



**Report
of the Expert Panel
on the REACCREDITATION
of the University Postgraduate (Doctoral) Programme
*Modern and Contemporary Croatian History in European and World
Context*
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb**

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INTRODUCTION

The Expert Panel appointed by the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE) created this Report on the Re-accreditation of the University Postgraduate (Doctoral) Programme *Modern and Contemporary Croatian History in European and World 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 Soficar, 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 Štětko, 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:

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 Soficar, 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. Vladimir Unkovski-Korica, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom
2. Prof. Bojan Aleksov, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London, United Kingdom

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.

The Expert Panel also had a tour of the library, IT rooms, student register desk and the classrooms.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme: *Modern and Contemporary Croatian History in European and World Context*

Institution providing the programme: University of Zagreb

Institution delivering the programme: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Scientific area and field: Humanities, Philology; Science of Arts

Place of delivery: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Number of doctoral candidates (all): 43

Number of HEI funded doctoral candidates: 8 (2 are employed, 6 were awarded stipends by the programme)

Number self-funded doctoral candidates: 33 + 2 employer-funded

Number of inactive doctoral candidates: 10

Number of teachers at the doctoral study: 15 (6 external)

Number of supervisors: 12 supervisor-advisors; 15 officially appointed supervisors; 11 other(?)

Number of doctoral candidates to whom a supervisor was appointed: 13

Learning outcomes of the programme:

LO 1: to deepen the knowledge of the key phenomena of 19 th and 20 th century Croatian history

LO 2: to place the key phenomena of 19 th and 20 th century Croatian history into the European context

LO 3: to gain knowledge of fundamental theoretical paradigms, central historical subdisciplines, key methods and concepts of the contemporary historical science

LO 4: to articulate research questions relevant to historiography

LO 5: to critically analyze data from primary and secondary sources and to use them in one's own research

LO 6: to apply the appropriate knowledge of theoretical paradigms, historical subdisciplines, methods and concepts to one's own field of research

LO 7: to independently suggest the theoretical and methodical conceptualization of one's own doctoral dissertation

LO 8: to write and defend the synopsis for one's dissertation

LO 9: to shape a wholesome interpretation of the chosen research topic

LO 10: to write one's own scientific papers, from shorter papers to dissertations and reports and to be ready to discuss one's own papers and reports, and the papers and reports of others

LO 11: to comprehend the importance of a continuous reflection of one's own practice in research, analysis and interpretation

LO 12: to have knowledge of and to apply different historical subdisciplines (political, diplomatic, social, cultural history, history of everyday life, gender history, historical demography, comparative history, history of science)

LO 13: to participate in scientific and research projects

LO 14: to actively participate in the academic and scientific community

LO 15: to establish international contacts and to participate in the international scientific community (by participating in doctoral workshops and scientific conferences)

Programme outline

Structured/taught part:

1st and 2nd year of the programme are composed of courses and seminars (mentorship appears in 4th semester for the first time). 3rd year is composed of doctoral seminars again and mentorship. All together this makes up to: 4 obligatory courses (20), 6 elective courses (12 ECTS) and 5 mandatory doctoral seminars (15 ECTS)- 47

(Mentorship and individual classes bring another 15 ECTS , but start from 4th semester on)

Other (research activity):

All together 105 ECTS in obligatory extra-curricular activities (synopsis 5, two papers 40, mentorship 15, teaching or two review papers 10, writing and defending the thesis 50 ECTS)

Optional: paper presented at workshops or conferences, research in archives etc.

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 of two (2) years in which period the higher education institution should make the necessary improvements. The letter of recommendation does NOT include suspension of student enrolment for the defined period.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. Amend the ILOs to introduce a requirement that the doctoral thesis produces an 'original contribution to the state of knowledge'.
2. Introduce explicit reference to European/World literature on the chosen topic in at least one foreign language as a formal requirement of the thesis proposal, in order to reflect the stated strategic ambition of making the course about Croatia in a 'European and World Context'.
3. Reduce the content-based element of obligatory taught modules in favour of individual research. In order to do so:
 - a. Introduce obligatory core transferable skills training and amplify the teaching of research and methodological skills.
 - b. Upgrade the ECTS obtained through individual research and through publication of journal articles, and use ECTS to incentivise publication in internationally competitive peer-review journals.
 - c. Consider introducing publishable research papers/reports or book reviews or other more usable formats rather than essays as the form of assessment for individual courses.
4. Formalise and make more transparent the use of funds collected for the doctoral programme, especially in relation to student travel abroad for research and conferences. Improve communication in this regard.
5. Improve quality control. Implement a regular student satisfaction survey. Implement a formal system of student representation at the level of the doctoral programme that will provide systematic student input to the Council of the doctoral programme on a regular basis, preferably once every semester. Periodically publish a summary of action taken to address issues arising from the feedback.

