



**REPORT
of the Expert Panel
on the
RE-ACCREDITATION OF
Faculty of Kinesiology University of Split**

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INTRODUCTION

This report on the re-accreditation of the Faculty of Kinesiology University of Split 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 and supporting documentation and a visit to the institution.

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 ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) full member, 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 programs.

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
- detailed analysis of the compliance to the Standards and Criteria for Re-Accreditation Faculty of Kinesiology University of Split.

The members of the Expert Panel were:

- Professor Arnold Baca, Faculty of Sport Science, University of Vienna, Austria
- Professor Lasse Kannas, Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
- Gordan Kožulj, MBA, Deloitte Advisory Services Ltd., Croatia
- Professor Maja Bučar Pajek, Faculty of Sport, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Tomislav Paripović, student, Faculty of Kinesiology, University of Zagreb, Croatia

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

- Viktorija Juriša, coordinator
- Frane Pavić, support to the coordinator
- Marko Hrvatin, interpreter during the site visit (external associate)
- Vlatka Derenčinović, translator of the report

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

- The Management;
- Working group that compiled the Self-Evaluation report and representatives of the Committee for Quality Improvement;
- The students;
- Vice Dean for Education;
- Vice Dean for Science;
- Vice Dean for Business Affairs and Finance;
- Head of the Department of International Cooperation;
- The teachers;
- Assistants and junior researchers;
- Leaders of research projects.

The Expert Panel also had a tour of the library, IT rooms, student register desk, laboratory, practicum and the classrooms at the Faculty of Kinesiology University of Split.

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 enrollment 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: Faculty of Kinesiology University of Split

ADDRESS: Teslina 6, 21000 Split

NAME OF THE HEAD OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: Prof.dr.sc. Boris Maleš

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE:

- Department of kinesiology of sports (Chair of sport games, Chair of aesthetic movements, Chair of mono-structural and poly-structural activities, Chair of martial arts, Chair of theory of sports and of kinesiological transformations),
- Department of anthropological kinesiology (Chair of biomedicine and anthropology, Chair of kinesitherapy and recreation, Chair of social sciences and humanities)
- Department of kinesiological education and methodology (Chair of kinesiological didactics, Chair of general methodology)
- Department of professional studies,
- Institute for kinesiology,
- Department of lifelong learning,
- Department of international cooperation.

LIST OF STUDY PROGRAMMES (and levels):

- Undergraduate university kinesiology programme,
- Graduate university kinesiology programme,
- Postgraduate university kinesiology programme,
- Professional kinesiology programme,
- Specialist graduate professional kinesiology programme.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 239 part-time, 365 full-time/final-year

NUMBER OF TEACHERS (full-time): 43

NUMBER OF SCIENTISTS (full-time): 31 doctors of science, 43 elected to grades

MSES FUNDING (percentage): 82.7

OWN FUNDING (percentage): 11.6

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION:

The Faculty of Kinesiology of the University of Split was founded in 2008 and it is the youngest component of the University of Split, however, the study of Kinesiology has a long tradition itself. High institutional education of teachers of kinesiology in the City of Split has lasted since 1953/1954, when the study of Physical education was a part of College of Education, that is of the Academy of Education. Since 1978 the four year study of kinesiology was held at: University of Split, Faculty of Philosophy in Zadar – OOUR in Split, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Education (later called Faculty of Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Kinesiology). Increased involvement of the employees at the Department of kinesiology of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Kinesiology of the University of Split since 2003, and especially during the period of adjustment to the Bologna process, and with the constant grow in the number of young scientists, and with the support of professional and scientific community as well, resulted in founding the Faculty of Kinesiology as an independent component of the University of Split. In accordance with the Bologna declaration there are undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate studies at the Faculty. Ever since its modest beginnings, with only three full-time teachers, the Faculty of Kinesiology grew to a number of 37 teachers and 13 non-teachers. Currently the Faculty of Kinesiology represents a respectable institution which is capable of educating young people independently and of training professionally and scientifically all profiles of kinesiologists (through kinesiological education, sports, kinesiological recreation and kinesitherapy). Institution is relied upon its own teaching and research staff, who actively participate in professional and scientific production and in this way create and promote the image of the Faculty of Kinesiology in a contemporary scientific and cultural environment.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE EXPERT PANEL

ADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. The Faculty of Kinesiology has attractive study programmes which are in line of the needs of Croatian society. Academic and administrative processes are adequately formalized. Based on interviews of students and staff members during the site visit, the student-teacher relationships seemed to be very good, partly due to the small size of the Faculty and its family like atmosphere, with almost everybody knowing each other.
2. The goals, the learning outcomes and teaching and learning methods are well described in the syllabuses of the study programmes. The implementation of e-learning is progressing in a good way. The course specific web site platforms have been established.
3. The student/teacher ratio is quite optimal allowing e.g. working in small groups and relatively good capacity for personal supervision and mentoring by the teachers. The Faculty has a well functioning system to monitor the quality of teaching and learning as well as e.g. work load, course attendance by students.
4. The doctoral study program has been carried out since 2009. At the Faculty there are young, internationally orientated and capable PhD students and young researchers (with good knowledge in English) who are committed to developing the scientific quality and productivity of the Faculty. There seemed to be quite positive and optimistic spirit concerning the quality improvement of the scientific efforts at the Faculty, especially among young researchers.
5. Although the Faculty of Kinesiology has modest sport facilities of theirs own the Faculty can use/hire sport facilities of the City of Split. Some of City-owned stadions and sport facilities are new, modern and well-suited for pedagogical and training purposes of the Faculty.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. The scientific activities and research productivity have not developed adequately. There are only some 10 research projects ongoing, only few research grant applications have been delivered on a yearly basis, there is a lack of laboratories and basic equipment for diagnostics, and practically no evidence of longer lasting cooperation with international research groups.
2. Strategic thinking and strategy formulation by the Faculty was not very convincing or professional. This might result of the fact that the University of Split does not have general strategy of education and research at the level of the university..
3. The Faculty of Kinesiology has a chronic lack of space, and the Faculty's facilities in its current form are far away of ideal physical academic environment for education, research and administration.
4. International profile of the Faculty is poor both in educational and scientific terms. The staff and student mobility and its support mechanisms are in its developing phase. There

are only a few international agreements with universities in Europe and elsewhere signed. So far the Faculty has not attracted foreign scholars or exchange students and it is not known enough in international academic sport science society. There are no formal study courses in English for international students.

5. Being a small faculty with a large number of bodies and committees results in a heavy administrative workload for staff members. These administrative duties diminish the amount of time employees have for developing education and research activities.

FEATURES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. The Faculty regularly monitors the achievements of students in the study programmes using the following indicators: number of students in the generation according to accumulated ECTS points; number of students who accumulate all ECTS points; and the number of students who drop out of their studies. A positive trend is that the number of dropout students is decreasing each year.
2. Professional-pedagogical practice is an integral part of the graduate study programmes. Students' field visits are well organized and professors and other teachers examine the practical field work by using several evaluation methods.
3. All the courses at the Faculty's homepage have uploaded detailed Syllabuses, exam dates, and other necessary information.
4. The Faculty of Kinesiology has created measures and awards (honourable mention, plaque and money award) for motivating students. Special measurements for motivating teachers are e.g. awards, acknowledgements and co-financing visits to scientific conferences. Teachers who go for professional and scientific in-service training are free from doing regular faculty activities.
5. The Faculty of Kinesiology has started the application call and will intensify the activities with aim of getting more international scientific grant money, especially the ones from HORIZON 2020 programme. Student and teacher mobility through ERASMUS programme has started slowly but steadily.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Management of the Higher Education Institution and Quality Assurance

- The Faculty of Kinesiology should reformulate its mission, vision and strategic goals in a more concrete and strategic way including the expected outcome indicators that have been reached and the methods of evaluation.
- The study programmes are recommended to develop in a way that they are in line of the Faculty's mission, vision and strategic goals.
- FK should build up a functional system for monitoring and evaluating scientific activities. FK must make a research strategy which covers both short term goals and achievements (on a yearly basis) as well as long term goals and achievements (for 5-10 years period). The research strategy has to include concrete proposals for activities which will enable the institution to reach the strategic research goals. Research priorities must also be described in Faculty's research strategy.

Study Programmes

- The Faculty of Kinesiology has to develop their study programmes in a way that they become more comparable and competitive to those implemented at renowned European institutions.
- Each study programme must be developed based on the latest scientific discoveries. The amount of international literature as learning and teaching materials must be increased and updated.
- FK should widen the opportunities for students to implement their learning in the context of practical situations and environments, such as through internships, business partnerships, community services, or similar arrangements.
- Based on Bologna principles of degree harmonization the undergraduate level studies must produce to an internationally recognized formal Bachelor Degree. The "degree" based on undergraduate studies is called "university baccalaureus" not bachelor degree as it is internationally recognized, and this might cause some confusion when comparing the standards of undergraduate studies between Croatian universities with other countries.

