



REPORT
of the Expert Panel
on the
RE-ACCREDITATION OF
the Department of Cultural Studies of the University of J. J.
Strossmayer in Osijek

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INTRODUCTION

This report on the re-accreditation of the University of J. J. Strossmayer in Osijek Department of Cultural Studies 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 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 Department Management;
- The Working Group that compiled the Self-Evaluation;
- The students, i.e., a self-selected set of students present at the interview;
- Research project leaders;
- Young researchers;
- Teaching and research staff.

The Expert Panel also had a tour of the library, student register desk, and the classrooms at the Department, 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: Department of Cultural Studies of Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek

ADDRESS: Trg Svetog Trojstva 3, 31 000 Osijek

NAME OF THE HEAD OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: Professor Jasmina Lovrinčević

LIST OF STUDY PROGRAMMES:

- Undergraduate:
 - o Interdisciplinary university programme Cultural Studies
 - Study courses: Cultural Management, Media Culture, Librarianship
- Graduate:
 - o Interdisciplinary university programme Cultural Studies
 - Study courses: Cultural Management, Media Culture, Librarianship

NUMBER OF STUDENTS

Full-time: 269

Part-time: 103

NUMBER OF TEACHERS

Full-time: 13,5

External associates: 14

NUMBER OF SCIENTISTS: 9

TOTAL BUDGET (in kuna): 6.449.070,93 (year 2012)

MSES FUNDING (percentage): 86,62%

OWN FUNDING (percentage): 3,84%

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: The Department of Cultural Studies is the youngest of the seventeen units of Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, founded by the Senate Decision of Josip Juraj Strossmayer

University of Osijek on 17th May 2010. It is the legal successor of undergraduate and graduate interdisciplinary university studies of Culturology, established by the Senate Decision on 20th July 2009, as the first university interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate study programme at the University, comprising the following study courses: Cultural Management, Media Culture and Librarianship. Currently there are 372 students enrolled at these programmes.

On the proposal of the Department of Cultural Studies, the Doctoral School of Social Sciences and Humanities was established at the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek in 2011, comprising postgraduate interdisciplinary university doctoral programmes in Cultural Studies, European Studies and Communication Studies, and an advanced master in European Studies.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel experienced considerable problems with the self-evaluation report which was remarkably badly translated and sloppily edited (partly by copy and paste, partly by Google-translation, comments and corrections partly not deleted), very tiresome to read, and included many vague indications of plans and intentions instead of facts and details about the activities and results achieved. Moreover, our communication with the representatives of the department was slowed down by translations in both directions, as the teachers (unlike most of the students!) were not able or willing to speak or understand English. Even staff with a very good command of English were unwilling to speak English and only one could be persuaded to do so.

These issues are not just technical but illustrative of a more general problem in the international outlook of the department: how the department and its teachers and researchers see their role in academia, including the essential international connections, and how they are willing or able to present themselves in an international perspective.

ADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. The teachers as well as the students seem to be highly motivated. Students are mainly positive about their institution. To a degree, the teachers try to introduce students to actual theoretical approaches and discussions in the field of Cultural Studies.
2. According to the self-assessment, the department tries to combine theoretical instructions and practical training (see comments below). As a central institute directly under the rector it would ideally have the ability to co-ordinate with

other faculties and departments, and the potential for developing a unique profile in a regional setting, using its position in a traditionally multilingual and multicultural area.

