

**REPORT
OF THE EXPERT PANEL
IN THE PROCEDURE OF INITIAL ACCREDITATION OF THE
PROFESSIONAL SHORT STUDY PROGRAMME
APPLIED AGROTECHNOLOGY**

Date of accreditation: 19 December 2025

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
BASIC INFORMATION ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME	5
DETAILED ANALYSIS OF EACH STANDARD, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY GRADE	6
I. Internal quality assurance	6
II. Study programme	11
III. Teaching process and student support	22
IV. Teaching resources and infrastructure	25
ANNEXES	33

INTRODUCTION

The Agency for Science and Higher Education (the Agency) is an independent legal entity with public authority, registered in the court register, and a full member of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

All study programmes delivered by public and private higher education institutions are subject to the procedure of initial accreditation of study programmes conducted by the Agency in accordance with the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Science (Official Gazette 151/22) and by following the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and good international practice in quality assurance of science and higher education.

The Agency's Accreditation Council appointed an independent Expert Panel for the evaluation of the professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology at the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka.

Members of the Expert Panel (in the same order as in the Decision to appoint the expert panel):

- Prof. Ana Matin, PhD, University of Zagreb Faculty of Agriculture, Republic of Croatia
- Assoc. prof. Nataša Hulak, PhD, University of Zagreb Faculty of Agriculture, Republic of Croatia
- Assoc. prof. Marko Petek, PhD, University of Zagreb Faculty of Agriculture, Republic of Croatia, panel chair
- Assist. prof. Marko Koščak, PhD, University of Maribor Faculty of Tourism, Republic of Slovenia
- Tea Žugec, student, University of Zagreb Faculty of Food Technology and Biotechnology, Republic of Croatia.

The Expert Panel held meetings with the following groups:

- with the management
- with the Chair of the Committee for the Development of the Study Programme
- with teaching staff who will participate in the delivery of the study programme, including full-time employees and external associates
- with representatives of industry and potential employers.

The Expert Panel visited the laboratories, the library, the student services office, and the classrooms.

The Expert Panel drafted this Report on the initial accreditation of the professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology of the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka based on the Proposal of the professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology of the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka, other relevant documents and the site visit.

The Report contains the following elements:

- Basic information on the study programme,
- Detailed analysis of each quality standard, recommendations for improvement and quality grade for each standard,
- Final recommendation of Expert Panel members,
- Appendices (quality grade summary by each assessment area and standard, and the site visit protocol).

In the analysis of the documents, site visit and the meetings held at the higher education institution, the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka, and writing of the Report, the Expert Panel was supported by:

- Viktorija Juriša, coordinator, ASHE
- Davor Černi, observer, ASHE.

BASIC INFORMATION ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Name, seat and PIN (Personal Identification Number) of the higher education institution: University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka, Trpimirova 2, Rijeka, 29573709870

Title and type of study programme: Professional Short Study Programme in Applied Agrotechnology

CroQF/EQF/QF-EHEA level: Level 5, Level/1

Scientific or artistic field and area of study programme: Biotechnical Sciences, Agriculture

ISCED FoET classification: 081

Programme duration: 2 years

Number of ECTS credits acquired on the completion of study programme: 120

Professional or academic degree/qualification obtained upon the completion of the study programme (if the study programme has several specializations, the issued degree/qualification cannot be named according to the specialization, but at the level of the study programme): *pristupnik primijenjene agrotehnologije (pristup. agr.)*

Language of delivery: Croatian

Place of delivery of the study programme (at the head office or outside the head office of the higher education institution): Poreč

Method of delivery of the study programme: traditional

Admissions quota (for full-time and part-time students): 20 full-time students and 30 part-time students

Academic year in which the study programme delivery is to commence: 2026/27

In case of joint programmes delivered by Croatian higher education institutions, please include a list co-providers/partners: /

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF EACH STANDARD, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY GRADE

I. Internal quality assurance

1.1. Clear justification for the introduction of the new study programme has been provided with regard to the mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution, as well as economic and societal needs.

Analysis:

The Expert Panel thoroughly examined all submitted documentation related to the justification for launching the new study programme, prepared by the University of Applied Sciences of Applied Sciences of Rijeka. In planning and introducing the professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology, consideration was given to an analysis of its alignment with the mission and strategic objectives of the University of Applied Sciences, as well as with relevant strategic documents at the regional, national and global levels, such as the Agriculture Strategy until 2030 (Official Gazette No. 26/2022) and the latest report of the World Economic Forum.

The proposed study programme Applied Agrotechnology has been designed as a two-year professional short study programme in response to the strategic objectives of the University of Applied Sciences. At the time of submission of the proposal and the site visit, the University of Applied Sciences had not yet adopted a new Strategy for the period 2025–2029. The proposal indicates that the Development Strategy of the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka 2020–2024, with its core objectives, remains applicable for the forthcoming period, with the addition that a committee has been appointed to prepare the Development Strategy of the University of Applied Sciences for the period 2025–2029.

As part of the subsequent amendments, the University of Applied Sciences submitted an explanatory document, i.e. a revised Proposal of the study programme and the corresponding Strategy document of the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka, which was published in July 2025 and is available on the official website (at the following link: https://www.veleri.hr/sites/default/files/2025-09/STRATEGIJA_RAZVOJA_VELEUCILISTA_U_RIJEKI_2025._-2029..pdf), but was not included in the initial documentation. Based on the additional documentation, the Expert Panel considers that the submitted Strategy meets the requirements of this standard and

that the conditions for a positive assessment, i.e. compliance with the standard, have been fulfilled.

The proposed enrolment quotas for the new study programme are 20 full-time students and 30 part-time students. The proposal states that the professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology has been developed in response to current and future challenges in the agricultural sector and rural development in general, such as digitalisation, population ageing, emigration, climate change, and the need for specialised knowledge. In this context, the study programme addresses the challenges of digital and green transition by providing new knowledge and skills relevant to the labour market.

For the purpose of preparing the proposal, several comparable professional and university study programmes in Croatia and abroad were analysed in order to avoid overlap with existing study programmes in the Republic of Croatia, while at the same time enabling both horizontal and vertical student mobility. As stated in the proposal, the proposed programme of the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka places emphasis on precision and sustainable agriculture, as well as on soil and water resource management in the context of current climate variability, which makes it substantially distinct. In particular, the proposed programme Applied Agrotechnology offers a narrow specialisation with a strong focus on practical skills. Based on Table 2 (Comparable study programmes in the Republic of Croatia – 1 programme analysed, and in the EU – 9 programmes analysed), the Panel concludes that the analysis identified no significant overlap at the level of professional course content between the analysed programmes and the proposed professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology.