Students

- The Faculty of Kinesiology should create a functioning alumni register and collect statistic data on their employment and career. FK should actively maintain contact with its former students e.g. arranging get-together seminars, informing about Faculty's news and inviting former students to share their expertise in work life. FK has to regard alumni as a valuable source of information.
- Students' feedback, opinions and expectations must be respected and taken into account still more widely and openly

Teachers

- The Faculty of Kinesiology should make more efforts in recruiting qualified scientific-teaching staff. The institution must increase the number of qualified scientific staff members, researchers and professors, to reach sufficient amount of critical mass of science representatives.
- FK has to rationalize administrative duties and decrease administrative workload of their teaching and science staff in making the Faculty's bureaucracy structure lighter e.g. by merging several bodies and committees.

Scientific and Professional Activity

- The Faculty of Kinesiology should formulate its strategic research agenda, the implementation of which is monitored, evaluated and reviewed through defined performance indicators. Research activities and achievements will be evaluated every five years by international external panel.
- FK has to strengthen interdisciplinary research within its departments and it has to cooperate much more with other scientific organizations in Croatia and abroad.
- FK should publish more scientific articles in international peer-reviewed scientific journals. The Faculty must offer support services for international publishing in terms of translation.
- FK needs to develop a tenure track system which motivates young researchers to create a step by step progressing scientific career to a full professor post.
- The research staff must more actively apply the project grants funded both from domestic and international sources, including EU-research programmes (e.g. HORIZON 2020). The amount of ambitious and innovative research projects must be doubled in the next three years.
- FK should encourage and strengthen the research based technology transfer of knowledge in the industry and/or public sector.
- The professors and researchers need to create more opportunities for cooperation with highly qualified international researchers. FK researchers should make more efforts to be invited to international research networks or projects. The communication skills in academic English must be improved.
- The quality of doctoral study programme must be improved. Methodological studies must be represented already at bachelor and master level studies. Doctoral studies should include more expertise not only in quantitative research but also in qualitative research and its methodology.
- FK should also put a lot of effort to attract foreign distinguished professors and senior researchers to visit the Faculty and contribute to research courses and doctoral programme in general.

International Cooperation and Mobility

- The Faculty of Kinesiology should enable and facilitate mobility of students and teachers. The Faculty must widen international mobility e.g. sign Erasmus programme exchange contracts with several well known and highly qualified sport science faculties and institutions in Europe.
- FK has to encourage its staff to take part in international sport science associations. The Faculty should organize international conference at least once every three years, and one national science symposium on a yearly basis.
- In order to appeal to students and teachers from abroad FK should offer larger number of courses in English. FK should be able to offer all necessary services and support for foreign academic quests in cooperation with the City of Split.

Resources: Administration, Space, Equipment and Finance

- The Faculty of Kinesiology needs to increase the number of its seminar rooms, lecture halls and study spaces. It is of particular importance to establish a library in line with international standards suitable for scientific demands of the departments, teachers and students.
- FK must make a plan and implementation proposal regarding the development of research laboratories. Because the laboratory infrastructure is poorly developed and far away from international standards FK does not only need funding resources but also international consultations about sport science laboratories of good quality.

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

1. Institutional management and quality assurance

- 1.1 The Faculty of Kinesiology has formulated its strategic goals and tasks. A separate document of the strategy of development of science was available and the Strategy of the development of the Faculty has been accepted by the Faculty Council. The strategic goals are defined quite well. The plan of implementation needs improvements.
- 1.2 FK has developed an adequate organizational structure and processes.
- 1.3 It was not possible to evaluate this criteria, because based on information during the interviews, the University of Split seemed not to have an explicitly addressed university level strategy. Also, the panel did not get any documents or other evidence in which the university level goals or strategies would have been explicitly formulated.
- 1.4 The study programmes' learning goals are adequately defined. However, because the mission of the Faculty has been expressed rather vaguely, the links between the mission and study programmes' goals and content must be defined more clearly.
- 1.5 FK has formulated guidelines for good practices and has quality assurance procedures in place. Quality assurance policy regarding the inclusion of external stakeholders (private and public sector) needs improvements.
- 1.6 FK has functional mechanisms for monitoring and improvement of teaching quality.
- 1.7 FK has some monitoring practices to evaluate faculty members' research activities. External evaluation of research quality by expert panels (peer review) has not been used.
- 1.8 FK has created functioning mechanisms for monitoring unethical behaviour in teaching and research. All the employees and students are informed thereof.

