

**REPORT
OF THE EXPERT PANEL
IN THE PROCEDURE OF INITIAL ACCREDITATION OF THE
STUDY PROGRAMME
Professional Undergraduate Study Programme in Midwifery
University of Applied Sciences Ivanić-Grad**

**Date of accreditation:
12 March 2026**

April, 2026

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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 undergraduate study programme in Midwifery, University of Applied Sciences Ivanić-Grad.

Members of the Expert Panel (in the same order as in the Decision to Appoint the Expert Panel):

- Prof. Janoš Terzić, PhD, University of Split Faculty of Medicine, Republic of Croatia,
- Asst. prof. dr. sc. Marin Dominović, PhD, University of Rijeka Faculty of Biotechnology and Drug Development, Republic of Croatia,
- Prof. Melania-Elene Tudose, Department of Midwifery, Carol Davila University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Romania, Panel chair,
- Assoc. Prof. Ana Polona Mivšek, PhD, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Health Sciences, Republic of Slovenia,
- Sara Božić, student, Catholic University of Croatia, Republic of Croatia.

The Expert Panel held meetings with the following groups:

- Management,
- Head of the study programme,
- Full-time teaching staff and external associates, that will participate in the delivery of the study programme,
- Students,
- Industry representatives, potential employers.

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

The Expert Panel drafted this Report on the initial accreditation of the study programme the professional undergraduate study programme in Midwifery, University of Applied Sciences Ivanić-Grad, based on the Proposal of the Study Programme the professional undergraduate study programme in Midwifery, University of Applied Sciences Ivanić-Grad, other relevant documents and the site visit.

The Report contains the following elements:

- Basic information about the study programme;
- Detailed analysis of each quality standard, recommendations for improvement and quality grade for each standard,
- Final recommendation of the Expert Panel,
- 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 University of Applied Sciences Ivanić-Grad and writing of the Report, the Expert Panel was supported by:

- Viktorija Juriša, coordinator, ASHE,
- Iva Žabarović, coordinator, ASHE,
- Irena Škarica, translator of the Report.

BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Name, seat and PIN (Personal Identification Number) of higher education institution:
University of Applied Sciences Ivanić-Grad, Moslavačka ulica 13, City Ivanić-Grad,
80175889349

Title and type of study programme: Professional undergraduate study programme in
Midwifery

CroQF/EQF/QF-EHEA level: level 6.st. /EQF- level 6 /QF-EHEA level 1

Scientific or artistic area and field of study programme: Biomedicine and health, clinical
medical sciences

ISCED FoET classification: Nursing and Midwifery (0913) ISCED 2013

Programme duration: 3 years (6 semesters) 3 years (6 semesters)

Number of ECTS points acquired on completion of study programme 180 ECTS points

Academic or professional 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): Bachelor's Degree in Midwifery (bacc. obs.)

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): University of Applied Sciences Ivanić-Grad, Moslavačka
13, 10310 Ivanić-Grad and Ulica slobode 37, 10310 Ivanić-Grad

Method of delivery of the study programme: In-person

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

Academic year in which the study programme delivery is to commence: 2026./2027.

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 study programme planned to be launched – the professional undergraduate study programme in Midwifery, University of Applied Sciences, Ivanić-Grad – falls within a field and area in which the University already conducts similar programmes, namely the undergraduate study programmes in Nursing and Physiotherapy. The proposed undergraduate Midwifery programme is in accordance with the Statute (Article 6; the Statute of the University of Applied Sciences, available online) and the strategic objectives of the University of Applied Sciences Ivanić-Grad. Furthermore, the Governing Council (*Upravno vijeće*) of this institution has granted approval to launch the undergraduate Midwifery programme (page 410 of the Application to initiate the initial accreditation procedure (*Zahtjeva za pokretanje postupka inicijalne akreditacije*)). In other words, the proposed programme is fully aligned with the higher education institution.