6. Devise a grant project application strategy for a proportion of staff that envisages funding for future doctoral students. Devise administrative support for academic staff that can reduce the administrative burden of applying for and running grant projects.

ADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. Excellent national base of academic staff and openness to co-mentorship from external staff, ensuring fantastic opportunities for highly specialised or interdisciplinary work.
2. A high level of infrastructural support for doctoral study, like strong library and good e-journal access, proximity to national archives and study space.
3. Strong support from staff for students. Evident enthusiasm on the part of both staff and students.
4. Increasing internationalisation. High number of international staff participating in the programme in a guest capacity. Yearly possibilities for international exposure like doctoral workshops and conferences.
5. Programme committee with a clear and strong vision, especially in the direction of improving the institution in terms of its international vision and competitiveness.
6. Quality of proposals for doctoral projects show an ever greater quality and ambitious trajectory.
7. Highly desirable career trajectory of doctoral students and graduates of the programme.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. Excessive amount of content-based courses, especially for graduates of history.
2. Dissertations projects are not defined right from the beginning.
3. Underdeveloped student feedback mechanisms.
4. Doctoral students are not represented in managing bodies.
5. Lack of transparency on how funds of the doctoral programme are spent, even though fees are high. Lack of formal ways students can apply for funds.
6. Lack of strategy and administrative support for application for external project funds by members of staff, which could benefit the staff and the opportunities for funded work by doctoral students.
7. Insufficient support for international activities for students, like training and support for writing and publication in international peer-review journals.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. Excellent support by members of staff for students.
2. The requirement of a foreign language for entry.
3. Superb use of international visiting staff as guest lecturers et sim.
4. Publication of articles encouraged as part of the PhD programme.
5. Large variety of optional history courses offered by the institution.
6. Openness to interdisciplinarity and use of external supervisors where appropriate.
7. Procedures for the approval of doctoral project are rigorous and encourage ambition.

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

Minimal legal conditions:	YES/NO notes
1. Higher education institution (HEI) is listed in the Register of Scientific Organisations in the scientific area of the programme, and has a positive reaccreditation decision on performing higher education activities and scientific activity.	YES
2. HEI delivers programmes in the two cycles leading to the doctoral programme, i.e., first two cycles in the same area and field/fields (for interdisciplinary programmes), and employs a sufficient number of teachers as defined by Article 6 of the Ordinance on the Content of a Licence and Conditions for Issuing a Licence for Performing Higher Education Activity, Carrying out a Study Programme and Re-Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions (OG 24/10).	YES
3. HEI employs a sufficient number of researchers, as defined by Article 7 of the the Ordinance on Conditions for Issuing Licence for Scientific Activity, Conditions for Re-Accreditation of Scientific Organisations and Content of Licence (OG 83/2010).	YES
4. At least 50% of teaching as expressed in norm-hours is delivered by teachers employed at the HEI (full-time, elected into scientific-teaching titles).	YES
5. Student: teacher ratio at the HEI is below 30:1.	YES
6. HEI ensures that doctoral theses are public.	YES, but only part provided digitally. There are cases where the students have decided not to give permission to publish online.
7. HEI launches the procedure of revoking the academic title if it is determined that it has been attained contrary to the conditions stipulated for its attainment, by severe violation of the studying rules or based on a doctoral thesis (dissertation) that has proved to be a plagiarism or a forgery according to provisions of the statute or other enactments.	YES
Additional/ recommended conditions of the ASHE Accreditation Council for passing a positive opinion	YES, but a formal mechanism to detect plagiarism and use of plagiarism software is strongly recommended.
1. HEI (or HEIs in joint programmes) has at least five teachers	YES