The higher education institution requested an opinion from the Croatian Employment Service (CES) on 11 April 2025; however, no response was received within the legally prescribed period of 30 days. Therefore, the opinion of the CES is considered to be positive.

According to the Recommendations for Educational, Enrolment and Scholarship Policy for 2025 issued by the CES, there is no indication of a need to reduce enrolment quotas for professional short study programmes in the field of agriculture in Istria County or in the neighbouring *Primorsko-goranska* County. The need for this type of professional profile was also confirmed by representatives of potential employers during the meeting with the Expert Panel.

Recommendations: /

Quality grade: Fulfilled.

1.2. The study programme has undergone an appropriate internal quality assurance process and has been formally approved by the higher education institution.

Analysis:

All procedures related to internal quality assurance for the proposed professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology were carried out appropriately, effectively and transparently. The development of the new professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology underwent internal quality assurance procedures involving both internal and external stakeholders (alumni, employers, the local community) as well as students.

According to the information provided in the Proposal, for the purpose of developing the professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology, a Committee was appointed comprising a total of 26 members (13 members of teaching staff of the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka, 3 external associates, 4 representatives of employers and association presidents, 5 alumni representatives of the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka who are also employers, and 1 alumnus who is also a current student of the professional graduate study programme Winemaking at the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka). The work of the Committee was conducted through in-person and online meetings. Feedback from stakeholders was also collected in the form of views on the competencies required in the labour market. Based on the information obtained, course syllabi for the study programme Applied Agrotechnology were developed. The Proposal of the professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology was positively evaluated and approved by the competent bodies of the University of Applied Sciences: the Quality Assurance Committee, the Professional Council, and the Governing Board.

All documentation related to this process was prepared to a high standard, as confirmed by the interviews conducted with the relevant stakeholders at the University of Applied Sciences. Particular emphasis is placed on the strong support for the proposed study programme from stakeholders from industry and professional practice. The University of Applied Sciences fully and effectively implemented all formal procedures, taking into account the Rulebook on the Procedure for the Adoption of New and the Improvement of Accredited Study Programmes of the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka, as well as the Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Study Programmes and the adoption of the Action Plan for Quality Assurance of the new study programme. All quality assurance policies are publicly available on the University of Applied Sciences' website.

Based on the elements within this standard and the interviews with stakeholders, the Expert Panel considers that all elements of the standard are in compliance with the requirements.

Recommendations: /

1.3. The higher education institution will collect, analyse and use relevant data for the effective management and continuous enhancement of the study programme in accordance with the published quality assurance policy.

Analysis:

The Expert Panel considers that the University of Applied Sciences systematically collects data on the quality of its study programmes, including the quality of the new professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology.

According to the information provided in the Proposal, the internal quality assurance system, through the quality policies of the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka, envisages regular and systematic monitoring and evaluation of the quality assurance system (QAS). An annual Action Plan for the improvement of the quality assurance system is planned, which includes measures for enhancing the study process, defining general objectives/activities as well as specific objectives/activities/measures for improving the QAS, together with the corresponding responsibilities, timelines, and implementation indicators used for regular reporting. In this way, processes and key performance indicators for the quality of teaching delivery are defined, along with target values and implementation deadlines.

Through established procedures and the QAS Manual, the key processes of quality assurance of the teaching process and study programmes are regulated and implemented through the following activities and analyses: student surveys on teaching quality, graduate surveys, monitoring of practical training quality, monitoring of pass rates, monitoring of student workload, monitoring of completion rates, monitoring of employability, verification of the alignment of assessment and grading methods with teaching methods and learning outcomes, teacher self-evaluation, etc. Appropriate reports are prepared in relation to the verification of all the above analyses. The Panel concludes that all key aspects of quality assurance of the teaching process for the study programme Applied Agrotechnology are thus covered.

The University of Applied Sciences effectively implements measures for establishing a system of analysis, monitoring, and use of relevant data related to the management and continuous improvement of the study programme. Rulebooks and guidelines for quality assurance are applied, prescribing in detail the procedures and responsibilities related to the continuous monitoring and enhancement of study programme quality. These monitoring processes will also include data on the duration of studies, completion rates, and dropout rates, as well as processes ensuring that ECTS credits are defined in accordance with learning outcomes and that the estimated student workload is achievable, realistic, and appropriate. Activities are carried out regularly in accordance with the relevant rulebooks and defined timelines, and the responsible bodies and

individuals within the University of Applied Sciences are transparently informed about all aspects of quality control and improvement of the study programme delivery.

Recommendations: /

Quality grade: Fulfilled

1.4. The higher education institution informs the public about the study programmes it offers, as well as plans to offer new programmes, i.e. change made to existing ones.

Analysis:

The University of Applied Sciences maintains a website providing a wide range of relevant information on its study programmes. The website is of high quality and ensures that the public is regularly and appropriately informed about study programmes, plans, and changes related to them. The University of Applied Sciences publishes information on admission requirements, intended learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods, as well as the qualifications awarded upon completion of the programme.

In addition, the University of Applied Sciences carries out a number of supplementary activities, including participation in various fairs (such as job fairs and career fairs), the organisation of other forms of direct communication such as Career Days, and the use of various social media platforms for the purpose of informing the interested public.

Recommendations: /

Quality grade: Fulfilled

II. Study programme

2.1. The proposed study programme is compatible with the qualification standard in the Croatian Qualifications Framework Register.

Analysis:

No qualification standard corresponding to the proposed study programme has been entered in the Croatian Qualifications Framework Register (CROQF Register); therefore, this standard is not applicable.

Recommendations: /

Quality grade: N/A

2.2. The intended learning outcomes at the level of the study programme are aligned with the competences a student should gain by completing the study programme, as well as with the CroQF and EQF level.

Analysis:

Based on the documentation submitted in the initial accreditation procedure, the Expert Panel established that the professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology is structured as a two-year programme (four semesters). Students who successfully fulfil all academic and professional requirements acquire a total of 120 ECTS credits and are awarded the professional title Associate in Applied Agrotechnology, in accordance with the applicable regulations of the Republic of Croatia and Level 5 of the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CROQF).

The programme is oriented towards understanding biological, ecological and physico-chemical factors in plant production and their relationship with agroecological conditions and climate change. This enables students to assess production risks and propose appropriate adaptation measures in practice.