The number of required midwives exceeds the number of available staff, so the Croatian Chamber of Midwives points out that institutions regularly report to them that, due to the chronic need for midwives, they have continuously open job vacancies for which no one applies. Additionally, out of the total number of midwives, as many as one-third will retire over the next ten years. It should also be emphasized that a significant number of those currently employed in midwifery positions are individuals with secondary-level qualifications, rather than bachelor's degree-qualified midwives, as recommended by Directive 2005/36 EZ. Furthermore, it should be noted that in Zagreb, the largest city of the Republic of Croatia, there is only one undergraduate midwifery programme (at the Croatian Catholic University), through which it will not be possible to educate a sufficient number of bachelor-level midwives to meet the required quotas. International data, such as information from the WHO, indicate that half of the missing healthcare workforce consists of workers in midwifery and nursing, and the WHO estimates (17 July 2025) a

global shortage of around 15% of midwives by 2030. In conclusion, there is a need at both the local and global levels to educate additional numbers of midwives, especially those with bachelor's degrees in midwifery.

The University of Applied Sciences Ivanić-Grad meets all the minimum criteria for launching the “Bachelor of Midwifery” programme. The institution has sufficient space, employs an adequate number of teaching staff, and has qualified instructors to deliver the required courses. The teaching workload falls within the necessary limits, and the student-to-teacher ratio is very favourable. Based on a review of the documentation and discussions with the institution's leadership and representatives of the city, the impression is that the polytechnic has sufficient resources to initiate the programme. (Most of this information is presented in Table 2, page 9 of the Application.)

According to the recommendations for education and enrolment policy of the Croatian Employment Service (December 2022), midwives are a shortage occupation in several counties. According to the opinion of the same body (dated 25 July 2024): “the proposed study programme is aligned with labour market needs.”

The programme plans to enrol 20 full-time students and 30 part-time students each year. During the visit to the University of Applied Science Ivanić-Grad, the need for well-educated midwives was emphasized several times, with a focus on their professional (rather than scientific) competencies. The need for trained midwives was also highlighted by members of the Expert Panel, particularly midwifery specialists. Since professional midwifery competencies are primarily acquired through the practical component of teaching, the importance of proper implementation of practical education, adequate mentoring, and supervision of students' practical work was repeatedly stressed.

Recommendations:

Carefully monitor the practical component of the education of future bachelor-level midwives.

Over time, the number of hours of practical training should be increased, as the proposed programme is close to the minimum of EU 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:

The University of Applied Science Ivanić-Grad successfully delivers undergraduate programmes in Nursing and Physiotherapy, demonstrating its capacity to implement programmes similar to the one for which accreditation approval is being sought. In addition, it offers two graduate programmes. The University has a document (prepared in

July 2023) that precisely defines the procedure for initiating and developing new study programmes (page 449 of the Application). The procedure plans to have: a proposer of the new programme; an analysis of the University's capacity to launch the programme; consultation with experts; and the appointment of a committee to develop the programme. The procedure envisioned eight steps and these steps are clearly defined, including the responsible entity for each step, as well as the expected outcomes and timeframes for each activity (page 450 of the Application).

In the preparation of the study proposal, as stated in the Application and confirmed during the meeting with stakeholders, representatives of the Croatian Chamber of Midwives also participated. The proposal for establishing the undergraduate Midwifery programme was formally adopted by the University's Governing Council on 17 July 2024 (page 410 of the Application).

Recommendations:

There are no particular recommendations since this point refers to the procedure that was properly completed.

Quality grade: Fulfilled

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 University of Applied Sciences Ivanić-Grad has a "Regulation on the System for Ensuring and Improving the Quality of the University of Applied Sciences Ivanić-Grad" (available on the University's website, reference: 029-PRA-07-05-2023), which regulates the methods for monitoring and improving the quality of their study programmes, and which they also plan to apply to the midwifery programme. The Regulation defines clear objectives, areas of evaluation, and the procedure for establishing a quality assurance unit. The Regulation clearly specifies the quality indicators that should be monitored. During meetings, the head of the quality assurance unit was present, and through discussion, it was evident that they have a vision for implementing Regulation and improving the study programme accordingly, as well as a defined approach (procedural roadmap) for resolving potential issues.

As part of its quality monitoring system, the University conducts anonymous student surveys in which they are regularly rated highly. During the accreditation process, the importance of high-quality practical training was emphasized multiple times, and the teaching staff plans to monitor the quality of this training in several ways: by maintaining

practical skills logs; regular communication with and training of mentors, as well as coordinators in individual hospitals, and visiting clinical training sites.

