



**REPORT  
OF THE EXPERT PANEL  
ON THE REACCREDITATION  
OF THE UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE (DOCTORAL)  
PROGRAMME  
*ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS*  
*FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY OF  
ZAGREB***

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Expert Panel appointed by the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE) created this Report on the Re-accreditation of the University Postgraduate (Doctoral) Programme **Economics and Business** on the basis of the Self-Evaluation Report of the Programme, other documentation submitted and a visit to the **Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Zagreb**.

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

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

The Report contains the following elements:

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

Members of the Expert Panel:

- President of the Expert Panel, Prof. Peter Mason, London Metropolitan University, United Kingdom;
- Prof. Aleksandra Mrčela Kanjuo, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia;
- Prof. Rainer Niemann, Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz, Austria;
- Prof. Anand Murugesan, Central European University, Hungary;
- Prof. Peter-Wim Zuidhof, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands;
- Prof. Wendy Sigle, London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom;
- Doc. dr. Maja Turnšek-Hančič, University of Maribor, Slovenia;
- Prof. Julius Horvath, Central European University Business School, Hungary;
- Prof. Adele Ladkin, Bournemouth University, United Kingdom;
- Ieva Krūmina, doctoral candidate, Latvian University of Agriculture, Latvia;
- Hrvoje Stojić, doctoral candidate, University Pompeu Fabra, Spain;
- Jeremiás Máté Balogh, doctoral candidate, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary;

- Kanad Bagchi, doctoral candidate, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Germany.

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

- Prof. Rainer Niemann, Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz, Austria;
- Prof. Anand Murugesan, Central European University, Hungary;
- Prof. Peter-Wim Zuidhof, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands;
- Prof. Wendy Sigle, London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom;
- Jeremiás Máté Balogh, doctoral candidate, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary;
- Kanad Bagchi, doctoral candidate, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Germany.

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

- Josip Hrgović, coordinator, ASHE,
- Alma Agović, assistant coordinator, ASHE,
- Goran Briški, interpreter at the site visit,
- Ivana Rončević, translator of the Report, ASHE.

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

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

The Expert Panel (henceforth 'the panel') also had a tour of the library, IT rooms, student register desk and the classrooms.

## ***SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME***

Name of the study programme contained in the licence: Economics and Business

Institution delivering the programme: University of Zagreb, Faculty of Economics & Business (FEB)

Institution providing the programme: FEB

Place of delivery: Zagreb

Scientific area and field: Social sciences, Economics

Number of doctoral candidates: 167

Number of doctoral candidates with funding (employed as research assistants at UZ FEB, another HEI or institute): 39

Number of doctoral candidates whose fees are paid by themselves: 94

Number of doctoral students funded by the employer-firm: 34

Number of teachers: 61

Number of supervisors: 55 supervisors are appointed for 112 doctoral students

Ratio between supervisors and doctoral students: 1:2.

Learning outcomes of the study programme:

Upon completion the candidates will be able to:

- LO 1: Evaluate and apply contemporary theories and models in economics and business on the basis of analytical and critical analysis aimed at understanding and solving economic and business challenges.
- LO 2: Make well argued choices regarding analytical, mathematical and econometric approaches necessary for designing and conducting independent and original scientific research.
- LO 3: Apply critical and creative reasoning in the context of scientific research.
- LO 4: Write and publish original research publications such as a doctoral dissertation, papers in relevant reviewed international journals and papers presented in international conferences.
- LO 5: Competently teach, supervise and assess students of economics and business. These skills enable candidates to pursue a teaching career in academia.
- LO 6: Apply scientific knowledge to solving business problems. Being able to do so qualifies candidates for a career in business.
- LO 7: Present, communicate and disseminate their research results and other scientific knowledge to both academic and business communities.

Classes / research ratio: 55/115 ECTS

Classes: (55 ECTS): completing 9 courses (6 in first year, 3 in second out of 66 offered courses) and 10 ECTS in participating in methodology workshop

Research part: (115 ECTS) 20 is assigned to first and second doctoral workshop; 10 for publishing a paper; 10 for conference participation; 25 for topic submission; 50 for thesis writing and defence.

