



**REPORT  
OF THE EXPERT PANEL  
ON THE RE-ACCREDITATION  
OF THE UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE (DOCTORAL)  
PROGRAMME**

***INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SCIENCES*  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES,  
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 **Information and Communication Sciences** on the basis of the Self-Evaluation Report of the Programme, other documentation submitted and a visit to the **Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of 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:

- Professor Andrew McGettrick, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom, president of the expert panel,
- Professor Bjørn Erik Munkvold, Universitetet i Agder, Norway,
- Professor Henrique Madeira, Universidade de Coimbra, Portugal,
- Professor Sofia Gaio, University Fernando Pessoa, Portugal,
- Professor Theo Thomassen, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands,
- Professor Tanja Oblak Črnič, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia,
- Akram El-Korashy, Max Planck Institute for Software Systems, Germany, doctoral candidate,
- Abhishek Tiwari, Potsdam University, Germany, doctoral candidate.

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

- Prof. Sofia Gaio, University Fernando Pessoa, Portugal,
- Prof. Theo Thomassen, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands, moderator,
- Prof. Tanja Oblak Črnič, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia,
- Abhishek Tiwari, doctoral candidate, Potsdam University, Germany.

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

- Marina Grubišić, coordinator, ASHE,
- Davorka Androić, assistant coordinator, ASHE,
- Ivana Rončević, interpreter at the site visit and translator of the report, ASHE.

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

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

The Expert Panel also had a tour of the library (reading room, computer classroom, conference rooms), IT rooms, student register desk and the classrooms.

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

Name of the study programme contained in the licence: **Postgraduate university doctoral programme Information and Communication Sciences**

Institution delivering the programme: **Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb**

Institution providing the programme: **Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb**

Place of delivery: **Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb**

Scientific area and field: **Social Sciences, Information and communication sciences**

Number of doctoral candidates: **83**

Number of teachers: **53**

Number of supervisors: **52**

Learning outcomes of the study programme:

**LO 1:** demonstrate understanding of research problems through critical analyses of previous scientific publications

**LO 2:** analyse and compare fundamental scientific theories of the research subject

**LO 3:** independently formulate new theoretical paradigms based on original research and current scientific achievements in the discipline

**LO 4:** apply scientific research methodologies to his/hers research questions, issues and problems

**LO 5:** choose appropriate statistical tools and methods and use them in various data analysis

**LO 6:** evaluate results of qualitative and quantitative analysis

**LO 7:** demonstrate knowledge and understanding of ethical principles and standards in executing scientific research

**LO 8:** communicate his/hers research in the academia through written and oral presentations

**LO 9:** demonstrate ability to plan, organize and conduct domestic and international research projects

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

<p>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: <b>issue a confirmation on compliance for performing parts of activities (renew the license).</b></p>
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## ***RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME***

1. Give high priority to further increasing the international scope and character of the programme, research projects and student population.
2. Strengthen contacts with companies and create formal mechanisms, such as industrial advisory boards, to stimulate the collaboration between the Faculty and local industries.
3. Improve the effectiveness of student feedback.
4. Improve the mechanisms to make students more aware of formal procedures.
5. Provide more evidence on the prevention of plagiarism.
6. Focus more on alternatives for students' research funding.
7. Consider reducing the number of courses.
8. Provide more institutional support mechanisms to support the candidates' successful progression.

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

1. The programme has a broad scope.
2. The programme is interdisciplinary in character.
3. Relationships with organisations in the professional field and other external stakeholders are direct and close.
4. Students and staff have a strong involvement in and identification with the programme.
5. Good facilities for study.

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

1. Part-time students are a great majority among the student population.
2. The number of drop-outs is very high.
3. Research projects are individual projects; teamwork is difficult to organise.

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

1. Doctoral conferences are organised on a regular basis.
2. A museologist is involved as a teacher in an archival research project.
3. Involvement in the INTERPARES programme facilitates and stimulates close relationships with government agencies and heritage institutions in Croatia and with researchers from other European universities.

