REPORT

of the Expert Panel

on the

RE-ACCREDITATION OF

the University of J. J. Strossmayer in Osijek Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Date of the site visit:

April 7th and 8th 2014

May 2014

Contents

INTRODUCTION

This report on the re-accreditation of the University of J. J. Strossmayer in Osijek Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences was written by the Expert Panel appointed by the Agency for Science and Higher Education, on the basis of the self-evaluation of the institution with supporting documentation and a visit to the institution.

A re-accreditation procedure performed by 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), is obligatory once in five years for all higher education institutions working in the Republic of Croatia, in line with the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

The Expert Panel is appointed by the ASHE Accreditation Council, an independent expert body, to perform an independent peer review-based evaluation of the institution and their study programmes.

The report contains:
- a brief analysis of the institutional advantages and disadvantages,
- a list of good practices found at the institution,
- recommendations for institutional improvement and measures to be implemented in the following period (and checked within a follow-up procedure), and
- the detailed analysis of the compliance to the Standards and Criteria for Re-Accreditation.

The members of the Expert Panel were:
- Professor Gábor Betegh, Central European University, Hungary

- Ivona Bulić, student, University of Zagreb Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Croatia
- Professor Ann-Christin Cederborg, Stockholm University, Sweden (Panel Chair)
- Nika Jelaska, student, University of Zagreb Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Croatia
- Professor Maja Jokić, Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, Croatia
- Professor Johanna Laakso, University of Vienna, Austria
- Professor Gerhard Leitner, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany
- Professor Peter Stachel, Institute of Culture Studies and Theatre History, Austrian Academy of Sciences

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

- Dr. Josip Hrgović, coordinator
- Ivan Bišćan, support to the coordinator
- Đurđica Dragojević, translator

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

- The Management;
- The Working Group that compiled the Self-Evaluation;
- The students, i.e., a self-selected set of students present at the interview;
- Representatives of departments;
- Research project leaders;
- Young researchers;
- Study programme coordinators;
- Teaching and research staff.

The Expert Panel also had a tour of the library, IT rooms, student register desk, and the classrooms at the Faculty, where they held brief question and answer sessions with the students and non-teaching staff.

Upon completion of re-accreditation procedure, the Accreditation Council renders its opinion on the basis of the Re-accreditation Report, an Assessment of Quality of the higher education institution and the Report of Fulfilment of Quantitative Criteria which is acquired by the Agency's information system.

Once the Accreditation Council renders its opinion, the Agency issues an Accreditation Recommendation by which the Agency recommends to the Minister of Science, Education and Sports to:

1. issue a confirmation to the higher education institution which confirms that the higher education institution meets the requirements for performing the higher education activities or parts of activities, in case the Accreditation Recommendation is positive,

2. deny a license for performing the higher education activities or parts of activities to the higher education institution, in case the Accreditation Recommendation is negative, or

3. issue a letter of recommendation for the period up to three (3) years in which period the higher education institution should remove its deficiencies. For the higher education institution the letter of recommendation may include the suspension of student enrolment for the defined period.

The Accreditation Recommendation also includes an Assessment of Quality of the higher education institution as well as recommendations for quality development

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED INSTITUTION

NAME OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Osijek

ADDRESS: L. Jägera 9, Osijek

NAME OF THE HEAD OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: Ana Pintarić, PhD

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE: 11 departments

LIST OF STUDY PROGRAMMES:

Undergraduate level: Croatian Language and Literature

German Language and Literature

Psychology

Information Sciences

English Language and Literature

Hungarian Language and Literature

Philosophy

History

Pedagogy

Graduate level: Croatian Language and Literature – Teacher Education

Croatian Language and Literature – Literary Research

Croatian Language and Literature – Linguistic Research

Information Sciences

German Language and Literature – Teacher Education

German Language and Literature – Translation Studies

Written Heritage in Digital Environment (joint studies)

Psychology

English Language and Literature – Teacher Education

English Language and Literature – Translation Studies

English Language and Literature – Philology Studies

Philosophy

Hungarian Language and Literature – Teacher Education

Hungarian Language and Literature – Communication Studies

Pedagogy

History

Postgraduate level: Postgraduate university study programme in Linguistics

Postgraduate university study programme in Literature and Cultural Identity

Postgraduate university study programme in Pedagogy and Contemporary School Culture

NUMBER OF STUDENTS:

Full-time: 1282

Part-time: 127

NUMBER OF TEACHERS:

Full-time teachers: 90

External associates: 51

NUMBER OF SCIENTISTS: 90

TOTAL BUDGET (in kuna): 37,241,385.48

MSES FUNDING (percentage): 81,3%

OWN FUNDING (percentage): 18,7%

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION:

The Osijek Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences is a research and teaching unit of the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek. The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences is the legal successor of the Faculty of Education (1977 to 2004) and the Teacher Training Academy (1661 to 1977). The significant events that have marked the past decade of the Faculty are as follows: the transformation of the Faculty of Education into the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (2004/2005), the development and establishment of new study programmes, the development and establishment of three postgraduate (doctoral) university study programmes, and obtaining the documents for the renovation of the existing building and the construction of a new one.

The mission of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek is to be an active stakeholder in higher education and research in the field of humanities and social sciences, and educate students to meet measurable learning standards and acquire distinct knowledge, professional competencies and skills.

The faculty has a distinct geographical location between three state borders, providing specific opportunities for international cooperation and multilingual work at the institution. The Faculty has established 11 undergraduate university study programmes, 19 graduate university study programmes and 3 postgraduate university study programmes. In the recent years, traditional study programmes for teachers have been enriched by new programmes in social sciences and humanities

CONCLUSIONS OF THE EXPERT PANEL

ADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. The faculty has a strong interest in accomplishing high standard education and research and this has been appreciated. The staff mostly consists of young, dynamic, ambitious teachers and students. The impressive work done so far is due to the staff's efforts to establish a high quality faculty with both national and international interests.

2. Even if the faculty, at times, is not allowed by the University to employ additional staff, the management still tries hard to find solutions that can be considered as the second best. This fact is impressive.

3. Most of the teachers and students expressed the view that they were proud of being employed by, and conducting their studies at, this faculty; this is very favourable in an assessment like this.

4. It is worth supporting the attempts (1) to become an internationally renowned faculty and, at the same time, to stay rooted in the region and the country and (2) to maintain the traditional and continental European humanistic ideals and multilingualism, while incorporating output-orientation and metrics in research.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. The lack of opportunities to hire qualified teachers when needed is a serious disadvantage. The faculty needs to be allowed to hire more qualified teachers for teaching and support in research. If university regulations or the national ones appear to be the cause, they should be altered so as to give institutions more rights. The teachers who are not also researchers need not be trained in topics

that concern research activities. These teachers need further development within the activities that belong to their assignment.

2. The faculty has to improve its academic standards. It seems to rely too much on journals it is itself in control of. Publishing in such journals does not have the same impact as international journals in English or in German, for example. The faculty should reduce the number of journals published by the faculty. Staff should increase the number of publications in prestigious international journals without decreasing their national interests. The faculty ought to encourage researchers and PhD students to publish in foreign languages, while still publishing in the institutional journals which, as noted below, could have a more popular character, as channels of communicating not only to Croatian academic and expert community but also to the wider Croatian public. Such an effort can widen collaboration with well-known researchers outside Croatia, which they are in need of. Such an approach may lead to more international recognition.

3. The research performed seems to be based on individual efforts rather than on faculty or departmental project initiatives where more researchers work together on common themes of interest. When collaborating in such a way and with research groups abroad the researchers and the faculty can increase their opportunities to receive research money from, for example the EU.

4. There is a need to re-structure the faculty board as too many members participate without having been formally elected. Both the large number and the vested interests may lead to delays in decision-making and cause meetings to be inefficient.

5. There is a need to improve the students' opportunities to influence the decision-making and problem-solving processes at the faculty. They need feedback on the steps that have been decided on. The faculty should ensure that students do not feel intimidated to raise their concerns as it has been suggested by the discrepancy between complaints received through different channels. Some of

the students also expressed the need of increased and enhanced communication between them and the teachers. This criticism has to be taken care of. The students said this criticism was not a general statement but was about some individual teachers. It would therefore be important to work with teachers to improve communication with students. The process should be conducted anonymously unless results fail to become visible.

6. The faculty should ensure that students are informed about their rights, and are familiar with the University Code of Ethics.

7. The localities need to be improved, for example, by creating more library space for books and study areas for students. However, the faculty is aware of this problem and tries to do what it can itself do.

