

# Report of the Expert Panel on the REACCREDITATION

of the University Postgraduate (Doctoral) Programme

Croatian Philology in the Intercultural Context

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb



September 2019



The project was co-financed by the European Union within the European Social Fund.

The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of the Agency for Science and Higher Education.

# **CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION	3
SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME	
RECOMMENDATION BY THE EXPERT PANEL TO THE ASHE'S ACCREDITATION COUNCIL	6
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME	6
ADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME	6
DISADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME	7
EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE	7
COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRESCRIBED CONDITIONS FOR THE DELIVERY OF A STUDY	
PROGRAMME	8
QUALITY ASSESSMENT	11

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Expert Panel appointed by the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE) created this Report on the Re-accreditation of the University Postgraduate (Doctoral) Programme *Croatian Philology in the Intercultural Context* on the basis of the Self-Evaluation Report of the Programme, other documentation submitted and a visit to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb.

The Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE), a public body listed in EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education) and a full member of ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), re-accredits higher education institutions (hereinafter: HEIs) and their study programmes in line with the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education (Official Gazette 45/09) and the Ordinance on the Content of a Licence and Conditions for Issuing a Licence for Performing Higher Education Activity, Carrying out a Study Programme and Re-Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions (OG 24/10). In this procedure parts of activities of higher education institutions and university postgraduate study programmes are re-accredited.

Expert Panel is appointed by the Agency's Accreditation Council, an independent expert body, to carry out independent evaluation of post-graduate university study programmes.

The Report contains the following elements:

- Short description of the study programme,
- The recommendation of the Expert Panel to the Agency's Accreditation Council,
- Recommendations for institutional improvement and measures to be implemented in the following period (and checked within a follow-up procedure),
- A brief analysis of the institutional advantages and disadvantages,
- A list of good practices found at the institution,
- Conclusions on compliance with the prescribed conditions of delivery of a study programme,
- Conclusions on compliance with the criteria for quality assessment.

### Members of the Expert Panel for Humanities and Social Sciences:

- 1. Prof. Alan O'Leary, School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds, United Kingdom
- 2. Prof. Tim Woods, Department of English and Creative Writing, University of Aberystwyth, United Kingdom
- 3. Prof. Claudia Tiersch, Philosophische Fakultät, Humboldt-Universität Berlin, Germany
- 4. Prof. Vladimir Unkovski-Korica, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom
- 5. Prof. Bojan Aleksov, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London, United Kingdom
- 6. Prof. Kurt Villads Jensen, Stockholms Universitet, Sweden
- 7. Prof. Emmerich Kelih, Department of Slavonic Studies, Universität Wien, Austria
- 8. Prof. Barbara Sonnenhauser, Universität Zürich, Switzerland
- 9. Iuliana Soficaru, doctoral candidate, Central European University, Hungary
- 10. Dajana Vasiljevićová, doctoral candidate, Charles University, Czech Republic
- 11. Prof. James Wickham, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland
- 12. Prof. Gergely László Rosta, Institut für Soziologie, Universität Münster, Germany
- 13. Prof. Václav Štětka, Loughborough University, United Kingdom
- 14. Ieva Bloma, doctoral candidate, European University Institute, Italy

15. Nika Đuho, doctoral candidate, Catholic University of Croatia, Croatia.

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

- Prof. Alan O'Leary, School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds, United Kingdom
- 2. Prof. Tim Woods, Department of English and Creative Writing, University of Aberystwyth, United Kingdom
- 3. Prof. Claudia Tiersch, Philosophische Fakultät, Humboldt-Universität Berlin, Germany
- 4. Prof. Vladimir Unkovski-Korica, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom
- 5. Prof. Bojan Aleksov, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London, United Kingdom
- 6. Prof. Kurt Villads Jensen, Stockholms Universitet, Sweden
- 7. Prof. Emmerich Kelih, Department of Slavonic Studies, Universität Wien, Austria
- 8. Prof. Barbara Sonnenhauser, Universität Zürich, Switzerland
- 9. Iuliana Soficaru, doctoral candidate, Central European University, Hungary
- 10. Dajana Vasiljevićová, doctoral candidate, Charles University, Czech Republic

The following Expert Panel members took part in the analysis of the documentation, site visit and writing of the report:

- 1. Prof. Emmerich Kelih, Department of Slavonic Studies, Universität Wien, Austria
- 2. Prof. Barbara Sonnenhauser, Universität Zürich, Switzerland
- 3. Dajana Vasiljevićová, doctoral candidate, Charles University, Czech Republic

The Panel was supported by:

• Marina Matešić, coordinator, ASHE,

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

- Management,
- Study programme coordinators,
- Doctoral candidates.
- Teachers and supervisors.

### SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme: Croatian Philology in the Intercultural Context

**Institution providing the programme:** University of Zagreb

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

Scientific area and field: Humanities, Philology

Place of delivery: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Number of doctoral candidates (all): 9

Number of HEI funded doctoral candidates: 1 Number self-funded doctoral candidates: 8 Number of inactive doctoral candidates: 0

**Number of teachers at the doctoral study:** 38 employed by the Faculty and 9 external

Number of supervisors: 0 (first generation was enrolled in 2017/2018)

## **Learning outcomes of the programme:**

LO 1: critically uses scientific literature to understand scientific and research concepts

- LO 2: analyses and compares scientific theories within the framework of the scientific and research area
- LO 3: defines relevant research questions in a subject area
- LO 4: poses theoretically founded hypotheses and clearly elaborates them
- LO 5: integrates the fundamental factors from the sub-areas, disciplines, branches and fields in their own research
- LO 6: analyses and interprets the collected materials in keeping with the adopted theoretical frameworks
- LO 7: modifies the existing methodological apparatus, creates their own and applies the appropriate apparatus for their own scientific and research purposes
- LO 8: independently produces oral presentations and written papers on their scientific and research work based on the rules of scientific communication
- LO 9: professionally presents arguments concerning their scientific and research work
- LO 10: plans and leads national and international scientific projects
- LO 11: applies ethical principles when planning and performing scientific research

## **Programme outline**

8 core subjects in each module (literary study or linguistic), 3 philological practicums, 29 elective courses in literary study and 26 in linguistic. There is no information in SER on conditions of enrolling into  $2^{nd}$  or  $3^{rd}$  year of the programme concerning ECTS, courses or research (just for finishing the programme).

**In coursework/structured part of the programme: 72 ECTS** (courses, workshops and exams are obligatory throughout all three years, or up to 6<sup>th</sup> semester).

Research: 108 ECTS

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

Upon the completion of the re-accreditation procedure and the examination of the materials submitted (Self-Evaluation Report etc.), the visit to the higher education institution and interviews with HEI members in accordance with the visit protocol, the Expert Panel renders its opinion in which it recommends to the Accreditation Council of the Agency the following:

**Issue a letter of expectation** for the period up to two (2) years in which period the higher education institution should make the necessary improvements.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

- 1. Focus on what is crucial for your programme in terms of contents, skills and strategy; adapt the learning outcomes accordingly (see 4.2. for details) and provide the necessary courses on a regular basis.
- 2. Reduce courses and work load in favour of developing research-oriented skills, i.e. put the focus on methodological aspects that enable students to deal with their specific topics in an adequate way. This will distinguish the programme from the MA level. Consider awarding ECTS for the doctoral dissertation.
- 3. Think about changing the admission process, in particular with respect to the criteria to be fulfilled. It seems particularly advisable to require an outline of the planned project in addition to a motivation letter.
- 4. Students should focus on their PhD research projects from the very beginning of their studies.
- 5. Improve the communication flow, e.g., by implementing a coordinating office at programme level which is responsible for helping students with administrative aspects, informs them about funding possibilities, conference calls, mobility programmes etc. This office will also be responsible for providing the necessary information to students interested in pursuing a PhD programme.
- 6. Implement evaluation procedures and quality control on all levels involved in the program (studying, teaching, administration).
- 7. Increase students' visibility, e.g. by presenting them and their research on the webpage of study programme.
- 8. Increase internationality in terms of mobility (incoming / outgoing), networks (conferences, collaborations) and dissemination (encourage publishing in international journals and in an international language of science, e.g. English).
- 9. Think about implementing a graduate survey in order to be able to estimate the job perspectives of your graduates and thus be in a position to teach appropriate general skills.

### ADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

- 1. Intention of the faculty to implement a general strategy and vision in order to harmonise the various programs.
- 2. Commitment and enthusiasm of the teachers and supervisors.

- 3. Separation of supervision and graduation, i.e. supervisor is not part of the defense committee.
- 4. The University of Zagreb is highly renowned in Croatian philology; in addition, the programme includes teachers from leading Croatian institutions in this field.
- 5. PhD supervision is not reserved for full professors, i.e. there are no hierarchies in supervision.

### DISADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

- 1. Huge amount of course work, obviously filling in gaps left by MA studies, and uneven work load required for obtaining 1 ECTS
- 2. Admission policy is too generous for PhD students.
- 3. Lack of international visibility.
- 4. Lack of institutional support for students; this also relates to the low number of projects awarded to teachers / supervisors.
- 5. The relationship between students and supervisors is not very formalised, even though the learning agreement seems to be on the right track.
- 6. Unclear overall goal of the programme: teaching oriented or research oriented; if both, both goals should be reflected in the course work offered.

### **EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE**

- 1. The programme offers the possibility of fully-fledged philological research. To make this even more advantageous, the programme should state very clearly what they conceive of as a philology that is fit for the future.
- 2. Learning agreement for students enrolled from 2019 onwards.
- 3. Separation of supervision and graduation committee.
- 4. Transparency of regulations (documents are provided online).

