



**REPORT
OF THE EXPERT PANEL
ON THE REACCREDITATION
OF THE UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE (DOCTORAL)
PROGRAMME
KINESIOLOGY
FACULTY OF KINESIOLOGY UNIVERSITY OF SPLIT**

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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 Kinesiology on the basis of the Self-Evaluation Report of the Programme, other documentation submitted and a visit to the Faculty of Kinesiology, University of Split.

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. Mojca Doupona Topič, Faculty of Sport, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia;
- Dr. Joanne Hudson, Swansea University, United Kingdom;
- Dr. Joanna Bowtell, University of Exeter, United Kingdom;
- Mikko Huhtiniemi, doctoral candidate, M.Sc., Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences, University of Jyväskylä, Finland.

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

- Dr. Joanne Hudson, Swansea University, United Kingdom;
- Dr. Joanna Bowtell, University of Exeter, United Kingdom;
- Prof. Mojca Doupona Topič, Faculty of Sport, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia;
- Mikko Huhtiniemi, doctoral candidate, M.Sc., Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences, University of Jyväskylä, Finland.

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

- Alma Agović, coordinator, ASHE,
- Đurđica Dragojević, interpreter at the site visit,
- Đurđica Dragojević, 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 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: Kinesiology

Institution delivering the programme: Faculty of Kinesiology, University of Split

Institution providing the programme: Faculty of Kinesiology, University of Split

Place of delivery: Split

Scientific area and field: Social Sciences, Kinesiology

Number of doctoral candidates: 14 active, 28 inactive, **40 with appointed supervisors**

Number of teachers: 27 employees/15 external associates

Number of supervisors: 7 active, 30 potential supervisors

Ratio: 7/40 (active and inactive); 7/14 (active students only)

Learning outcomes of the study programme:

After the completion of the doctoral study of Kinesiology students will be able to obtain the following knowledge and skills as well as relative independence and responsibility:

1. Apply advanced research principles in research and development of new technologies, ideas and processes in different areas of applied kinesiology;
2. Create new procedures and theories leading to moving boundaries of knowledge in the area of research;
3. Critically evaluate published original research results published by other authors in the area or research;
4. Evaluate new and specialised skills, methods and instruments in the area of scientific research;
5. Publish original research papers in a journal referenced in a Web of Science database;
6. Publish and present scientific research in English;
7. Argue an opinion on a debate with other scientists in the area of research;
8. Collaborate in interdisciplinary groups in planning, implementation and evaluation of international research projects;
9. Apply methods of defining and protecting intellectual property;
10. Explain scientific research results to other scientists and unskilled persons;
11. Express personal, professional and ethical attitude;
12. Assume ethical and social responsibility for the success of research as well as possible consequences on a wider community;
13. Confront new challenges of the society and economy and contribute to both social and economic development with application of scientific research results.

Classes / research content: 40 ECTS in courses /140 ECTS in thesis writing

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 confirmation on compliance for performing parts of activities (renew the licence)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. Develop a more strategic approach to maximise the opportunities from the international partnerships via ERASMUS to ensure effective staff and student exchange.
2. Ensure that the student feedback on the taught programme is utilised to make improvements.
3. Ensure that there is an explicit allocation of supervisors' research excellence income to support doctoral candidates and improve the quality of their experience.
4. Introduce annual monitoring of supervisors and doctoral candidates, which will then be reviewed and appropriate actions agreed by the Doctoral Study Council.
5. Consider earlier allocation of supervisor to the doctoral candidates, after discussion of research interests at interview to allow an earlier start to the 3 years of independent research.
6. Consider removal of the supervisor from the proposal defence process.
7. Introduce software for identification of plagiarism, and monitor impact.
8. Doctoral candidates should be including data from 2-3 studies within their theses.

ADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. The formative feedback provided to the candidates on the pre-proposal prior to submission to the Doctoral Study Council.
2. Strong track record of the supervisors for international publications with robust annual monitoring and incentivisation.
3. Transparent selection criteria and the availability of the syllabus for candidates before application for a doctoral place.
4. Co-supervisor role is a good preparation for future supervision.
5. Preparation of candidates for the publication in English language WOS journals.
6. Student representation on Doctoral Study Council.
7. The triennial Contemporary Kinesiology conference, international visitors and links with other faculties broaden and add to the quality of the student experience.
8. Introduction of student evaluation surveys for the taught programme.
9. Excellent external stakeholder network and external income generation.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. Supervisors in some topics in particular are operating at capacity, so recruitment of new candidates in these areas of interest will necessitate reliance on external supervision which is currently *ad hoc*, thus their sustainability is not assured.
2. The recruitment/enrolment process could consider earlier identification of the focus area of the student and allocation of supervisor avoiding the need for tutor allocation.