An analysis of the proposed programme-level learning outcomes indicates that the majority of learning outcomes are not fully aligned with the qualification level for which the programme is intended. Although the programme is formally classified at CROQF Level 5, certain learning outcomes are formulated in a manner that does not clearly reflect the competencies, level of autonomy, and responsibility expected upon completion of a professional short study programme. Some learning outcomes are overly general, insufficiently operational, or lack a clear focus on applied knowledge and skills, which makes it difficult to unambiguously align them with CROQF Level 5. In some cases, learning outcomes imply a higher level of autonomy, analytical judgement, and responsibility than is appropriate for this level of study.

It was also observed that certain learning outcomes are not sufficiently differentiated from those corresponding to higher qualification levels, resulting in an unclear distinction between the competence profile of graduates of a professional short study programme and those completing professional or university undergraduate programmes. Consequently, the learning outcomes of the study programme should be revised and more precisely formulated, and more clearly aligned with the descriptors of CROQF Level 5. Particular attention should be paid to the level of autonomy in work, the scope of responsibility, the application of knowledge in standard and predictable situations, and the limitation of more complex analytical and strategic tasks that belong to higher qualification levels.

Although the learning outcomes have been developed in accordance with relevant guidelines and methodological tools, the Expert Panel considers that they require further adjustment in order to clearly, consistently and unambiguously reflect CROQF Level 5. In particular, it is recommended to ensure the consistent use of verbs appropriate to the level of a professional short study programme, a clearer differentiation of competencies in relation to undergraduate programmes, and a stronger focus on operational, implementation-oriented and practical competencies.

The implementation of these recommendations would ensure a higher level of alignment between learning outcomes and the qualification level, more realistic expectations of graduates, and greater transparency and quality of the study programme.

In the process of revising and amending the learning outcomes, certain changes introduced by the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka were observed; however, the learning outcomes are still not fully aligned with the recommendations of the Expert Panel, as approximately 40% of the outcomes remain at CROQF Level 6 instead of focusing on Level 5 as required. Although some learning outcomes have been adjusted towards the operational application of knowledge, the justification based on programme constraints does not address the concern regarding progression to higher levels of autonomy and responsibility, thereby undermining a clear distinction from professional undergraduate programmes, although this does not prevent the formal establishment of the programme.

Recommendations:

The Expert Panel recommends that the learning outcomes at the level of the study programme be further refined and more precisely aligned with the competencies, level of expertise, autonomy, and responsibility corresponding to Level 5 of the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CROQF). Although the learning outcomes have been formulated in accordance with relevant legal and methodological documents, an analysis of their content and operational level indicates that some outcomes exceed the expected scope of achievement for a professional short study programme.

A significant number of learning outcomes are formulated using verbs and activities that imply a higher level of autonomy, planning, organisation, evaluation, and strategic decision-making, which are characteristic of CROQF Level 6 and higher. For CROQF Level 5, more appropriate learning outcomes are those that emphasise the application of knowledge in standardised and predictable situations, the implementation of procedures in accordance with instructions, and participation in planning and organisation under professional supervision.

Recommendations by groups of learning outcomes:

Learning outcomes 3, 5, 6, 9, 12 and 13

(Justify opportunities for initiating business ventures; determine possibilities for the application of technology through the development of a plan; plan and implement sustainable methods; organise and carry out technological procedures; develop a plan for managing ecological production; apply economic and marketing strategies)

The Panel considers that these learning outcomes are formulated in a manner that exceeds the competencies realistically expected from graduates of a professional short study programme. Verbs such as justify, plan, organise, and develop a plan imply a higher level of autonomy and responsibility. It is recommended that these outcomes be reformulated with an emphasis on participation in planning, the implementation of predefined procedures and measures, and a focus on the operational and execution level, without assuming full responsibility for planning or management.

Learning outcomes 4, 8, 10 and 11

(Assess the impact of climate change; propose irrigation management approaches; implement circular economy strategies; recommend integrated production systems)

The use of verbs such as assess, propose, implement, and recommend implies analytical and advisory roles typical of higher qualification levels. The Panel recommends aligning these outcomes with CROQF Level 5 by emphasising the identification of basic impacts and measures, the application of recommended solutions, and participation in the implementation of sustainability measures and integrated production, rather than the independent design or evaluation of solutions.

Learning outcomes 1, 2 and 7

(Explain the impact of production factors; apply quantitative methods; identify symptoms of disorders)

These outcomes are the closest to CROQF Level 5; however, further refinement is recommended to more clearly emphasise the applied and practical dimension of the

acquired knowledge, while limiting theoretical depth and independent interpretation of more complex phenomena.

The implementation of these recommendations would ensure better alignment of the learning outcomes with the qualification level, more realistic expectations of graduates, and greater transparency and quality of the study programme.

Quality grade: Partially fulfilled

2.3. The intended course outcomes are aligned with the intended learning outcomes at the level of the study programme.

Analysis:

The Proposal of the professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology provides a total of 19 compulsory and 6 elective courses. In addition to compulsory and elective courses, students are required to choose one of four offered elective course packages: Package I – Viticulture, Package II – Fruit Growing, Package III – Entrepreneurship, and Package IV – Olive Growing.

For all proposed courses, objectives, learning outcomes, and their alignment with programme-level learning outcomes have been defined. Course-level learning outcomes are elaborated in detail and enable a clear identification of the knowledge and skills that students are expected to acquire upon successful completion of each course. Based on their analysis, the Panel concludes that course-level learning outcomes are largely aligned with programme-level learning outcomes, particularly in the areas related to the acquisition of fundamental professional knowledge in agrotechnology, the application of quantitative methods, the understanding of agroecological factors, and the implementation of technological procedures in plant production.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to ensure consistent and systematic alignment of course-level learning outcomes with those at the level of the study programme. The higher education institution should establish a clearly defined mechanism for verifying this alignment. Based on the submitted documentation and interviews with members of the Committee responsible for drafting the Proposal and teaching staff (including a representative of the Quality Assurance Office), it has not been sufficiently specified how the alignment between course-level and programme-level learning outcomes will be verified, nor the frequency of such verification procedures.

The development of generic and subject-specific competencies is an integral part of every study programme and individual course, as these competencies enable students to integrate more easily into the labour market and to function more effectively in a professional environment. The Proposal of the study programme Applied Agrotechnology defines a number of generic competencies, including the application of knowledge in practice, communication skills, teamwork, the use of information and

communication technologies, work planning, and the monitoring of professional and technological developments. However, it is not entirely clear from the proposed course learning outcomes how these competencies will be systematically and evenly developed throughout the programme, particularly in areas requiring teamwork, independent and responsible decision-making, and effective communication in professional and interdisciplinary environments. During the interviews with teaching staff, it was noted that teaching is predominantly conducted on an individual basis, which limits the development of certain generic competencies, especially those based on interaction, collaboration, and joint problem-solving.

The Expert Panel considers that teaching methods, forms of instruction, and assessment methods should be more clearly defined in order to ensure the achievement of generic competencies in line with the programme-level learning outcomes.