FEATURES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. Overall, the staff showed a deep interest in accomplishing a high standard of teaching and research in accordance with the law and good practice. The faculty has developed effective organizational structures and processes and formalized them in its documentation.
2. The way the staff organized counselling, mentorship and professional orientation services for students is impressive and they have plans for increasing their support to students with disabilities as well.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. Management of the Higher Education Institution and Quality Assurance

The faculty needs to improve its organizational structure:

(a) A smaller, more functional and elected Faculty Council is a high priority

(b) Its relationship with departments needs clarification; they may need a similar organization with elected heads.

(c) Its relationship with other faculties and the rector's office was not discussed enough, but passing remarks on overlaps in teaching, name-giving of faculties, etc. suggest there is space for improvement. Some of that may suggest steps beyond the brief of this panel so we refrain from commenting.

(d) The faculty might look for inspiration to universities in Europe, such as Germany, Sweden etc.

2. Study Programmes

- The evaluation of teaching and teachers should be improved, developing questions which reveal really relevant aspects of the quality of teaching.
- The study programmes (at least short descriptions of them) should be available on the website in English as well.

3. Students

- There seems to be a diverse range of the level of student involvement in the Faculty management, depending on the departments. We would like to encourage departments that recognized the importance of student participation to put more pressure on departments that seem to avoid student participation. Namely, the election mechanisms for student representatives do not seem to be fully solved. In some departments student representatives are not invited to all departmental meetings, and are not sufficiently involved in the discussions of strategic planning and the decision making procedures.

- The general information level about appeal processes, the rights of student representatives etc. are not widely known. Short and very to the point brochures, like the ones developed for accessing databases could be helpful, especially if put online where they can be accessed on a needs basis.

- We would like to advise the Faculty to use the general positive attitude and students' suggestions to their advantage. Students can be a crucial partner in the Faculty's requests towards other key actors (like the University and the Ministry) for better institutional support.

- The mentoring system that exists in most departments where a professor is assigned to mentor students is a feature of good practice. It might be beneficial to use a similar system that would assign senior students as mentors for students in their first or second year. This might help de-burden the professors (as there seems to be a general lack of permanent teaching staff), create a more balanced status, and disseminate information to a broader audience. Obviously, such a system would have to be on a voluntary basis and cannot replace formal communication from the Faculty management to the students, but it could help to involve a larger number of the student body.

- Student surveys seem to lack questions that the students want to answer. It would be advisable to include students while devising these surveys, as this would help more efficient evaluations and needs assessments.

4. Teachers

- The faculty is devoted to accomplish high qualification of their scientific teaching staff. The problem is that they do not always get the opportunity to hire additional teachers because the university does not allow them to. This may be a university stipulation and not easy to change. This means that it is not their fault that they are not always able to employ the right people to courses where they really need to have qualified teachers. As it is there is an insufficient number and thematic variety of teachers.

- There is a need to encourage all teachers to improve their support to and communication with students, as currently there is variation in this regard, while it does seem that the majority are doing their best.

- Current efforts to train staff are commendable. However, they should be better targeted to ensure that everyone has access to further training suitable to their current position and work they are doing at the institution.

5. Scientific and Professional Activity

As Faculty intends to be "…a strong regional, international and national centre of humanities and social sciences with focus on systematic development and strengthening of its research groups…" (Self-evaluation document, pp. 28), its scientific activity needs to be widened and improved.

- Research should be allowed to continue by individuals but more group-oriented projects tend to have a greater impact and lead to inter-departmental and interdisciplinary debates. The faculty should stimulate a broad debate about how to conduct research and assign funding better.

- International cooperation needs to be developed and enhanced. Especially those departments which now have less international activities should be encouraged to look for cooperation partners, more ambitiously and geographically more widely than now. Collaboration needs to be increased on regional and international level, visible through co-authored peer-reviewed papers and publications. More contributions to international peer-reviewed journals per year, per departments, and per scientist will be necessary. Emphasis needs to be put on collaboration with language-oriented institutions, e. g. German, Hungarian, and other Slavonic languages. It will be necessary to attract more funding from

international/European funding agencies, and to play a more visible role in the creation and organization of international projects.

- Acknowledging the importance of publishing in the local languages, part of the resources now used for "home journals" could be reallocated into popularisation of research, while scholarly publishing should aim at internationally accessible and higher-ranked journals.