appointed to 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 Professional Activity marked as at least "partly implemented" (3).	YES
3. The doctoral programme is aligned with the HEI's research strategy.	YES
4. The candidate : supervisor ratio at the HEI is not above 3:1.	YES, although some supervisors have more than 3.
<p>5. All supervisors meet the following conditions:</p> <p>a) PhD, elected into a scientific title, holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position and/or has at least two years of postdoctoral research experience; YES (although several are retired)</p> <p>b) active researcher in the scientific area of the programme, as evidenced by publications, participation in scientific conferences and/or projects in the past five years (table 2, Supervisors and candidates); YES (one does not but is returning from diplomatic activity, several have very few)</p> <p>c) confirms feasibility of the draft research plan upon admission of the candidate (or submission of the proposal); YES</p> <p>d) ensures the conditions (and funding) necessary to implement the candidate's research (in line with the draft research plan) as a research project leader, co-leader, participant, collaborator or in other ways; NO, with few exceptions.</p> <p>e) trained for the role before assuming it (through workshops, co-supervisions etc.); Unable to ascertain.</p> <p>f) received a positive opinion of the HEI on previous supervisory work. YES.</p>	NO/REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT
We were unable to find out if there is formal supervisor training but we strongly recommend it for new members of staff.	

<p>More than half of the stated supervisors are external to the department or university, or retired. This can be a mark of good practice, but the ratio suggests that the HEI should monitor the situation more closely. The co-mentorship system is a step to ensuring the system has oversight.</p>	
<p>6. All teachers meet the following conditions: a) holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position; b) active researcher, recognized in the field relevant for the course (table 1, Teachers).</p>	<p>NO/REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT a) Yes, but several teachers are retired. b) Yes, but some have published very little.</p>
<p>7. The supervisor normally does not participate in the assessment committees.</p>	
<p>8. The programme ensures that all candidates spend at least three years doing independent research (while studying, individually, within or outside courses), which includes writing the thesis, publishing, participating in international conferences, field work, attending courses relevant for research etc.</p>	<p>YES</p>
<p> </p>	

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

	Quality assessment (“high level of quality” or “improvements are necessary”) and the explanation of the Expert Panel
<p>1. RESOURCES: TEACHERS, SUPERVISORS, RESEARCH CAPACITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	
<p>1.1. HEI is distinguished by its scientific/ artistic achievements in the discipline in which the doctoral study programme is delivered.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>1) History at the Philosophy Faculty of Zagreb is clearly a major centre for the doctoral study of Croatian history at the national level. Almost all supervisors have been research active within the last five years. Several have a major national, regional and international profile. We deemed this aspect high quality.</p> <p>2) Being a national leader shows potential for internationalisation. The management team of the doctoral programme believe a regional approach is a first step towards wider international collaboration. There have been several joint workshops and conferences with international partners. However, most publications are within local or regional journals. Staff most often have a Google scholar h-index score of 2, which is low (note that a small number of profiles appear to be incorrect or the Google scholar links were locked). Publication in English or other international languages in leading international journals or co-authorship with international scholars in such journals could raise the research profile of staff, which is a necessary precondition for internationalisation. These are the aspects which suggest that the overall score is ‘improvements are necessary’.</p>
<p>1.2. The number and workload of teachers involved in the study programme ensure quality doctoral education.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>With only 5 percent of formal workload dedicated to PhD programmes, staff appear to work overtime to provide teaching and supervision at PhD level. It is apparent that several teachers have excessive</p>