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

Minimal legal conditions:	YES/NO
	notes
1. Higher education institution (HEI) is listed in the Register of Scientific	YES
Organisations in the scientific area of the programme, and has a positive	
reaccreditation decision on performing higher education activities and	
scientific activity.	
2. HEI delivers programmes in the two cycles leading to the doctoral	YES
programme, i.e., first two cycles in the same area and field/fields (for	
interdisciplinary programmes), and employs a sufficient number of teachers as	
defined by Article 6 of the Ordinance on the Content of a Licence and	
Conditions for Issuing a Licence for Performing Higher Education Activity,	
Carrying out a Study Programme and Re-Accreditation of Higher Education	
Institutions (OG 24/10).	
3. HEI employs a sufficient number of researchers, as defined by Article 7 of the	YES
the Ordinance on Conditions for Issuing Licence for Scientific Activity,	
Conditions for Re-Accreditation of Scientific Organisations and Content of	
Licence (OG 83/2010).	
4. At least 50% of teaching as expressed in norm-hours is delivered by teachers	YES
employed at the HEI (full-time, elected into scientific-teaching titles).	
5. Student: teacher ratio at the HEI is below 30:1.	YES
6. HEI ensures that doctoral theses are public.	YES
7. HEI launches the procedure of revoking the academic title if it is determined	YES
that it has been attained contrary to the conditions stipulated for its	
attainment, by severe violation of the studying rules or based on a doctoral	
thesis (dissertation) that has proved to be a plagiarism or a forgery according	
to provisions of the statute or other enactments.	
Additional/ recommended conditions of the ASHE Accreditation Council	YES/NO
for passing a positive opinion	notes
1. HEI (or HEIs in joint programmes) has at least five teachers appointed to	YES
scientific-teaching titles in the field, or fields relevant for the programme	
involved in its delivery.	
2. In the most recent reaccreditation, HEI had the standard Scientific and	YES
Professional Activity marked as at least "partly implemented" (3).	120
3. The doctoral programme is aligned with the HEI's research strategy.	YES
4. The candidate : supervisor ratio at the HEI is not above 3:1.	YES
5. All supervisors meet the following conditions:	NO (some, but not all
a) PhD, elected into a scientific title, holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching	conditions are met)
position and/or has at least two years of postdoctoral research experience;	
YES	
b) active researcher in the scientific area of the programme, as evidenced by	
of active researcher in the scientific area of the programme, as evidenced by	

publications, participation in scientific conferences and/or projects in the past five years (table 2, Supervisors and candidates);	
YES (but it seems that not all supervisors have updated their scientific profiles; this is highly recommended also for attracting PhD students from abroad)	
c) confirms feasibility of the draft research plan upon admission of the candidate (or submission of the proposal);	
NO (Supervisors are not involved in the admission process at all; supervisors are involved only in the third year)	
d) ensures the conditions (and funding) necessary to implement the candidate's research (in line with the draft research plan) as a research project leader, co-leader, participant, collaborator or in other ways;	
NO (majority of supervisors do not have any funding for candidates)	
e) trained for the role before assuming it (through workshops, co-supervisions etc.);	
YES	
f) received a positive opinion of the HEI on previous supervisory work.	
N/A (new programme; the predecessor program, 'Kroatistika', at the same department was not evaluated)	
6. All teachers meet the following conditions:	YES
a) holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position;	
YES	
b) active researcher, recognized in the field relevant for the course (table 1, Teachers).	
YES (however, some are retired; suggestions: improve international visibility by publishing more in international journals)	
7. The supervisor normally does not participate in the assessment committees.	YES
YES	
8. The programme ensures that all candidates spend at least three years doing	NO
independent research (while studying, individually, within or outside courses),	
which includes writing the thesis, publishing, participating in international conferences, field work, attending courses relevant for research etc.	
Candidates start independent research during third year of study. Independent	

research is impeded by the extremely high number of obligatory and elective courses and the ECTS to be gained. Developing an independent research profile is also impeded by the definition of the doctoral topic in the third year only).

# QUALITY ASSESSMENT

	Quality assessment ("high level of quality" or "improvements are necessary") and the explanation of the Expert Panel
(1) RESOURCES: TEACHERS, SUPERVISORS, RESEARCH CAPACITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE	
	Improvement is necessary
	The faculty is an utterly renowned history in terms of subjects and people. The faculty is, with no doubt, a major national player with the potential of becoming an international player in the future.  Developing this potential further will be the next step to be taken.
1.1. HEI is distinguished by its scientific/artistic achievements in the discipline in which the doctoral study programme is delivered.	The fact that the Faculty is the "home publishing institution" for several journals might lead researchers to publish in these 'home journals'. Even though they might have a reviewing system and thus ensure quality, this still impedes their research to enter international competition and reach broader visibility and impact. This will also raise the degree of 'competitiveness' in respect to domestic and international research and research institutions, mentioned in the SER.
	At present, the panel cannot see much international cooperation; moreover, internationality in research presupposes English (or any other major language) as language of publications. However, not all records seem to have been updated (see 1.3).
	Advancing the internationality of the programme will also contribute to achieving one of the central aims of the program, which is to "understand the interdependence of recent scholarly insights and achievements; and to critically evaluate their own and others' insights and knowledge [] at the highest level of scholarship".
1.2. The number and workload of teachers involved in the study programme ensure quality doctoral education.	Improvement is necessary  The involvement of quite a lot of teachers shows a considerable amount of commitment and dedication to the programme. On the other side, ca clear focus is missing. The documents show a rich array of different topics taught. These topics seem to emerge from the particular specialisations of the teachers and not so much follow an overall strategy.  When it comes to ensuring a coherent doctoral education, it might be worth thinking adapting the study programme a bit more to the overall goals of the programme. This will also provide the chance of reflecting on how 'philology' could look like in the 21st century (in

terms of research questions, interdisciplinarity involving disciplines such as history, sociology etc., methods such as corpora and quantitative tools, genuine contribution of Croatian philology to the overall philological discourse etc.).