6. International Cooperation and Mobility

- The website, at least its most relevant contents (short descriptions of research foci and study programmes, international cooperations), should definitely be available in English as well.
- The Faculty should consider offering courses of Croatian as a foreign language especially for exchange students and visitors.
- The faculty should ensure, as far as possible, the acknowledgement of the credits earned by students at foreign institutions during their mobility programmes. This might significantly increase students' willingness to participate in such programmes.
- The Faculty should encourage both its students and staff to participate in exchange programmes abroad. There seem to be some structural issues with mobility – for some reasons students are reluctant to participate. This should be further investigated and properly addressed. Cooperation with more attractive universities might help.
- While there are individual cases of excellent international cooperation, there seems to be a general lack of publishing, cooperation and recognition of the

importance of assessing the Faculty's value on a more global and international scale.

- It is necessary to offer foreign language courses in order to attract more students, also from abroad (but also, give the possibility to domestic students to learn how to use these languages in their future career more efficiently). As noted above, the English website will be necessary to achieve this.

- The Faculty has the possibility to make multilingualism a part of its strategic goals – this should be developed by inter-departmental planning and used as a strong asset. The importance of Croatian as a "key" to other Slavic languages of the region should be emphasized, together with encouraging more students to learn the languages of regional minorities. The Faculty (and University) would profit from using their past heritage.

7. Resources, Administration, Space, Equipment and Finance

- The IT support quite obviously needs to be improved. The Faculty building should have an EDUROAM WiFi access, and the databases licensed to the Faculty library should be made accessible (for instance, by way of a VPN connection) for faculty and students in home use (i.e. outside the physical university network) as well.

- For the planning of international research applications and cooperations, more supporting staff or funding (for instance: project startup funding for hiring talented advanced students or postgraduates as project planning assistants) would be needed.

- There is a serious lack of available space, especially for the library. The faculty is aware of that problem and has concrete plans to solve this (new building).

- Students criticise the opening times of the library as much too restricted and the number of textbooks in the library is too small.

- There is also a lack of computer workplaces for students, especially in courses of the Information studies (fewer computers than students). A wireless network is not available.

- The overall ratio of teachers to students is excellent, although in some departments (e.g. History, Psychology) the number of teachers is rather low, so that teachers have to teach a very wide variety of topics.

- There is a serious lack of optional courses. In contrast to other Croatian universities, there is no possibility to include optional courses from other departments in the individual study-plans of students.

- According to information provided by staff-members, the financial situation in general seems to be satisfactory, although there are some deficits in the number of non-teaching staff. Personal resources of the administration are not convenient.

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE TO THE STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR RE-ACCREDITATION

Institutional management and quality assurance

1.1.*In line with its mission, HEI developed a strategic plan, and all the stakeholders were included in its development and implementation. Strategic plan includes strategic goals, operational plan and monitoring mechanisms.* It is not clear what the faculty understands of stakeholders. It seems they only include individuals from few public institutions at the moment. Also, monitoring mechanism for teachers - the student survey - might be improved in order to get more relevant data.

1.2. *The institution has developed effective organizational structure and processes and has formalized them in its legal documents.* The institution has all necessary legal documents.

1.3. *Higher education institution, as a university constituent, actively contributes to the goals of the university and has aligned its strategy with the university strategy.* We did not have the opportunity to speak to university representatives at the Rector's Office. The faculty is trying to follow all the legal documents they are supposed to abide by. It would have been important to learn about university plans regarding its role as a regional

university, and the intentions behind establishing programmes in humanities and social sciences at other institutions. The faculty strategy was completed before the university one, and then aligned with it.

1.4. *All study programmes are in line with institutional mission.* The number of qualified teachers must be increased. However, the faculty has done a lot of work on improvement of study programmes and what we have seen is satisfactory for the most part. The philological disciplines are organized like most other continental European faculties in that language and literature are together. It might be useful to encourage cross-disciplinary activities in both. The English Department seems quite active in research, while the German and Hungarian ones are less so. In line with the faculty's endeavour to stay rooted in the region, it might encourage work on the multilingual heritage of the region and encourage applied research and teaching the pluricentric reality of languages. An analogous statement could be made about literature. The Philosophy Department clearly lacks qualified teaching staff to cover important areas of the subject. This problem could be alleviated with the involvement of external, part-time faculty members.