3. The department supports students in their extracurricular activities.
4. Available space is more than satisfactory for the department.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. Although it has to be kept in mind that the department is rather newly invented and partly still “in the making”, the self-assessment is full of rather vaguely formulated plans for the future, in most cases without mentioning a time frame.
2. The ratio of qualified teachers to students is only 1:40. To solve the problem of under-staffing, teachers are hired, who are from their level of academic graduation not qualified for academic teaching at a university. The quality of teaching seems to be very uneven.
3. According to the information provided by students, no practica are offered in Library Studies and Cultural Management Studies. They are replaced by talking about practical work in cultural institutions or by theoretical courses (see comments above).
4. The library is absolutely insufficient. There is also a lack of technical tools for teaching, especially for practica in the Media Culture programme.
5. The department claims in its self-assessment that there is no overlapping of their studies with any other faculty or department of Osijek University. It must be

mentioned that the Faculty of Humanities and Social Studies does not share this opinion and criticizes a serious overlap of their Information Studies with Library Studies at the Department of Cultural Studies. The Department does not have a clearly formulated overarching scientific agenda or profile or connections to other research institutions and activities. The Department apparently does not collaborate with other faculties and departments and thus seems isolated and disorganized, fails to exploit its potential and is unable to reach its objectives. As the Department is unable to maintain its own doctoral programme (the connection to the university's doctoral school remains unclear) and does not seem to cooperate with other faculties in postgraduate education, it cannot offer its students perspectives to research or a career in research.

FEATURES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. The motivation of most teachers is high.
2. Members of non-teaching staff are included in international exchange programmes, such as Erasmus.
3. Most students, it seemed to us, were content with the running of their courses.
4. Some teachers are ready to teach in English and the students would welcome more courses in English.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. Management of the Higher Education Institution and Quality Assurance

- We recommend that the university and the Department consider:

- o Finding a viable internal and external structure for the pursuance of the idea of delivering this type of programme (e.g. relocate the components of the department amongst faculties with a small head office as coordinator of the interdisciplinary study programmes, or agreed co-operation in delivering the study programmes)
 - o Encouraging greater innovation in terms of content.
 - o Looking beyond the very narrow labour market in the region.
 - o Trying as much as possible to offer practical skills to students via practica.
 - o Cooperating with other faculties of the University, such as Humanities and Social Studies, especially in doctoral-programmes and student exchange programmes.
- The Department should introduce a more functional method of monitoring teachers, beyond the ones proposed by the University. Students are dissatisfied with the evaluation questions; they are not specific enough so the evaluation is not objective or realistic.
 - The Human Resource policy of the Department should be more transparent, involving more external members in the Search Committees in order to ensure that not only local candidates are offered full time and external, part-time teaching positions.

2. Study Programmes

- General impression is that the idea of the department is to be more praxis-oriented, linking theory with labour market, which is defensible. In many European countries this is done at colleges or applied science universities (e.g. at 70 institutions across Germany). If the praxis-oriented core functions of the Department – training of media and library professionals or cultural

management – are to be strengthened, it might be a better solution to place them in a “less academic” institution. Alternatively, the connections of the Department to academic research and theory should be strengthened by placing these core activities in a closer institutional connection and cooperation with relevant university faculties or departments.

- The enrolment quotas are not in line with the needs of the society and the labour market. Approximately 20 librarians per year are far more than the city of Osijek and the surrounding area seem to need. Better market research is necessary.

3. Students

- Students should be encouraged to be more outward-looking, making use of the easily available international exchange programs.
- They should be encouraged to learn actively or passively languages other than English, given the labour market and its clients. Other languages should be offered.
- The Department does not offer any kind of mentorship. Students solve all their problems on a personal basis, talking directly to their teachers. A more official method should be introduced. If there is a lack of staff, the Department could involve students from higher years to do this.
- Students are very poorly informed about everything (their rights, mobility, professional opportunities after they graduate, the relation between ECTS and workload etc.) The Department could include older students in helping students from lower years.
- Students should be given more perspectives into research and possible postgraduate career paths.

4. Teachers

- The number of academically qualified teachers is too low. Teaching by unqualified persons should be avoided. The Department needs to employ faculty members with more adequate academic qualifications to replace teachers with BA degrees.
- The Department needs to ensure that the faculty members can offer a sufficiently high level teaching of the very wide range of topics nominally covered in the study plans.
- Teachers should be encouraged to become more active in research and in cooperation with each other as well as with relevant institutions, faculties and departments.
- Teachers should be encouraged to engage in international cooperation.