In the process of revising and aligning course-level learning outcomes with programme-level outcomes, the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka has made a significant step forward by introducing a detailed verification mechanism through committees for the improvement of study programmes, procedures for recording changes, and regular analyses of the alignment of assessment methods. However, although compulsory courses such as Professional Practice and the Final Thesis justifiably cover a broad range of learning outcomes, and the course English Language has been made compulsory, the revision does not fully address the lack of explicitly defined teaching methods for the development of generic competencies (e.g. teamwork, interdisciplinary communication), which the Panel identifies as critical for the labour market. For full compliance, it is necessary to further define concrete forms of instruction (e.g. group projects, collaborative simulations) in the syllabi of all courses and to ensure that all elective course packages equally support the development of generic skills, thereby achieving consistent transparency and quality at CROQF Level 5.

Recommendations:

The Expert Panel recommends that the higher education institution further clarify the method for implementing a systematic verification of the alignment between learning outcomes at the level of the study programme and those at the level of individual courses. It is necessary to precisely define verification mechanisms, including the method and frequency of monitoring, documentation of the achievement of learning outcomes, and responsible persons. The establishment of a regular verification system would enable reliable monitoring of the achievement of the intended competencies and timely adjustment of courses to student needs.

An analysis of the submitted tables shows that most compulsory courses—such as Economics of Agricultural Production, Fundamentals of Plant Biology, Soil Science, Professional Practice I and II, and the Final Thesis—cover a wide range of programme

learning outcomes (LO 1 – LO 13). For example, compulsory courses encompass key technical and professional competencies, such as planning and implementing sustainable fertilisation and plant protection methods (LO 6), organising technological processes in production and processing (LO 9), and implementing circular economy principles and sustainable resource management (LO 10).

Elective courses, such as Fundamentals of Viticulture, Ecological and Technological Aspects of Vine Cultivation, Fruit Growing, and Olive Growing, further contribute to the achievement of specific learning outcomes; however, their contribution to generic competencies depends on the student's choice. These courses provide additional opportunities for specialisation and the strengthening of professional competencies. Courses such as Fundamentals of Viticulture, Ecological and Technological Aspects of Vine Cultivation, Fruit Growing, Olive Growing, Vine Protection, Orchard management practices, and Olive Protection enable the achievement of specific outcomes such as LO 4 (assessment of agroecological factors and climate change) and LO 5 (application of modern technologies, equipment, and machinery through planning). However, as students select three out of six elective courses, the attainment of certain generic competencies—such as GC2 (professional communication in a foreign language)—may be limited depending on the chosen electives.

In order to ensure consistency in the competencies of all students, the Panel considers that courses covering key generic skills, such as professional communication in a foreign language (English Language), should have the status of compulsory courses. This would ensure that all students acquire fundamental professional competencies regardless of their choice of electives. The Panel also recommends revising certain course learning outcomes so that they fully correspond to CROQF Level 5. Competencies related to planning and organising systems (e.g. SC1 and SC2 in the original Proposal) should be formulated in a way that reflects the level of knowledge and abilities expected at Level 5, with an emphasis on the implementation and application of defined procedures rather than on strategic planning and process management, which belong to higher qualification levels.

Similarly, competencies related to digital marketing and promotion should focus on the application of existing strategies rather than their independent development. Such adjustments would ensure alignment between the description of learning outcomes and the level of expertise envisaged for a professional short study programme.

The analysis indicates that compulsory courses cover the majority of programme learning outcomes, while elective courses complement specific areas and enable additional specialisation. The Panel recommends ensuring that all students, regardless of their choice of electives, achieve the defined generic and subject-specific competencies, particularly those related to teamwork, independent decision-making, the application of technologies, and sustainable production practices.

In conclusion, the proposed curriculum enables the achievement of the programme learning outcomes and the development of competencies at CROQF Level 5; however, further refinements are required to ensure consistent alignment between compulsory and elective courses and both generic and subject-specific competencies, to more precisely define the level of autonomy and responsibility, and to introduce a clear system for verifying alignment.

Quality grade: Partially fulfilled

2.4. The study programme content allows students to achieve all the intended learning outcomes.

Analysis:

The proposed professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology provides a balanced and functional structure that enables students to acquire knowledge and skills in accordance with Level 5 of the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CROQF) / European Qualifications Framework (EQF Level 5). The programme consists of 19 compulsory and six elective courses, with students required to take three elective courses in addition to the compulsory ones, allowing for a certain degree of flexibility and adaptation to individual interests. Programme-level learning outcomes are defined in thirteen points and encompass key competencies in the fields of agriculture, plant and animal production, resource management, environmental sustainability, and economic and marketing aspects of agricultural activity. The structure and content of the programme contribute to both horizontal and vertical student mobility within the national and European higher education area. Students may continue their education in professional undergraduate or university undergraduate programmes, with the possibility of ECTS credit recognition and, where applicable, the requirement to pass additional (bridging) examinations. The programme also enables participation in international projects and mobility schemes such as Erasmus+, thereby further promoting mobility and knowledge exchange.

An analysis of the alignment between programme-level learning outcomes (LO1–LO13) and course-level learning outcomes indicates that most of the planned outcomes can be achieved through the proposed teaching content. Compulsory courses, such as Fundamentals of Agriculture with Environmental Protection, Soil Science, Economics of Agricultural Production, Precision Irrigation and Fertigation of Agricultural Crops, and Management of Plant Nutrition and Protection in Sustainable Production, ensure the acquisition of fundamental and professional competencies. Elective courses, such as Fundamentals of Viticulture, Fruit Growing, Olive Growing, and Olive Protection, enable students to further specialise in selected areas of production.

The Expert Panel recommends further elaboration of the method and mechanism for verifying the alignment of course-level learning outcomes with programme-level

learning outcomes. It is important to specify the documentation that will support this alignment, define the monitoring frequency, and clearly assign responsibilities to all participants involved in the implementation of quality assurance procedures. In addition, it is recommended to revise the formulation of learning outcomes at both course and programme levels to ensure full alignment with CROQF Level 5. In this context, the use of verbs emphasising application and implementation is recommended, instead of verbs such as plan and organise, which are characteristic of higher qualification levels.

In conclusion, the content and structure of the professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology enable the achievement of most of the intended learning outcomes and adequately prepare students for entry into Professional Practice. However, in order to fully achieve all generic and subject-specific competencies, it is necessary to include additional foundational disciplines, strengthen content related to sustainable production, and establish a systematic mechanism for monitoring and continuous improvement.