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

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

**Issue a letter of expectation for the period *up to three (3) years* in which period the higher education institution should make the necessary improvements.**

### **Joint recommendations for all of the evaluated study programmes in the cluster of social sciences and the field of economics:**

1. Research proposal should accompany applications of candidates and should be part of the assessment process when choosing the best candidates for enrolment.
2. A supervisor should be appointed at the start of the programme.
3. Transparency of doctoral students' funding should be improved.
4. Justification of fee level should be improved.
5. There should be an equal treatment of part-time and full-time (fully-funded) students.
6. All doctoral students should have at least 3 years of independent research in full capacity. With current teaching content taking large portion of the programme, the programme should be prolonged to last possibly 4 or 5 years, with first (classroom) part as a Masters (Research) level.
7. Systematic internationalisation of curriculum, faculty and students (incl. student experience) should be a priority.

## ***RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME***

1. Establish an internationalisation strategy for research outputs and collaborations, including the targeting of higher level journals for publications.
2. Establish an internationalisation strategy for student recruitment.
3. Establish an internationalisation strategy for faculty recruitment.
4. Consider ways to encourage and promote greater mobility of staff and students.
5. Conduct a systematic review and updating of course materials (i.e. textbooks, statistical software).
6. Ensure that prospective students submit a research proposal as part of their application.
7. Provide a more transparent allocation of funds.
8. Explore ways of providing students with lower cost access to personal licenses for statistical software.

## ***ADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME***

1. Qualified and devoted mentors.

2. Supportive Faculty management and administrative support.
3. Receptiveness to feedback.
4. The size and selectivity of the programme provides opportunities for the development of support and collaborative networks amongst the students.
5. There are opportunities for students to work as teaching assistants, or on research projects.

### ***DISADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME***

1. The lack of options to enrol formally as a part-time student.
2. Restrictive regulations that divert students from Scandinavian-style dissertation models.
3. Limited tracking by ability in core methods teaching.
4. The high cost of fees for self-funded students.
5. Strict publication requirements may discourage people from attending particular conferences (without proceedings) or targeting top journals (where the time from submission to publication may be more protracted).
6. Relatively low ECTS weighting for the dissertation.

### ***EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE***

1. Research workshops focused on skill development.
2. A pro-active approach to addressing and avoiding plagiarism.
3. The large number of students that co-author research papers with their supervisors.
4. Annual monitoring reports.

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

<b>Minimal legal conditions:</b>	
1. The Higher Education Institution (HEI) is listed in the Register of Scientific Organisations in the scientific area of the programme, and has a positive reaccreditation decision on performing higher education activities and scientific activity.	YES
2. HEI delivers programmes in the two cycles leading to the doctoral programme, i.e., first two cycles in the same area and field/fields (for interdisciplinary programmes), and employs a sufficient number of teachers as defined by Article 6 of the Ordinance on the Content of a Licence and Conditions for Issuing a Licence for Performing Higher Education Activity, Carrying out a Study Programme and Re-Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions (OG 24/10).	YES
3. HEI employs a sufficient number of researchers, as defined by Article 7 of the the Ordinance on Conditions for Issuing Licence for Scientific Activity, Conditions for Re-Accreditation of Scientific Organisations and Content of Licence (OG 83/2010).	YES
4. At least 50% of teaching as expressed in norm-hours is delivered by teachers employed at the HEI (full-time, elected into scientific-teaching titles).	YES
5. Student: teacher ratio at the HEI is below 30:1.	YES*
*Accordingg to MOZVAG and MZO data: 1:27.5	
6. HEI ensures that doctoral theses are public.	NO*
*Comment: Dissertations are only available to employees and students of the UZ FEB in free and internet access.	
7. The HEI launches the procedure of revoking the academic title if it is determined that it has been attained contrary to the conditions stipulated for its attainment, by severe violation of the studying rules or based on a doctoral thesis (dissertation) that has proved to be a plagiarism or a forgery according to provisions of the statute or other enactments.	YES
<b>Additional/ recommended conditions of the ASHE Accreditation Council for passing a positive opinion</b>	
1. HEI (or HEIs in joint programmes) has at least five teachers appointed to scientific-teaching titles in the field, or fields relevant for the programme involved in its delivery.	YES
2. In the most recent reaccreditation, HEI had the standard Scientific and Professional Activity marked as at least "partly implemented" (3).	YES
3. The doctoral programme is aligned with the HEI's research strategy.	YES
4. The candidate : supervisor ratio at the HEI is not above 3:1.	YES
5. All supervisors meet the following conditions: a) PhD, elected into a scientific title, holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position and/or has at least two years of postdoctoral research experience;  b) active researcher in the scientific area of the programme, as evidenced by	a) NO - some are retired  b) NO (Some supervisors