1.5. *Higher education institution has quality policy and procedures that include collection and analyses of relevant data, with the purpose of ensuring and improving the quality of all institutional activities. These procedures include students and stakeholders from private and public sectors, and civil society organisations* A number of quality mechanisms are in place, and the faculty has worked hard on quality policy. Students should be uniformly involved as equal participants, as well as all relevant stakeholders. The procedures should be more inclusive. The power division seems fairly uneven, with a lot of power in the hands of a fairly small number of staff, especially at certain departments. This deficiency should be rectified when substantial structural changes are made. As for grading staff, the average grades in student surveys are high, but some of the questions there do not seem to be relevant. It seems that the high survey grades are partly the result of questions which generally retrieve positive answers ('Does the teacher arrive on time?') and have little relevance for the quality of teaching.

1.6. *Higher education institution has functional mechanisms for monitoring and improvement of teaching quality.* Student surveys should be improved to make them more relevant to students and enable substantial improvement of teachers.

1.7. *Higher education institution has functional mechanisms for monitoring and improvement of research quality.* The Faculty could work on attracting more projects and more competent researchers by improving its official networking etc.

1.8. *The institution has effective mechanisms for monitoring unethical behaviour in teaching and research, and all the employees and students are informed thereof.* Not all students are fully informed on major issues. Importantly, their understanding of the complaint procedures is vague. The dissemination of information should be improved. Students rely too much on individual contacts with teachers and management in solving issues. Formal procedures, which include complaint mechanisms, should be established.

Study programmes

2.1. *HEI has effective procedures for monitoring and improving the quality of study programmes. The procedures are used for monitoring development, innovation and improvements to existing study programmes. These procedures include students and stakeholders from private and public sectors, and civil society organisations.* Full student and stakeholder inclusion is an issue as noted above.

2.2. *Taking into account the needs of society, proposed enrolment quotas are justified.* It seems that the university is producing too many librarians as a whole, and there are potential issues with employability in other overlapping programmes which are not necessarily caused by this faculty, which seems to pay close attention to employability.

2.3. *The enrolment quotas are in line with the institutional resources for quality teaching and pass rate analysis.* There is a lack of scientific staff, and then there should be more elective courses , allowing more specialization for teachers. This was one of the major

complaints we heard from students from various departments, however, there might be issues with librarians and philosophy students in particular.

2.4. *Defined learning outcomes clearly describe the knowledge and skills students obtain upon the completion of study programme.* The diploma supplements and learning outcomes are good; however there are issues with particular programmes. Also, new programmes are pending for approval and there will be developments here.

2.5. *Teachers at a study programme ensure that the assessment of student learning is in line with the defined learning outcomes, that the full range of learning is being assessed, and that the assessment is appropriate to the qualification level.* The procedures are being modified.

2.6. *Allocation of ECTS reflects the realistic estimate of student workload.* There are problems with the ECTS allocation mentioned by both teachers and students, unfortunately, however, they cannot be changed without a new programme evaluation at the university. New programmes are pending for approval and ECTS allocations should be improved when they are adopted.

2.7. *The content and quality of each study programme conforms to internationally recognized standards, and is based on the latest scientific discoveries.* There are quality issues with Hungarian and philosophy in particular. As for Hungarian language and literature, the problem seems to be in the frame of reference: the department sees itself in relation to the Hungarian national-philology paradigm, serving the interests of the Hungarian ethnic group and the region and cooperating mainly with the geographically closest Hungarian universities, and there are few signs of outlook or cooperation in the direction of general linguistics or literature beyond the national classic canon, applied linguistics (research into language teaching and learning would be particularly important considering the teacher-training function of the department), multilingualism and minority studies beyond the Hungarian tradition, etc. (This, of course, is a classical problem of national philologies *extra muros* in general, but for historical and political

reasons it is often a particular problem with Hungarian departments abroad.) It also seems that the Hungarian department, although the number of applicants to its programmes is relatively high, does not attract high-achievers, which indicates that higher scholarly ambition would be needed to make the study programme more attractive for talented students. Although the faculty members at the Philosophy Department show strong commitment to the subject, the study programme of the department is inadequate. Students get their degrees in philosophy with practically no exposure to analytic philosophy, which constitutes at least one half of philosophy as practiced in the world. A more balanced approach to the subject is required. The teaching methods practiced at the Philosophy Department should also be modernised.

2.8. *Teachers use teaching methods that are appropriate for subject matter and different ways of learning, and encourage independent student learning.* The faculty is trying to communicate and train their teachers and they have recently introduced peer review and trainings – however, these have yet to be spread throughout the institution as currently the participation is voluntary and not everyone participates. Of course, there will always be room for improvement in this aspect.