In the process of revising and amending the learning outcomes, certain improvements introduced by the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka have been noted. In particular, the recognition of the importance of the English language in a contemporary professional environment and its introduction as a separate compulsory course is considered a positive development. However, it remains necessary to incorporate teaching methods for the development of generic competencies into course syllabi.

Recommendations:

The Expert Panel recommends that, in order to enable students to achieve all intended learning outcomes, measures be implemented to further improve the alignment of learning outcomes, the structure of the study programme, and the mode of teaching delivery. Particular attention should be given to refining the formulation of learning outcomes at both compulsory and elective course levels so that they are fully aligned with CROQF Level 5. In this context, learning outcomes that currently include elements of planning and organisation should be reformulated using verbs that emphasise application, implementation, and execution of tasks, as CROQF Level 5 corresponds to an operational rather than a planning and organisational level of competencies.

Furthermore, the Panel considers that the methods of teaching delivery and assessment should be adjusted in order to ensure the systematic development of generic competencies during both the teaching process and Professional Practice. These include teamwork, communication skills, and independent decision-making. This can be achieved through the introduction of group assignments with clearly defined roles, continuous monitoring of student performance, and the organisation of structured Professional Practice that promotes collaboration and the practical application of

acquired knowledge, rather than relying predominantly on individualised forms of teaching.

The Panel also points to the need to strengthen fundamental professional knowledge through the inclusion of teaching units or courses covering areas such as soil science (paedology), climatology, fertilisation, and agricultural mechanisation. The current structure of the study programme does not ensure a sufficient level of knowledge required for the full achievement of learning outcomes related to the technological component reflected in the programme title. In order to ensure continuous alignment between course-level and programme-level learning outcomes, the Panel recommends establishing a clear and systematic mechanism for monitoring and verifying their alignment. In this regard, it is necessary to precisely define responsibilities, monitoring frequency, and documentation related to the achievement of learning outcomes, including the regular evaluation and updating of teaching content in line with identified needs.

Particular attention should also be given to the structure of the elective component of the programme to ensure that all students have the opportunity to achieve key generic competencies. This is especially relevant for competencies related to foreign language proficiency in a professional context, which, given their importance for Professional Practice and mobility, should be made compulsory or ensured through appropriate alternative provisions within the study programme.

In conclusion, the implementation of the above recommendations would ensure that students are provided with real conditions for achieving all intended learning outcomes. This would enable the development of professional competencies in line with CROQF Level 5, as well as the acquisition of generic competencies necessary for employability, Professional Practice, and both horizontal and vertical mobility within the national and European higher education area.

Quality grade: Partially fulfilled

2.5. ECTS distribution is aligned with the anticipated actual student workload.

Analysis:

In the revised Proposal, the allocation of ECTS credits is methodologically consistent for full-time students: it is clearly defined that 1 ECTS corresponds to 30 hours of student workload, and the course syllabi demonstrate alignment between learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and workload, in accordance with the ECTS Users' Guide (2015). The distribution across semesters (60 ECTS per academic year) logically reflects the increasing complexity of the content, with a greater share of practical training and laboratory/workshop components in the later semesters.

A key correction relates to the status of part-time students: the justification now explicitly refers to Article 68 of the relevant legislation and clarifies that full-time and part-time students have the same number of ECTS credits, identical learning outcomes, and equivalent standards, with differences being solely organisational in nature (e.g. teaching in afternoon sessions, block delivery, and a higher proportion of independent work). Given that teaching in Poreč is organised in the afternoon for all students, a unified delivery plan is applied, thereby addressing the previous concern regarding separate delivery arrangements for part-time students.

The system for monitoring student workload is further supported by existing internal procedures of the University of Applied Sciences (student surveys, workload monitoring, and programme review), which provides a sound basis for concluding that Standard 2.5 is met for both full-time and part-time students, with appropriate legal grounding.

Recommendations:

The Expert Panel recommends that, in the further development of the programme, student workload and ECTS credits be presented more clearly and be continuously monitored separately for full-time and part-time students, with the possibility of adjusting the organisation of teaching as necessary.

Quality grade: Fulfilled

2.6. Student/professional practice is an integral part of the study programme (if applicable).

Analysis:

The Expert Panel previously noted that 12 ECTS allocated to Professional Practice was insufficient for a professional short study programme at CROQF Level 5. In the revised programme, this concern has been fully addressed: Professional Practice III has been introduced in the fourth semester, resulting in three Professional Practice courses (I, II, and III) with a total of 18 ECTS credits and 270 hours, compared to the previous 12 ECTS and 180 hours.

In addition to Professional Practice, an additional 150 hours of practical training have been introduced through compulsory and elective courses (60 hours in the second and third semesters, and 30 hours in the fourth semester), bringing the total practical experience to approximately 420 hours (professional practice and practical training combined). This represents a clear increase in work-based competencies, in line with expectations for CROQF Level 5 and with the practice of comparable study programmes.

The syllabi for Professional Practice retain clearly defined learning outcomes, methods of implementation and assessment, as well as reliance on a network of external partners. Therefore, Standard 2.6 can now be considered fully met.

Recommendations:

The Expert Panel recommends including several concise examples of typical tasks within Professional Practice III, in order to further link the increased ECTS allocation with concrete work-based competencies in future reaccreditation procedures.

Quality grade: Fulfilled

2.7. If the completion of the study programme allows students access to a regulated profession, the programme is aligned with national and European regulations and the recommendations of national and international professional associations.

Analysis: This standard is not applicable.

Recommendations: /

Quality grade: N/A

III. Teaching process and student support

3.1. Admission requirements and criteria as well as the admissions procedure are clearly defined and transparent, and guarantee that students will possess the necessary prior knowledge.

Analysis:

The submitted documentation clearly and transparently defines the admission procedure (requirements, criteria, and process) for the professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology. The scoring system used to rank applicants has been defined, both for candidates applying through the NISpVU system and those applying directly through the public call. The documentation clearly specifies the proportion of points assigned to each component (state matura exams, secondary school grades, overall academic performance, and specific subjects), as well as the possibility of awarding additional points.

Based on the review of the curriculum and courses, as well as interviews with teaching staff who indicated the possibility of preparing additional materials to support students' prior knowledge, it has been established that the admission requirements are appropriate to the level of prior knowledge required for enrolment in the professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology.

Recommendations:

The Expert Panel recommends that all admission requirements, criteria, and procedures be transparently published in locations clearly visible and accessible to prospective students.

Quality grade: Fulfilled.

3.2. The planned teaching methods guarantee student-centred teaching and the achievement of all intended learning outcomes.