The regulations for payment of teachers on PhD level, i.e. which teachers get additional payment and which don't, is intransparent;

### **High quality**

Without any doubt, the teachers are all experts in their field. However, when it comes to doctoral studies, the panel would like to add some remarks.

Several teachers are from the Academy of Sciences. People employed at Academies are distinct scholars but mostly not involved in scientific competition.

it seems advisable to treat all teachers alike.

1.3. The teachers are highly qualified researchers who actively engage with the topics they teach, providing a quality doctoral programme.

The topics taught are promised "harmonize with global trends". However, judging from the references, this is not visible from all course descriptions. For sure, a programme 'Croatian philology' needs to rest on literature on (and, presumably, in) Croatian mainly, talking about 'global trends' sets yet another – and very desirable – goal, namely that of embedding the national philology within the current general philological (and interdisciplinary) discussion. Of course, not all current research will proof sustainable and relevant, but in order to enable students to critically reflect and argue, it seems necessary to take these trends into consideration.

While most teachers are publishing on topics that are relevant for the programme area what they teach, not all teachers are internationally visible. This relates to two main aspects: a lot of publications appear in smaller collective volumes or conference proceedings and most publications are in Croatian. While the latter is, of course, justified by the specialisation of 'Croatian philology', it runs danger of impeding international visibility and greater impact of Croatian philology in terms of a genuine contribution to the general philological discourse.

1.4. The number of supervisors and their qualifications provide for quality in producing the doctoral thesis.

### Improvement is necessary

Given that there are only 9 students enrolled, the number of supervisors is enough in quantitative terms.

However, not all supervisors are experienced in acquiring and leading scientific research projects. The panel would very much like to encourage supervisors and teachers to apply for projects. Many supervisors tend to publish in collective volumes and conference proceedings, mostly in Croatian. This might be justified given the field and topics of research; however, it impedes international visibility. With English playing an increasing role as a *lingua franca* 

	in the academia (which one might like or not, of course), it seems important to publish in English – also in order to enable Croatian philology to contribute to the overall philological discourse.
	High quality
1.5. The HEI has developed methods of	There are workshops for first-time mentors, which is very good. According to the interviews at the site visit, these courses are highly appreciated. It thus seems highly desirable to intensify such possibilities and establish a teacher training programme. Also, to improve teaching, students' evaluation on a regular basis should be taken into consideration. This is already implemented at the BA and MA levels and could easily transferred to the PhD level.
assessing the qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors.	It is also advisable to closely monitor the progress of the students and to give them regular feedback. One idea would be to implement regular interviews (every semester for instance) between supervisor and student in order to identify needs, progress etc. and mutual feedback.
	Since the programme has started only recently, there are no figures concerning completion rates. In general, however, completion rates do not tell very much about supervisors. What is necessary is a good admission process with supervisors being involved from the very beginning.
	High quality
1.6. The HEI has access to high-quality resources for research, as required by the programme discipline.	Resources "as required by the programme discipline" depend on the definition of the discipline, i.e. what should be understood by 'philology' (see comment on 1.2). If philology is understood in its very classical sense, very different resources are needed as compared to philology aiming at employing the most recent methods (digital, quantitative, interdisciplinary etc.) for answering long-standing and newly arising questions.
	From what the panel can tell from the documents and the interviews, most traditional (in the very best sense of the term) resources are available. There service of scanning articles and sending them to students is great.
(2) INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE PROGRAMME	
2.1. The HEI has established and accepted effective procedures for proposing, approving and delivering doctoral education. The procedures include identification of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social and economic needs.	The current programme follows a basic strategy described, but it could be improved regarding the focused interdisciplinarity. In particular it could be more focused on selected topics/highlights of

		needs, but it should be made more explicit how they are identified.
2.2.	The programme is aligned with the	High level of quality
	HEI research mission and vision, i.e. research strategy.	The programme is aligned with the research mission and strategy of the faculty and it has a clear structure.
		Improvements are necessary
2.3.	The HEI systematically monitors the success of the programmes through periodic reviews, and implements improvements.	There is a continuous monitoring of the research productivity of the supervisors (even though some of the material provided does not seem be updated regularly). However, there is obviously no working feedback systems for the candidates, where they could anonymously report on an annual basis. Since there is a working evaluation system at the graduate and undergraduate level this could be also easily implemented in the PhD programme. Since the programme is a new one, drop-out quotas etc. are not applicable so far.
2.4.	HEI continuously monitors	Not applicable
	supervisors' performance and has mechanisms for evaluating supervisors, and, if necessary, changing them and mediating between	The programme started in the academic year 2017/2018 and supervision starts after the second year, there are for the time being no official supervisors involved.
	the supervisors and the candidates.	It seems advisable to implement students' evaluation of courses and implement a supervisor/teacher training programme.
		High level of quality
2.5.	HEI assures academic integrity and freedom.	According the SER the Faculty of Humanties and Social Sciences provides the necessary legal to ensure academic integrity.
	rreedom.	The freedom of scientific research is guaranteed for both, teaching staff and students (also confirmed by participants in the site-visit).
2.6.	The process of developing and defending the thesis proposal is transparent and objective, and includes a public presentation.	High level of quality // not applicable The procedures of producing and defending the doctoral thesis proposal are developed. However, since the assessed programme started in 17/18 only, there are recently no thesis proposals available. During the site-visit five doctoral topic proposals (including the supervisor's comments etc.) from the previous programme Kroatistika has been provided, all fitting the required standards. For the current programme motivation letters were provided, also fitting required standards.
2.7.	Thesis assessment results from a scientifically sound assessment of an independent committee.	High level of quality // not applicable  The programme adheres to the Regulations on Doctoral studies at the University of Zagreb, where explicitly independent committees are provided.

