



**Report
of the Expert Panel
on the Reaccreditation
of the University Postgraduate (Doctoral) Study Programme
in Pedagogy
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
University of Rijeka**

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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) Study Programme Pedagogy 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 Rijeka.

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:

1. Prof. Nihad Bunar, Stockholm University, Sweden, the chair
2. Dr. Rachel Shanks, University of Aberdeen, United Kingdom,
3. Prof. Juana M Sancho Gil, University of Barcelona, Spain,
4. Prof. Rachel Msetfi, University of Limerick, Ireland,
5. Dr. Matthew Schuelka, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom,
6. Prof. Bosse Bergstedt, Lund University, Sweden,
7. Justīne Vīķe, Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia,
8. Ieva Bloma, European University Institute, Italy,
9. Prof. Annkathrin Schacht, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Germany,
10. Prof. Cathy Craig, Queen's University Belfast, United Kingdom,
11. Dr. Michel Denis, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, France,
12. Prof. Thomas Morton, University of Exeter, United Kingdom,
13. Dr. Hrvoje Stojić, London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom.

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

1. Dr Rachel Shanks, University of Aberdeen, United Kingdom, moderator;
2. Prof. Rachel Msetfi, University of Limerick, Ireland;
3. Prof. Juana M Sancho Gil, University of Barcelona, Spain;
4. Justīne Vīķe (doktorand), Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia.

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

- Iva Žabarović, coordinator, ASHE,
- Aleksandar Šušnjar, interpreter at the site visit,

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

- Management,
- Head of Postgraduate (doctoral) study programme,
- Doctoral candidates,
- Teachers and supervisors.

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: Postgraduate university (doctoral) study programme in Pedagogy

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

Institution providing the programme: University of Rijeka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Pedagogy

Place of delivery: Rijeka

Scientific area and field: social sciences, pedagogy

Number of doctoral candidates: 30

Number of funded doctoral candidates: 4

Number of self-funded and those funded by employer: 24

Number of inactive doctoral candidates (still entitled to graduate): 2

Number of supervisors involved in the doctoral study programme: 10 (5 supervisors from the Faculty, 5 outside the Faculty and 2 co-supervisors)

Number of teachers involved in the doctoral study programme: 21

Ratio of officially appointed supervisors and their doctoral candidates: 10/30

Taught (courses) / research ratio (in ECTS): 45 /135

Learning outcomes of the study programme:

Competencies related to research work:

- understand the scientific (disciplinary) study area and master research skills and methods used in the fields of Pedagogy and Educational Sciences
- envision, design, implement and adapt the scientific research process
- conduct an independent, original and publishable research in the field of Pedagogy and Educational Sciences
- make a contribution by conducting original research which will expand the existing body of knowledge and result in a noteworthy thesis, parts of which will be published in domestic or international journals and adequately reviewed
- work in research teams and develop new research projects
- critically analyse, evaluate and synthesize new and complex research ideas
- communicate their expertise to their colleagues, as well as wider scientific and social community.

Competencies related to the development of professional knowledge and skills:

- gain knowledge from the field of Pedagogy and Educational Sciences which will enable them to improve professional practice in education
- evaluate their own professional practice with the help of data gathered through empirical research
- analyse and reflect upon professional practice in education
- apply and develop a number of professional techniques, skills, instruments and methods specific to a particular professional field and understand their theoretical foundations

- understand different roles and perspectives of the participants in a professional setting
- reflect upon and analyse a number of case studies from professional practice
- research and comment on ethical dilemmas in professional practice
- show personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable situations in professional and equivalent contexts in education
- critically reflect on the wider area of professional knowledge application in professional and educational contexts
- reflect upon social norms and relations in their specific educational area and be an instigator of change
- communicate research results and innovations to their colleagues
- promote the technological, social and cultural progress in society through academic and professional context.

Competences related to social/public activity:

- respond and react to pressing professional problems and practices by suggesting adequate solutions and approaches
- take part in the dialogue with other participants of the broader professional surroundings (e.g. with local governance, the civil sector, public institutions)
- be initiators and leaders of complex processes in their professional surroundings
- demonstrate the ability of critical reflection, i.e. the ability to critically approach their own and other people's work
- present and publicly defend scientific studies
- demonstrate creativity and innovativeness in their professional surroundings.