	workloads. Students did not appear to find that this had an adverse effect on them but it is likely to create inconsistencies and is in the long run unsustainable. The system has to be brought within the formal workload and ranked accordingly.
1.3. The teachers are highly qualified researchers who actively engage with the topics they teach, providing a quality doctoral programme.	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>1) Almost all teachers have been research active within the five years within their area.</p> <p>2) Google scholar indicates a modal point of 2 strongly suggesting that most publications are only of local impact.</p>
1.4. The number of supervisors and their qualifications provide for quality in producing the doctoral thesis.	<p>High quality</p> <p>There are enough supervisors for the number of candidates. Supervisors are qualified, resulting in quality theses. Some supervisors appear to supervise at other institutions as well, which makes full evaluation difficult. Some members of staff are retired and a few appear not to be researching, or are returning from diplomatic service and have few publications in the recent period. But a system of co-mentorship has been developed which ensures high quality. It also enables truly inter-disciplinary projects through use of external co-mentors from other disciplines. Some supervisors are nationally or internationally visible and lead projects, though this could be improved. Doctoral topics should be chosen with greater reference to the research strategy. In the past, there appear to have been doctoral thesis which appear peripheral in their vision, but the doctoral management team is aware of this and are doing their best to improve and internationalise the work of their doctoral students.</p>
1.5. The HEI has developed methods of assessing the qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors.	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The SER details a variety of formal mechanisms in which the University and Faculty assesses the qualifications of teachers and supervisors. However, there does not appear to be formal teacher training. There appear to be formal evaluations and informal feedback mechanisms, and there are plans to develop a programme-specific</p>

	<p>and formal feedback mechanism. Until this is developed and evidence is shown that student feedback affects teaching practices, it is difficult to assess the programme fully in this regard, but the doctoral management team appear determined to act in the right direction. The doctoral programme should establish a system of monitoring completion rates.</p>
<p>1.6. The HEI has access to high-quality resources for research, as required by the programme discipline.</p>	<p>High quality</p> <p>The Faculty library is a strong educational resource, and students reported that any book they desired from abroad would be acquired by the library or through inter-library loan (although direct purchase appeared to be the main approach). The SER stated that a strong data-base of international journals was available and students confirmed this to be the case, though they said there is always room for improvement. The Faculty has important other nearby resources like the national library, the national archives, city archives and other institutions of value for historical research. There is a dedicated work space for doctoral candidates in the library. The programme therefore offers an excellent base from which to conduct research.</p>
<p>2. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE PROGRAMME</p>	
<p>2.1. The HEI has established and accepted effective procedures for proposing, approving and delivering doctoral education. The procedures include identification of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social and economic needs.</p>	<p>High quality</p> <p>The programme was accepted through the usual procedure, which included approval by the Field Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences and the Senate of the University of Zagreb.</p> <p>The SER states that the 'programme has created a report during the establishment of the study programme in 2006 (https://dokt-hist-mod.ffzg.unizg.hr/) and a report for the periodical internal assessment of doctoral study programmes in 2009'. The willingness of staff to open themselves to external assessment is also demonstrated by the conduct of this evaluation.</p>

<p>2.2. The programme is aligned with the HEI research mission and vision, i.e. research strategy.</p>	<p>High Quality</p> <p>The programme is aligned with institutional vision and strategy. There is a strategy document that recognises scientific/ artistic needs as demonstrated by the range of research themes and methods and it shows a sensitivity to wider political, social and cultural conditions and impact of doctoral study. The SER notes that economic trends (supply and demand for PhDs) is changing in the wider market, which is making the reproduction of high quality staff difficult. Still, the programme espouses a desire to make the discipline socially useful. The SER states that the strategy is based on the strategy of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, which itself tries to reflect the “Strategy Europa 2020 by the European Union, Obzor 2020 by the European Union, on the Strategy of education, science and technology of the Republic of Croatia and on strategic documents of the University of Zagreb”.</p>
<p>2.3. The HEI systematically monitors the success of the programmes through periodic reviews, and implements improvements.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>There are solid foundations for improvement, of which this external review is clearly a part. The HEI conducted a national review and made changes in 2009, which shows a willingness to adapt to feedback.</p> <p>The quality of staff is guaranteed through election and re-election into scientific-teaching titles. It is periodic and dependent on publication.</p> <p>The Council of the Doctoral Study Programme meets once a month to maintain contact with students and review the progress of the programme. The annual report of the doctoral candidate is not yet being systematically analysed and surveys at the end of the study have not yet been devised. But the faculty staff insist this is a priority.</p> <p>There will also be informal gatherings of doctoral students at the beginning of every academic year to create informal networks , a welcoming atmosphere and mutual trust between staff and students.</p>