Their commitment to quality is also demonstrated by the fact that last year they held two workshops for teaching staff and one for mentors of practical training. Based on the data they plan to collect and analyse, the University will be able to effectively manage and improve the Midwifery study programme they intend to launch.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that students' practical training be closely monitored, with comprehensive records maintained.

Furthermore, it is advised that the Regulation on Quality Assurance and Improvement be fully implemented.

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. changes made to existing ones.

Analysis:

The University of Applied Sciences Ivanić-Grad maintains a well-developed website, which has notably been improved since our visit to the University 14 days ago. While the site could benefit from a more modern design, it is highly informative. It provides comprehensive information about the University, its study programmes, enrolment procedures, essential student information, and even the results of surveys conducted among graduates, which is particularly commendable.

The University also organizes an Open Day, as evidenced by posters observed during our visit, with corresponding information available on the University's website. According to information provided during the meeting, the public is further informed through local radio, national television, and other media channels.

Recommendations:

The website should be kept up to date, and efforts should be made to make its visual design more modern. Some text is written in grey coloured-letters, which reduces readability and should be corrected.

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:

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:

Competencies of midwives are in Europe unified with the EU Directive 2005/36/EC that sets out a list of minimal scope of midwifery practices. Competencies can be achieved with prescribed theoretical contents in midwifery study programmes and practical interventions that students are obliged to gain during the studies in order to get appropriate practical skills (Annex 5 of EU directive). The compliance with these criteria was the main factor when assessing learning outcomes of the proposed study programme.

Table 2 on page 17 of the application form lists all learning outcomes of the study programme and connects them with subjects of the proposed midwifery study programme of the University of Applied Sciences. Additional information on theoretical components from the EU Directive linked with study subjects also offers tables listed from page 64 to 70 of the application form and syllabuses. Cross-checking of prescribed theoretical contents listed in the EU Directive with mentioned parts of application form, demonstrates that the proposed study programme contains all theoretical subjects necessary in order to graduate achieve the midwifery competencies.

When calculating the number of hours of practical training (EU Directive – Article 41 requires at least one third of the programme to be in clinical settings, so that students can get enough clinical procedures that are prescribed by the Directive), we have calculated 1590 hours of clinical practice (according to the numbers in “Knjižica za praćenje vježbovne nastave klinične prakse” on the p.585 of the application form). As this is close to a minimum, defined by the EU Directive, careful monitoring of the first generation of students is necessary. If it turns out students cannot achieve the EU prescribed interventions, elective subject for additional hours of clinical practice should be offered to them in the last year of the study programme.

The employers and representatives of midwifery associations present in the session with stakeholders were asked whether the graduates of the proposed study programme will be in line with the needs of the labour market in Croatia. They presented that 800 midwives will retire in next few years in Croatia and that they look forward to graduates. It is important for them that graduates have knowledge and skills according to EU directive. They are willing to provide placements for clinical training and mentorship to future students. The clinical mentors (program developers assured that they already have 19 clinical mentors) will closely collaborate with the head of the program at the university of applied sciences in Ivanić-Grad, so that students will get necessary practical competencies.

In the session with teachers, 3 of them are meant to teach midwifery contents. This will ensure that study programme is midwifery centred and the graduates will obtain theoretical midwifery contents. The dean of the Ivanić-Grad University Of Applied Sciences assured in the conversation that they plan to employ a midwife on a position of midwifery course leader, therefore we expect graduates to develop a midwifery professional identity and will be educated in line with midwifery philosophy (promotion of physiology, women centred, etc.). It was also clearly stated that graduates of the University of the Applied Sciences will (as graduates of university programmes) at the end acquire all requirements of the EU Directive; the distinction is that graduates of curriculum at the University of Applied Sciences do not intend to build an academic career.

Recommendations:

We recommend that the first generation of students is closely monitored with regard to obtaining clinical skills in practical training. The programme includes minimal hours of clinical training recommended by the EU Directive, therefore a concern exist that students will not be able to achieve the prescribed number of procedures (100 examinations of healthy pregnant women, management of 40 deliveries, examination of 100 newborns, etc.). We recommend that student's individual progress is closely monitored at the end of every study year. If it will arise that students at the end of secondary year of study do not have enough interventions and will not be able to fulfil EU requirements, we recommend that a new elective course is offered to them in the third (last) year of studies, providing them with an opportunity for additional hours of clinical placements.