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

<b>Minimal legal conditions:</b>	<b>YES/NO notes</b>
1. Higher education institution (HEI) is listed in the Register of Scientific Organisations in the scientific area of the programme, and has a positive reaccreditation decision on performing higher education activities and scientific activity.	<b>YES</b>
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).	<b>YES</b>
3. HEI employs a sufficient number of researchers, as defined by Article 7 of the Ordinance on Conditions for Issuing Licence for Scientific Activity, Conditions for Re-Accreditation of Scientific Organisations and Content of Licence (OG 83/2010).	<b>YES</b>
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).	<b>YES</b>
5. Student: teacher ratio at the HEI is below 30:1.	<b>YES</b>
6. HEI ensures that doctoral theses are public.	<b>YES</b>
7. HEI launches the procedure of revoking the academic title if it is determined that it has been attained contrary to the conditions stipulated for its attainment, by severe violation of the studying rules or based on a doctoral thesis (dissertation) that has proved to be a plagiarism or a forgery according to provisions of the statute or other enactments.	<b>YES</b>
<b>Additional/ recommended conditions of the ASHE Accreditation Council for passing a positive opinion</b>	<b>YES/NO notes</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.	<b>YES</b>
2. In the most recent reaccreditation, HEI had the standard Scientific and Professional Activity marked as at least "partly implemented" (3).	<b>YES</b>
3. The doctoral programme is aligned with the HEI's research strategy.	<b>YES</b>
4. The candidate : supervisor ratio at the HEI is not above 3:1.	<b>YES</b>
5. All supervisors meet the following conditions: a) PhD, elected into a scientific title, holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position and/or has at least two years of postdoctoral research experience; b) active researcher in the scientific area of the programme, as evidenced by publications, participation in scientific conferences and/or projects in the past five years (table 2, Supervisors and candidates); c) confirms feasibility of the draft research plan upon admission of the	<b>a) YES</b> <b>b) YES</b> <b>c) YES</b> <b>d) IN PART</b> <b>e) YES</b> <b>f) IN PART</b>

<p>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>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>	<b>YES</b>
<p>7. The supervisor normally does not participate in the assessment committees.</p>	<b>YES</b>
<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>	<b>YES</b>
<p>9. For joint programmes and doctoral schools (at the university level): cooperation between HEIs is based on adequate contracts; joint programmes are delivered in cooperation with accredited HEIs; the HEI delivers the programme within a doctoral school in line with the regulations and ensures good coordination aimed at supporting the candidates; at least 80% of courses are delivered by teachers employed at HEIs within the consortium.</p>	<b>N.A./NO JOINT PROGRAMMES OR DOCTORAL SCHOOLS</b>



## QUALITY ASSESSMENT

	Quality assessment (“high level of quality” or “improvements are necessary”) and the explanation of the Expert Panel
<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>High level of quality</b>            HEI has a well-defined strategy, pursuing relevant strategic goals for Croatian competitiveness in research and higher education.            The programme of doctoral studies in Information and Communication Sciences is well-established and aligned with international best practices in similar programmes.            The programme has important strengths, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The know-how of the University of Zagreb in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences,</li> <li>• A well-defined strategy,</li> <li>• Relevant and competitive research focus areas,</li> <li>• The interdisciplinary profile of the programme,</li> <li>• The high qualifications of teachers,</li> <li>• The number and quality of publications,</li> <li>• The programme internationalization policies,</li> <li>• The close relation with industry and employment sector.</li> </ul> <p>The programme is well-positioned to reach even higher levels in the international arena and for that students should be motivated to write theses in English, and the participation of international members in the evaluation committees should increase.</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>            The number of teachers engaged with the doctoral studies is quite good. The programme well exceeds the legal ratio of 50% delivered by teachers of the Faculty. It is positive that external experts and researchers also participate in the programme.</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>High level of quality</b>            The average number of teachers’ publications is quite good. Publications are related to teaching and research areas.            In addition, international cooperation in terms of projects,</p>