3. No formal annual monitoring of the progress of candidates undertaking their independent research, nor formal/anonymous feedback on progress or issues of concern.
4. There is bias towards natural sciences, with limited opportunity to study social sciences and to develop understanding of interpretive research and to gain experience in associated methodologies. This is largely reliant on expertise outside of the Faculty.
5. Systematic methods for identifying and addressing plagiarism by candidates are not currently in place.
6. In some instances the completed theses were below international standards in terms of the number of research studies included (often just one research study compared to 3-4 internationally), however the change to the programme allowing an earlier start to the independent research should start to rectify this.
7. Part-time mode of study presents some challenges for supervisors and students, and delays in publication of findings, which might be a factor in limiting the opportunity for publication in international journals.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. The international conference with student section (and subsidised registration and travel) provides excellent opportunities for networking amongst PhD candidates across countries.
2. Co-supervisor role provides excellent development opportunities for potential supervisors.
3. A very strong stakeholder network that provides excellent opportunities for innovative partnerships, co-creation of programmes and products, diversification of income and knowledge transfer.

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

Minimal legal conditions:	YES/NO notes
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.	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
6. HEI ensures that doctoral theses are public.	YES
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.	YES
Additional/ recommended conditions of the ASHE Accreditation Council for passing a positive opinion	YES/NO notes
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).	NO
Comment: But this was assessed as improved during the follow-up process when a Letter of Expectation was changed into positive accreditation.	
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) YES b) YES

<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>c) YES on submission of proposal</p> <p>d) YES</p> <p>e) YES</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) YES</p> <p>b) YES</p>
<p>7. The supervisor normally does not participate in the assessment committees.</p>	<p>YES*</p>
<p>Comment: Although the supervisor is not a member of the thesis defence committee, he/she takes part in the proposal defence. The Panel recommends the exclusion of the supervisor from the thesis proposal defence.</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, etc.</p>	<p>NO</p>
<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>	<p>N/A</p>

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

	Quality assessment (“high level of quality” or “improvements are necessary”) and the explanation of the Expert Panel
1. RESOURCES: TEACHERS, SUPERVISORS, RESEARCH CAPACITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE	
<p>1.1. HEI is distinguished by its scientific/ artistic achievements in the discipline in which the doctoral study programme is delivered.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The Doctoral study of Kinesiology was established in 2007 and in January 2015 an action plan was designed and later the development of the Research Strategy for the 2016-2020 period.</p> <p>Scientific excellence of teachers is best reflected in the data, according to which during the last 5 years the teachers had 535 authorships on papers with an average citation of 220.7 and an average h-index of 6.</p> <p>In 2016, on average, each employee of the Faculty published more than one paper in WoSCC scientific databases, representing a significant positive trend.</p> <p>The Faculty of Kinesiology has average success in receiving funds for research. In the last five years 7 research projects were funded. They enjoy support from the EU programmes Erasmus + and 3 national research projects. These numbers are fairly low compared to the general European standard, and there is a way to go before excellence is reached.</p> <p>Their scientific activity is also demonstrated by the organization of a triennial scientific Conference »Contemporary Kinesiology«.</p> <p>The quality of research and publications is reflected in the number of citations, the overall work of teachers from the doctoral studies who are indexed. The average citation is 718.5 and with an average h-index of 10.9 and the teachers from foreign countries had 37 authorships with average citation of 1105 and the h-index of 28.</p>
<p>1.2. The number and workload of teachers involved in the study programme ensure quality doctoral education.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The study programme is offered with the support of 33 teachers, about 57% of the teaching workload is delivered by the Faculty of Kinesiology teaching staff. The average</p>

	<p>teaching is shown to be in line with current national regulations, and therefore it satisfies the quantitative requirement. Fifteen teachers, that is, external associates, delivered a part of the study programme in the last 5 years, while two teachers were employees of international universities.</p> <p>The aim of the Faculty is to adjust the workload for teachers to be as even as possible, but no concrete suggestions were provided on how this will be achieved.</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>High level of quality</p> <p>Data on the scientific qualification of teachers were also reported. Overall, the Faculty of Kinesiology has the required number of scientific publications relevant to the field of the doctoral programme.</p> <p>In 2016, employment of a highly qualified international scientist resulted in a significant increase in the number of papers produced by the Faculty employees. The Faculty employed 35 teachers holding a research and teaching position in 2016 and 38 papers were published in WoSCC journals (4 papers were published in Croatian journals, with 34 papers in international journals), comprising more than a paper per annum for each employee.</p> <p>Overall, the staff comprise dedicated and open-minded teachers, but they have to widen their horizons to ensure a research level of European status. More research is needed to meet future needs.</p>
<p>1.4. The number of supervisors and their qualifications provide for quality in producing the doctoral thesis.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>In general, the set of supervisors is qualified and satisfies the requirements for a successful PhD programme. There is a 1:3 supervisors-doctoral candidates ratio. With the aim of increasing doctoral study quality and interdisciplinarity it has been regulated that scientists from other institutions which have a legally binding agreement on collaboration and assuming responsibilities with the Faculty, can also assume roles of supervisors or co-supervisors. PhD candidates reported positively to the Panel on the existing collaboration between supervisors and candidates.</p>
<p>1.5. The HEI has developed methods of assessing the qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>General regulations are determined and applied to ensure the quality of study programmes and the scientific work both at the University level and at the level of the Faculty</p>