	<p>The Council of the Doctoral Study Programme, however, does not include student representatives, but there is a student representative on the Faculty Council and the Council of Postgraduate Studies. In the circumstances, it seems pertinent to include a student representative on the Council of the Doctoral Study Programme. It is also important to devise methods not just to survey those completing but those dropping out of the programme or past alumni. It is impossible to raise completion rates without understanding better the reasons for non-completion.</p>
<p>2.4. HEI continuously monitors supervisors' performance and has mechanisms for evaluating supervisors, and, if necessary, changing them and mediating between the supervisors and the candidates.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The SER lists a series of formal mechanisms which act to ensure the rights and obligations of supervisors and candidates, as well as resolving disputes. These appear rigorous, and conflicts are asserted to be low. Nothing in the interviews with supervisors and candidates suggested otherwise.</p> <p>As stated previously, however, formal student representation and feedback mechanisms are underdeveloped. Furthermore, there is no feedback loop for those leaving the programme without completing it. It is strongly recommended that these mechanisms are further developed and are shown to affect the functioning of the doctoral programme.</p>
<p>2.5. HEI assures academic integrity and freedom.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The SER lists a formal set of codices at Faculty, University and Ministry level that regulate issues of academic freedom and ethics. It also notes that a case of plagiarism was discovered and acted upon within the Faculty. The due procedures were followed and the student prevented from completing the doctoral programme. Staff and students appeared well aware of the ethical dimensions of academic research in interviews. The students also emphasised that they felt free to choose their topics of research.</p>

	<p>It should be noted that certain controversial topics are receiving less academic attention than would be expected, like those pertaining to the Second World War, which may reflect wider societal pressures bearing on students. While several supervisors are vocal on matters related to the controversies related to the Second World War, mechanisms to shield potential post-doctoral researchers who want to tackle controversial topics should be devised.</p> <p>It should also be noted that research ethics is not systematically taught at the HEI. While it is emphasised in teaching, a formal component related to wider methods and ethics is missing. A faculty-wide course for methods is being devised according to higher-level university management. This would be highly desirable, and a way to reduce the heavy frontal teaching aspect of the doctoral programme in history.</p> <p>Use of anti-plagiarism software is recommended.</p>
<p>2.6. The process of developing and defending the thesis proposal is transparent and objective, and includes a public presentation.</p>	<p>High quality</p> <p>The SER reports in detail on the process of the creation and defence of the thesis proposal from enrolment to completion. It points to procedures and forms for each stage of the development of the thesis produced by the University of Zagreb and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. It also links to a dedicated page which explains the procedure surrounding the defence of the thesis proposal as well as the thesis itself. The faculty staff provided examples of portfolios of students who completed, as well as recently defended thesis proposals, which were of the highest standard.</p>
<p>2.7. Thesis assessment results from a scientifically sound assessment of an independent committee.</p>	<p>High quality</p> <p>The SER shows that the programme follows the regulations established at the level of the University of Zagreb and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Each stage of the defence is well explained, documents pertaining to it are publicly available, and the</p>

	<p>process ensures an independent committee as well as a transparent process. The SER mentioned the possibility of writing in different languages, as well as the possibility of <i>cotutelle</i>. These are examples of good practice. The theses provided showed the procedures work well. The regulations also encourage doctoral students to publish articles, but there is little support for students contemplating publication in internationally competitive peer-review journals.</p>
<p>2.8. The HEI publishes all necessary information on the study programme, admissions, delivery and conditions for progression and completion, in accessible outlets and media.</p>	<p>High quality</p> <p>The SER detailed all the links related to admission, delivery and conditions of progression and completion, which were clear and transparent. Admission documents were also available in English, suggestive of the ambition to internationalise. The SER also notes that '[t]he management and the teachers of the doctoral study programme and the Postgraduate admissions office of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences regularly communicate with the doctoral students via e-mail'. Students appeared aware of major deadlines.</p>
<p>2.9. Funds collected for the needs of doctoral education are distributed transparently and in a way that ensures sustainability and further development of doctoral education (ensures that candidates' research is carried out and supported, so that doctoral education can be completed successfully).</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>Teaching and supervision is not part of ordinary workload, so student fees finance staff and the basic infrastructures for the course. There are mechanisms in place to ensure that higher instances of authority in the Faculty have oversight over spending.</p> <p>The SER states also that 'the doctoral study programme (co)organizes at least one international scientific conference, one international roundtable and one international doctoral workshop every year, which the doctoral students attend or participate in within their own scientific development.' This is excellent.</p> <p>The site visit did however suggest that there were inconsistencies in terms of how staff and students understood possibilities for research support or</p>