2.8. The HEI publishes all necessary information on the study programme,	Improvements are necessary  The relevant website ( <a href="http://interkulturni.hr/">http://interkulturni.hr/</a> ) gives the required
admissions, delivery and conditions for progression and completion, in accessible outlets and media.	necessary information. A continuous update is highly appreciated (for instance about next possibility to enrol) and further details about admissions should be added.
2.9. Funds collected for the needs of	Improvements are necessary
doctoral education are distributed transparently and in a way that ensures sustainability and further development of doctoral education (ensures that candidates' research is carried out and supported, so that doctoral education can be completed successfully).	The SER explains in general terms what tuition fees are spent for. We are not completely aware whether the students are actually informed about the possibility to ask for financial support for their research activities (the SER mentions some support of students' conference fees and financial support for their research). May be more explicit information about funding students should be added.
	Improvements are necessary
2.10. Tuition fees are determined on the	The SER does not provide any particular information on this issue.
basis of transparent criteria (and real costs of studying).	The HEI explains the amount of the tuition fee when discussing the costs of studying. An explanation of criteria for determining the tuition fee was not available.
(3) SUPPORT TO DOCTORAL	
(3) SUPPORT TO DOCTORAL CANDIDATES AND THEIR PROGRESSION	
CANDIDATES AND THEIR	Improvements are necessary/not applicable
CANDIDATES AND THEIR	Improvements are necessary/not applicable  Teaching and supervision capacities are adequate for the established admission quotas (47 teaching staff to 9 students) and teaching/supervising workload seems to be in line with current recommendation of 360 NH.
CANDIDATES AND THEIR	Teaching and supervision capacities are adequate for the established admission quotas (47 teaching staff to 9 students) and teaching/supervising workload seems to be in line with current
CANDIDATES AND THEIR PROGRESSION  3.1. The HEI establishes admission quotas with respect to its teaching and supervision capacities.  3.2. The HEI establishes admission quotas	Teaching and supervision capacities are adequate for the established admission quotas (47 teaching staff to 9 students) and teaching/supervising workload seems to be in line with current recommendation of 360 NH.  The first generation of students of the programme enrolled in 2017/18 are still in the process of developing research plan. This means that even at the second year of their studies, students still have vague idea about sustainable research plan and future supervisor, as the process of assigning the supervisor is planned during the fifth semester of doctoral studies. Because of that, there are no data available on supervisors (number of candidates, involvement in research teams, etc.) and it puts into question direct link between admission quotas and supervision abilities.  Improvements are necessary
CANDIDATES AND THEIR PROGRESSION  3.1. The HEI establishes admission quotas with respect to its teaching and supervision capacities.	Teaching and supervision capacities are adequate for the established admission quotas (47 teaching staff to 9 students) and teaching/supervising workload seems to be in line with current recommendation of 360 NH.  The first generation of students of the programme enrolled in 2017/18 are still in the process of developing research plan. This means that even at the second year of their studies, students still have vague idea about sustainable research plan and future supervisor, as the process of assigning the supervisor is planned during the fifth semester of doctoral studies. Because of that, there are no data available on supervisors (number of candidates, involvement in research teams, etc.) and it puts into question direct link between admission quotas and supervision abilities.

Given that during the admission process there aren't any research institutions involved (see 3.3), admission quotas do not seem to be oriented toward the specific needs of academia/scientific community. As to the motivations for pursuing a PhD dissertation, the interviews conducted during the site visit give the impression of two groups of candidates: one group hoping to improve their position at work place or/and on the labour market (teaching professionals, civil servants, etc.), another group that would like to get involved in research. This brings with it the challenge to meet the needs of both groups without giving up the scientific aims of a PhD programme.

# Improvements are necessary

It is unlikely that the availability of funding is taken into account when establishing admission quotas as none of the students receives departmental funding in the sense of being currently employed by HEI or participating in an HEI project.

Only one of the students interviewed got a four-year employment contract within a research project at different institution. Since this student expects to adjust the topic of her/his PhD research according to the project aims and plans to ask the head of project to be supervisor, it could be, by ASHE regulations, classified as inclusion of doctoral candidate in supervisor's research project.

It is also important to point out that being employed by research institution presents significant advantage not only from financial perspective but also concerning aspects such as networking and international visibility.

Based on progress and dropout rate of PhD. students in Croatia, it seems that self-funded/working students at FFZG have significantly slower academic progress and almost certainly finishes PhD. studies later than programme outlines.

3.3. The HEI establishes the admission quotas taking into account the funding available to the candidates, that is, on the basis of the absorption potentials of research projects or other sources of funding.