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).

The expert panel recommends to the Agency that the license be renewed (quality assessment is satisfactory). The panel considered very carefully whether the label of high quality be conferred, for the following reasons.

1) 22 re-accreditation criteria were deemed by the panel to be of high quality. This is significantly more than the 50% required to achieve the 'high quality' label

2) Irrespective of the 50% criterion, the panel reached an overarching assessment of the programme as 'high quality'; this assessment was based on their expert consideration of the programme, in terms of the submission in the SER, the accompanying documentation, based on interviews with the programme team and students during the site visit;

However, the panel also noted that (1) the programme has yet to graduate a cohort of students; (2) most compelling evidence for the high quality label is the successful graduation of students; and (3) there is work to be done in improving access to supervision training, internationalisation of the programme and the library resources. Therefore a 'satisfactory' label was chosen. The panel would like to congratulate the Director and Programme Team on this excellent assessment.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. The Faculty should refine its research foci in pedagogy from 16 narrow topics to fewer broader themes that act as overarching themes for the 16 topics. This will enable the development of stronger research groupings and capacity, and support the further development of this research community, which is a key enabler of the doctoral programme.
2. The university should revisit its regulation / ordinance on the disciplinary requirements for membership of the thesis examination panel. Interdisciplinarity is a very important aspect of contemporary research and this regulation interferes with the development of this.
3. The programme and Department should strengthen their international networks to enable the internationalisation of the PhD programme. They should consider the appointment of international co-supervisors (mentors), and use of Erasmus plus teaching and development mobility in order to fund international academic visitors to Rijeka.
4. The Faculty should strengthen its training programme for PhD supervisors / mentors, both new and as part of continuing professional development for all supervisors.
5. The Faculty / University should examine the workload of the programme team as PhD programme activities are not included in the workload, which in most cases is well above the legal requirement. Vacant posts should be filled as a priority.

ADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. The doctoral study programme is of a high quality and the students achieve high levels of knowledge, skills and competencies, with research and academic integrity at the heart of the programme. The panel anticipates that the programme will graduate highly skilled and competent researchers.
2. The doctoral programme benefits from a high level of expertise, commitment and professionalism from the supervisory team.
3. The programme provides an individualised approach to the doctoral education of its students, ensuring that students from disciplinary background achieve the required competencies and learning outcomes.
4. The programme team set high expectations in terms of the learning outcomes, competencies to be achieved and the mechanisms through which they support the students in achieving these,
5. The programme offers students the opportunity to complete their PhD within nationally and internationally funded research projects, which provides excellent development opportunities for these students.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. The programme would benefit from strengthening the international networks of staff and students. International and interdisciplinary supervision could be a vehicle for supporting this, as could Erasmus funded teaching mobility visits to the Institution by international Researchers.
2. The Faculty Research Strategy has 16 areas of research strength in pedagogy alone. In order to develop further research capacity, research excellence and international reputation, which will enable the further development of this doctoral programme, the areas should be refined under overarching thematic umbrellas.
3. Supervisor training is currently limited to that offered at University level. Further and continuing supervisor training is recommended.
4. The University regulations concerning the disciplinary composition of thesis examination panels, discourage interdisciplinarity. This is particularly important in all research. The panel recommends that this regulation is changed to permit and encourage interdisciplinary supervision and examination.
5. The programme team and students do not have high levels of access to bibliographic resources, including online journals, eBooks and databases. We recommend that this investment is a priority for the Faculty and University.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. The Doctoral Seminar is an important example of good practice. It provides a space for the students to communicate with their cohort, to develop as a research community and to discuss key issues and develop their thesis proposals. It is also an important forum for communication by the programme team to the students. This is to be commended.
2. The content of the doctoral training programme is flexible and individualised and meets the needs of its students.