2.9. *Appropriate supplemental resources, including electronic journal databases, scientific literature and other sources that aid in acquisition of knowledge, are made available by the teachers.* There is good access to databases, some bought by the Faculty from its own income, and great instructions for students on how to use them; the library is user friendly while lacking in infrastructure. According to what we have heard from the students, teachers generally do their best to make resources available to students.

2.10. *As appropriate to learning outcomes, students have opportunities to reinforce and apply their learning in the context of practical applications, such as through internships, business partnerships, community service, or similar arrangements.* There is variation among study programmes and departments, some are fairly good, and some need to be improved substantially. In teacher training in particular, it seems that the amount and quality of school practice is experienced by students as insufficient.

Students

3.1. *The competencies of applicants evaluated upon admission are aligned with the demands and expectations of their future careers. HEI performs regular analyses of the admission criteria, taking into consideration students' academic success.* Admission criteria are constantly assessed for effectiveness and revised. This could use a more methodological approach, by which we mean long term planning. Of course this cannot be assessed fully at this moment because the new centralized procedure has been recently introduced.

3.2. *The institution supports students in their extracurricular activities.* There are no credits for extracurricular activities like conferences or volunteering; the faculty might consider introducing those, in addition to providing additional funding for this.

3.3. *The institution offers counselling, mentorship and professional orientation services to ensure personal and professional development of the students.* There is a good mentorships system, there is counselling offered and more seems to be planned in terms of 'learning how to learn' workshops for students. There is also a plan to improve work with the disabled. However, this is the next step. The faculty keep close contact with students.

3.4. *Knowledge assessment procedures and methods are established and published. Various methods of knowledge assessment are used, including teachers' feedback aimed at improving student learning, and students have the possibility to appeal against a decision concerning their assessment.* There are well worked-out offices and mechanisms to file, discuss, and process student complaints. However, at least some students seem to fear negative consequences of complaints. This is indicated by the fact that numerous student complaints arrived at the anonymous site opened and operated by ASHE, whereas no such complaints were filed at the Faculty's own, similarly anonymous site.

The Faculty should investigate the source of this discrepancy and it should introduce more effective means to receive and deal with student grievances and complaints.

3.5. *HEI maintains contacts with its former students and collects statistic data on their employment.* Individual professors communicate with individual students and there is an alumni database, plus labour market surveys. However, we feel that this has just been launched and can develop in the future. In addition, we were not able to decide definitely if the contact is done at the individual or faculty level, and if they aim to include all alumni.

3.6. *The institution regularly informs the public about its study programmes, learning outcomes, qualifications and employment opportunities.* Fully implemented (for Croatian speakers at least).

3.7. *Students can express their opinions and give suggestions for improvement; they can also influence the decision-making and problem-solving processes on issues that concern them.* There are a lot of procedures but, as already noted, many students currently seem clueless on their options, or are not eager to use them. This should definitely be more discussed with students, as currently some teachers are very open while others less so. All departments should aim to have students actively participating at meetings.

3.8. *Students receive feedback on the measures that have been taken on the basis of their opinions and suggestions for improvement of the quality of studying, as well as the measures that have been taken in order to solve the problems that affect them.* Students do know the results of surveys, however they would like to have more participation, more say in study programme design, and more relevant questions in the surveys, as already noted. Most teachers are dedicated to communicating with students, some need to invest more efforts and, as in any other higher education institution, some will always just need to be retired.

Teachers

4.1. *Number and qualifications of the scientific-teaching staff are in line with strategic goals of the institution and adequately cover core disciplines. The institution employs a sufficient number of qualified full-time teachers to ensure the quality and continuity of teaching and learning on all study programmes.* The faculty is devoted; the question is if they have sufficiently high standards in academic training for all teachers. It is not their fault that they are not able to employ more people, but something should be done about it as now there is an insufficient number and thematic variety of teachers. We understand that this does not depend on the faculty and that they have been put in a difficult situation by the system.

4.2. *The institution carries out the policy of growth and development of human resources, especially taking into account potential retirements and sustainability of study programmes and research activities.* Faculty staff consists mostly of younger academics and the question of retirement only occurs now and then. When it happens this is planned in advance and taken into account.

4.3. *The institution takes into account the number of full-time teachers, maintaining the optimal ratio between students and full-time teachers.* The faculty seems to meet the "minimal criteria", but the situation varies between departments. On the other hand they do seem to be doing their best according to the circumstances as noted above (see 4.1.)