Analysis:

The documentation indicates that the programme is methodologically designed as highly practice-oriented and student-centred. The course syllabi systematically include interactive lectures, problem-based learning, project assignments, case studies, laboratory and field exercises, as well as the use of e-learning systems. Each course includes a matrix linking learning outcomes with teaching methods and assessment methods, which supports the conclusion that the intended learning outcomes are realistically achievable through the planned activities.

The Panel's previous comment referred to the insufficiently elaborated operational delivery for part-time students and its link to Standard 2.5. In the revised explanation, this issue is addressed through the already described model of unified teaching delivery in afternoon sessions for all students, thereby eliminating differences in teaching methods based on student status. Given that teaching methods are the same, with differences limited to scheduling and, where applicable, block delivery, the Panel concludes that student-centred teaching and the achievement of learning outcomes are ensured for part-time students as well.

Recommendations:

The Expert Panel considers it appropriate that, in the future, further consideration be given to the development of a model in which active teaching methods for all students (including part-time students) are organised in block and/or hybrid formats, with the periodic documentation of examples of good practice.

Quality grade: Fulfilled.

3.3. The higher education institution proves that adequate support for future students is ensured.

Analysis:

During the interviews with the management of the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka and teaching staff, the existence of student support systems based on peer support (student buddy system) and a mentoring system was confirmed. The mentoring system includes groups of approximately 20 students assigned to one faculty mentor, providing appropriate support to students throughout their studies.

The use of digital platforms in communication between teaching staff and students facilitates access to teaching materials and information (Merlin), as well as direct communication (email, Teams).

Although most student organisations and offices providing specific student services (such as the Student Union and the International Relations Office) are located in Rijeka, their representatives regularly visit the branch location and are available to students on a daily basis through online channels. In addition, administrative documentation has been digitalised, which further facilitates communication.

Recommendations:

The Expert Panel recommends maintaining the existing student support systems and encouraging the greatest possible involvement of students in organisations based in Rijeka.

Quality grade: Fulfilled

3.4. An objective and consistent assessment and grading of student achievements is planned in order to ensure acquisition of intended learning outcomes.

Analysis:

The assessment system is elaborated in detail at the level of individual courses: each syllabus includes a “Continuous Assessment” table, with clearly defined proportions of written exams, projects, practical assignments, presentations, etc., for each learning outcome separately, including minimum thresholds per outcome and the conversion of points into grades. This ensures objectivity, transparency, and alignment of assessment with learning outcomes, which represents the core requirement of Standard 3.4.

The key shortcoming previously identified by the Panel was the complete absence of assessment of English as a language of professional communication, despite the fact that CROQF Level 5–6 descriptors imply the ability to participate in international communication. In the revised programme, a compulsory course English Language has been introduced in the third semester (3 ECTS), with a focus on professional terminology in agriculture and clearly defined learning outcomes and assessment criteria. This effectively addresses the identified gap in language assessment, and the generic competency of professional communication in English is now explicitly planned and assessed.

In addition, the justification further elaborates existing institutional procedures for verifying the alignment of assessment methods with learning outcomes (committees for the improvement of study programmes, periodic review of examinations, and, where necessary, staff training), which strengthens the argument that the assessment system is stable and systematically controlled.

The Panel therefore concludes that Standard 3.4 is now met, with a notably strengthened component related to English language proficiency.

Recommendations:

The Expert Panel considers it useful to continue the systematic development of the assessment of professional terminology in English within the English Language course, and to consider the gradual introduction of applied tasks in English in selected professional courses, where pedagogically and operationally appropriate.

Quality grade: Fulfilled.

IV. Teaching resources and infrastructure

4.1. The higher education institution has ensured adequate teaching capacities to deliver the study programme and achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Analysis:

The Expert Panel established that the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka, in cooperation with external associates, has adequate teaching capacities required for the delivery of the professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology. Teaching is delivered by full-time teaching staff (76.19%), appointed to teaching positions in accordance with the applicable regulations, with the necessary involvement of external associates (23.81%).

According to the submitted documentation, the University of Applied Sciences employs a sufficient number of full-time teaching staff who deliver more than the prescribed minimum share of direct teaching for a professional study programme. This fulfils the legal requirement ensuring the stability of the teaching process and the continuity of programme delivery. The average annual workload of teaching staff is aligned with the prescribed norms.

The teaching process in the proposed professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology involves 1 full professor (tenured), 3 professors of professional studies (tenured), 6 professors of professional studies, 4 senior lecturers, 5 lecturers, and 2 assistants. In addition, 70% of the teaching staff hold a doctoral degree, and 10% hold a master's degree in science. The majority of teaching staff are active in the field of biotechnical sciences (66.67%), while the remaining staff are from the fields of social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities.

The student-to-teacher ratio is favourable, amounting to 11.11, which is significantly below the maximum permitted ratio (1:30). For the proposed study programme, a sufficient number of teaching staff is ensured in relation to the planned student enrolment, enabling high-quality teaching, the implementation of practical training, exercises and seminars, and effective monitoring of the achievement of learning outcomes.

However, Table 5 and the course syllabi indicate that some teaching staff are heavily overloaded. In addition, certain external associates are responsible for delivering multiple compulsory courses, which raises concerns regarding the feasibility of programme delivery, particularly as they do not have supporting staff assigned to these courses.

In the process of revision, the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka submitted amended Tables 4 and 5, specifying revised workloads per course for both internal teaching staff and external associates. The Panel identified an improved distribution of teaching hours between institutional staff and external associates. It was also noted that additional internal staff members have been assigned to certain courses, which ensures continuity of teaching delivery in unforeseen circumstances.

Following the revision, it was established that teaching is delivered by full-time staff with a share of 84.38%, appointed in accordance with the applicable regulations, while the share of external associates has been reduced to 15.62%.

Recommendations:

The Expert Panel recommends continued monitoring of the balanced distribution of teaching workload among teaching staff and course leaders of compulsory courses. It is also necessary to ensure that, in addition to external associates, institutional staff members are involved in the delivery of courses.

Quality grade: Fulfilled

4.2. The qualifications and professional experience of external associates are appropriate for the delivery of the study programme and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

Analysis:

The Expert Panel established that external associates involved in the delivery of the study programme Applied Agrotechnology have been selected in accordance with the applicable regulations, with particular emphasis on their relevant educational background and practical experience in the respective subject areas. Teaching activities are predominantly planned to be delivered by the institution's own teaching staff, while external associates are primarily engaged to enhance the quality of the study programme through the transfer of specialised, practice-oriented knowledge.

The submitted documentation demonstrates that all planned external associates possess formal qualifications in the relevant fields, appropriate professional experience, and valid appointments to corresponding teaching or associate positions. Many external associates are already involved in teaching on other study programmes at the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka or at their home institutions, thereby contributing to the important link between theory and practice. Their role is further emphasised through mentoring final and professional theses, as well as through their involvement in the organisation and implementation of professional practice within their respective organisations, as evidenced by signed cooperation agreements.