5. Scientific and Professional Activity

- There exists no strategic research-agenda of the department at all. Research-projects are done only on an individual level, there is no participation in international research-projects. The number of papers, published in peer-reviewed high-quality scientific papers is low. The department does not have a formal doctoral program. However, it has initiated the university doctoral school, which is not a part of the department for technical reasons. It is not our task to evaluate this programme but if it is primarily the staff of this department who are tasked with running the programme, which we cannot be sure is the case, we would like to note that the department is absolutely understaffed to do so and we do hope that the doctoral school is truly organised as a common effort of all faculties at the university. Mentorship for students in research is underdeveloped.

- While the concept of, broadly speaking, linking an academic training with praxis, is defensible and frequently done internationally, it lacks depth and innovation. E-culture and the efforts made to digitize cultural exhibits and performing arts (e.g. Malaysia, elsewhere in Asia) or museum pedagogy (e.g. Australia) are not observed and envisaged. The depth in other disciplines taught should be reconsidered.
- There is a need to re-think the academic foundation that would unite the four sub-departments, wrongly called “Chairs”. In order to be viable as an academic institution, the Department would need an overarching research agenda, theoretical and/or methodological commonalities and cooperations.

6. International Cooperation and Mobility

- To function, the department would need to entertain close and agreed links with faculties like Business, Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Arts. This would yield study components, avoid overlap, guarantee PhD supervisors, etc. It could also benefit from the international outlook pursued there.
- The Department could attract both more students and teachers from abroad by introducing at least a few courses in English.
- Students do not take part in mobility programmes such as Erasmus, because they fear the courses would not be recognized after they come back to their home university. This could be solved by simply following the rules of Erasmus (students can study abroad without having any problems at their home university).
- As mentioned also above (see section 4.) the Department should encourage its faculty members to get involved in international cooperation and mobility programs on a broader range.

7. Resources, Administration, Space, Equipment and Finance

- According to student's information, some students could not complete their studies due to a lack of support by the department.
- The Department seems to have enough space for the moment. But the library is plainly ridiculous with a few hundred books and two computers. Even if there were one thousand books it would not work. If there is no central university library within the nearest future, the Department must collaborate with different faculty libraries, not only public libraries in the town.
- The premises are beautiful and deserve particular praise for barrier-free accessibility (for disabled students), but technical equipment is inadequate and should be brought to the level of European standards. The department has got enough rooms for teaching and administration, although these rooms are partly not well equipped (media devices are missing or in bad condition). Students complain about not having cameras, microphones, computers etc. Wireless internet is not offered. There is no wireless EDUROAM access, no media lab for the necessary training of media professionals, and even video projections do not work properly due to lack of proper screens and darkening curtains.
- In comparison to the teaching activities (which are partly run by under-qualified staff and external associates) and research (which is seriously underdeveloped), administration seems very well resourced, provided with numerous opportunities for international exchanges and looks overstaffed: the administrative staff in their beautiful and almost empty offices gave the impression of not being particularly busy. Perhaps the management could consider a reallocation of resources.

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

1. Institutional management and quality assurance

The Department is unviable in its current structure internally and externally. It is a very small department split up into four units, wrongly called “Chairs”, and its external connections apart from the university as such are unclear or probably absent. As a result:

- a. The Department cannot run a PhD programme. The one that it initiated is currently situated at the University level, but this fact was not clearly explained either. But it is clear that the four units (culture management, media culture [oddly re-named mediology], librarianship and culturology), whether located inside the department or at the university level, cannot form a PhD link; they cannot introduce common courses for PhD students
- b. It cannot develop a research plan, international programs
- c. It cannot develop peer review in teaching
- d. It cannot have peer-reviewed journals etc.

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.* There is a strategic plan but it has no real goals, implementation plans or content. According to the information we have received from our Croatian speaking colleagues, even the parts of the strategic plan - such as the SWOT analysis – which should have been included in the self-evaluation were not included. We also failed to receive answers on concrete plans in our interviews.