# Improvements are necessary

Supervisors are not appointed at point of admission; the students' draft of research plan is made at the end of fourth semester, the proposal is to be submitted to university body during the fifth semester.

Both head of programme and his deputy put great effort into continuous monitoring of students and serve as temporary mentors or student advisors. However, this temporary solution does not seem very effective; at the time of the site visit none of enrolled students seemed to have a sustainable research plan submitted. Neither did they seem to have a permanent supervisor assigned.

It would be beneficial to require a sustainable research plan during first two semesters to ensure appropriate research period. As one of

3.4. The HEI should pay attention to the number of candidates admitted as to provide each with an advisor (a potential supervisor). From the point of admission to the end of doctoral education, efforts are invested so that each candidate has a sustainable research plan and is able to complete doctoral research successfully.

	the supervisors stated, students need at least two years of independent research to finish their PhD theses. Comparing with international standards, three years seem appropriate.
	Improvements are necessary
	Without any doubt HEI ensures that all candidates are talented and highly motivated however international aspect of recruitment is debateable.
3.5. The HEI ensures that interested, talented and highly motivated candidates are recruited internationally.	The HEI tries to attract the best candidates via internet. This seems effective for Croatia and neighbouring countries, but not internationally, given that currently, the 'international' students are from Bosnia and Hercegovina and Croatian expat residing in the USA. Implementing an international recruitment strategy seems highly recommendable. The attractiveness of the programme could increase a broader international orientation, cooperation/projects with universities outside Croatia, better student support system and elimination of obstacles for foreign students' enrolment (language barrier, help with enrolment process, etc.).
	Improvements are necessary
	The call for application is published via internet and all information are available. The website of programme is easy to navigate, but it should be regularly checked whether the links to the FFZG webpage are working.
3.6. The selection process is public and based on choosing the best applicants.	The programme is open to all interested candidates that meet the formal requirements that could be assessed as basic (required GPA higher than 4.0 on a scale 1 to 5 (although lower GPA is acceptable in exceptional cases), working knowledge of foreign language, two recommendations by professors/scholars) and pass the admission interview that determine the general interest of candidate. No research proposal or work plan for upcoming research is requested. In 2017/18 nine candidates out of eleven were selected and the head of programme indicated rejection of two candidates because of GPA requirement. As stated previously (see 3.2 and 3.3) this indicates that admission policy is one of the weaker points of programme.
	It is important to stress that there should be clear criteria for admission based on research excellence and research proposal should be integral part of selection process with outline of feasible work plan for upcoming years.
3.7. The HEI ensures that the selection	High level of quality
procedure is transparent and in line with published criteria, and that there is	The election procedure is transparent and there is clear complaints procedure with deadlines outlined on website. During first call there

_		
	a transparent complaints procedure.	were no complaints to the procedure. A list of accepted / rejected candidates was not available for evaluation.
		High level of quality
3.8.	3. There is a possibility to recognize applicants' and candidates' prior learning.	There is formal procedure of acknowledging applicants' prior learning record on University of Zagreb (UoZ) level, information about the process are available at the HEI website (not all links checked upon log in are working). Based on the regulations of the HEI it is possible to acknowledge applicants' prior learning record from research master's degrees or PhD studies upon appraisal by independent committee and approval by UoZ.
		Student representatives stated that they are familiar with the procedure concerning recognition of ECTS from prior education, namely recognition of foreign language exams. Students also can replace ECTS from elective courses by publications and/or summer school as is suggested in presented structure of programme.
		Improvements are necessary
3.00	O. Candidates' rights and obligations are defined in relevant HEI regulations and a contract on studying that provides for a high level of supervisory and institutional support to the candidates.	Even though study agreement delineating the terms of programme and rights of students will be in place for second generation of students enrolled in 2019/20, the first generation of students wasn't offered any alternative and is thus disadvantaged. There should be an edited version of the contract for current students delineating the mutual expectations between students and their supervisors. At this time, students rely on meetings with the head of programme and his deputy (at the beginning of academic year and regularly through the year). Although they are satisfied with this system, there should be more formal framework ensuring the understanding of rights and obligations.
		Improvements are necessary
		The institutional support of candidates is adequate. In addition to practical support (administrative and expert assistance) access to institutional e-mail address, subscribed databases/periodicals and library service (with scan service on request) is available.
3.10	O.There are institutional support mechanisms for candidates' successful progression.	The annual survey on the degree of satisfaction with the content of core and elective seminars appears to be an insufficient mechanism surveying the progress of research development.
		The programme should encourage student networking. This could support independent research especially at the beginning of studies and in-between the meetings. One suggestion is to implement an online platform for students (moodle etc.) would be beneficial as research tasks could be discussed independently and monitored by a moderator (head of programme or deputy) continuously during the semester.
		•

Another concern is the limited degree of internationalisation.
Research abroad via Erasmus or Ceepus is not common practice as majority of students are self-funded and/or working elsewhere.

Publishing activities are encouraged as one of the key aspects of PhD studies from third year, but it seems that HEI supports it mostly in the form of mentoring. The HEI does encourages and supports participation at workshops and conferences and covers the of fees and cost only partially to selected candidates, based on available budget.