	<p>conference support abroad. Transparency and consistency would be major stepping stones towards providing a fair and transparent environment.</p>
<p>2.10. Tuition fees are determined on the basis of transparent criteria (and real costs of studying).</p>	<p>Improvements necessary</p> <p>The Council of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences sets the rates of tuition fees. There was little explanation for how this was done or how the study programme determines its own level of fees, which it does however mention as among the lowest tuition fees in the Faculty.</p>
<p>3. SUPPORT TO DOCTORAL CANDIDATES AND THEIR PROGRESSION</p>	
<p>3.1. The HEI establishes admission quotas with respect to its teaching and supervision capacities.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The department seems to be admitting all applicants and is lamenting that their numbers continue to sink. The selection applies only to one candidate that is awarded the departmental funding and this process is transparent and duly respected. We had an opportunity to meet one of the selected candidates. There is a sufficient number of available supervisors and their teaching workload allow for supervision as presented by relevant documents. They are competent and suitable. In addition a number of external supervisors is hired as co-mentors to better suit the needs of candidates and because of inter/cross disciplinarity of many research projects.</p> <p>There is some inevitable disbalance among the supervisors as some seem to be supervising even more than 3 candidates while others have no supervisees. Yet this is not possible to ascertain based on information available as many of the candidates have either already completed their dissertation or dropped out and even the department has no information on the latter. The obligations of supervisors and co-mentors as well as of candidates are clearly defined but there appears to be no way of ensuring the supervisory limit as supervisors perform their duties also outside the department.</p>

<p>3.2. The HEI establishes admission quotas on the basis of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social, economic and other needs.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>As stated above there was no talk or evidence of any admission quotas and definitely not about the wider scientific/artistic, cultural, social and economic needs when admitting doctoral candidates. It seems that all applicants are accepted which in itself is not problem given that the numbers are small and declining. What is more worrying and stated above is that the programme could not provide any data for completion rate as many students “freeze” their status for personal (health, maternity, etc) or financial reasons and many are not maintaining contact with supervisors or the department.</p>
<p>3.3. The HEI establishes the admission quotas taking into account the funding available to the candidates, that is, on the basis of the absorption potentials of research projects or other sources of funding.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>There is no evidence of research projects undertaken to collaborate with businesses, other HEIs and public research institutes, though the latter are financing some candidates who are already employed by them (esp. Archives, History institutes).</p> <p>The lack of funding is highlighted as the biggest problem to attract candidates to this programme. As stated the department is providing only one highly competitive scholarship and some candidates are already employed by the department as teaching assistants. Several students are funded by their employers such as archives, other HEI and public institutes and several students are externally funded through the Archive of Serbs. Others pay for themselves which is the main reason for falling number of applications and rising number of dropouts. While this is similar to situations with postgraduate history programmes in many countries the case of Zagreb seems to be too precarious given that there is only one funded scholarship and given the importance and prestige of the programme. For this reason, we suggest more applications for research projects with funding for doctoral students.</p>
<p>3.4. The HEI should pay attention to the number of candidates admitted as to provide each with an advisor (a potential supervisor). From the point of</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>According to the existing plan the postgraduate programme assigns a supervisor at a very late stage (6</p>