<p>publications, participation in scientific conferences and/or projects in the past five years (table 2, Supervisors and candidates);</p> <p>c) confirms feasibility of the draft research plan upon admission of the candidate (or submission of the proposal);</p> <p>d) ensures the conditions (and funding) necessary to implement the candidate's research (in line with the draft research plan) as a research project leader, co-leader, participant, collaborator or in other ways;</p> <p>e) trained for the role before assuming it (through workshops, co-supervisions etc.);</p> <p>f) received a positive opinion of the HEI on previous supervisory work.</p>	<p>have no publications, no projects, no citations and no h-index.)</p> <p>c) YES</p> <p>d) NO, the necessary conditions are not always met</p> <p>e) NO not all are trained</p> <p>f) YES.</p>
<p>6. All teachers meet the following conditions:</p> <p>a) holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position;</p> <p>b) active researcher, recognized in the field relevant for the course (table 1, Teachers).</p>	<p>a) In general 'YES' (but one works outside academia)</p> <p>b) In general 'YES' but one has no publications, or citations.</p>
<p>7. The supervisor normally does not participate in the assessment committees.</p>	<p>YES</p>
<p>8. The programme ensures that all candidates spend at least three years doing independent research (while studying, individually, within or outside courses), which includes writing the thesis, publishing, participating in international conferences, field work, attending courses relevant for research etc.</p>	<p>NO - the programme has 55 ECTS attained in coursework throughout the first and second year!</p>
<p>9. For joint programmes and doctoral schools (at the university level) (...)</p>	<p>n/a</p>

## QUALITY ASSESSMENT

<b>1. RESOURCES: TEACHERS, SUPERVISORS, RESEARCH CAPACITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b>	
<p>1.1. HEI is distinguished by its scientific/ artistic achievements in the discipline in which the doctoral study programme is delivered.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are Necessary</b></p> <p>Due to its size and location in the capital, the Faculty is a leading institution at a national level, but is not really visible on an international scale (i.e., beyond South-Eastern Europe). It attracts PhD students from Zagreb and other Croatian universities, but – due to language restrictions – hardly any students from abroad. To improve international visibility of the Faculty, the Expert Panel recommends to target publications in higher-ranking international journals rather than in outlets with a regional focus, as is currently practised.</p> <p>The journals published by the Faculty are not visible beyond South-Eastern Europe. Editorial activities of the Faculty members beyond the Faculty journals are not reported.</p>
<p>1.2. The number and workload of teachers involved in the study programme ensure quality doctoral education.</p>	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>The number of teachers in the doctoral programme is high. Almost all of them are employed on a full-time basis. The workload differs substantially among teachers, including a few very high levels (above 360 hours) but the average level is acceptable.</p>
<p>1.3. The teachers are highly qualified researchers who actively engage with the topics they teach, providing a quality doctoral programme.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are Necessary</b></p> <p>The quantity as well as the quality of publications is very heterogeneous among the Faculty members. Most researchers are active and publish regularly, so that the overall publication activity is quantitatively high.</p> <p>However, articles in leading academic journals that are visible at a European or even world-wide level are rare. As an example, the number of SSCI-listed journal articles is not provided in the Self-Evaluation Report, but occasional checks of the publication lists of the Faculty members suggest this number is low. The panel recommends that the Faculty targets higher level journals for publications, so that there is higher quality of output.</p> <p>Since the process used to allocate courses to teachers is not mentioned in the Self-Evaluation Report, it does not demonstrate that teachers actually publish on the topics they teach. However, it did appear from what the panel members were told during the visit that this is the case.</p>