Quality grade: Fulfilled

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

Analysis:

Study programme outcomes that are listed in Table 2 on page 17 of the application form were checked against syllabuses of study subjects, listed from page 166-459. The review revealed that study outcomes of individual subjects in the syllabuses are in line with general course outcomes.

The multidisciplinary teachers' board (presented in the application form from page 23 on) that is planned to deliver the study programme is reassurance that subject outcomes (and consequently course outcomes) will be reached in the theoretical part of the study programme. A lot of teachers had additional training on how to create outcomes and study goals which is evident from the application forms and confirms that the development of curriculum was approached with reflection and care.

Clinical practice (1599 hours) in different placements of healthcare will enable students to get learning opportunities for midwifery skills in all fields of midwifery scope of practice (prenatal, intranatal and postnatal). This will ensure graduates will be able to gather interventions that are prescribed with the EU Directive (they will have to collect signatures of clinical mentors that will confirm this).

The study programme offers students also 18 ECTS (10%) elective courses (as similar programmes in EU – Slovenia for example). Some of them with their outcomes should be considered compulsory for all future graduates (for example Multiple Pregnancies or Aspects of Labour Pain), however in a meeting with future teachers, we were explained that these courses offer advanced knowledge on topics, while basics are primarily covered in the mandatory part of the curriculum for all students.

We have checked with head of the study programme and future teachers' awareness of EU directives requests, and they are fully aware of what students need to master at the end of their study programme.

The strategy to equip students with practical skills is very refined. We were told that after theory, they will have simulations in the laboratories (during the site visit we have seen manikins that are appropriate for midwifery students). Hours of simulations are not included in the number of hours of clinical practice, which is correct. 1590 hours of clinical practice, described in the "Knjižica za pračenje vježbovne nastave klinične prakse", are in the clinical environment. In clinical environments coordinators of clinical training will accept the students and pair them with clinical mentors, who will then work with them. We were assured that clinical training will be 100% obligatory (also for part time students), so that intended outcomes of the clinical part of the studies will be achieved and all students will gain same practical competencies at the end of the studies.

Recommendations:

In future more elective courses can be developed. Especially for students who might have difficulties to collect practical interventions, an elective subject with additional quota of hours for practical training might be beneficial.

Quality grade: Fulfilled

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

The study programme builds knowledge from basic/generic (anatomy, prevention, etc.) to complex contents (pathophysiology, radiation therapy, etc.). It also leads students from physiology (midwifery care for example) to pathology (like obstetrics, gynaecology, neonatology). Since the subjects of complications during the pregnancy, birth and postpartum are placed from the third trimester on, students need to successfully complete the first year of study, to be enrolled in the second year and attend more demanding subjects.

The curriculum gives students basic general healthcare knowledge, however it also offers specific contents for midwives, who are specialized for promoting physiology during the reproductive period of a woman. Contents of the course are aligned with outcomes and cover the requirements of the EU Directive.

Since the recognition of midwifery diploma is closely linked to competencies obtained in study programmes harmonious with the EU Directive and its demands for midwifery education, the proposed study programme of University of Applied Sciences Ivanić-Grad therefore suffices basic requirements for midwifery education.

The agreement with the programme was discussed at the meeting with stakeholders. Employers explained that due to a deficit of midwives in Croatia the graduates of the University of Applied Sciences will be crucial for the Croatian labour market. Representatives of midwifery associations also consider the programme in accordance with Croatian legislation and the Act on Regulated Professions and Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications, since it covers the requirements of the EU Directive for midwifery education.

Recommendations: /

Quality grade: Fulfilled

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

Analysis

Based on the submitted documents, the ECTS distribution was analysed and found to be largely balanced and in accordance with the regulations, which stipulate that approximately 30 hours of total student workload correspond to one ECTS credit.

Following the discussions held with the prospective university members and the future head of study programme, the few remaining uncertainties were clarified, and it was understood that the credits were deliberately distributed according to the difficulty and significance of each subject in relation to the midwifery profession.

The programme has 18 ECTS of elective subjects (10%), like international similar programmes. In such a way students are able to choose topics they are interested to study in-depth and already gain additional knowledge and skills for the sub-field of midwifery they are interested to work at (pre-, intra-, post-natal).