1.2. *The institution has developed effective organizational structure and processes and has formalized them in its legal documents.* The legal documents are there, however they do not seem to be disseminated among students. Issues that should be regulated by formal procedures are run informally, for example the appeal procedure.

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.* N/A

1.4. *All study programmes are in line with institutional mission.* The mission is to promote higher education, however we failed to notice the higher education aspects as different from the training of media professionals which is normally done at professional institutions that focus on applications of knowledge. Also, another aspect of mission is interdisciplinarity, which we failed to see, we could not identify an overarching interdisciplinary mission across or within courses; they all seem fairly basic.

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.* The idea of quality assurance seemed vague, and students were not sure about their opportunities to truly participate - apart from the formal representation. The formal procedures that exist should be much better developed in reality.

1.6. *Higher education institution has functional mechanisms for monitoring and improvement of teaching quality.* There is a university level survey of teachers and some teachers do their own surveys, and there are other mechanism introduced by the university. However, improvements are requested informally, and the formal channels do not seem to be well developed at the department level. We also failed to learn about mechanisms such as peer review of teaching or any other additional measures introduced by the department.

1.7. *Higher education institution has functional mechanisms for monitoring and improvement of research quality.* There are few research projects and the overall quality of research seems very low. The self-evaluation states that they are aiming for introducing quality mechanisms in this respect, but we failed to establish if they have been introduced or become functional in the meantime. If mechanisms for improvement have been introduced, we learnt nothing about them during our visit. They are not functional.

1.8. *The institution has effective mechanisms for monitoring unethical behaviour in teaching and research, and all the employees and students are informed thereof.* There is the university code of ethics and committee for ethics at the department; however we failed to establish if it is functional in practice - informal mechanisms seem to be used. Students do not seem to be systematically informed about the content of the university code of ethics.

2. 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.*

There are some mechanisms for improvement and some stakeholder representatives have been in cooperation with the institution, however despite our questions we have failed to establish a clear role of stakeholders. Students did not express any explicit dissatisfaction with their inclusion in decision-making but were obviously unaware of their institutional representation mechanisms. How the quality of teaching is controlled and assessed, beyond the student surveys required by general regulations, remained unclear. It seems that classes taught by external associates or assistants are not assessed or monitored very well: one course we tried to visit was not taking place as scheduled, and obviously the secretariat was unaware of this.

2.2. Taking into account the needs of society, proposed enrolment quotas are justified.

We have been told that the quotas are justified but we have failed to see any evidence of this. Some students had very explicit doubts about their future employment chances.

2.3. The enrolment quotas are in line with the institutional resources for quality teaching and pass rate analysis.

It is only the high proportion of teaching assistants added to qualified teachers that enables the department to reach the legal limit of 1:24. The quality of teaching seems to vary to a considerable extent, however, focusing on numbers only, the department does seem to meet the legal criteria.

2.4. Defined learning outcomes clearly describe the knowledge and skills students obtain upon the completion of study programme.

The learning outcomes in the diploma supplements are not described well. There are no learning outcomes for courses, as they were not obligatory when the department was accrediting its study programmes, and they have not been developed since. (The course descriptions were only available in Croatian, and this text as well was badly edited; some course descriptions were completely missing.)

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.

There are teachers who teach very well and students are content with methods of assessment. However, the quality of teaching varies greatly which is why we are not able to give an overall assessment. In addition to this, the learning outcomes are not defined well.

2.6. Allocation of ECTS reflects the realistic estimate of student workload.

Students were not aware of what ECTS represent, however neither did they complain explicitly. The ECTS points in the study programmes do not seem to have any connection

to the actual student workload. To give an example of a course (from the Study Programme Plans available at the Department website), 1 ECTS is given to a student essay, the rest is allocated to the exams. There is no workload attached to lectures. Language classes seem to bear the same workload as physical education, which does not have any ECTS at another year (although it seems obvious that the students do need to do something on the course).