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.	N/A*
*All theses will be made public. No graduates from the programme as yet.	
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).	YES.
3. The doctoral programme is aligned with the HEI's research strategy.	YES.
4. The candidate: supervisor ratio at the HEI is not above 3:1.	YES.
5. All supervisors meet the following conditions: a) PhD, elected into a scientific title, holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position and/or has at least two years of postdoctoral research experience; b) active researcher in the scientific area of the programme, as evidenced by 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 candidate (or submission of the proposal); d) ensures the conditions (and funding) necessary to implement the candidate's	a) YES. b) YES. c) YES d) YES e) YES*

<p>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>	f) YES.
<p>* The University has provided a 2-day training for first time supervisors. Attendees were asked to present about their experiences to other colleagues. However, this would be the minimum standard, and further supports or training for supervisors (new and current) would be recommended.</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>	YES.
<p>7. The supervisor normally does not participate in the assessment committees.</p>	YES.
<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>	YES.
<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>	N/A

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

<p>RESOURCES: TEACHERS, SUPERVISORS, RESEARCH CAPACITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	
<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 The university teachers have each between 8 and 35 publications in the last 5 years with between 21 and 410 citations in the same period. The university supervisors have between 8 and 57 publications each with 21 to 184 citations. The programme team also publish books which were viewed by the panel, who recognise that book publishing is the norm in the discipline of pedagogy. Some staff have led several international and national research projects.</p>
<p>1.2 The number and workload of teachers involved in the study programme ensure quality doctoral education.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary Supervisors have a high workload in relation to normed hours, some as high as 850 hours. Third cycle activities are not included in this workload model so this is an underestimate in the weight of workload. In spite of this, students reported that they were able to see their supervisors and arrange meetings as and when necessary, and would say that they see their supervisors almost every day. Teachers also have high workload with some having over 500 hours, for example total workload hours of 510, 525, 532.5, 561 and 637. Improvements are necessary for supervisors and teachers to have workload that is closer to the norm hours. Also see 1.4 below.</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 The teachers are highly qualified, active and competent researchers, who research the topics they teach, publishing and disseminating their work nationally and internationally. Their publications and citations demonstrate that their work is of high quality and recognised within their discipline.</p>
<p>1.4 The number of supervisors and their qualifications provide for quality in producing the doctoral thesis.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary There are sufficient supervisors to ensure an appropriate supervisor: student ratio (however, see 1.2 above). There are inconsistencies in the Self Evaluation Report, for example the workload of teachers and supervisors presented in Tables 1 and 2. The workload for supervisors, although based on the same principles, is considerably</p>

	<p>lower in Table 2 than in Table 1 for some teachers/supervisors, for example Prof. B. R. has 561 norm hours in Table 1 and 321 in Table 2. Both are marked with *** and explained as “Workload in norm hours for all three levels of higher education and workload at other HEIs”. In the SER, the HEI arrives at the conclusion that “It can be seen from the tables attached that teacher workload at the undergraduate and graduate study level is mostly in line with legal regulations, which means that the workload at the undergraduate and graduate study level enables quality work at the doctoral study programme for most teachers” (p.13) but this is demonstrably not the case.</p> <p>The programme team includes supervisors from outside the department. This is beneficial to students and provides interdisciplinarity in PhD supervision, which is important in addressing contemporary research questions.</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>The qualification/s needed to be a PhD supervisor are laid down in the standards set by the University. For example, it is necessary to have a PhD and the first-time someone is a PhD supervisor, the programme ensures that they co-supervise with a more experienced colleague. Two of the students we met had two supervisors.</p> <p>In terms of training for supervisors – the university developed and ran a 2-day training course. This is important and helpful to supervisors.</p> <p>In terms of monitoring competencies of teachers and supervisors - PhD students’ annual reports come to the Faculty Council to be discussed – this body consists of all full professors, associate professors, delegates of assistant professors and delegates of students and everyone has a vote on the Council. This is a transparent mechanism and every report goes to both the Faculty Council and the PhD Programme Board. The documents are uploaded to the shared drive where everyone can see them. This is a commendable level of transparency.</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 students and supervisors would benefit from more resources in the library and online, for example the full text of journal articles from more subscriptions to journals.</p>
<p>INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE PROGRAMME</p>	
<p>2.1 The HEI has established and accepted</p>	<p>High level of quality</p>