Recommendations: /

Quality grade: Fulfilled

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

Analysis:

The institution's management has ensured that mentoring and supervision during clinical practice are of high quality and in accordance with both national and international standards for midwifery education.

The institution's management stated that cooperation has already been established with 19 clinical midwife mentors working in the hospitals with which agreements for clinical practice have been signed. These mentors are highly qualified and have distinguished themselves by demonstrating obstetric practice aligned with the core philosophy of the midwifery profession.

Hospitals with which collaboration agreements have already been signed, through the designated coordinator, have committed that each mentor will supervise a maximum of five students, ensuring their access to the full range of practical activities stipulated in Annex V of the European Directive, as well as the requirements set out in national legislation. They will also facilitate the practice of these activities in accordance with the terms specified by these legislative frameworks, while supporting the acquisition of all necessary skills and competencies for subsequent independent practice.

Where clinical cases are less frequent, for example breech birth, the institution's management has assured us that practical training will be supplemented through simulation using the mannequin already acquired by the institution and verified during the site visit, under the supervision of a qualified midwife experienced in teaching these techniques, in the institution's practical training laboratory.

Almost one-thirds of the future teaching staff presented during the accreditation visit were experienced midwives with teaching skills and qualifications. All of them are members of the Croatian Chamber of Midwives, three of whom hold leadership positions within the organization, which also serves as the regulatory body for the midwifery profession in Croatia.

All components of the programme were found to be effectively coordinated, monitored, and continuously evaluated, demonstrating a robust implementation of the prescribed educational standards.

Recommendations:

The Panel recommends partnering with smaller, less crowded hospitals or maternity units to provide midwifery students a more comfortable learning environment and better access to natural births and collaborating with family doctors for practical antenatal and postnatal training.

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:

Through comprehensive discussions with administrative staff, teaching personnel, and relevant stakeholders, as well as through direct observations during the site visit, it was noted that the laboratories and the majority of facilities necessary for the implementation of the programme comply with the minimum required standards and are in accordance with the submitted documentation and applicable legal provisions. It was noted that the curriculum and programme structure are designed to ensure that theoretical instruction is closely integrated with practical clinical training, thereby guaranteeing that future students will acquire the necessary professional competencies and skills.

In addition, a remarkable level of engagement and motivation was observed among the future teaching staff interviewed, which can be considered a clear indication of their commitment to educating students and preparing them comprehensively to become providers of safe and high-quality reproductive health services.

The presented curriculum complies with the recommendations of the Croatian Chamber of Midwives as well as the recommendations of the European Midwives Association, which are aligned with the European Directive, and it also meets the standards of the International Confederation of Midwives.

Recommendations:

Considering that work is currently underway to update the European Directive 2005/36/EC, amended by ED 2013/55/EU, I recommend updating the curriculum in the future in accordance with the forthcoming approved amendments.

Quality grade: Fulfilled

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:

Based on the submitted documentation, the admission requirements, criteria, and procedures are clearly defined, transparent, and aligned with the objectives of the study programme in midwifery. During discussions, it was confirmed that the institution has established clear, consistent, and publicly available admission procedures. The criteria ensure fair selection of candidates and alignment with programme requirements.

The University of Applied Sciences has clearly defined; Admission criteria for enrolment and continuation of studies; Procedures for recognition of prior learning and qualifications (both domestic and international); Methods of assessing candidate qualifications (e.g., secondary school performance, national exams, entrance assessments where applicable); Transparent decision-making processes related to admissions; Public availability of all relevant information in a timely manner.

All procedures are consistent with regulatory requirements and ensure that admitted students possess the necessary competencies for successful participation in the programme. The planned enrolment numbers are aligned with institutional capacities.

Recommendations:

Further enhance digital accessibility of admission-related information (e.g., centralized online platform with step-by-step guidance for applicants).

Introduce periodic reviews of admission criteria in collaboration with healthcare stakeholders to ensure continued alignment with evolving professional standards in midwifery.

Quality grade: Fulfilled

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

Analysis:

Teaching methods as described in syllabuses are mainly lectures, seminars, exercises and e-learning. They will enable to reach study outcomes, however more innovative approaches would be expected since a lot of teachers reported to attend the workshop for higher education teachers: "Application of Teaching Methods and Assessment Approaches Aligned with Learning Outcomes," Only the subject Evidence-Based Midwifery Practice plans to use blended e-learning. Also, elements of evaluation formations are very standard – exams (written and oral, colloquiums).