	events and papers is quite positive. Professors are participating in 19 international projects.
1.4. The number of supervisors and their qualifications provide for quality in producing the doctoral thesis.	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The ratio of candidates and supervisors is 1:1.13, which fulfils by far the legal requirements. Also, the data in SER shows capacity for the increase in the number of supervisors, if the need arises.</p> <p>There are formal mechanisms for monitoring qualifications of supervisors such as the Personal Profile of Mentor. Also, the number of relevant publications and participations in scientific events of supervisors and students reinforces the quality of research.</p>
1.5. The HEI has developed methods of assessing the qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors.	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The Faculty has well-established formal mechanisms for assessing and monitoring qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors. Recent positive initiatives such as the Quality Assurance Committee on the study programme level are a good example of that. The inclusion of more external members in this panel should be considered.</p>
1.6. The HEI has access to high-quality resources for research, as required by the programme discipline.	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>HEI has excellent access to resources for research.</p> <p>Besides gathering a large number of researchers and research units, HEI's library infrastructures are excellent, as is its services system.</p> <p>Students have access to relevant printed and electronic resources in the programme fields of studies.</p>
<b>2. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE PROGRAMME</b>	
2.1. The HEI has established and accepted effective procedures for proposing, approving and delivering doctoral education. The procedures include identification of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social and economic needs.	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The HEI has evaluated the main reasons for proposing the study programme, its procedure and also the main visions and aims of the programme. What is evidenced is strong international support and collaboration of the study programme with universities from USA, Austria, Slovenia and Italy.</p>
2.2. The programme is aligned with the HEI research mission and vision, i.e. research strategy.	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The programme is strongly aligned with the HEI research strategy, which is also evident in Self-evaluation report</p>

	and additional documented links within it: it is also internationally integrated with ERA (European Research Area), and EHEA (European Higher Education Area). In addition, the programme is aligned with the research mission and vision of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science and internally aligned with the Research Strategy (2015-2020).
2.3. The HEI systematically monitors the success of the programmes through periodic reviews, and implements improvements.	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p> <p>The PhD programme is strongly aligned with the Internal Quality Assurance System of the PhD study programme. Regulation of the programme is in line with the general evaluation process at the University of Zagreb, which includes: monitoring the productivity of supervisors and candidates, collecting the feedback from alumni and candidates and collecting the feedback from other stakeholders.</p> <p>However, the surveys about the specific programme elements (course evaluation, supervisors etc.) are not conducted regularly and this could be improved in future.</p>
2.4. HEI continuously monitors supervisors' performance and has mechanisms for evaluating supervisors, and, if necessary, changing them and mediating between the supervisors and the candidates.	<p><b>High quality level</b></p> <p>The system for monitoring supervisors is defined within the document Mentoring System and Rules on Supervisors' Work. The procedure for appointing the supervisor and election of topic is monitored and documented through universal university forms. In addition, regulations on doctoral studies at the University of Zagreb state the rights and obligations of both candidates and supervisors. The document also determines the procedures to solve possible issues between the mentor and the student.</p>
2.5. HEI assures academic integrity and freedom.	<p><b>Improvements are necessary</b></p> <p>According to the documentation, the academic integrity and freedom is assured: the Faculty has the Ethics Committee and the Code of Ethics; the University has established the Ethics Council. However, there is no evidence that the Faculty or the Programme monitor the prevention of plagiarism with assisted computer-based software programme (like, for instance, Turnitin).</p>
2.6. The process of developing and defending the thesis proposal is transparent and objective, and includes a public presentation.	<p><b>High quality level</b></p> <p>As is evident in the documentation, the process of developing and defending the thesis is transparent and objective. The official forms are publicly available through web-pages on the Faculty, department and postgraduate study level.</p>