	<p>of Kinesiology.</p> <p>A supervisor can be a person holding a research and teaching position who has published at least four scientific papers in journals covered by the Web of Science database or journals cited in Web of Science bibliographic databases, in the past 10 years. Exceptionally, a co-supervisor can be a person holding a research and teaching position who has published at least two scientific papers in a ten-year period since accepting the proposal in journals cited in Web of Science bibliographic databases. At the same time, a supervisor can supervise not more than two doctoral candidates or four as a co-supervisor (1 supervision or 2 co-supervisions).</p> <p>Overall, it can be concluded that assessing the qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors is assured at the Faculty of Kinesiology.</p>
<p>1.6. The HEI has access to high-quality resources for research, as required by the programme discipline.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The doctoral study is carried out in the Faculty of Kinesiology facilities where candidates have access to all the resources and equipment. Specifically, the Self-Evaluation Report mentioned a catalogue of research equipment which is under the personal care of some employees and is listed per organisational units of the Faculty, available on the Faculty web pages.</p> <p>The Institute of Kinesiology and Sport provides opportunities to carry out research in limited research areas. Candidates are able to use laboratories and the Institute in order to develop their doctoral theses and perform doctoral research work without charge.</p> <p>For applied kinesiological research, the laboratories are moderately well-equipped. Advanced instrumentation for more basic research is not yet in place. This makes it difficult to achieve research excellence on an international level.</p> <p>Computing equipment and network access are provided according to the standards of international research institutions. Moreover, the library provides an excellent service both in terms of available hard copy collection of scientific resources (books, journals, reports, etc.) and in terms of access to digital resources.</p>

<p>2. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE PROGRAMME</p>	
<p>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>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The doctoral programme in Kinesiology at the University of Split was initially established in 2007, and followed all approved proposals for the development of the study programme and its application. The SER and strategy set out a clear justification and need for the programme. This was corroborated during our discussions with alumni and stakeholders, in which the scientific, cultural, social and economic needs for this programme were made clear.</p> <p>As a consequence of internal review (2012) and external review (2014 for UG and PGT programmes) the programme has been modified to ensure that it is meeting the needs of candidates. In particular, the taught programme has been modified to ensure that it develops students' generic and research-specific skills, so that they are able to produce a robust research proposal, and have the methodological skills to collect high-quality data and apply appropriate statistical analyses.</p>
<p>2.2. The programme is aligned with the HEI research mission and vision, i.e. research strategy.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The Kinesiology doctoral programme is well aligned with the Faculty strategy. There is evidence of interdisciplinarity, which is consistent with the strategy.</p> <p>The Faculty strategy (2016-2020) is particularly focused upon enhancing their scientific arrangements. Actions include the establishment of the Institute of Kinesiology and Sport, which is now operational as a well-equipped facility for applied and field work, which is facilitating a larger volume of work with clubs and sports organisations at all performance levels with increased project opportunities for doctoral students and an increased desire from stakeholders to work with Split. The facilities are available for doctoral candidates via a paper booking system and approval by the Vice Dean. In addition, incentivisation of staff for scientific excellence is paying dividend with increasing publication rates in WOS indexed journals. Candidates are also incentivised via extra ECTS credits for producing papers as part of their taught programme.</p> <p>The Faculty have a number of ERASMUS projects with evidence of some staff and student exchange. We met one</p>