<p>effective procedures for proposing, approving and delivering doctoral education. The procedures include identification of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social and economic needs.</p>	<p>The Faculty Council has membership from all levels of the Faculty and all members have voting rights. The FC approves the programme but the Director of the Programme is responsible for management of the programme and minor programme changes, and autonomously uses their own budget. The Faculty provides an oversight mechanism over these activities. For example, the Director proposes financial transactions and Dean approves. For enrolments, Director proposes and FC approves.</p>
<p>2.2 The programme is aligned with the HEI research mission and vision, i.e. research strategy.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>A focus on the development of doctoral studies is a key part of the HEI research strategy, with a graduate school potentially being developed. The faculty itself is considering the development of a faculty wide PhD programme and they see this as good way forward to improve opportunities for co-supervision across departments.</p> <p>The Faculty Strategy has 16 areas of focus from the field of pedagogy. This is a large number of areas, especially in relation to the development of the doctoral studies programme.</p> <p>The Faculty Management team considers that there are advantages in that the students can work in their specific areas of interest, which increases their motivation; In addition, the university provides research funding for teams of 3 to 5 researchers; this means that there is more opportunity for the department to receive funds from the university. A disadvantage cited by the management team is the potential dispersion of expertise.</p> <p>The advantages do not outweigh the disadvantage. The issue is that so many topics do not support building research capacity, developing higher standards of excellence and an excellent reputation internationally. Moreover, the best and most successful doctoral students work within research teams which result from such capacity development.</p> <p>Therefore the doctoral programme team needs to have the opportunity to input into the Faculty research strategy, as the development of research excellence and research capacity of teams, as well as international reputation is a</p>

	key enabler of doctoral education.
<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>There is considerable evidence that the HEI monitors the success of the programme and implements recommendations at programme levels (see examples later in this report). However, at Faculty level there is less evidence of this.</p> <p>For example, the 2014 accreditation review specifically recommended that an international evaluation be carried out. This has not taken place. Rather the Faculty have considered alternative actions, which do not necessarily relate to that specific recommendation. For example, there has been consideration of a plan to develop a faculty wide PhD programme, and a suggestion that the university is planning to create a graduate school.</p> <p>It is important that the Faculty documents and follows up recommendations of external accreditation or review processes so that there is transparency around whether recommendations are followed and if not why not. The panel recommend that the programme maintain a library of review documentation, and actions taken. However, this is often an activity taken on by a University or Faculty level quality assurance office, so this level of oversight would be the panel's recommendation.</p> <p>In terms of programme review, the programme is in a continual cycle of review, and a programme board, lead and convened by the Director, monitors this. Students feedback into the programme using online forms. In addition, the doctoral seminar is used as a location for closing the feedback loop and telling students the outcomes of their feedback. The Director is to be congratulated on the successful and effective management of the programme.</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>High level of quality</p> <p>Each student and supervisor is the subject of an annual report. The annual report comments on both the supervision and the student's progress, it also lays out expectations for the following year.</p> <p>Every report on each supervisor / student goes through the Faculty Council and Postgraduate Board of which there is membership by every contributor to the course. These reports are posted on the Faculty VLE and are publically</p>