#### 4. PROGRAMME AND OUTCOMES

## Improvement is necessary

Improvement seems to be necessary in the following domains: (1) independent research of the candidates, (2) courses provided within the programme, (3) opening up to the international philological discourse, (4) comparability of requirements within the programme and of the programme to other programmes, (5) the interdisciplinary aspects implemented in the programme.

- (1) Three years of independent research is hardly possible with the amount of ECTS and course work required. Shifting the focus more on methodological training, potentially combined with self-study units dwelling into necessary topics, might contribute to widening and deepening the scientific skills in terms of contents and transferable skills.
- (2) The courses mentioned in the SER as being offered for the programme provide a huge diversity of topics. While this quite impressively shows the multi-faceted interests of the teachers and their being highly engaged in the program, it involves the danger of the programme becoming arbitrary. Equally problematic is the fact that the selection of topics is based on the interest of the whole group. The fact that the whole group has to arrive at a general consensus about elective courses is problematic since it is chosen by majority not necessarily with regard of one's individual research in mind.
- (3) Acquiring international skills when specialising on the national philology might seem contradictory at first sight. We understand very well that the focus needs to be on the particularly Croatian tradition and discourse. At the same time it appears of utmost importance to make PhD students acquainted with the ongoing research also beyond (South) Slavic discussions and the most recent advances in the field of philology, which includes both familiarity with the current international discourse and the technical means of getting access to this discourse (making use of bibliographies and databases such as JSTOR, MLTA, MLA, LLBA etc.). This should be implemented with course work (in

4.1. The content and quality of the doctoral programme are aligned with internationally recognized standards.

- terms of reflecting current literature) and research skills and will eventually contribute to establishing national and international networks.
- (4) The workload behind 1 ECTS does not seem to be the same for all courses. The overall structure of the programme is hardly comparable in international terms, not only because of the large amount of course work which is quite unusual from an international perspective (and which in part seems to subsidise the MA level), but also because of the processes of being assigned or choosing a supervisor (only in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year). The supervision procedures could be made more intransparent, in particular how candidates get to know about potential supervisors and how they will finally match.
- (5) The interdisciplinary aspect of the programme is addressed in the description and the SER and has been discussed during the site visit. When it comes to details, however, there is still some potential for improvement, in particular when it comes to making the boundaries between linguistics and literary more flexible and when it comes to methodological issues. Most courses rely on rather traditional topics and literature; innovativeness which is praised in the SER as important characteristics of the programme is not reflected in the programme schedules and descriptions.

4.2. Programme learning outcomes, as well as the learning outcomes of modules and subject units, are aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF. They clearly describe the competencies the candidates will develop during the doctoral programme, including the ethical requirements of doing research.

# Improvement in necessary

Not all LOs as spelled out in the SER confirm to PhD level, in particular LO1. LO3 (student defines research questions in an area) is very general and should be more related to the PhD projects; LO5 sounds like an aim in itself; as to LO10 (plan and lead research projects), it is not visible how and in which courses these skills are taught – in particular given that many supervisors do not have projects on their own. One suggestion concerning the last point will be to implement an office providing information on national and international calls and providing assistance in developing a project proposal, in particular concerning the administrative aspects. LO11 is again very general and it is not clear in how far it relates to philological research as aimed at in the programme. This could be spelled out more precisely, including, e.g., issues related to the excerption, processing and storage of data.

After having adapted the learning outcomes, courses should be implemented that ensure these outcomes to be reached.

4.3. Programme learning outcomes are logically and clearly connected with teaching contents, as well as the contents included in supervision and

### Improvement is necessary

There is improvement in the new programme, but the desiderata of the old programme (Kroatistika) is still influencing the advances of

the new one. research. The SER states that "The results show that the learning outcomes of the programme are logically connected to the learning outcomes of courses, research work and mentoring work." This is not visible from the description, in particular there does not seem to be any obvious inherent coherence. It is suggested to think about the general idea of the programme and why students should pursue their PhD at Zagreb university, i.e. elaborate what is specific of this programme and what distinguishes it from comparable programmes. Then define the competences the PhD degree holders should acquire and develop the course programme accordingly. Each course needs to contribute to and fit into the overall aims of the PhD programme. At present, teaching does not seem to be structured in line with a general, coherent idea, which mainly relates to the above-mentioned missing vision of the programme. Teaching does not seem to be systematically organised (see the many diverse courses) and it seems to be matter of negotiation (the group has to vote for a course topic). Hence, it is also hard to teach transferrable skills in the topical courses. The SER mentions 'pragmatic aspects' of the programme, obviously understanding by this preparing the students for the labour market. However, what this market could be, within and outside the academia, is not specified. One suggestion to get a clearer picture of the employment possibilities of graduates would be to implement a structured survey of alumni. Not applicable 4.4. The doctoral programme ensures the The current programme has started only two years ago. Not all achievement of learning outcomes and theses from previous programme "Kroatistika" and other competencies aligned with the level 8.2 programmes at FFZG are openly accessible at Faculty of Humanities of the CroQF. and Social Sciences repository DARHIV. Some of them are accessible only upon written request. Improvement is necessary

4.5. Teaching methods (and ECTS, if applicable) are appropriate for level 8.2 of the CroQF and assure achievement of clearly defined learning outcomes.