	<p>incoming ERASMUS student, an Italian student and a staff member who had an exchange with the US. The Faculty has also established partnerships with professors from Italy (Padula, now employee at Split) and from Delaware, US (Jaric, now employee at Split). Already there is a cohort of 17 doctoral students enrolled from Italy this year.</p> <p>The Faculty is generating considerable commercial income from partners, estimated at 6.4m kuna in 2015/16, which is being reinvested into facilities and staff and doctoral candidate projects via the research excellence incentivisation scheme (see section 2.9).</p>
<p>2.3. The HEI systematically monitors the success of the programmes through periodic reviews, and implements improvements.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The internal quality assurance processes for the University of Split implement an internal review every 2 years, but there is no description of any outcomes from such a review. The ASHE reported its evaluation on the Postgraduate University (Doctoral) Study of Kinesiology of the Faculty of Kinesiology in Split in 2012-2013, and as a result a number of strategic changes have been made (see 2.2). These include an annual report produced by each staff member for the Vice Dean of Science highlighting their scientific productivity, and these data are used for the research excellence incentivisation.</p> <p>In terms of the doctoral programme structure, the SER indicates that small changes are made prior to each enrolment, and certainly it is clear that the taught programme is now much more research focused. Assessments comprise presentations as well as writing papers, which are incentivised with award of additional ECTS. At present, enrolling candidates are allocated a tutor to guide them to identifying their research focus, who may or may not eventually become the research supervisor. We would recommend that the Faculty consider allocating the supervisor upon enrolment on the basis of the candidates' interests expressed through the recruitment process and at interview.</p> <p>The proposal is developed usually at the end of year 1 but sometimes year 2 and again early allocation of the supervisor should ensure a more rapid submission of the proposal to facilitate the candidate in achieving a timely completion of the 3 years of independent research.</p> <p>Candidates are aware of the possibility to submit via the Nordic model and 2 candidates are currently preparing</p>

	<p>their theses via this style. In the monograph format candidates must have at least one paper published in a WOS indexed journal. Candidates are incentivised by additional ECTS for paper submission.</p> <p>There is a relatively large number of inactive students and the Faculty have attempted to survey this group as well as current and completed students. The panel commends the staff for their efforts and recommends the continued and systematic collection and analysis of such data to try to reduce the presently high number of inactive students.</p> <p>The online questionnaire student satisfaction survey data provided within the SER indicate overall satisfaction with the programme, although perhaps unsurprisingly this was lower for those students who were inactive. There were however some low scores for several competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Using modern diagnostics devices in research from the area of Kinesiology” • “Application of research results as contribution to social and economic development” • “Planning and managing research projects”. <p>It is not yet clear what changes will be made in light of this feedback and the panel has thus recommended that staff ensure that the student feedback on the taught programme is utilised to make improvements.</p>
<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>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>We heard from both current candidates and alumni who expressed satisfaction with the level of contact, support and feedback provided by supervisors. However, although systematic feedback is now provided by candidates on the taught programme, there is currently no formal process of annual monitoring of candidate and supervisor performance. We have recommended that this is introduced with the data considered by the Doctoral Study Council.</p>
<p>2.5. HEI assures academic integrity and freedom.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>Doctoral candidates receive training in what comprises plagiarism but currently, software is used by only one teacher/supervisor. We have recommended introduction of plagiarism software across the programme.</p>
<p>2.6. The process of developing and defending the thesis proposal is transparent and objective, and includes a public presentation.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>There is some excellent practice (highlighted in best practice) whereby candidates complete a pre-proposal stage where there is an informal presentation and defence</p>

	<p>of the proposal with feedback from peers and staff including supervisor. This allows candidates to incorporate this feedback into the proposal submitted to the Doctoral Study Council. There are robust procedures in place for review of the proposal by rapporteurs, consideration by the Doctoral Study Council and then the proposal public defence. The proposal defence committee is selected by the Doctoral Study Council but currently the committee includes the supervisor and we recommend that the supervisor is excluded from this stage of the process.</p>
<p>2.7. Thesis assessment results from a scientifically sound assessment of an independent committee.</p>	<p>High level of quality The procedures for the doctoral thesis defence are clearly described in the doctoral study curriculum.</p> <p>Doctoral theses can be submitted in the form of monographs or in the Scandinavian style as a collection of papers accompanied with a review chapter (cumulative dissertation). Currently two candidates are preparing their theses via this format. Mandatory prerequisites for the dissertation defence are one publication in a WOS indexed journal, and presentation of at least one conference paper.</p> <p>The defence committee is determined by a Doctoral Study Council. The supervisor is not permitted to be part of the defence committee and at least one member of the dissertation defence committee has to be external. For dissertations written and defended in English, it is common practice to invite experts from abroad into evaluation and defence committees.</p> <p>Unfortunately, most doctoral theses are still written in Croatian (with the monographs and published works mainly written in English). This precludes the evaluation committee from being truly international, as only academics who can read Croatian are eligible as evaluators.</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>High level of quality All information regarding the curriculum, the admissions processes, registration, and the important administrative forms for candidates are provided online. Doctoral projects and doctoral theses are defended publically and are published electronically.</p>
<p>2.9. Funds collected for the needs of doctoral education are distributed</p>	<p>High level of quality As described below, the tuition fees are set below market</p>