2.7. The content and quality of each study programme conforms to internationally recognized standards, and is based on the latest scientific discoveries.

There is nothing like international standards being met here. The organisation of the study programmes does not have direct counterparts in other countries (where cultural studies are typically integrated with faculties of humanities, social sciences etc., or there is an overarching, common institutional framework). We could not observe any connection between the contents of the study programmes and state-of-the-art research, or even research in general. None of the students we spoke with could see their future in research.

2.8. Teachers use teaching methods that are appropriate for subject matter and different ways of learning, and encourage independent student learning.

While there are certainly some very good teachers, there is also a great variance among the quality of teachers. Some teachers, as we could observe, seemed very committed and encouraging.

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.

The library is utterly insufficient, so students use the city library. Most teachers do not provide additional materials, while some go extra length to do so.

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 are some opportunities for practical application, however especially at programmes for librarians and cultural management much more practical work is needed. It seems that it is only in the field of media studies that students are provided with voluntary, but still valuable opportunities to apply what they learn in real life settings.

3. 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.

We have been repeatedly told by staff that this programme is not chosen by high achievers, and we have not been told about any concrete planned measures for improvement.

3.2. The institution supports students in their extracurricular activities.

Sports activities of students are well supported, and they have opportunities to visit cultural events.

3.3. The institution offers counselling, mentorship and professional orientation services to ensure personal and professional development of the students.

There is no one in charge of mentoring students outside of their learning obligations, although there are some university centres for that purpose. Students rely on teachers who seem supportive and open, however we did not hear anything about departmental efforts at mentorship and counselling etc. Students are not encouraged to embark on postgraduate studies or a career in research.

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.

Students feel they can appeal to teachers and teachers accept this readily, however, students did not seem to be aware of formal mechanisms they have at their disposal. They do not seem to be systematically informed of their rights and the University Code of Ethics.

3.5. HEI maintains contacts with its former students and collects statistic data on their employment.

There is no data on alumni as far as we have been able to establish. Of course, this is not surprising as there are very few alumni because the institution is too young. N/A

3.6. The institution regularly informs the public about its study programmes, learning outcomes, qualifications and employment opportunities.

There is a website in Croatian and information on Facebook pages, there are fairs organised, however, most information is lacking and we were able to learn little from these sources.

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.

Students can express their opinion to teachers, although they are not always met with understanding. They are involved in the formal decision making according to the legislation, however, we were not sure how effective the communication is as there were a number of students complaints the staff did not seem to be aware of.

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 are informed on the decisions made and can get their answers, however, as noted above, channels for suggesting improvements are not clear and students have divided opinions on this.

4. 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 student teacher ratio is satisfactory. However, there is a very high number of faculty members who do not even have master degrees - 7 with bachelor degrees only. These faculty members are definitely under-qualified to teach at the higher education level. The division of core disciplines is very unclear, and it is equally unclear that the existing faculty, with their often inadequate academic qualifications, can offer courses at a sufficiently high level for such a wide range of topics. The research output of teachers is overall very low, and remains internationally invisible.

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.

As already noted, there is an insufficient number of qualified full time staff, even taking into account that a department providing this type of education necessarily needs to use external associates - practitioners and staff from other faculties. As noted above, the department has no doctoral programme of its own (the university doctoral school seems to be connected with the department, but we did not receive any more detailed information about it) nor a regular cooperation with the thematically related faculties. For this reason, the qualification of the junior staff is connected to various other universities. This, together with the lack of a clearly formulated overarching research agenda, creates the impression of “interdisciplinarity” understood as a diverse collection

of occasional professionals each working on their own special areas, and indicates a lack of a comprehensive agenda for the training of junior staff.

4.3. The institution takes into account the number of full-time teachers, maintaining the optimal ratio between students and full-time teachers.