	<p>available. There is considerable transparency in this process. One downside of the transparency is that it might be hard for students to raise issues about supervision given the public nature of this reporting. That being said, students can discuss issues with supervision at any time with the Programme Director. The usual response would be to provide advice about discussing the issue with a supervisor, before the PD would get directly involved. It would be rare for a student to change supervisors, but there are mechanisms through which this can take place.</p>
<p>2.5 HEI assures academic integrity and freedom.</p>	<p>High level of quality Plagiarism software is widely available, and student theses are checked by the software ‘Turnitin’. Research integrity is widely discussed with students, especially within the Doctoral Seminar, which is an important space for doctoral learning; Open Science is an issue that the students are very well aware of. Importantly, there is an independent committee for the evaluation of the final thesis, which includes a member of the panel who is external to the university.</p>
<p>2.6 The process of developing and defending the thesis proposal is transparent and objective, and includes a public presentation.</p>	<p>High level of quality The timeline for developing the thesis proposal is around one year. Each student is assigned a study counsellor from the time they enrol on the programme. During that first year, they take methodology modules and work with their study counsellor. They attend doctoral seminars also. The Doctoral seminar is an important support system for the development of the thesis proposal. Students present ideas to the doctoral seminar and receive feedback. Once the proposal is developed a pre-draft is written and the counsellor provides feedback. The final proposal is presented and defended before the Programme Council and reviewed by a panel, which includes a member external to the university; The process is transparent and objective.</p>
<p>2.7 Thesis assessment results from a scientifically sound assessment of an independent committee.</p>	<p>High level of quality The thesis is reviewed by a committee of 3 to 5 members, at least one of which is an external examiner (i.e. external to the university). There is a public defence of the thesis, after which the corrections are made and the final thesis is (will be) made publically available.</p> <p>The panel note that this programme is still relatively new,</p>

	and that the procedures outlined above are University and Faculty procedures, which the panel assumes the programme team will follow.
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.	High level of Quality Students have access to all the necessary information that they need on the Programme webpage. They are alerted to academic and programme regulations by the Programme Director, although the regulations etc. are all available on the webpage and the VLE. Students know where to find information, and have no issues with the availability of information.
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).	High level of quality Departments (rather than the Faculty) decide on the formula for fee distribution. In practice, the Programme Study Council decides on and approves division of fees and calculates fee value based on costs.
2.10 Tuition fees are determined on the basis of transparent criteria (and real costs of studying).	High level of quality The Programme Study Council decides on and approves division of fees and calculates fee value based on costs.
SUPPORT TO DOCTORAL CANDIDATES AND THEIR PROGRESSION	
3.1 The HEI establishes admission quotas with respect to its teaching and supervision capacities.	Improvements are necessary Supervisors have a high workload at University of Rijeka. The national average or recommended average is 300 to 360 normed hours. However, many supervisors have considerably more than this in their workload, around 850 hours. These normed hours do not include doctoral supervision, and this has reduced the departments' capacity to supervise more students. In addition, and as noted below, the university need to offer more supervisory training in order to enhance supervision capacity.
3.2 The HEI establishes admission quotas on the basis of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social, economic and other needs.	High level of quality The programme team has looked at needs within the discipline of pedagogy, and developed their programme to address these needs. Following the accession of Croatia to the European Union, as recognized by the lecturers of the study programme "Pedagogy", this demands the harmonization of the university educational system with the EU guidelines, therefore there is a great necessity for highly qualified

	<p>experts in the field, prepared by this study programme. The new doctors of pedagogy will be able to implement EU reforms successfully in the country by taking part in the development of educational policy. Currently, there is a lack of experts in the field of pedagogy in Croatia, so the programme is very topical and relevant to the political, economic and social requirements.</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>High level of quality</p> <p>Admissions quotas are linked to the funding which is available to support PhD study. So, some students are employed within the department as research assistants and complete their PhDs as part of these projects. Some students have funding from employers, and some are part time students and work outside the university.</p> <p>In addition, when the programme was developed, the programme team did an analysis of the 'blockages' or prevention factors for doctoral studies that are experienced by students. They designed this programme in order to ensure that structurally, and in other ways, the programme addressed these blocks in order to enable students to engage in further study</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>High level of quality</p> <p>Students engage in research activities from the first semester. They draft a research proposal in the motivation letter, which is part of the application process. A study counsellor is appointed to each student on enrolment. The counsellor, will support the student in developing their thesis proposal and is assigned based on the student's research interest. The counsellor often becomes the student's supervisor / mentor. In addition, the students develop their research plan via their doctoral courses and in particular the Doctoral Seminar. As part of the Doctoral Seminar, they develop a research community, receive in/formal feedback on research plans and ideas. The doctoral seminar is a very beneficial aspect to the programme.</p> <p>The study programme is sustainable, because in order to successfully lead the new doctoral student, initially, a study advisor is assigned that helps to develop an individual study programme, recommending certain study subjects, discussing the research topic and methodology, discussing the motivation to carry out the specific research and the overall study process. Study advisor provides support until a supervisor is appointed, who will continue to work with</p>