<p>1.4. The number of supervisors and their qualifications provide for quality in producing the doctoral thesis.</p>	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>The number of supervisors is high. The number of candidates per supervisor is adequate. The number of students per supervisor is typically one or two and never exceeds five.</p> <p>Most supervisors are active researchers (see 1.1. and 1.3.). Few supervisors have a low publication output.</p> <p>Regarding supervisors' publication activity, there seems to be no rule requiring supervisors to step down. So, in principle, professors who stopped publishing or retired professors are permitted to supervise PhD theses. While this assures continuity of supervision, and may be the best solution for students confronted with the retirement of their supervisor, it may be an issue that needs to be considered at the time that a supervisor is first assigned.</p>
<p>1.5. The HEI has developed methods of assessing the qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are Necessary</b></p> <p>According to the SER, the Faculty applies well-established quality assessments of qualifications and competencies of supervisors. The SER does not provide information about how the qualifications of international teachers are assessed, but involvement of international teachers and especially supervisors, seems to be rare. The panel suggests that there needs to be clearer information on the assessment of the qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors. The panel also recommends the greater use of international teachers and supervisors.</p>
<p>1.6. The HEI has access to high-quality resources for research, as required by the programme discipline.</p>	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>During the site visit, most (junior and senior) researchers expressed their satisfaction with the library resources, the available databases, and the software. However, some PhD students reported that they did not have access to some statistical packages that they would like to use. The HEI needs to ascertain the needs of students regarding these statistical packages.</p>
<p><b>2. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE PROGRAMME</b></p>	
<p>2.1. The HEI has established and accepted effective procedures for proposing, approving and delivering doctoral education. The procedures include</p>	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>The programme was established according to the procedures of the Regulations on Doctoral Studies at the University of Zagreb and accredited in 2008. It has awarded over 700 PhD degrees.</p>

<p>identification of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social and economic needs.</p>	<p>The proposal and approval of the programme clearly involved a consideration of the scientific, social and economic needs in Croatia. As one of the foremost PhD programmes in economics in Croatia, it has been training large numbers of candidates who teach at economics faculties both in Zagreb and elsewhere in Croatia. They have been training economists and business students working for important national institutions, such as the Central Bank of Croatia, ministries, banks and industry. Important stakeholders are regularly consulted to determine the needs of the programme.</p> <p>The programme admits significant numbers of students each year, of whom approximately half are self-funded. The programme has an admissions quota of 45 which, in practice, is more of a target than a quota (the actual number of students admitted each year is well below this number).</p>
<p>2.2. The programme is aligned with the HEI research mission and vision, i.e. research strategy.</p>	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>The PhD programme is aligned with the research strategy of the Faculty of Economics and that of the University of Zagreb. The latter seeks to distinguish itself as an elite national higher education institution. The Faculty of Economics' mission is to train highly qualified experts.</p> <p>The programme indeed takes a central place in doctoral education in business and economics in Croatia. The programme clearly contributes to the research objective of improving the (international) research capacities of the Faculty.</p> <p>The programme could further improve its standing by stating more explicitly the specialist areas of research in which it would want to achieve national and regional excellence.</p>
<p>2.3. The HEI systematically monitors the success of the programmes through periodic reviews, and implements improvements.</p>	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>Periodic reviews of the PhD programme are conducted.</p> <p>The programme effectively registers and monitors the research output of supervisors and candidates. It regularly collects feedback from external stakeholders.</p> <p>Courses are regularly evaluated. There is no formal system for collecting and analysing feedback from candidates, alumni and drop-outs. The latter should be improved, especially the monitoring of students who do not make sufficient progress.</p> <p>From our encounters with its representatives, students and</p>

	external stakeholders, the programme appears responsive to suggestions for improvement.
2.4. HEI continuously monitors supervisors' performance and has mechanisms for evaluating supervisors, and, if necessary, changing them and mediating between the supervisors and the candidates.	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>The programme monitors research performance of its active students, who have passed the proposal stage. It has clear records of completion rates. There are clear university procedures for supervision and these are in line with international EDAMBA standards.</p>
2.5. HEI assures academic integrity and freedom.	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>The Faculty has passed an Ethics Code for students and the Faculty.</p> <p>The programme offers a required course on Research Methods and Research Ethics. The programme has recently taken a decision to purchase plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) and has started using it to check completed dissertations. However, the use of plagiarism software could be improved by making it required for every course.</p>
2.6. The process of developing and defending the thesis proposal is transparent and objective, and includes a public presentation.	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>The Regulations on Doctoral Studies have clearly defined procedures for developing and defending the thesis proposal in public. Further good practice is that the proposal is assessed by a committee that has at least one external member and that the supervisor is prohibited from being the chair of the committee. The thesis proposal is defended in public in front of the committee.</p>
2.7. Thesis assessment results from a scientifically sound assessment of an independent committee.	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>The Regulations on Doctoral Studies have clearly defined procedures for defending the thesis. The thesis is defended in front of a committee that has at least one external member. On occasions there have been international members in the committee. According to the SER, the supervisor can be part of the defense procedure but is prohibited from assessing the dissertation. The dissertation is defended in public in front of the committee. It is recommended that a greater number of international staff are used on the committee.</p>
2.8. The HEI publishes all necessary information on the study programme, admissions, delivery and conditions for progression and completion, in	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>The SER provided evidence that the programme satisfies this criterion.</p>