In order to activate students and use their inner motivation to accept responsibility for their own knowledge, more different approaches to teaching are suggested, especially using possibilities of digital upgrade, beside classical role playing, inquiry-based learning, reversed teaching, pro et contra debates, etc.

The proposal contains the information that graduates will finish the study programme with the thesis. Since the curriculum has few hours devoted to conducting the research (only the compulsory subject that covers this topic is Basics of Research Work in Midwifery – 2 ECTS and elective subject Evidence Based Midwifery practice that not all students will select), we have asked teachers and course developers what research designs they plan for students' thesis. They provided us with information that thesis will be literature reviews, what we have found satisfactory for this level of education.

Recommendations:

We recommend teachers to practice more innovative teaching methods, like flipped classroom, problem-based learning, role playing, etc. to make students more active.

Quality grade: Fulfilled

3.3. The higher education institution has provided evidence that adequate support will be ensured for future students.

Analysis:

Based on the submitted documentation, the University of Applied Sciences has outlined a comprehensive system of student support services. These include academic advising, mentoring, access to learning resources, and administrative support. The documentation

indicates that adequate structures are in place to support students throughout their studies in the midwifery programme.

During discussions with the head of the study programme and teaching staff, it was confirmed that student support mechanisms are clearly defined and accessible. Staff members are actively involved in mentoring and providing guidance, and students will have access to both academic and personal support services.

The institution ensures adequate student support through; Clearly structured academic advising and mentoring systems; Availability of qualified teaching staff for consultations and guidance; Access to learning resources, including library services and digital materials; Administrative support services that are responsive and accessible, Support mechanisms for practical training, including coordination with healthcare institutions.

Measures to support student well-being and progression throughout the programme
The planned support system is appropriate for the needs of students in a healthcare-oriented programme such as midwifery and demonstrates alignment with good practices in higher education. Overall, the institution has provided sufficient evidence that future students will receive comprehensive and continuous support.

Recommendations:

Further develop structured career guidance services specifically tailored to midwifery graduates to support their transition into the labour market.

Strengthen feedback mechanisms (e.g., regular student satisfaction surveys) to continuously monitor and improve the quality of student support services.

Quality grade: Fulfilled

3.4. Objective and consistent evaluation and assessment of student achievements are planned so as to ensure the achievement of all intended learning outcomes.

Analysis:

Regarding the assessment of the knowledge acquired by students, based on the presented documents and discussions with the prospective teaching staff, we concluded that there are clear evaluation procedures in place. All forms of assessment are used, including oral examinations, written examinations, presentations of papers, as well as evaluations based on active participation during lectures and seminars.

For the clinical practice component, an internship logbook was presented in the documentation, covering all the requirements of Annex 5 of the European Directive. In

addition, the 19 mentors have established procedures for supervising and evaluating the progress of students' practical activities.

Furthermore, the theoretical teaching specific to the profession is provided by 10 specialists in midwifery (3 bacc. obs. and 7 mag. obs.), representing one fifth of the employed and associated staff members. According to the discussions held with half of them present during the institutional visit, they assume responsibility for a rigorous assessment of the level of knowledge with which students will begin their professional activity as future providers of healthcare services in the field of reproductive health.

International and European regulatory frameworks consistently emphasize that midwifery education programmes must be midwife-led, although they do not prescribe fixed percentages for the composition of teaching staff. The International Confederation of Midwives states that midwives should form the core of educators and deliver most of the teaching, particularly in core midwifery subjects. Similarly, the Directive 2005/36/EC requires that midwifery education be provided at higher education level and delivered by appropriately qualified professionals, without specifying numerical ratios, but implying a strong professional focus on midwifery. The World Health Organization further reinforces this approach by highlighting that midwifery educators should be qualified midwives with both clinical and pedagogical competence, ensuring that education is competency-based and aligned with the midwifery model of care. Together, these frameworks support a multidisciplinary teaching approach while clearly establishing that midwives must maintain a leading and predominant role within midwifery education programmes.