2. Study programmes

- 2.1. The Faculty of Kinesiology has procedures for monitoring and improvement of study programmes. These procedures should include more external stakeholder feedback (from industry experts, professional associations), society level need assessment, market analysis, etc.
- 2.2. Study programmes take into account to some extent the needs of society concerning proposed enrolment quotas. More focus to health promotion, health and well being, sport for all and aging is recommended.
- 2.3. The enrolment quotas are in line with the institutional resources for quality teaching and pass rate analysis.

- 2.4. Defined learning outcomes clearly describe the knowledge and skills student obtain upon completion of their study programmes.
- 2.5. There is a functioning mechanism and practices for the assessment of student learning. The panel is uncertain whether there is a system for students to be part of assessment process or whether they have a possibility to express their agreement or disagreement with the assessment. Assessment practices of doctoral thesis need improvements.
- 2.6. Allocation of ECTS reflects the realistic estimate of student workload.
- 2.7. The structure of study programmes is not in line of the Bologna principles because upon completion of undergraduate studies internationally recognised Bachelor Degree should be awarded, and not university baccalaureus, since this might cause some confusion when comparing the standards of undergraduate studies between Croatian universities with other countries. The quality and quantity of doctoral programme need improvement, especially concerning the thesis.
- 2.8. Teachers use teaching methods that are appropriate for subject matter and different ways of learning, and encourage independent student learning. Distance learning platforms have been applied for teaching and learning.
- 2.9. Because of limited and insufficient funding resources there has been a lack of appropriate supplemental resources like electronic journal databases, scientific journals, books and other information sources. These scientific and professional supplemental resources do not meet international standards.
- 2.10. FK has facilitated some well functioning systems for internships, business partnerships, community services to reinforce which enable student professional skill learning.

3. Students

- 3.1 Faculty of Kinesiology performs analysis of the admission criteria and the quality of students applying to its study programmes. The number of interested and enrolled students is growing. The competencies of applicants evaluated upon admission are aligned with the demands and expectations of their future career. The Faculty has an opinion that the students' foreknowledge should be better. The panel recommend that FK monitor more carefully the quality of their student applicants.
- 3.2 FK supports students in their extracurricular activities.
- 3.3 FK offers counselling and mentoring especially concerning thesis preparation and doctoral dissertation. However, the more comprehensive study programme related counselling system is in developing phase.
- 3.4 Knowledge assessment procedures and methods are established and published. It remains unclear for the panel after reviewing presented in which are the practical sport courses and their learning outcomes (e.g. sport skills, didactic, pedagogical skills, practical skills in coaching) being evaluated.
- 3.5 The Faculty maintains contacts with its former students. The Alumni association of former students has been active since 2011. Regular alumni meetings have been

arranged. Regular monitoring system or longer term data of former students's career is not available.

- 3.6 FK informs the public about their programmes, learning outcomes, qualifications and employment opportunities mainly through their website. The use of other kinds of media needs improvements.
- 3.7 Students can express their opinions and give suggestions for improvement. Still more opportunities must be given to students to influence the decision-making and problem-solving processes on issues that concern them.
- 3.8 The institution has a mechanism for collecting student feedback but it needs further improvements.

4. Teachers

- 4.1 Number and qualifications of the practical teaching staff is in line with strategic goals of FK and adequately cover the main disciplines. However, this is not the situation with regard to scientific staff. There is a need to have more professorships and more qualified post holders in research. The Faculty does not have posts for permanent full time researchers.
- 4.2 FK has invested efforts in growth and development of human resources.
- 4.3 Having quite a small number of students FK has quite optimal ratio between students and full-time teachers.
- 4.4 FK has policies for scientific-teaching staff that ensure their professional development. Neither the Faculty nor the university have established a systematic support in the area of training and developing teachers' competencies.
- 4.5 Policies governing the assignment of teachers' workload provide for a fair and equitable distribution of efforts, at least in teaching, mentorship and student consultations. However, because of a large administrative workload professors can not devote sufficient time to research work.
- 4.6 FK ensures that teaching and research activities of employed teaching staff are not affected by their external commitments.

5. Research

- 5.1 The Faculty of Kinesiology has quite a modest strategic research agenda. It is especially important to carry out improvements related to the plans for research funding, research training, research priorities, nominating the fields of excellence to be developed, participating in international scientific forums. A well functioning system of monitoring and reviewing scientific activities is in developing phase.
- 5.2 The research strategy does not define the key international partners in research cooperation. Cooperation within Croatia is adequately addressed.
- 5.3 FK does not have an adequate number or internationally compared profile of researchers for the implementation of its strategic research agenda (see also 4.1).