accessible outlets and media.	
2.9. Funds collected for the needs of doctoral education are distributed transparently and in a way that ensures sustainability and further development of doctoral education (ensures that candidates' research is carried out and supported, so that doctoral education can be completed successfully).	<p><b>Improvements are Necessary</b></p> <p>The SER has not specified exactly how tuition fees are allocated. The sustainability of funding for the programme cannot be determined.</p> <p>There is very little project based funding for PhD research.</p> <p>The programme provides students with the resources to conduct their research. Some students reported that they would benefit from a wider access to international literature and research findings available in dedicated databases.</p> <p>The panel recommends a more transparent allocation of funds.</p>
2.10. Tuition fees are determined on the basis of transparent criteria (and real costs of studying).	<p><b>Improvements are Necessary</b></p> <p>Considering the national context, the tuition fees for this programme are very high. We were provided with very little information about how the tuition fees are determined. The HEI must make the determination of fees transparent.</p>
<b>3. SUPPORT TO DOCTORAL CANDIDATES AND THEIR PROGRESSION</b>	
3.1. The HEI establishes admission quotas with respect to its teaching and supervision capacities.	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>The procedures, which are clearly outlined in the SER, are appropriate and satisfactory.</p> <p>In our overall assessment, it transpired that the Faculty members were not overloaded with teaching and thus could devote sufficient time to the doctoral students.</p>
3.2. The HEI establishes admission quotas on the basis of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social, economic and other needs.	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>Generally, 33 doctoral candidates are admitted into the programme annually, while 20 candidates receive doctoral titles. Data we were provided with, which was labelled as "completion rates", were not in fact completion rates, and, although we requested it, we were not provided with an accurate figure of the percentage of admitted candidates who complete the programme. The panel recommends that the HEI maintains accurate records of rates of completion and these are made available during external reviews.</p> <p>The majority of postgraduates are employed at the UZ FEB, or at other HEIs, in research and development positions in the private sector or in the public sector, in the banking sector and as</p>

	entrepreneurs. Only one PhD holder is unemployed.
3.3. The HEI establishes the admission quotas taking into account the funding available to the candidates, that is, on the basis of the absorption potentials of research projects or other sources of funding.	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>The FEB is able to absorb many of its PhDs: 22 candidates are employed at UZ FEB.</p> <p>It was our overall impression that most of the students were employed by the University and hence were funded by the University. Several others were funded by sister research institutions in Zagreb or elsewhere. Moreover, those students who could not find funding in the initial phases of their PhD, were often able to find some form of financial support as they proceeded further into their PhD programmes.</p> <p>However, this information was not entirely consistent with numbers reported in the SER document (page 4) and so the panel may have been met with individuals for whom what is indicated above was the case.</p>
3.4. The HEI should pay attention to the number of candidates admitted as to provide each with an advisor (a potential supervisor). From the point of admission to the end of doctoral education, efforts are invested so that each candidate has a sustainable research plan and is able to complete doctoral research successfully.	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>Before writing their research proposal, PhD students must successfully complete at least two research workshops.</p> <p>The PhD process is monitored and reported in every stage, especially through the means of annual progress reports.</p> <p>There are procedures which can be used to withdraw or change a supervisor in case of non-accomplishment.</p>
3.5. The HEI ensures that interested, talented and highly motivated candidates are recruited internationally.	<p><b>Improvements are Necessary</b></p> <p>PhDs are recruited mainly in Croatia and in the region. We saw no evidence that specific efforts are made by the University to recruit international candidates.</p> <p>The rules made it difficult to produce a thesis in English, and we saw no theses that were.</p> <p>Another apparent rigidity in the rules and regulations meant that the 'Scandinavian model' is not widely encouraged or used. This may make the programme less attractive to students who are concerned about their international career prospects.</p> <p>Among the students that we interacted with during our site visit, there was only one international student. Her biggest complaint</p>