<p>2.7. Thesis assessment results from a scientifically sound assessment of an independent committee.</p>	<p><b>High quality level</b>          Doctoral dissertation is assessed by the joint report written by an independent Committee for Dissertation Evaluation. Mentor and co-mentor are generally not members of this Committee.          The evaluation showed that doctoral candidates do not have the same attitude towards this kind of process: some would prefer to have supervisors included in the whole process, including the last evaluation within the defence. An internal discussion and reflection regarding this issue would be recommended.</p>
<p>2.8. The HEI publishes all necessary information on the study programme, admissions, delivery and conditions for progression and completion, in accessible outlets and media.</p>	<p><b>High quality level</b>          All information about the study, conditions for admission, requirements for progression and completion of the study are available online. The Office of Postgraduate studies also regularly sends information by email.</p>
<p>2.9. Funds collected for the needs of doctoral education are distributed transparently and in a way that ensures sustainability and further development of doctoral education (ensures that candidates' research is carried out and supported, so that doctoral education can be completed successfully).</p>	<p><b>High quality level</b>          Funds are classified according to the financial plan, also including the active participation of doctoral students in the scientific research process.</p>
<p>2.10. Tuition fees are determined on the basis of transparent criteria (and real costs of studying).</p>	<p><b>High quality level</b>          The tuition fee is proposed by the Faculty Council.</p>
<p><b>3. SUPPORT TO DOCTORAL CANDIDATES AND THEIR PROGRESSION</b></p>	
<p>3.1. The HEI establishes admission quotas with respect to its teaching and supervision capacities.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b>          The HEI provides for a high quality admission policy, systematically taking into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The number of available supervisors and their teaching workload;</li> <li>- The number of candidates a teacher already supervises, with no more than 3 candidates per supervisor on the programme as a whole;</li> <li>- Teaching workload of supervisors, which should not exceed the existing legal thresholds.</li> </ul>
<p>3.2. The HEI establishes admission quotas</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary.</b></p>

<p>on the basis of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social, economic and other needs.</p>	<p>HEI is involved in several public programmes, aiming to bring several PhD students together to present their research. That helps to understand scientific and cultural needs of society.</p> <p>As stated in the Self-evaluation report, more than 90% of students are not employed by the University. There is no direct connection between the students' employers and the University.</p> <p>The panel recommends the HEI to consider establishing formal mechanisms, such as industrial advisory boards, to stimulate the collaboration between the University and local industries.</p>
<p>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>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary.</b></p> <p>The HEI needs improvements in this area. A large number (<b>almost 90%</b>) of students have no research funding. Most of the students are working outside of the Faculty. This directly reduces their availability for research and hence their productivity.</p>
<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>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary.</b></p> <p>This programme helps both the supervisors and students in finding a suitable match for their research. However, this study programme is intense and lengthy, so the students do not get sufficient time to work on their research proposals. The number of courses should be reduced and sufficient time should be given to candidates for their research proposals. For example, in the first semester, the candidate has to take 18 ECTS from the mandatory courses and the development of the research strategy only contributes 5 ECTS. This gap should be balanced to give a candidate more time for developing the research strategy. This can be enforced via reducing the ECTS from mandatory courses to 9 and introducing a concept of a research project. This research project should be completed in groups to promote the team work among students.</p>
<p>3.5. The HEI ensures that interested, talented and highly motivated candidates are recruited internationally.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The HEI needs to make improvements with regard to attracting international students.</p> <p>The panel recommends developing course materials in English. The e-learning platform should be made in English as well, so that the international students have a better insight in the offered course work.</p>