- 5.4 The record of scientific work measured by the number of high quality scientific papers in international peer reviewed journals is quite modest. There is a need to improve scientific publishing activities.
- 5.5 FK has some mechanisms for rewarding scientific productivity. Based on the scientific outcomes and the interviews with researchers, these efforts have not been sufficient.
- 5.6 The Faculty of Kinesiology has to increase the quantity of peer reviewed scientific publications.
- 5.7 FK does not have an adequate number of domestic and international projects. It seems that professors face big difficulties in creating and starting new ambitious research projects. Some cross-national research partnerships have been established with countries in the Balkans region. Wider international research project cooperation has not been established so far.
- 5.8 The Faculty has made some minor preliminary efforts to implement technology transfer, and cooperation for the transfer of knowledge with the industry and/or public sector. These activities are in their beginning and developing phase.
- 5.9 FK supports professional activities and maintains an adequate ratio between making additional earnings and its core activity. Teachers at the Faculty are quite actively contributing to sport club coaching activities as well as providing their expertise to the Croatian Olympic Committee.
- 5.10 FK has established a doctoral study programme, for which tutoring and mentoring processes have been described in detail. However there is not enough evidence of the quality of the doctoral programme. There is a need to improve the doctoral programme e.g. by having more international science readings, having wider methodological course collection, recruiting more PhD students, and motivating students already in master level studies for research work. There is no expertise among professors at the Faculty in qualitative research. This methodological paradigm is recommended to be included to comply to international standards.

6. Mobility and international cooperation

- 6.1 The Faculty of Kinesiology enables and facilitates mobility of students from other Croatian higher education institutions so that the earlier studies and ECTS points are recognized. So far there has been very little evidence of the methods FK uses to encourage and facilitate international mobility. For example, in the study year 2012/2013 it was reported that only one student from abroad made a study visit to FK within Erasmus programme. A lot of improvement is needed in this regard
- 6.2 So far FK has signed quite a small amount of agreements with universities abroad. The amount of students who are willing to take part in exchange programmes is increasing. Students have opportunities to complete a part of their programme abroad and the international university network is increasing based on e.g. bilateral Erasmus agreements. The number of FK students who have spent part of their programme at universities abroad is very small.

- 6.3 FK encourages international cooperation and mobility of its teachers. Funding resources for these internationalization efforts are limited. The number of teachers who have visited for a longer period in universities abroad is very small.
- 6.4 At the moment, FK does not take part in any international associations of similar institutions in a formal sense.
- 6.5 With the present conditions, FK has difficulties to attract students from abroad. FK does not have any formalized courses in English. Student services in English as well as offering courses in English need a lot of improvement.
- 6.6 FK has not yet been able to ensure conditions for attracting teachers from abroad. Referring to the Faculty's self evaluation "FK as a relatively young and still unrecognizable institution at the University of Split does not achieve satisfying results in terms of international cooperation".
- 6.7 FK has developed inter-international cooperation through Erasmus and other bilateral agreements to some extent. There is a need to improve these internationalization efforts.

7. Resources: administration, space, equipment and finances

- 7.1 Current number of classrooms, labs/practicums, library resources used in teaching is inadequate to provide appropriate learning resources for all enrolled students. Sports facilities within FK are limited and modest with regard to space. Part of the teaching is arranged in hired spaces outside the Faculty building.
- 7.2 FK secures an adequate ratio of teaching and non-teaching staff.
- 7.3 FK has well-developed policies that ensure professional development of non-teaching staff.
- 7.4 Laboratory facilities and equipment need a lot of improvement. The laboratory infrastructure and relevant usage protocols do not comply with recognized international standards.
- 7.5 There is modern equipment, technology and technical support for teaching and research activities. However, some improvements are needed.
- 7.6 The library and its services need improvements in order to adequately support students' learning. The library at FK facilities is shared with three other faculties. The space available is not optimal. There is a need for improvement in updating the literature, having more international literature, especially international scientific journals and electronic databases that students' and teachers' have access to.
- 7.7 The funding of FK is not at an adequate level and affects limited autonomy and low degree of flexibility that FK has in financial transactions and e.g. in investments. However the funding enables all students to successfully complete their study programmes.
- 7.8 FK's own limited funds are used to raise the quality of teaching and scientific activity. Challenging financial situation of FK needs to be solved in order for the institution to comply to the standards of similar institutions.