<p>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>rate and certainly do not cover the costs of the programme. The Faculty has taken a decision in line with their strategy to invest in their facility base which may otherwise limit their ability to conduct contemporary and high quality research. There is cross-subsidy from their industry partnerships to cover the funding gap. In addition, staff are incentivised for their publication profile and also their PhD completions, based on published metrics. Staff are currently encouraged to invest a proportion of these funds into their candidates. However, we have made a recommendation that a set amount or proportion of these funds should be stipulated to be invested in the candidates as already occurs for equipment purchase.</p>
<p>2.10. Tuition fees are determined on the basis of transparent criteria (and real costs of studying).</p>	<p>High level of quality This fee level is set at a level below market rate, and the Faculty subsidises the programme via entrepreneurial activity with industry partners. The Faculty wishes to widen access to the programme and prevent cost from being a barrier to Croatian nationals entering the programme.</p>
<p>3. SUPPORT TO DOCTORAL CANDIDATES AND THEIR PROGRESSION</p>	
<p>3.1. The HEI establishes admission quotas with respect to its teaching and supervision capacities.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary Admission instructions are displayed on the Faculty website at least two months prior to the deadline. The Faculty has a quota of 40 students every three years. In the latest cohort, total number of applicants was 45 and 34 students were accepted to the programme. During the recruiting process, the selection committee interviews candidates, although the criteria and the purpose of the interview are not clearly documented.</p> <p>The Faculty has approximately 30 supervisors available, including external experts from other national and international HEIs. Taking new candidates every three years is well justified and in line with staff availability and workload. Also, as the taught modules of the study programme mostly take place during semesters 1-4, it is reasonable to take new candidates only every three years. On the other hand, there is a risk of major fluctuations between cohorts resulting in unpredictable changes in the number of candidates, although potential candidates can register their interest in between intakes. Furthermore, as</p>

	<p>there are many external supervisors, it is difficult to estimate the total supervision capacity, especially in the long term.</p> <p>During the site visit, candidates expressed their satisfaction with supervision and teaching, indicating adequate resources for high-quality guidance. Candidates and supervisors felt that the tutoring-system established by the Faculty was effective, wherein Faculty members act as tutors for up to 5 students helping them to specify their research area and topic during the first semester. Later on, tutors might become supervisors, which might lead to a situation where a supervisor has more than three possible candidates, or that candidates who have already completed their first year have difficulties in finding a supervisor. Therefore, we recommend that the Faculty might consider appointing a supervisor earlier, even during the enrolment process.</p>
<p>3.2. The HEI establishes admission quotas on the basis of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social, economic and other needs.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>According to the Head of the programme, the quota of candidates is sufficiently managed in relation to the needs of the University and society. A clear need for the programme and the intake of candidates was presented and supported by candidates and stakeholders. The Faculty has targeted recruitment of international students, especially from neighbouring countries such as Italy. According to the SER and supported by student comments, the programme is attractive for both Croatian and international students from different fields. During the visit, we heard multiple examples of enrolled students with previous PhD degrees or studies.</p> <p>According to the SER, external legal entities have covered tuitions fees for approximately one third of the students in the past five years showing a clear outside interest in the PhD graduates. Discussions with the Management and stakeholders also indicated that there is a need for the programme. During the site visit, external stakeholders expressed positive comments regarding the co-operation between them and the Faculty, also stating possibilities for future employment of the graduates. It is recommended that the Faculty takes action in further exploiting these relationships and connecting them more closely to the doctoral programme.</p>

	<p>The number of unemployed PhDs remained unclear, although it seemed evident that there is a market for the Croatian students in the region, both in graduate and doctoral level. Also, as the programme is relatively new, it is difficult to estimate where the PhD graduates will be employed. Regarding the relatively large portion of international students, it seems that there is a need from the EU area and especially neighbouring countries for experts in Kinesiology.</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>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>A large majority of candidates in the programme are self-funded and opportunities for scholarships or other financial support are limited. According to the SER and discussions with the Head of the Programme and Management, supervisors have some opportunities for obtaining internal research funding which can be directed to their students. Also, senior researchers of the Faculty are encouraged to apply for external funding from national and international sources. Despite these efforts, there are only a few small ongoing projects, and it is therefore recommended to increase the number of applications in the future.</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>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>At the beginning of the study, students are appointed a tutor in order to help them define a research topic and to find a supervisor. Tutors are staff members who can also be supervisors, but it is not required or always possible as some tutors have up to 5 students to guide. During the site visit, candidates complimented their tutoring system and felt they had adequate support and guidance. In addition to tutoring, there is also a coordinator of foreign students at the Faculty providing support especially for the international students.</p> <p>Despite the apparent smooth running of the tutoring system, some students indicated that they found their supervisors as late as the end of the third semester which might lead to a situation where students' progression is delayed. Therefore, it is recommended that the Faculty considers appointing supervisors upon enrolment in order to ensure that all candidates meet the requirement of 3 years of independent research.</p> <p>The tutor's responsibilities and role are clearly documented in the Faculty regulations. In addition,</p>