<p>admission to the end of doctoral education, efforts are invested so that each candidate has a sustainable research plan and is able to complete doctoral research successfully.</p>	<p>semester according to table 3 in self-evaluation) though we were assured that the programme informally tends to assign both the topic and the supervisor as early as possible. We felt that both research plan and personal supervision ought to be worked out formally and soon after admission. While finances seem to be the main obstacle and reason behind the high dropout or late completion rate this could have positive impact on the latter.</p>
<p>3.5. The HEI ensures that interested, talented and highly motivated candidates are recruited internationally.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>There is no evidence that the applications are advertised internationally and the best applicants are admitted as no one seems ever to be rejected. The programme is struggling with the declining number of applications which is related to costs or unavailability of financial support for the programme. The applications for one funded scholarship from the department is highly competitive as well as to few available opportunities for external funding (Arhive of Serbs in Croatia, the Croatian Science Foundation i.e.).</p> <p>While the department is committed to recruit internationally so far they could report only on 3 candidates and one colleague from Italy who defended his doctoral thesis by the cotutelle model (dissertation in Italian). More concrete steps would be needed beyond verbal commitment. A clear target should be students from other countries in the region</p>
<p>3.6. The selection process is public and based on choosing the best applicants.</p>	<p>High quality</p> <p>The study programme has a clearly defined criteria for selection of applicants including previous university record, two recommendations by teachers and a proposal for prospective supervisor, the identification of archival material and a research proposal. An interview with the applicant is a compulsory part of the selection procedure and is conducted in the Croatian and English languages before a three-member committee of the programme. All the data on application and enrolment is available and transparent.</p> <p>However, there is no evidence that anyone was ever rejected.</p>
<p>3.7. The HEI ensures that the selection</p>	<p>High quality</p>

<p>procedure is transparent and in line with published criteria, and that there is a transparent complaints procedure.</p>	<p>Transparent selection procedure exists as stated above but is not implemented as all candidates are accepted. It does apply to the selection of a single funded candidate though.</p> <p>We were also assured of a transparent complaints procedure but there have been no complaints received so far given the above.</p>
<p>3.8. There is a possibility to recognize applicants' and candidates' prior learning.</p>	<p>High quality</p> <p>There are clearly defined procedures to recognise applicants' prior learning and qualifications.</p> <p>However, differences in prior qualifications are used to justify an ECTS structure that envisages excessive course work compared to individual research and dissertation writing.</p>
<p>3.9. Candidates' rights and obligations are defined in relevant HEI regulations and a contract on studying that provides for a high level of supervisory and institutional support to the candidates.</p>	<p>High quality</p> <p>The Faculty of Humanities, which includes History Programme, uses a learning agreement (sort of a contract) which is signed by every student and which also includes information on the financing of their studies.</p> <p>Student rights and obligations are clearly defined and regulated and this information is available online on a special site dedicated to the History Postgraduate Studies Programme.</p>
<p>3.10. There are institutional support mechanisms for candidates' successful progression.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The programme organised international postgraduate workshops (3 so far) where students could present as well as in other events organised by the department. Furthermore, the department has rich library and archival resources and cooperation with other archives in Croatia.</p> <p>There is very little evidence to comment on other ways of institutional support such as support for paper publication (formatting, proofreading) or archival work outside of Croatia (grants).</p> <p>The portfolio of the International Office at the level of the</p>

	<p>Faculty regarding support for candidates' progression is not clear especially regarding institutionalised support procedures (grants advertised or similar), but the department claims that they would not refuse any request for support for attending conferences or similar but such requests were never made. On the other hand students complain that they were not aware of any possibility of receiving support for attending conferences so clearly there is a lack of communication.</p> <p>Informally, supervisors and all professors at the department support doctoral candidates with their personal networks, etc.</p> <p>According to the self-evaluation there are currently 8 students exempt from tuition fees (1 on the project of the Croatian Science Foundation and 7 as employees of HEI).</p>
<p>4. PROGRAMME AND OUTCOMES</p>	
<p>4.1. The content and quality of the doctoral programme are aligned with internationally recognized standards.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The programme's two-year teaching structure that precedes independent research and collaboration with mentor (starting from 4th and 5th semester only) is not in line with most European doctoral models in terms of the ratio between teaching and independent research. This structure was justified by previous reforms and the diverse disciplinary background of the candidates with some not having studied history before. Both obligatory and elective courses are well designed and offer a wide range of knowledge and interpretative perspective. While there is an ample selection of elective courses offered there is a notable gap in teaching 20th century Fascism and Croatia's and regional experience in the WW2.</p> <p>Supervision procedures, assessment committees, admission procedures are comparable. Thesis format not clearly regulated and some dissertations we consulted were too lengthy.</p> <p>Improvements are needed in the teaching provision of generic (transferable) skills and international experience. While the latter is fostered verbally there is</p>