	<p>the doctoral student. Every year, reports are written, initially from a study advisor, then from a supervisor, for the doctoral student's progress. The head of the study programme also engages in advising if there are situations in which assistance is sought from one or the other. It is highly appreciated that the advisor or supervisor discusses with the doctoral student both the accomplishments and the future tasks, thus ensuring the identification of critical points and timely elaboration of a specific action plan.</p>
<p>3.5 The HEI ensures that interested, talented and highly motivated candidates are recruited internationally.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>Students do not tend to be recruited internationally, although the programme is advertised online and admits cohorts annually. However, the programme team recognise the challenges of internationalisation for their programme. It is also worth noting that the University is interested in recruitment of international PhD students/ candidates, and receives international students at UG level via the Erasmus programme. These Erasmus students may provide a pool of potential international students, which the programme team might consider marketing to. This strategy might have several advantages, by spreading information about the excellence of the programmes offered at Rijeka via the networks of these international students, and becoming a pool of potential graduate students on the programme. The team note that this programme team faces the same challenges around internationalization that all universities face internationally.</p> <p>At the moment, there are no formal international cooperation networks, but the programme team have plans in this regard. The attraction of guest lecturers and student exchange is part of this plan.</p> <p>For example, international students and lecturers may visit within the framework of the project Informed European and Global Political Engagement of Disadvantaged Youth in Europe (I PLEDGE) within the framework of European Training Network, Horizon 2020. Moreover, supervisors may use their international networks to bring a more global flavour to the university.</p>
<p>3.6 The selection process is public and based on choosing the best applicants.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>From an applicant pool of around 20 students, 8 were enrolled. Students must complete a range of application activities and must fulfil specific criteria, such as hold a Masters degree.</p>

	<p>The assessment criteria of candidates are the average marks from the Master's degree studies, a brief description of the study and the achievements so far, letters of recommendation, language skills. A very successful selection criterion is the interview with potential doctoral students. The process of receiving and evaluating doctoral students is transparent because the competition information is sent to a potential audience through various communication channels.</p> <p>It is critical that potential doctoral students do not need to have very precise achievements in terms of scientific publications and a detailed description of the proposed study since it is only developed at the beginning of doctoral studies, but this tendency is evident in almost all Croatian doctoral programmes.</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</p> <p>The selection process fulfils standard criteria. Applicant complete a set of application activities. These are evaluated by staff. We did not observe any specific complaints procedure, but any applicant could contact the programme director in order to discuss a complaint.</p>
<p>3.8 There is a possibility to recognize applicants' and candidates' prior learning.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The programme recognises students' prior learning via gap analysis. Students are offered the opportunity of differential year / activities in order to fill these 'gaps'. In addition, the programme of doctoral study is individualised to the students' needs. This is a very positive aspect of the programme, recognised and commended by the panel.</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>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>Supervisors are committed and professional. They aim to support students in the development of their knowledge and competencies. There is a high level of supervisory support, with supervisors having an open door policy and are on hand for informal questions and discussions. In addition, supervisors engage in scheduled meetings with their supervisors. Supervisors take an individual approach for every PhD student, which is tailored to the students' needs. The panel noted however that co-supervision (more than 1 supervisor) should be the norm for all supervisions.</p> <p>Each supervision (both student progress and supervision experience) is evaluated and documented every year. This</p>