	<p>was that most of the courses were taught in Croatian and not in English. Moreover, there was no incentive or encouragement to publish in English. The panel recommends that the regulations are revised so it is possible to publish the thesis in English. Additionally, the HEI should ensure that far more international students are recruited.</p>
<p>3.6. The selection process is public and based on choosing the best applicants.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are Necessary</b></p> <p>The selection process includes a variety of factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past performance in the graduate programme, selection criteria include a grade point average of at least 4.0.;</li> <li>• Interview conducted by the Doctoral Study Council;</li> <li>• Demonstrated motivation in scientific research;</li> <li>• Previous publications;</li> <li>• Recommendation letter by a teacher is needed (in case that the grade point average is below 4.0).</li> </ul> <p>During their interaction with students the panel was informed that there was no requirement to submit a research proposal as part of the application process. The panel strongly recommends that students submit a substantial research proposal as part of their application. This is intended not only to help select candidates, but also assist students at the beginning of the programme to focus their ideas.</p>
<p>3.7. The HEI ensures that the selection procedure is transparent and in line with published criteria, and that there is a transparent complaints procedure.</p>	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>The list of admitted applicants is public. All applicants are notified of the Committee's decision. Information provided in the SER indicates that there is a complaints procedure that applicants are aware of, and a recent case was described.</p>
<p>3.8. There is a possibility to recognize applicants' and candidates' prior learning.</p>	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>According to the SER, the candidates in the postgraduate university programme who have previously completed a two-year postgraduate scientific study programme or a postgraduate specialist study programme get the credit recognition of 60 and 30 ECTS points, respectively.</p>
<p>3.9. Candidates' rights and obligations are defined in relevant HEI regulations and a contract on studying that provides for a high level of supervisory and institutional support to the candidates.</p>	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>Based on the SER and information provided during the site visit, the panel members were satisfied that students knew what is expected from them at the outset and that they knew who to approach in case of difficulties. The panel also found that the administration team was very helpful in attending to the students'</p>

	needs.
3.10. There are institutional support mechanisms for candidates' successful progression.	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>In total, 47 candidates were financed directly from research projects, whereas 22 candidates were financed from projects funded by the University Development Fund, the Croatian Science Foundation, EU and international projects.</p> <p>All candidates employed at the Faculty received institutional support for the publication of their research papers.</p> <p>PhDs students also receive support with respect to translation services with regard to their publications and papers submissions.</p> <p>PhD students meet their supervisors frequently or keep in contact by e-mail or Skype. Co-authoring with supervisors is typical if not explicitly encouraged.</p> <p>The international office of UZ supports candidates to find exchange programmes and international conferences.</p> <p>Several research workshops are organised during the programme with participation of many researchers and PhD students.</p>
<b>4. PROGRAMME AND OUTCOMES</b>	
4.1. The content and quality of the doctoral programme are aligned with internationally recognized standards.	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>National and international comparators are considered when programmes are proposed and approved at the Faculty and University level. The SER mentions that UZ FEB is a member of global organisations such as CEEMAN, EDAMBA, EFMD, AACSB, PRME – Principles for Responsible Management Education and CRANET (<a href="http://www.efzg.unizg.hr/default.aspx?id=10830#ceeman">http://www.efzg.unizg.hr/default.aspx?id=10830#ceeman</a>) which can facilitate efforts to ensure that the content and quality of the programmes is aligned with internationally recognized standards.</p> <p>PhD candidates are required to take a standard mix of compulsory courses (Micro. &amp; Macro. Economics, Mathematics for Econ. Analysis, Econometrics, Qualitative and Quantitative Methods et al.).</p> <p>Several candidates work in the University and have opportunities to closely interact with their faculty/supervisor.</p>