	<p>discussions with supervisors as well as students revealed that the system is well communicated across the community.</p>
<p>3.5. The HEI ensures that interested, talented and highly motivated candidates are recruited internationally.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The Faculty has demonstrated a clear demand for the programme from international candidates. Currently, there are 17 foreign candidates enrolled in the doctoral programme, mostly from Italy and other neighbouring countries. The enrolment announcement is communicated through the international network of the Faculty, and also posted to the Faculty website.</p> <p>During the admission process, applicants' study merits and accumulated ECTS credits from research activities are evaluated. In addition, an interview is organised in order to determine the motivation and suitability of the candidate. Online interviews are utilized for candidates not residing in Split area.</p> <p>The study programme is similar for both Croatian-speaking and international candidates. Some courses are taught in English and in some cases, translation services are provided. During the visit, we also heard that candidates from abroad, especially from Italy, are able to collect data and conduct their research in their own countries. The Faculty has introduced online methods to enhance studying and supervision of foreign candidates.</p>
<p>3.6. The selection process is public and based on choosing the best applicants.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>Regulations concerning the admission process are well documented and clearly provided to the candidates. The call for students is public and the criteria for selection are clear, although some clarification would be beneficial in order to further enhance transparency. Students' past academic performance, research activity and grade-point average are taken into account. Interviews – live or via Skype – are organized for all applicants.</p> <p>According to the Head of the Programme, approximately one third of the applicants were rejected in the latest admission. Selected and enrolled candidates were seen as competent by the supervisors.</p> <p>Although it seems that the selection process is more or less clear for the applicants, it should be noted that the relatively high number of dropouts during the first</p>

	<p>semester might indicate that candidates (at least those from the first cohort) did not have a clear idea of what was expected of them during their studies. Therefore, it is recommended that the Faculty further emphasize those expectations set for candidates. In addition, the Faculty should consider adding a demand for a proposal or a more general idea of the intended research to be presented during enrolment.</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>Improvements are necessary According to the SER, the Doctoral Study Council of the Faculty is responsible for the selection of candidates. Regulations are clearly documented and made available for the applicants.</p> <p>According to the SER and based on discussions with the Head of the Programme, there is a possibility to complain if an applicant is not satisfied with the selection. However, the details of the complaint procedure remained somewhat unclear.</p>
<p>3.8. There is a possibility to recognize applicants' and candidates' prior learning.</p>	<p>High level of quality Candidates' previous academic achievements are recognized during admission according to the clearly documented regulations. Those candidates who have already completed a PhD programme from another field or have previously defended their research master's thesis can apply for recognition based on their previous studies.</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>High level of quality Candidate rights and obligations are clearly defined in a contract between the candidate and the Faculty. The contract, among other regulations from the University and Faculty, is communicated to the candidate at the beginning of their studies. During the site visit, candidates expressed positive comments regarding the instructions from the Faculty employees. They also mentioned that the small, family-like community is ideal for spontaneous feedback and that they had no trouble in contacting the supervisors, tutors or other staff members with regard to any issues.</p> <p>According to the Head of the Programme and supervisors, there is a possibility to change the supervisor if there are issues preventing candidates from progressing. According to the regulations for the doctoral programme, candidates may change the supervisor or topic of thesis only once, with a written request and a statement from the previous</p>

	<p>supervisor. During the site visit, we did not hear any examples of this procedure, but the candidates felt confident that, if needed, they could ask for another supervisor.</p>
<p>3.10. There are institutional support mechanisms for candidates' successful progression.</p>	<p>High level of quality Support for the candidates was provided not only through the official supervisors, but also with the help of tutors, administration staff, Head of the Study Programme, 'rapporteurs' (e.g. commenting on the study proposal) and members of the committee for the development and defence of doctoral thesis.</p> <p>According to the SER, the Faculty has invested a substantial amount of money to foster scientific excellence in the past five years, and especially after the last evaluation in 2014. Money is allocated for supervisors based on their publishing record and it can be used in multiple ways (equipment, scholarships, publishing costs, conference costs etc.). The Faculty could explore the possibility to allocate a portion of these funds directly to candidates, for example by opening internal funding calls or rewarding candidates as well as staff for published papers.</p> <p>The Faculty has invested significantly in new research equipment and facilities during the past few years, and made these available for the candidates in the doctoral programme.</p> <p>The Faculty has demonstrated that it has been redirecting funds for the doctoral programme in order to enhance possibilities for research activities among candidates. According to the supervisors, this has meant for example paying proofreading or translation costs of candidates' manuscripts.</p> <p>Despite the positive initiative of the Faculty to support scientific activities, only a few candidates are funded by the projects, and the funding has been only partial.</p>
<p>4. PROGRAMME AND OUTCOMES</p>	
<p>4.1. The content and quality of the doctoral programme are aligned with internationally recognized standards.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary The programme team has recently reviewed and restructured the programme and begun the delivery of this restructured programme in 2015. The revised programme is, as required, research-oriented, with the taught modules</p>