Recommendations: /

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:

According to Table 5 of the Application, the HEI employs lecturers who deliver more than 35% of the teaching in the first year of the professional study programme; more precisely, it employs lecturers who deliver more than 50% of the teaching. Additionally, according to the same table and requested contracts, it has been established that the HEI employs 10 full-time lecturers that will participate in the programme. Upon obtaining the license for the study programme, one lecturer is ready to be immediately employed at the institution, which was confirmed during the meeting. The submitted documentation did

not include one contract, which was subsequently provided. The student-teacher ratio, shown in Table 3 of the Application is 4,9:1, while our calculation done according to the guidelines and revised contracts suggests 5,67:1, which is still very favourable.

The total annual teaching workload of each lecturer does not exceed 20% of the total annual teaching workload, as shown in Table 4.

Lecturers are qualified to teach the courses they deliver, as evidenced by the submitted CVs, and course holders have been elected to teaching titles. Some appointments to academic titles were not included in the Application and were later submitted upon request.

The HEI provides support for lecturers through the organization of workshops twice a year, which was confirmed upon our request.

Recommendations:

Continue organizing workshops for the development of lecturers' competencies.
We recommend increasing the number of midwives in teaching positions in the future.

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:

External associates of the HEI possess relevant professional experience and are qualified to participate in teaching, as evidenced by their CVs and the submitted Table 5.

The HEI provides support to external associates by organizing workshops, which was confirmed upon our request.

The institution ensures professional practice for students at the home institutions of the external associates, as evidenced by the attached list of mentors and the practical training plan. Not all listed mentors had signed contracts with the higher education institution; this was subsequently corrected by submitting all contracts. A corrected contract with one teaching base was submitted upon our request. Furthermore, several permits for external associates from their home institutions were missing but were submitted upon our request.

Recommendations:

Continue supporting external associates by organizing workshops for their professional development.

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 Table 6 of the Application, the attached contract 4.2.1 with the City of Ivanić-Grad, and the visit to the HEI, it was established that the institution provides at least 1 m² per student (1:2.42 m²).

The visit established that the HEI has four lecture rooms with a total capacity of 200 seats. The practical training room is adequately equipped, with the recommendation that the institution acquire a mannequin for practicing vaginal examinations and a model for suturing perineal ruptures. The institution also has a small kitchen for students, student rest areas, and an elevator. All the above indicates adequate facilities and equipment.

During the visit to the computer classrooms, it was established that the institution has provided 33 computers for students within its premises, as well as additional computers at another location.

Recommendations:

Acquire a mannequin for practicing vaginal examinations and a model for suturing perineal ruptures.

Acquire additional computers.

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:

The visit confirmed that the library has been established; however, it currently has no employees, as indicated in Table 7. The library's working hours are from 8:00 to 16:00, which was confirmed during discussions.

Based on Table 7 and the site visit, it was established that the HEI does not yet possess adequate literature; however, the acquisition of books is currently in progress, as evidenced by purchase orders. During discussions it was also emphasized that the procurement of literature will be intensified if the license to start the study programme is granted.

Through discussions and the submitted document 4.2.10, it was established that the HEI has a cooperation agreement with the Ivanić-Grad Public Library. It was also confirmed during meetings that the library has subscriptions to Scopus and WoS.

Recommendations:

Continue acquiring required literature, particularly literature for the first year of study – at least five copies per title.

Place particular emphasis on acquiring textbooks for professional courses, for example Myles Midwifery. Employ a librarian.

Adjust the working hours to extend beyond 16:00.

Quality grade: Partially fulfilled

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

Analysis:

Based on document 4.2.3 (the ten-year Agreement on co-financing of material costs), Table 8, and discussions with representatives of the City of Ivanić-Grad as the founder of the HEI, it has been established that the institution has secured financial resources for the implementation of the study programme.

Recommendations:

Continue cooperation with the City of Ivanić-Grad.

Quality grade: Fulfilled

☐ **AMEND THE STUDY PROGRAMME**

OPINION OF THE EXPERT PANEL AFTER PROGRAMME AMENDMENTS

FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS:

a. ☒ **ISSUE A LICENSE, rationale**

Rationale:

The initiative to open a professional undergraduate study programme in Midwifery is more than commendable. At the global level, it is known that there is still a shortage of approximately one million midwives, and more specifically, at the European level, a shortage of more than 10,000 midwives, according to the statistics produced by the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM). Midwives are essential for ensuring access to safe and high-quality reproductive health services and represent an important link within every country's healthcare system.