The University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka has established procedures for engaging external associates, including their familiarisation with the organisation of work, rights and obligations related to teaching delivery, and participation in training sessions, workshops, and informational meetings. This ensures that external associates remain up to date with teaching practices and apply them in their work, thereby further enhancing the quality of education and the achievement of intended learning outcomes. However, concerns remain regarding the fact that certain external associates, who are not formally employed by the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka, are appointed as course leaders of compulsory courses, which represents a significant shortcoming.

The explanation provided by the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka regarding external associates constitutes a satisfactory response to some of the recommendations of the Expert Panel, as it refers to a publicly available decision on hourly compensation (published in 2023) and confirms practices of transparency and coordination with permanent staff. Nevertheless, it does not address the key concern of the Panel, namely why external associates who are not formally employed by the institution are assigned as course leaders of compulsory courses with substantial teaching loads, even when supported by assistants or co-teachers from among full-time staff. Therefore, it is recommended that course leaders of compulsory courses be appointed from among full-time teaching staff.

Recommendations:

The Expert Panel notes the importance of publicly disclosing the hourly remuneration of external associates in order to ensure cost transparency and legal certainty, in line with the principles of openness and responsible financial management within higher education institutions. This also supports the continuous engagement of external associates with current professional and teaching developments, thereby contributing to the enhancement of educational quality and more effective achievement of the intended learning outcomes of the study programme.

The Panel recommends maintaining a clearly defined role of external associates in course delivery, with particular emphasis on courses requiring practical and applied knowledge. It is further recommended to regularly monitor the proportion of teaching delivered by external associates in order to ensure an appropriate balance between permanent teaching staff and external experts, and to ensure effective coordination and communication between institutional staff and external associates for the alignment of course content and learning outcomes.

Particular emphasis is placed on the continuation of mentoring of final and professional theses, as well as the organisation of professional practice within the organisations of external associates, in order to provide students with practical experience relevant to their professional development. The public disclosure of the hourly remuneration of

external associates further contributes to transparency and accountability in the use of institutional funds.

In conclusion, the qualifications and professional experience of external associates are considered appropriate to the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme Applied Agrotechnology, and in line with quality standards for initial accreditation, particularly in the case of elective courses. Their engagement contributes to linking theoretical knowledge with practice, enhances the overall quality of the teaching process, and supports the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

Quality grade: Partially fulfilled

4.3. The premises, equipment and entire infrastructure (classrooms, laboratories, library, etc.) are appropriate for the delivery of the study programme and ensure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

Analysis:

Based on the analysis of the submitted documentation and the site visit to the facilities of the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka at the Poreč location, the Expert Panel established that the higher education institution has adequate spatial capacity and infrastructure for the delivery of the study programme Applied Agrotechnology. Teaching will be conducted in appropriately equipped classrooms and laboratories, enabling the effective implementation of lectures, seminars, and practical exercises in accordance with the proposed curriculum.

The University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka ensures the minimum prescribed spatial standard per student (2.1 m² per student), thereby fulfilling the requirements for the initial accreditation of the study programme. Teaching and other facilities are equipped with appropriate teaching and IT equipment, including audiovisual tools and computer equipment necessary for modern teaching delivery.

Furthermore, it has been established that the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka provides additional infrastructure relevant to the delivery of the professional short study programme, including facilities for administrative and student support, as well as library resources available to students and staff. The library ensures access to core professional and scientific literature, as well as relevant information sources necessary for teaching activities and independent student work.

Based on the available spatial and infrastructural resources, the Expert Panel assesses that the existing conditions enable the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. In conclusion, the spatial conditions, equipment, and overall infrastructure are considered adequate for the delivery of the study programme and for ensuring the achievement of the planned learning outcomes.

Recommendations.

The Expert Panel recommends the systematic and continuous improvement of equipment and teaching facilities, with particular emphasis on practical training and the application of modern technologies in the field of agriculture, in line with the development of the study programme and the needs of students and employers.

Quality grade: Fulfilled

4.4. The library premises and resources, as well as access to additional services ensure the availability of literature and library services for the delivery of the study programme.

Analysis:

Based on the review of the submitted documentation and the site visit to the higher education facilities, the Expert Panel established that the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka at the Poreč location provides library resources and services necessary for the delivery of the professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology. Students and teaching staff have access to a library with a reading room containing core professional and scientific literature relevant to the field of agriculture and related disciplines.

The library ensures the availability of compulsory and recommended literature prescribed by the curriculum and enables students to use library services for independent study, preparation of seminar papers, and exam preparation. In addition to printed sources, students also have access to additional information resources, including electronic sources and online databases available through institutional systems.

The library collection is updated annually in accordance with course requirements, and interlibrary loan services are also provided.

The Expert Panel established that the library resources are aligned with the level and type of the professional short study programme and enable the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Library and information resources are available to students during the working hours of the institution, and teaching staff actively encourage students to use the available literature and information sources within the teaching process.

In comparison with infrastructural conditions assessed during the initial accreditation procedure of the professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology, the Panel concludes that the library and information resources for the programme are at a comparable level and meet the requirements of the quality standards.

The Expert Panel concludes that the library, including its reading room, equipment, and access to additional resources, ensures adequate availability of literature and library services necessary for the delivery of the study programme.

Recommendations:

The Expert Panel recommends further systematic strengthening of the library collection through the renewal and expansion with up-to-date and interdisciplinary sources in the field of agriculture and related disciplines, along with the enhancement of access to electronic information resources.

Quality grade: Fulfilled

4.5. The higher education institution ensures the availability of the necessary financial resources to organise the activities and provide a high quality of delivery of the proposed study programme.

Analysis:

The documents “Request for the Initiation of the Initial Accreditation Procedure for the Professional Short Study Programme Applied Agrotechnology” and the “Elaboration of the Justification for the Delivery of the Professional Short Study Programme Applied Agrotechnology” provide detailed financial calculations and overviews of all financial aspects related to the introduction and operation of the proposed study programme at the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka at the Poreč location.

Based on these documents, it can be established that the University of Applied Sciences secures the necessary funding for the quality delivery of the planned study programme through tuition fees and other student contributions, as well as through the allocation of a portion of funds from the institutional budget for regular activities. Furthermore, financial projections for a three-year period demonstrate the sustainability and efficiency of the proposed study programme.

The Panel therefore concludes that the requirements of this standard, including all its elements, are fully met.