As noted, there is an insufficient number of qualified full time staff, even taking into account that a department providing this type of education should use external associates - practitioners and staff from other faculties.

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.

This department is simply too small to have policies for development of human resources and they can only do this in collaboration with others - the university and other faculties, however we saw no plans in this regard. At any rate, the department needs to make more efforts to ensure the transparency of its hiring procedure.

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.

Teachers seem generally content with the workload while they do little research.

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

Everyone seem happy with the existing arrangement.

5. 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 nothing that we could possibly call an actual research agenda, while there does exist a document with that name.

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 cooperation within the region, but no clear agenda.

5.3. The institution has an adequate number and profile of researchers for the implementation of its strategic research agenda.

Researchers do not seem very qualified when considering their publications or projects.

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.

Even the list of top journals provided in the Self-evaluation document includes non-peer reviewed publications and newspapers. There are almost no decent publications.

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 are plans for developing and improving excellence, but there is nothing there yet.

5.6. HEI has an adequate number of peer-reviewed scientific publications.

There are almost no decent publications.

5.7. HEI has an adequate number of domestic and international projects.

There are university projects and some national ones in preparation, however we failed to see even plans for international projects.

5.8. HEI encourages technology transfer, and cooperation for the transfer of knowledge with the industry and/or public sector.

Public outreach should be the strong point of this type of institution, however, we failed to see evidence of effective knowledge transfer apart from individual efforts to participate in various bodies.

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 is income being generated by professional education and fees charged to mature students, however we are not sure of the quality of the trainings the department provides, as a number of problems were indicated by students.

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.

N/A They formally do not have a doctoral program however they have initiated the university doctoral school which for technical reasons is not a part of the department. It is not our task to evaluate this programme but if it is primarily the staff of this department who are tasked with running the programme, which we cannot be sure is the case, we would like to note that the department is absolutely understaffed to do so and we do hope that the doctoral school is truly organised as a common effort of all faculties at the university.

6. International cooperation and mobility

6.1. The institution enables and facilitates mobility of students from other higher education institutions.

Students from other HEIs are received.

6.2. In keeping with the international context of study programmes, students have opportunities to complete a part of their programme abroad.

There are doubts among students around recognition of courses taken abroad, so the dissemination on the opportunities should be improved. A number of students did participate in mobility programmes, both incoming and outgoing.

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.

Some teachers have studied abroad, there is some ongoing international cooperation which is mostly regional and should be extended.

6.4. HEI is part of international associations of similar institutions, exchanging the results of scientific research in a wider scientific community.

There was participation at conferences. There have however been very few publications and associations and little participation at top international events.

6.5. The institution has adequate conditions for attracting students from abroad. Some foreign students did visit the department through Erasmus and there is a list of classes which can be delivered in English, however, as noted above, this is not done often enough. For such a small department, they have achieved much.

6.6. The institution has ensured conditions for attracting teachers from abroad.

There is nothing to attract foreign teachers academically, while this would be very useful for the institution. We were provided with no evidence of visiting teachers.

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 bilateral agreements and regional student conferences, and plans to improve in the future.

7. 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.

The classrooms are wonderful and the old building is beautiful and beautifully located, however, there is no media technology - not even a decent projection hall, no wireless EDUROAM access; the library is very modest and there are only 2 computers in the library.

7.2. HEI secures an adequate ratio of teaching and non-teaching staff.

Teachers are happy with the administrative support and the existing non-teaching staff do not seem to be overtly busy.

7.3. The institution has well-developed policies that ensure professional development of non-teaching staff, in line with the institution's mission.

Non-teaching staff participated in exchanges and have training opportunities.

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.

As noted under 7.1., there are problems here.

7.6. Size, usability and availability of the library, as well as the equipment therein, ensure adequate support to student learning.

As the faculty is well aware, the library is substandard.

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.

The department has a new building and has employed a lot of staff. N/A

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.

There is funding for travel while more should be invested in books and other resources mentioned above.