in year 1 offering a foundation to prepare candidates for their final thesis research. Candidates complete taught modules and assessments related to these, all of which are aimed at developing both the candidates as critical researchers, and, their own research programme. The assessments take the form of micro-research papers and whilst not mandatory, are most likely to be related to the candidate's final thesis. Candidates are encouraged to identify their thesis topic at the outset of the programme to enable them to focus these assessments on this topic. In year 2 students complete a further semester of taught modules and thereafter focus on their independent research. Thus, cumulatively, through a combination of assessments completed as part of taught modules and development and execution of an independent research project, the programme provides for three years of independent research experience, as regulated by the Croatian Qualifications Framework, CroQF.

Candidates felt that the newly purchased equipment contributed to being able to produce high-quality research and therefore increase the possibility of its publication in high-impact, international journals.

We are satisfied that in general the programme demonstrates international comparability, for instance, in relation to programme objectives, admission criteria, admission procedures, programme duration, specialisations, comparability of supervision procedures, comparability of thesis formats and assessment committees. There are differences in the form of delivery of the programme with those delivered elsewhere (e.g., the UK where independent research occurs over three years with no subject specific modules) and in the format and assessment of the final thesis (e.g., fewer candidates present their thesis in the form of published articles, although a minority of candidates do produce their thesis as a series of papers). However, these differences do not detract from the comparability of the quality of the programme internationally. There was a difference in the number of research studies produced by candidates (typically only one whereas internationally this is usually 3-4) and in the study mode (candidates here are registered as part-time whilst in other countries a large number are full-time students).

<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>High level of quality</p> <p>The revised learning outcomes following the Programme review and development are aligned with Level 8.2 of the CroQF. They focus on key elements of this level of attainment (e.g., critical evaluation, development of original research and subsequently, offering original contributions to advance the academic field and contribute to contemporary challenges in society, and in kinesiology, specifically). As noted above, taught elements of the programme are clearly directed towards developing candidates as critical scientists and towards the development of their own research. The level of outcomes expected of the programme are commensurate with those expected internationally. Indeed, candidates commented that the programme was challenging with high standards of achievement expected.</p> <p>We are confident that candidates are able to develop specific research competencies and competencies in research methodologies, and they commented on the effectiveness of modules in these areas for helping them to prepare research papers. We did note, however, less opportunity to develop competence in interpretative research and research methodologies. This could be an area of the programme that would benefit from expansion and strengthening. Candidates complete a course on scientific writing, about which they commented that it was helpful for producing their thesis and manuscripts for subsequent publication. The programme prepares candidates appropriately for understanding and applying ethical principles of research.</p> <p>Collaboration with external faculty ensures that, as appropriate, candidates are able to pursue interdisciplinary programmes of research (e.g., through links with colleagues in engineering, medical and social sciences faculties, either within the University of Split or elsewhere).</p> <p>Candidates are encouraged to conduct research that has real world relevance and social impact in collaboration with various external stakeholders (e.g., sports organisations).</p> <p>Candidates were not required to teach or assess undergraduate or master's level students.</p>
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<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>High level of quality Programme learning outcomes are clearly mapped against modules in the SER to illustrate where they are covered within the programme. The taught and research elements are logically and coherently linked to each other. Candidates were highly complimentary of the quality of supervision, including supervisors’ accessibility and the helpfulness of their feedback. The Panel was particularly impressed by the formative learning opportunity offered by the pre-proposal process whereby candidates receive developmental feedback on the research proposal prior to its submission for review to confirm progression to the execution of the project.</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>High level of quality The SER clearly identifies how the learning outcomes of the programme encourage development of the skills and knowledge specified as required at Level 8.2 of the CroQF. Candidates commented on their level of attainment and the nature of the critical research and analysis skills they developed on the programme as being commensurate with the level expected at Level 8.2. Papers published from their research are increasingly published in WOS-indexed international journals.</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>High level of quality Teaching methods, and in particular, the assessment methods employed, are appropriate for the level and nature of the programme. The emphasis of taught courses is on supporting candidates’ development as critical researchers who are able to apply their developing knowledge and understanding of advanced research methods. As noted above, courses are clearly focused on achieving specific learning outcomes of the programme which are in turn based on the level of skills expected at Level 8.2 of the CroQF. With the recent purchase of new equipment and the establishment of a Kinesiology laboratory, candidates on the revised programme now engage in experimental and laboratory work. The Faculty makes excellent use of its relationships with external organisations to provide candidates with opportunities to conduct research in field settings, which is an integral element of this academic specialism and is a good preparation for subsequent careers in this area.</p> <p>As noted above, assessments are focused on developing candidates’ critical research capabilities, in line with the</p>