4.4. *The institution has well-developed policies for scientific-teaching staff that ensure their professional development, as needed to advance the institution's mission.* The faculty organizes or supports numerous workshops, trainings, and development policies. However not everyone should be trained in everything they offer, and the general scientific level and international connections should be much improved. We appreciate the work that has been done regarding the circumstances but they should really ask for

and take advice from foreign peers, as they need support regarding higher scientific level and international connections to prestigious universities.

4.5. *Policies governing the assignment of teachers' workload provide for a fair and equitable distribution of effort and include teaching, research, mentorship and student consultations.* We got a clear impression that most of the teachers are putting in a lot of work in their teaching, research, mentorship and student consultations while others do not necessarily do so.

4.6. *HEI ensures that teaching and research activities of the employed teaching staff are not affected by their external commitments.* Fully implemented.

Scientific and professional activity

5.1. *The institution has a strategic research agenda, the implementation of which is monitored, evaluated and reviewed through defined performance indicators.* There is a research agenda and implementation plans, however the content needs to be improved as the standards are not good enough for the future. They should focus on more competitive journals and projects and really set an agenda, not simply collect what people are already doing and put this into a strategy. Regional, European etc. strategies should be taken into account more systematically. They should select priorities, be it educating professionals, becoming a regional hub in specific fields, etc. As we did not have any direct contact with the university management, we had no opportunity to find out whether and how the research agenda of the faculty corresponds to the strategies of the university as a whole.

5.2. *In planning and implementing its research agenda, the institution clearly envisions and provides for cooperation with other scientific organisations, both in Croatia and abroad.* There is no clear vision of cooperation, they are struggling with what they do have and do not aim for much more. There should be more systematic work, as they are now aware that much is done solely on the individual level. They should be more ambitious and aim for cooperation with a larger number of prestigious institutions.

5.3. *The institution has an adequate number and profile of researchers for the implementation of its strategic research agenda.* The strategic research agenda is somewhat fuzzy so this is difficult to answer.

5.4. *HEI has an adequate number of high-quality scientific papers (published in prestigious scientific journals or by prestigious publishers), providing a significant, global contribution in its scientific field.* The management have already introduced some incentives, such as the prize for the best publications, to raise the level and international visibility of publications. However, there should be much more efforts put into international publications as the management are well aware, and avoid publishing in regional-level 'article cemeteries' - journals which do not have an impact outside the country and the region. We understand the wish and the need to publish locally and this should be maintained, but a portion of funds for home journals could be better spent elsewhere.

5.5. *The institution has effective mechanisms in place for recognizing and encouraging excellence of its employees, including a reward system based on scientific productivity.* There is lot of encouragement and incentives for publishing abroad, however they did just start with these.

5.6. *HEI has an adequate number of peer-reviewed scientific publications.* There is a lot of struggle here, because the general criteria in the country were anti-excellence, however there is understanding that they should publish more internationally. They should work more on targeting the internationally recognized journals.

5.7. *HEI has an adequate number of domestic and international projects.* Vast majority of projects are domestic, they should strive much more. Also, there is an unequal distribution of projects, with some departments being much more active than others. Currently there is only one FP7 project, and as envisaged by the strategy these should be increased, with more networking aimed at attracting Horizon 2020, Erasmus + and other types of projects, as part of the staff is already trying to do. The inequality between

departments should also be dealt with by developing more effective incentives to mobilise the inactive departments as well.

5.8. *HEI encourages technology transfer, and cooperation for the transfer of knowledge with the industry and/or public sector.* There is a lot of work with schools, libraries etc. Cooperation with industry (including public organisations) and business should be improved and made more systematic.

5.9. *In accordance with its mission, HEI supports professional activities, services and counselling, maintaining an optimum ratio between making additional earnings and its core activities.* There are a number of lifelong learning programmes bringing funding which do not seem to threaten their other activities.

5.10. *HEI carries out a high-quality university postgraduate (doctoral) study programme (with an adequate number and profile of mentors). PhD students are actively involved in scientific research at the institution, and the institution ensures that they complete their doctoral studies within a set time period.* There are support courses in methodology and writing, however it is unfortunate that we did not manage to meet any current doctoral students who work outside of this institution. Former doctoral students working here did seem content with the programme.