The teaching methods comply to the MA level; it seems advisable to implement more courses teaching competences required for conducting doctoral research. This pertains, in particular, to shifting the focus of teaching from very specific topics to more methodological contents.

The workshops and philological practica seem a good step; these courses should be offered on a regular basis.

While the use of "written comprehensive research examinations" (stated in the SER) on a PhD level seems questionable, awarding

	ECTS for writing scientific papers is an example of good practice. However, this should not be scheduled for a specific semester; in addition, it should be specified for which step of the overall process ECTS are awarded: already for submission or only after acceptance.
4.6. The programme enables acquisition of general (transferable) skills.	Improvement is necessary  Some of the skills described in the SER are BA level (e.g. graphic design of the text; searching bibliographies). As to the general skills appropriate for the PhD level, it is not visible how their acquaintance is ensured (see 4.2).
	Improvement is necessary
4.7. Teaching content is adapted to the needs of current and future research and candidates' training (individual course plans, generic skills etc.).	The SER states "The selection of potential mentors ensures a wide array of specific research topics at the candidates' disposal, depending on their personal interests." As noted above, the process of figuring out potential supervisors and the process of student-supervisor matching are not very transparent. Moreover, if students need to fix their topic only in the 3rd year, it is hardly possible to develop research plans focused on the specific projects. Proving all different kinds of courses – as it seems to be the case right now – does not seem very efficient. Rather, general course work needs to be general in the sense of teaching research skills that are specific for particular topics but relevant for all PhD students.
	Improvement is necessary
4.8. The programme ensures quality through international connections and teacher and candidate mobility.	While internationalisation is presented as important strategy and goal of the programme, it is not visible how it is actually implemented. If all teaching is in Croatian, the programme might be deterrent for students from abroad. There should also be the possibility of writhing the thesis in English or any other major language of academic communication. As concerns international mobility, programme specific international agreements, cooperation etc. should be promoted among PhD students.

# \* NOTE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXPERT PANEL TO THE ASHE'S ACCREDITATION COUNCIL AND QUALITY LABEL

The role of the Expert Panel in the re-accreditation of doctoral study programmes is manifold. The Expert Panel or part of the Expert Panel visiting a higher education institution drafts a report on the basis of a self-evaluation report, the accompanying relevant documentation, and a site visit to HEI. The draft report is adopted by all members of the Cluster Expert Panel, while the president of the Cluster Expert Panel is responsible for coordinating the assessment levels.

The report contains an assessment on whether a doctoral study programme delivered at a higher education institution complies with the prescribed laws and by-laws, as well as any additional/recommended requirements defined by the Agency's Accreditation Council, and whether a higher education institution can obtain a positive, i.e. satisfactory quality assessment according to the criteria set out in this document. Moreover, the Expert Panel must make recommendations for quality improvement.

Based on the assessment of all these elements, the Expert Panel may propose to the Accreditation Council of the Agency to issue either a confirmation on compliance, a letter of expectation for the period up to three (3) years in which period the higher education institution should eliminate the identified deficiencies, or to deny the license.

If the Expert Panel has assessed that a doctoral study programme delivered by a higher education institution does not meet legal and other requirements or that the quality of a study programme is not ensured (i.e. that HEI does not meet additional requirements or recommendations made by the Accreditation Council, or has a very poor quality assessment), they should propose to the Accreditation Council to deny the license.

If the Expert Panel considers that the relevant laws and bylaws have been met by a higher education institution, but that certain elements mentioned above do not meet the quality requirements, while they consider that the identified shortcomings can be corrected within a time frame of three years, they should issue a letter of expectation.

If the Expert Panel considers that all legal and additional/recommended requirements have been met and the quality assessment is satisfactory, i.e. that a study programme fulfils the learning outcomes appropriately defined for that level and scientific area, they may propose the issuance of a certificate and have a HEI commit to quality improvement and reporting to the Agency during the follow-up period.

Finally, if the Expert Panel has, in accordance with the criteria mentioned above, proposed issuing the certificate of compliance and assessed that, in addition to meeting the minimum quality requirements – i.e. the qualification framework level - for a study programme, the programme should be identified as a doctoral programme of a 'high level of quality', the Expert Panel may propose to the Agency's Accreditation Council that such a doctoral study programme be awarded the 'high quality label'. Thus the Agency, with the consent of the Accreditation Council, grants a higher education institution the right to use the label for their academic and promotional purposes.

The 'high quality label' cannot be proposed or awarded to a programme or a higher education institution that does not comply with the requirements laid down by the laws and bylaws mentioned in this document, and any additional requirements recommended by the Accreditation Council. Moreover, the quality assessment awarded to a study programme should reflect a high level of quality inasmuch that at least half of the sub-criteria in each of the quality assessment criteria are assessed as

being of high quality. The Accreditation Council of the Agency issues a final opinion on the label awarded. The content and form of the quality labels shall be prescribed by the Agency in a relevant general act.

The Accreditation Council of the Agency discusses the final report with all recommendations and suggestions, and issues their opinion on the report. Based on a prior opinion of the Accreditation Council, the Agency issues an Accreditation Recommendation to the minister responsible for science and higher education, and upon receipt of the minister's final decision on the outcome of the procedure, awards the 'high quality label" to a higher education institution.