	<p>However, the panel recommends that the rules should be altered so that it is easier to write a thesis in English (presently, they are predominantly in Croatian) and to produce a ‘Scandinavian style’ thesis.</p>
<p>4.2. Programme learning outcomes, as well as the learning outcomes of modules and subject units, are aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF. They clearly describe the competencies the candidates will develop during the doctoral programme, including the ethical requirements of doing research.</p>	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>This is asserted in a table in the SER but not demonstrated. The panel examined the actual course outlines and found that the learning outcomes are clearly described and demonstrate how the course objectives and learning outcomes are connected with teaching contents, procedures for applied supervision and research.</p> <p>The panel suggests that a programme handbook, which aggregates relevant procedures and requirements over the course of the PhD programme, would be helpful for PhD candidates.</p>
<p>4.3. Programme learning outcomes are logically and clearly connected with teaching contents, as well as the contents included in supervision and research.</p>	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>The learning outcomes have been clearly outlined and the choice of compulsory and elective courses overall align with international standards for a graduate programme in Economics and Business.</p> <p>Besides the standard courses for a PhD programme in Economics and Business, 56–60 elective courses are offered in economics and business. Some courses have a student teacher ratio of 1:1 which may be resource intensive, but it suggests that it may provide more bespoke, research focused support than the ECTS figure suggests.</p> <p>The recent addition “Methodology of Research in Qualitative Methods” was appreciated by students as a useful transition to doing research.</p> <p>We would suggest that the textbooks and course materials are continually updated (see texts used for teaching Econometrics or microeconomic analysis materials at Bocconi or INSEAD).</p> <p>The adoption of Turnitin software (purchased) is in line with international practices to stemming “plagiarism” as a widely recognized issue among students. We would encourage wide usage of the “show student report” feature inherent in the software and frequent usage (every course with written text component) to acquaint students with what constitutes original work.</p>

<p>4.4. The doctoral programme ensures the achievement of learning outcomes and competencies aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF.</p>	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>The SER, supplemented with the course outlines, provided sufficient evidence that the doctoral programme ensures the achievement of learning outcomes and competencies aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF.</p>
<p>4.5. Teaching methods (and ECTS, if applicable) are appropriate for level 8.2 of the CroQF and assure achievement of clearly defined learning outcomes.</p>	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>The SER, supplemented with the course outlines, provided sufficient evidence that the teaching methods are appropriate.</p>
<p>4.6. The programme enables acquisition of general (transferable) skills.</p>	<p><b>High Level of Quality</b></p> <p>Some electives enable candidates to pursue a career in academia while others are of a more applied nature and can be applied broadly (including business).</p> <p>The methods training (which includes the development of computer skills), and the critical thinking skills developed through the PhD student workshops provide examples of the development of general transferrable skills. The employers (including the Central Bank which hires both the undergraduates and graduates from this school) were overall positive about the training provided in the PhD programme in economics and business. The employers also noted that the quality of the graduates from the programme has been increasing over the years.</p>
<p>4.7. Teaching content is adapted to the needs of current and future research and candidates' training (individual course plans, generic skills etc.).</p>	<p><b>Improvements are Necessary</b></p> <p>Student comments and reports suggest that there might be a mismatch between the content and the needs of some of the students. Some students reported that the mandatory methods courses are only introductory-level. Given the heterogeneous skills and levels of preparation in entering PhD cohorts, the content could be superfluous for students who enter the programme with a stronger methods background.</p> <p>The panel has several suggestions on ways to improve this situation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some departments provide a math/statistics 'camp' in the pre-class weeks for entering cohorts.</li> <li>• Another option might be to provide online self-paced preparatory materials to help those with gaps in their knowledge of fundamental concepts (mathematics – algebra/calculus and statistics/probability) to catch up.</li> <li>• Another approach is that the mandatory courses could be</li> </ul>

	<p>programme specific. Hence, offer more advanced micro- and econometrics for Economics PhD candidates compared to Business PhD candidates. If the numbers for economics (advanced micro econometrics) course is not adequate (20% of students reported they choose economics) to justify changing the first year mandatory courses in this way, the school might consider waivers for certain first year mandatory courses if students have adequate preparation. In the second year, we would strongly recommend differentiation of advanced and intermediate students (i.e. not the same mandatory courses for all).</p>
<p>4.8. The programme ensures quality through international connections and teacher and candidate mobility.</p>	<p><b>High level of Quality</b></p> <p>For students employed at the Faculty, there is informal support (as Croatian labour laws constrain their travel while working/getting paid). However, we would recommend that the Faculty consider new ways of promoting mobility and of ensuring that students can make the most of international connections.</p> <p>The panel also suggests that the language of instruction should gradually switch to English from Croatian.</p> <p>Some efforts have been made for supporting international exposure (500 Euro support to attend a course at a university outside Croatia) but the panel suggests that this needs further investment, particularly as it might be inadequate given the cost of living in an international location.</p>

**\* NOTE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXPERT PANEL TO THE ASHE'S ACCREDITATION COUNCIL AND QUALITY LABEL**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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