	<p>provides quality control around the supervisory process. The Doctoral programme has a highly committed programme director who manages all aspects of the programme which is another quality assurance mechanism. As evidence of high quality, scientific papers and books are published in cooperation with students and their supervisors. As a relatively new programme, and cognizant of the publication time lag, the panel were delighted to be provided with these publications during the site visit.</p> <p>However, there are currently limited training and CPD opportunities for supervisors. The University is working hard to rectify this. Recently, the university developed supervisory workshops (two days) in which several of the programme supervisors participated and relayed their learnings back to colleagues.</p> <p>Co-supervision should be encouraged to enable the desired level of interdisciplinarity.</p>
<p>3.10 There are institutional support mechanisms for candidates' successful progression.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>Students are evaluated at least annually, with progress and subsequent expectations documented as part of the report. These reports are presented to various boards, and are part of public record. There is considerable transparency in this evaluation procedure. The panel commend the progression processes implemented by the programme as these might be considered to be modelled on international best practice.</p> <p>In addition, the programme has developed a doctoral seminar, which is part of the doctoral training programme. This supportive mechanism provides research and learning opportunities as well as a scholarly community in which students participate. This, as well as supervision, is a key enabler of students' successful progression. The panel noted that the doctoral seminar is also evidence of best practice and should be highly commended.</p>
<p>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</p> <p>The programme team have diligently researched programmes which are considered models of good practice. They have taken into account nearby doctoral programmes (Slovenia, and possibly Finland). However, moving forward, the panel recommend that the team</p>

	<p>should look at least at other European and international programmes to continue to ensure that their offering continues to be at the forefront of international best practice.</p> <p>The Programme Team also looked at EuroDoc conferences in order to foresee problems and limitations.</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>High level of quality</p> <p>By completing the programme activities, students are able to focus on a doctoral level research project and implement it. Panel interviews with the students showed that they achieved an impressive level of content knowledge, methodological expertise and ethical perspectives. This demonstrates that the programme is delivering on its learning outcomes. These students were truly impressive.</p> <p>Part-time students find outcomes requirements rather high; they did not expect so much work. Counsellors do all their best to help them to meet them.</p> <p>The panel note that the programme has not yet graduated their first cohort. However, considering the students' conditions, the panel do not consider this to be a barrier to evaluating the high level of quality demonstrated by the programme.</p>
<p>4.3 Programme learning outcomes are logically and clearly connected with teaching contents, as well as the contents included in supervision and research.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>There is a good balance between methodology, mentors and research topics, which allows students to connect with methodological competencies; working with statistics; develop scientific thinking; being responsible for themselves and their research ideas and feeling confident in developing these. This is because of the range of activities included in the Doctoral programme. There is an emphasis on methodology to support their path in theory. The programme team should try to lead students to achieve the theoretical level.</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</p> <p>The learning outcomes are achieved as students develop critical views and participate in discussions, take into account ethical issues and, if needed, enrol in elective activities and seminars. So, students are able to focus on their research topics and, if needed, they take differential exams / activities. A particularly strong aspect of the programme is the individualised approach to the students'</p>

	development needs which allows them to fill any gaps in their knowledge and competencies. However, the programme should put more effort, even if it is not entirely its responsibility, in making sure more students finish their PhD dissertations.
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.	High level of quality Most teaching methods are participatory and adapted to the level of students, not so much ex-cathedra. There can be differences between less experienced and more experienced teachers. Exams mostly consist of assignments, essays, papers, and oral exams.
4.6 The programme enables acquisition of general (transferable) skills.	High level of quality Staff and students see clear progress from the first year to the completion of their thesis, with a progressive development of research skills as well as general transferable skills. The panel interviewed a number of students who demonstrated attributes of being extremely articulate in a second language of English, professional and ethical.
4.7 Teaching content is adapted to the needs of current and future research and candidates' training (individual course plans, generic skills etc.).	High level of quality Full-time students participating in research projects have more learning opportunities. Everybody is invited to participate in these learning opportunities, although it is difficult for part-timers or those employed outside the university. In addition, content is adapted to the needs of students. Gaps in knowledge and competencies are identified and students' complete activities which enable them to achieve these. This individualised approach is a very strong aspect of the programme.
4.8 The programme ensures quality through international connections and teacher and candidate mobility.	Improvements are necessary The students on this programme seem academically ambitious and credit the programme. These students would like more opportunities that are international. They would like more opportunities to host international visitors and develop their own international networks and perspectives. The programme team acknowledged that internationalisation is a challenge and they want to develop opportunities to enhance internationalisation, including international cooperation and collaboration.

*** 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.