<p>3.6. The selection process is public and based on choosing the best applicants.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b>  The HEI provides a fair procedure to hire PhD students. The HEI appoints an expert panel, whose role is to identify brilliant candidates, based on following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grades,</li> <li>- Recommendation letters,</li> <li>- Letters of motivation towards the research topic,</li> <li>- Previous publications,</li> <li>- Interview with the counsellor.</li> </ul>
<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>  The HEI ensures that the selection is transparent and that applicants have a right to challenge the decision. The selection procedure is documented and the list of admitted applicants is public. There is a time limit for complaints and responses to complaints. The applicants who were not admitted have the right to review the strengths and weaknesses of their application and, possibly, receive guidelines to improve their research plans.</p>
<p>3.8. There is a possibility to recognize applicants' and candidates' prior learning.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b>  The selection procedure at the HEI involves identification of student's capabilities. The motivational letter and the direct interview with the counsellor ensure that the prior learning is recognized. The hiring committee also looks at previous subjects and grades, to make sure that the correct qualifications are taken into account.</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>  The HEI provides relevant documents on the rights and obligations of candidates through the Regulations on Doctoral Studies.  However, during the visit, PhD students pointed out that many of them are not aware of these formal procedures. The panel recommends to HEI to provide a formal seminar on rights and obligations at the beginning of the course.</p>
<p>3.10. There are institutional support mechanisms for candidates' successful progression.</p>	<p><b>Improvements are necessary.</b>  The HEI provides following positive supports to their candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They conduct a doctoral conference, several times a year, to make sure that every student can have a peer review of their research.</li> <li>• Motivates students to participate in international</li> </ul>

	<p>conferences.</p> <p>The points in which HEI should improve are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivate students towards team work.</li> <li>• Explain formal procedures to them.</li> <li>• Supervisor should work more closely with students on their research.</li> <li>• Make sure that the courses on catalogue are actually offered.</li> </ul> <p>The panel also found out that industry-funded candidates were under exceptional pressure to prioritize their work over the successful and timely completion of their PhD studies. The HEI could consider engaging with industry to reduce the pressure on students.</p>
<p><b>4. PROGRAMME AND OUTCOMES</b></p>	
<p>4.1. The content and quality of the doctoral programme are aligned with internationally recognized standards.</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The doctoral study programme is comparable in quality and level with similar programmes in renowned British and other universities; the Research Strategy 2015-2020, on which the programme is based, is in line with relevant national and international standards.</p> <p>The doctoral study programme is broad and multidisciplinary. It covers most relevant scientific branches in the field of the information and communication sciences.</p> <p>In order to strengthen the research orientation of the programme, the amount of courses has been reduced. Teaching now includes 20% of the programme. It focuses on both general research skills and research skills required by the specific field of candidate's research.</p> <p>On the basis of international agreements, the programme provides candidates with good international experience.</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>The learning outcomes as formulated are in line with relevant regulations and applicable to doctoral research programmes in general. They are specified in the syllabi of the courses and related to the research and other competencies the candidates must acquire. They also direct research and related activities of the candidates and the performance of teachers and supervisors. The programme stimulates the acquisition of research competences in a broad way.</p>
<p>4.3. Programme learning outcomes are logically and clearly connected with teaching contents, as well as the</p>	<p><b>High level of quality</b></p> <p>The learning outcomes are logically and clearly aligned with individual courses, supervisory work and research.</p>

contents included in supervision and research.	
4.4. The doctoral programme ensures the achievement of learning outcomes and competencies aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF.	<b>High level of quality</b> The achieved learning outcomes (scientific review papers, research plans, theses, scientific publications, seminar and conference papers and presentations) are in accordance with Croatian and international guidelines.
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.	<b>High level of quality</b> Teaching methods enable the candidates to develop individual research skills. They encompass individual work with the supervisor, discussion groups, workshops, participation in colloquia, research projects and experimental or laboratory work. Writing a review paper is a part of each course.
4.6. The programme enables acquisition of general (transferable) skills.	<b>High level of quality</b> The programme provides for workshops and additional activities aimed at the acquisition of research, communication, management and business skills. Monitored by the Doctoral Study Council, workshops and additional activities are chosen by candidates according to their personal educational needs, as laid down in their personal development plans.
4.7. Teaching content is adapted to the needs of current and future research and candidates' training (individual course plans, generic skills etc.).	<b>High level of quality</b> Teaching content is tailored to the personal development plans candidates create in cooperation with their supervisors.
4.8. The programme ensures quality through international connections and teacher and candidate mobility.	<b>High level of quality</b> The programme improves its quality through internationalisation. Professors and researchers participate in international projects, international bodies and associations. Student mobility is enabled in Erasmus contracts.



**\* 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.