumni, who said that they had not been asked to repeat material covered in their BA and MA courses. They confirmed the statement of the self-evaluation document that the ethical requirements of research are communicated to students as a part of their training in research methodology.</p>
<p>4.3. Programme learning outcomes are logically and clearly connected with teaching contents, as well as the contents included in supervision and research.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The content and outcomes of the compulsory and elective courses relate clearly, logically and immediately to the History and Dialectology of the Croatian language and the subjects chosen for dissertations. The sample bibliographies achieve a satisfactory balance between authoritative classic works and recent publications, and include relevant general works, often published abroad, as well as studies specific to Croatian (The Expert Panel noted only one instance in which the bibliography largely consisted of works by the teacher of the course in question).</p>
<p>4.4. The doctoral programme ensures the achievement of learning outcomes and competencies aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The Expert Panel had opportunity to see a number of dissertations which had been successfully defended on this programme, and was in no doubt that they met globally accepted standards in methodology, literature review, solid</p>

	<p>evidential basis in relevant data appropriately analysed, substantial new findings and proper standards of academic presentation and citation, as expected of a piece of research conducted over 3 years full time (in practice most students on this programme work as research / teaching assistants and therefore carry out their research part-time over a period typically of 5-6 years).</p>
<p>4.5. Teaching methods (and ECTS, if applicable) are appropriate for level 8.2 of the CroQF and assure achievement of clearly defined learning outcomes.</p>	<p>High level of quality It is clear from the detailed course description, supported by the comments of present and past students, that most of the compulsory and elective courses on this programme are in fact conducted and assessed through seminar papers and interactive discussion, project and field work, i.e. as research training rather than <i>ex cathedra</i> teaching. Their aims and expected outcomes are defined clearly, in detail and at an appropriate level of academic sophistication.</p>
<p>4.6. The programme enables acquisition of general (transferable) skills.</p>	<p>Minor improvement is necessary The training which students on this programme receive - in critical analysis of literature and data, research methodologies, project and team-based field work, use of archives, planning their own research, writing applications for funding, giving presentations at conferences - entails the development through practice of a number of transferable skills. However, the alumni suggested that some formal training in academic skills (citations and referencing, graphics, writing an abstract and keywords, a review, a paper for submission to a journal, editing papers, preparing an oral presentation etc.) would be useful. We recommend that this should be made a component of the programme (as it is of the doctoral programme in Linguistics at the University of Zagreb), if this can be achieved without overloading the first year of the programme.</p>
<p>4.7. Teaching content is adapted to the needs of current and future research and candidates' training (individual course plans, generic skills etc.).</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary One of the explicit aims of this programme is to allow for the needs and interests of individual students by the provision of a wide range of elective courses and the possibility of replacing electives with other types of academic activity, such as writing articles or participating in conferences and summer schools. Students emphasized the extent to which both teaching and course choices were adjusted to the individual. They commented that the first year of the course involved a heavy workload, and some students expressed a wish to concentrate more on that component of the</p>

	<p>programme – History or Dialectology – in which they planned to carry out research (see section 4.7). However the general view, supported by alumni, was that the programme was well balanced and that a knowledge of both components was in fact a necessary preparation for advanced research and subsequent academic employment. Generic skills are developed through the various modes of teaching and study mentioned in sections 4.5 and 4.6.</p> <p>However, the Expert Panel felt some concern about current intake levels and employment prospects of students and therefore about the long-term viability of the programme, in view of its strictly national subject focus: the number of academic positions open to doctorands must always be limited, especially in present circumstances, and the number of foreign students can only be small. We recommend that consideration should be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - introducing more flexibility in the number, range and timing of compulsory courses, in order to allow for the divergent interests and prior training of students, to avoid overload in the first year of the programme, to reduce their ECTS weighting and to make the programme more nearly comparable to those in other European countries and therefore more attractive to foreign students; - slightly widening the focus of the course, by introducing electives or encouraging projects in comparative dialectology, language standardization and multilingual cultures. <p>The Expert Panel recognizes that any such changes will need to be carefully considered, in order not to undermine the balance and effectiveness of this high quality programme.</p> <p>We also recommend that, as students normally write their dissertations in Croatian, they should be encouraged to publish articles in other languages, in order to disseminate their research more widely, and to seek opportunities to participate in comparative and interdisciplinary workshops and conferences, such as the International Medieval Congress held annually in Leeds (http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/info/125137/international_medieval_congress).</p>
<p>4.8. The programme ensures quality through international connections and teacher and candidate mobility.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The teachers and supervisors on this programme are variously based at the University of Rijeka, the Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics, the Old Church Slavonic</p>

	<p>Institute, the University of Zagreb and universities in several other countries. They are engaged in a wide range of academic activities on the international level: as members of editorial and advisory boards, as reviewers, as participants in mobility programmes and collaborations (see sections 1.1 and 1.3 above). Together with the organizers of the programme they are active in encouraging students to participate in Erasmus and other mobility programmes (in Austria, the Czech Republic, Spain, Hungary, and several other countries in Western and Central Europe) as far as funding will permit. Both current and former students emphasized that their supervisors provided information about conferences and study opportunities abroad, co-authored articles with their doctorands, and integrated them into academic life.</p> <p>The programme has so far attracted 4 students from abroad (1 from Germany, 2 from Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1 from Belarus') with another in prospect (from Macedonia); its specific subject focus must necessarily limit its intake of foreign students, but the recommendations set out in section 4.7 may help to attract more students from abroad and so promote academic and cultural interaction.</p>
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*** NOTE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXPERT PANEL TO THE ASHE'S ACCREDITATION COUNCIL AND QUALITY LABEL**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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