International cooperation and mobility

6.1. *The institution enables and facilitates mobility of students from other higher education institutions.* We did meet graduates from other institutions who transferred to a graduate programme and mobility is high in general, however there should be more choice in electives among departments and within the university, and foreign language courses are still in planning. Cooperation with students who are working here and are at other doctoral programmes is good.

6.2. *In keeping with the international context of study programmes, students have opportunities to complete a part of their programme abroad.* Students seem reluctant to participate in mobility, although they do have opportunities. They should be encouraged more and it should be investigated why they are not more eager to participate in mobility - especially if there are potential issues with credit recognition or mere self-confidence of students who are good and should be made to understand that they do speak foreign languages and can compete internationally. More prestigious universities should be included in the agreements as soon as possible.

6.3. *Higher education institution encourages international cooperation and mobility of its teachers (researchers), and analyses the implementation of this international experience in their activities.* There are some opportunities and encouragement; however this should be much improved by creating opportunities for longer stays. There are opportunities for the staff to take time off from teaching to go abroad and they should be encouraged to do so, as is the case with students. Again, there is also variety between departments and the faculty is aware of those which need to improve.

6.4. *HEI is part of international associations of similar institutions, exchanging the results of scientific research in a wider scientific community.* There is a lack of publishing in English and other foreign languages as noted above. The work on English website is under way and this should be commended and encouraged. Regarding memberships and connections, there is variation among departments as noted above. We would also like to note that there are excellent people at the faculty in departments like Psychology, English and German, and many staff members are individual members of prestigious associations.

6.5. *The institution has adequate conditions for attracting students from abroad.* There is a midterm plan to develop a special programme for foreigners and improve the English website. More courses should be offered in Croatian as a foreign language for people from the region and for incoming exchange students - multilingualism should be encouraged and fostered in all possible ways as part of the faculty is well aware. The

importance of Croatian as a "key" to other Slavic languages of the region should be emphasized, together with encouraging more students to learn the languages of regional minorities.

6.6. *The institution has ensured conditions for attracting teachers from abroad.* There are few joint programmes and European projects, English website needs to be developed, research results need to be more visible. In addition to this, there should be more efforts to advertise internationally, use connections and try to employ foreign staff.

6.7. *Higher education institution has developed other forms of inter-institutional cooperation through Erasmus and other European projects, bilateral agreements, joint programmes, etc.* There are some Erasmus and bilateral agreements, but few projects or joint programmes and few contracts with prestigious institutions. Successful faculty members can lead the way here.

Resources: administration, space, equipment and finances

7.1. *The institution provides appropriate learning resources for all enrolled students. These resources include classrooms, laboratories and equipment, library resources, computers, individual and group study spaces, and other, in accordance with the institution's multiple learning modalities.* Library opening hours should be widened, more computers should be bought to informatology students, proxy servers or VPN or other solution should be introduced to enable access to databases from home, as faculty is trying to do.

7.2. *HEI secures an adequate ratio of teaching and non-teaching staff.* The faculty would like to be able to hire more administrative support, this is not their responsibility but the need is there and it is real, as administrative burden is increasing and teachers are feeling it. Qualified staff should be hired and trained to provide support in project management, international cooperation, language issues, quality assurance including institutional research and other expert tasks.

7.3. The institution has well-developed policies that ensure professional development of non-teaching staff, in line with the institution's mission. Some staff - librarians in particular - did participate in Erasmus exchange, there are regular specialised trainings, and this is to be commended. As noted above, additional staff is necessary if the international cooperation is to be improved.

7.4. Laboratory equipment and relevant usage protocols comply with recognized international standards. N/A

7.5. The institution secures modern equipment, technology and technical support for teaching and research activities, which is largely utilized in accordance with the mission. Computers are there, but more should be acquired, especially for the informatology programmes, the library needs more space and books.

7.6. Size, usability and availability of the library, as well as the equipment therein, ensure adequate support to student learning. The library needs more space, and more books, however they have a great student space and good database access.

7.7. Financial sustainability is ensured in accordance with HEI's mission, enabling all students to successfully complete their study programmes. Sources of funding and all the conditions related to funding are transparent and do not limit the institutional autonomy. This is a public institution so financial stability does not seem to be threatened, and funding seems transparent.

7.8. Institution's own funds are used to raise the quality of teaching and scientific activity, in line with institution's mission and other documents. A lot of money is being invested in improvement, while what they really need is more teachers and it is unfortunate that they feel blocked in this regard.