From the analysis of the documents made available to the Panel members, following the visit to the institution and the discussions held with the institution's management, local authorities, and the prospective teaching staff, we have concluded that the minimum required standards—both practical and theoretical—are met, and in certain areas are even exceeded. In this context, our recommendations should be understood more as guidance towards a higher level of performance, which we are convinced all those involved in this initiative aspire to achieve.

From our observations, the University of Applied Sciences in Ivanić-Grad has made all necessary efforts for the establishment of this programme, based on the conviction that midwifery is a vocational profession and that its training is best delivered within a higher education institution with a professional orientation. We understand and appreciate this all the more as it represents the most efficient solution, both qualitatively and quantitatively, for increasing the number of midwives in Croatia at this time. The analysis carried out, as well as the motivated attitude of the interviewees, assures us that the graduates of this programme will be competent professionals. Furthermore, the active involvement of the Croatian Chamber of Midwives, through the presence of educators from this body in the implementation of the programme, gives us confidence that graduates of this school will be closely monitored—from ensuring that they possess all the necessary competencies to practise, to ensuring their integration into the healthcare

system—and that they will make a significant contribution to the field of reproductive health.

However, we recommend that, in the future, a solution be identified to align midwifery education at the same level in Croatia, preferably at the university level, considering that this is strongly encouraged at the European level (direct entry, minimum 4 years of university education), and that the vast majority of EU countries have already aligned with this model. It is not premature to consider a possible pathway to facilitate the transition of graduates of this institution towards university-level qualifications.

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

ANNEXES

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. Internal quality assurance	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. changes 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.			X



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<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 has provided evidence that adequate support will be ensured for future students.			X
3.4. Objective and consistent evaluation and assessment of student achievements are planned so as to ensure the achievement of all intended learning outcomes.			X



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<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 quality delivery of the proposed study programme.			X

2. Site-visit Protocol

**Inicijalna akreditacija
stručnog prijediplomskog studija
*Primaljstvo Veleučilišta u Ivanić-Gradu***

**Initial accreditation procedure
of the professional undergraduate
study programme of *Midwifery* at
University of Applied Sciences Ivanić-Grad**

PROTOKOL POSJETA / SITE VISIT PROTOKOL

Mjesto događanja/ Venue
Veleučilište u Ivanić-Gradu,
Ulica slobode 37, 10 310 Ivanić-Grad

	Četvrtak, 12. ožujka 2026.
09:00 - 09:45	Sastanak s Upravom Veleučilišta (<i>bez prezentacije</i>) / Meeting with the Management of HEI (<i>no presentation</i>)
09:45 - 10:45	Sastanak s voditeljem studijskog programa / Meeting with the Head of the study programme
10:45 - 11:00	Pauza i interni sastanak članova Stručnog povjerenstva / Break and internal meeting of the panel members
11:00 - 12:00	Sastanak s nastavnicima koji će biti angažirani na studijskom programu (<i>u stalnom radnom odnosu - nisu na rukovodećim položajima</i>) i vanjskim suradnicima / Meeting with teachers (<i>employed full time - except those in managerial positions</i>) and external associates
12:00 - 13:30	Radni ručak / Break
13:30 - 15:00	Obilazak veleučilišta (<i>knjižnica, nastavni kabineti, praktikumi, ured za studente, predavaonice i ostalo</i>) / Tour of the HEI (<i>library, classrooms, computer classrooms, laboratories/practicums, Office for Students</i>)
15:00 - 15:45	Sastanak s vanjskim dionicima - predstavnicima strukovnih i profesionalnih udruženja, poslovna zajednica, poslodavci, stručnjaci iz prakse, organizacijama civilnog društva / Meeting with external stakeholders – representatives of professional organisations, business sector/industry sector, professional experts, non-governmental organisations

15:45 - 16:00	Organizacija dodatnog sastanka o otvorenim pitanjima, prema potrebi / Organisation of additional meeting on open questions, if needed
16:00 - 16:30	Interni sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstva – priprema za završni sastanak / Internal meeting of the panel members – preparation for the exit meeting
16:30 - 16:45	Završni sastanak s Upravom Veleučilišta / Exit meeting with the Management of the HEI