	primary aim of a Doctoral level qualification.
4.6. The programme enables acquisition of general (transferable) skills.	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>Alumni of the programme discussed the role of the programme in helping them to develop skills in organisation, creative problem solving, co-operation, teamwork and goal setting. Examples were also provided to illustrate how their completion of the programme had helped them to develop the confidence, skills and knowledge to change career or apply for, and achieve, promotion to new positions. On the programme, candidates are clearly provided with numerous opportunities to develop their communication skills via presentations of research assignments throughout the course. They also commented on the networking opportunities offered by their attendance at the Contemporary Kinesiology Conference with the subsequent potential to broaden their own portfolio of skills development.</p> <p>However, the SER makes it less clear how more generic, transferable skills and knowledge are developed with the list of generic skills identified including mostly research specific skills. It was not completely clear how candidates developed business and managerial skills, project management skills and experience of applying for funding etc. Thus opportunities to acquire generic (transferable) skills were evident but less so than research specific skills.</p> <p>The programme had a clear and strong emphasis on supporting candidates through their individual research process but evidence of how candidates develop an individually based programme that is tailored to meet their individual needs was less clear. The opportunities for international experience, although not absent, are limited in comparison with those at HEIs internationally.</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>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>Candidates are offered a number of elective choices and can select to study modules outside the Faculty if those provided by the Faculty do not help them to develop the research methods and subject specific knowledge that are needed to complete their research project. As noted above, however, the focus of modules is on natural sciences and medical topics, somewhat limiting opportunities to develop research specialisms in social science and interpretative methodologies.</p>

	<p>One-on-one meetings with the candidate's tutor ensure that their programme of study is focused on meeting their individual needs and has sufficient flexibility in its delivery to accommodate this. Where necessary, supervisors outside the Faculty are appointed to assist with supervisory expertise if this is not available within the Faculty. The Panel would recommend some caution with this arrangement as at present it appears to be somewhat <i>ad hoc</i> with the absence of any systematic method of appointing external supervisors/advisors, leaving this arrangement vulnerable to the risk of not being able to appoint a supervisor for a candidate's project or to external factors beyond the control of the Faculty impacting negatively on their progress and/or capacity to successfully complete their thesis.</p>
<p>4.8. The programme ensures quality through international connections and teacher and candidate mobility.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>Since its review and introduction of a new research strategy in 2012, the Faculty has substantially increased its international links to the benefit of the candidates on the Doctoral Study programme. Candidates commented positively on the contributions of international scholars to their experience. Visiting professors and those attending the Conference offered valuable opportunities to network and expand their knowledge.</p> <p>Numbers of staff and candidates exploiting opportunities for international exchange have increased and current exchange candidates who were at different stages of their programme of study expressed high levels of praise for the programme quality and the support they received from staff. Staff international mobility also clearly offered benefits for candidates on the programme in the form of their advanced skill and knowledge development as a result.</p> <p>The above comments notwithstanding, there is still scope to further exploit international collaboration and exchange with the potential for greater benefits for the candidates on the Doctoral Study Programme. For instance, international mobility is evident but limited in scope, with international candidates on the programme derived from only a small pool of overseas countries, and, candidates attend a limited number of international conferences (e.g., mostly attend the locally organised Contemporary Kinesiology conference). In addition, the panel noted that the data</p>

presented on international mobility of staff and candidates could be presented in more detail and clarity to allow observers to determine origins and destinations of exchange personnel, nature of the exchange activity, collaborators involved, and, benefits derived for the Doctoral Study Programme community.

The candidates are very strongly encouraged to publish their research in international, English language journals and a number of them do so. Some candidates produce their thesis in English with a minority producing their thesis in the form of published papers. Supervisors provide candidates with an excellent level of support and learning opportunities to help them develop their scientific writing skills in English. Still, the proportion of candidates publishing their work in Croatian journals (including the Faculty's own journal) is relatively greater than those publishing in English language and international journals, as is the case with the production of Croatian language and English language theses.

Stakeholders discussed examples to illustrate how candidates are involved in funded research projects that are linked to industry. Their theses were based on this work and it formed the basis for subsequent publications. Mutual benefit was derived from these connections, for instance, amongst other examples, national data on sport were captured via work towards one PhD and PhD candidates are involved in research to establish a national model of talent development in sport.

*** 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.