Recommendations: /

Quality grade: Fulfilled

**Rationale:**

The following standards were identified as having deficiencies in the initial version of the documentation, which required revisions to the study programme: 1.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 3.2, 3.4, 4.1, and 4.2. Detailed recommendations for improvement are provided in the preceding sections of the report within the analysis of each individual standard.

In addition, it is necessary to include in the Introduction, within the section Basic Information on the Study Programme, the ISCED FoET classification, the indication of the academic year in which the programme will commence, as well as the full professional title and its abbreviation awarded upon completion of the proposed study programme.

OPINION OF THE EXPERT PANEL AFTER AMENDMENTS

Following a detailed review of the revised and amended documentation submitted by the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka regarding the establishment of the professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology, the Expert Panel established that certain modifications and improvements have indeed been implemented in line with the previously provided recommendations and guidelines. However, it was also observed that some elements are not yet fully aligned with the proposed recommendations. Despite the evident progress compared to the initial version, there remains scope for further improvement of the quality of the proposed study programme.

The Expert Panel further considers that the institutional, human resource, spatial, and organisational conditions of the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka are, to a large extent, sufficient and generally appropriate for the delivery of the proposed professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology. These resources provide a solid foundation for the implementation of the study programme; however, in certain aspects, their continuous development and strengthening are recommended, particularly in the context of long-term sustainability and ensuring a high level of teaching quality and professional practice.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS:

a. ☒ **ISSUE A LICENSE, rationale**

During the implementation of the professional short study programme Applied Agrotechnology, particular attention should be given to the development and strengthening of the institution's own teaching staff. This is especially important in cases where external associates act as course leaders, as the long-term sustainability and quality of the programme largely depend on the competence and availability of internal experts. Through systematic investment in staff professional development, encouragement of their research activities, and their active involvement in teaching, it is possible to ensure continuity, stability, and institutional autonomy of the study programme.

Furthermore, during the delivery of the programme, particularly in the first five years of its implementation, it is recommended to continuously and systematically align the defined learning outcomes with the competencies actually achieved by students. This approach should be based on regular and structured verification of alignment between intended and achieved learning outcomes, both at the level of the entire study programme and at the level of individual courses. This enables the timely identification of potential discrepancies, as well as the definition and implementation of appropriate improvement measures and necessary adjustments when preparing each subsequent academic year, ultimately contributing to the continuous enhancement of the quality of the educational process.

In this way, the continuous improvement of the study programme is ensured, along with its relevance to labour market needs and its alignment with applicable standards and guidelines in higher education.

b. ☐ **DENY THE REQUEST FOR ISSUING A LICENSE, rationale:**

1. Quality grade summary- tables

<i>Quality grade by assessment area</i>			
<i>Assessment area</i>	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
<i>I. Internal quality assurance</i>			X
<i>II. Study programme</i>		X	
<i>III. Teaching process and student support</i>			X
<i>IV. Teaching resources and infrastructure</i>			X

<i>Quality grade by standard</i>			
<i>I. Internal quality assurance</i>	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
1.1. Clear justification for the introduction of the new study programme has been provided with regard to the mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution, as well as economic and societal needs.			X
1.2. The study programme has undergone an appropriate internal quality assurance process and has been formally approved by the higher education institution.			X
1.3. The higher education institution will collect, analyse and use relevant data for the effective management and continuous enhancement of the study programme in accordance with the published quality assurance policy.			X
1.4. The higher education institution informs the public about the study programmes it offers, as well as plans to offer new programmes, i.e. change made to existing ones.			X

<i>Quality grade by standard</i>			
<i>II. Study programme</i>	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
2.1. The proposed study programme is compatible with the qualification standard in the Croatian Qualifications Framework Register.	N.A.		
2.2. The intended learning outcomes at the level of the study programme are aligned with the competences a student should gain by completing the study programme, as well as with the CroQF and EQF level.		X	
2.3. The intended course outcomes are aligned with the intended learning outcomes at the level of the study programme.		X	
2.4. The study programme content allows students to achieve all the intended learning outcomes.		X	
2.5. ECTS distribution is aligned with the anticipated actual student workload.			X
2.6. Student/professional practice is an integral part of the study programme (if applicable).			X
2.7. If the completion of the study programme allows students access to a regulated profession, the programme is aligned with national and European regulations and the recommendations of national and international professional associations.	N.A.		

<i>Quality grade by standard</i>			
<i>III. Teaching process and student support</i>	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
3.1. Admission requirements and criteria as well as the admissions procedure are clearly defined and transparent, and guarantee that students will possess the necessary prior knowledge.			X
3.2. The planned teaching methods guarantee student-centred teaching and the achievement of all intended learning outcomes.			X
3.3. The higher education institution proves that adequate support for future students is ensured.			X
3.4. An objective and consistent assessment and grading of student achievements is planned in order to ensure acquisition of intended learning outcomes.			X

<i>Quality grade by standard</i>			
<i>IV. Teaching resources and infrastructure</i>	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
4.1. The higher education institution has ensured adequate teaching capacities to deliver the study programme and achieve the intended learning outcomes.			X
4.2. The qualifications and professional experience of external associates are appropriate for the delivery of the study programme and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.		X	
4.3. The premises, equipment and entire infrastructure (classrooms, laboratories, library, etc.) are appropriate for the delivery of the study programme and ensure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.			X
4.4. The library premises and resources, as well as access to additional services ensure the availability of literature and library services for the delivery of the study programme.			X
4.5. The higher education institution ensures the availability of the necessary financial resources to organise the activities and provide a high quality of delivery of the proposed study programme.			X

2. Site-visit protocol

Initial Accreditation of the Professional Short Study Programme Applied Agrotechnology of the University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka

PROTOKOL POSJETA / SITE VISIT PROTOCOL

Mjesto događanja / Venue

University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka, C. Huguesa 6, Poreč

	Friday 19 of December 2025
09:00 – 09:45	Meeting with the Management of HEI (<i>no presentation</i>)
09:45 – 10:45	Meeting with the Chair of the Committee of the study programme
10:45 – 11:00	<i>Break and internal meeting of the panel members</i>
11:00 – 12:00	Meeting with teaching staff engaged in the study programme (<i>full-time staff not holding managerial positions</i>) and external associates
12:00 – 13:30	Working lunch
13:30 – 15:00	Tour of the HEI (<i>library, teaching offices, practical training facilities, student office, classrooms</i>)
15:00 – 15:45	Meeting with external stakeholders -representatives of professional organisations, business sector/industry sector, professional experts, non-governmental organisations, external lecturers
15:45 – 16:00	Organisation of additional meeting on open questions, if needed
16:00 – 16:30	Internal meeting of the panel members – preparation for the exit meeting
16:30 – 16:45	Exit meeting with the Management of HEI