	<p>less formal evidence (attendance at conferences abroad, publication in foreign journals, use of literature on other languages missing in many dissertations). An example of good practice is one dissertation in Italian and one dissertation written under the cotutelle (joint tutors) model.</p> <p>The programme provides for interdisciplinarity by providing supervision and elective courses across disciplines and we could meet both students engaging in interdisciplinary research and see examples of dissertations that cross disciplinary borders. The programme also provided a list of co-supervisors and teachers from other scientific fields and disciplines.</p>
<p>4.2. Programme learning outcomes, as well as the learning outcomes of modules and subject units, are aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF. They clearly describe the competencies the candidates will develop during the doctoral programme, including the ethical requirements of doing research.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The learning outcomes of the programme as a whole are well defined though objectives and intended outcomes for individual courses are missing. As stated above the existence of two year course structure is not conducive of achieving the intended outcomes of independent learning and research.</p> <p>Assessment procedures are similarly well defined and implemented. More emphasis on teaching and acquisition of transferrable skills are needed. The panel welcomed the suggestions of students to put more emphasis on writing publishable research papers/reports or book reviews or other more usable formats than essays as the form of assessment for individual courses.</p> <p>LOs do not require PhDs to ‘contribute to the state of knowledge’, which they should.</p> <p>LO 11 of the selfevaluation points to the programme’s insistence on competencies in research ethics though it remains unclear what evidence one might provide for this.</p> <p>The Panel had the opportunity to inspect few dissertations available online or provided by the department. What is noticeable is an unusually high discrepancy in the quality of dissertations. While some were excellent and fully comparable to European dissertation standards others were very parochial and limited to local sources and chronological enquiry approach with few or absolutely no sources or literature in any language beyond Croatian. Remarkably there</p>

	<p>were no dissertations or on-going research plans on the most controversial period in Croatian history and one that receives a lot of attention/research internationally. On a more positive note, all dissertations demonstrated archival research, source interpretation and general research competence as well as acquisition of practical skills such as dissertation formatting, structuring and presentation.</p>
<p>4.3. Programme learning outcomes are logically and clearly connected with teaching contents, as well as the contents included in supervision and research.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The programme clearly matches its LOs to the modules it proposes but the panel found that its heavy course-based structure in the first 4 semesters, as outlined above, undermine the intended outcomes of independent learning and research. The rest of LOs is well aligned with individual courses and supervision provided</p>
<p>4.4. The doctoral programme ensures the achievement of learning outcomes and competencies aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The panel could see a sample of theses provided by the programme and others available online. As mentioned above those provided were clearly remarkable and ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes of the programme. However, several of the others failed to do so in a number of areas by not placing their research into the European context, not employing theoretical and methodological conceptualisation and not sufficiently reflecting of one's own practice in research, analysis and interpretation (L02, L06, L07, L011) . We can provide a more detailed assessment of dissertations in a separate document.</p> <p>We were not able to see candidates' publications coming out of doctoral research or seminar papers, conference presentations etc.</p>
<p>4.5. Teaching methods (and ECTS, if applicable) are appropriate for level 8.2 of the CroQF and assure achievement of clearly defined learning outcomes.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The Panel found that a variety of teaching methods were being used from standard <i>ex-cathedra</i> to using methods more appropriate for developing individual research skills, such as colloquia, connected teaching methods, methodological workshops and one to one seminars. Nevertheless, as already stated, the panel deemed the</p>

	<p>existing programme of course-based structure in the first two years provides too much history content and the remaining doctoral seminars and supervision do not offer enough opportunity to acquire transferable skills and engage in independent research and international scholarly environment.</p>
<p>4.6. The programme enables acquisition of general (transferable) skills.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The programme structure and the courses and assessment envisaged by it enable students to acquire general skills for historians. In addition the programme organised some extracurricular activities such as three international postgraduate workshops and has also sponsored participation of 2 students to attend a doctoral seminar in Ljubljana. However this is far from enough. Not only that there is no systemic policy within the department but also at the level of faculty which would train students in more general transferable skills in areas such as digital humanities, cultural/educational management, communication and media which are useful for job market and career in the future. More specifically for historians much is needed in terms of skills such as writing for foreign language journals, project preparation and application, particular softwares, etc.</p>
<p>4.7. Teaching content is adapted to the needs of current and future research and candidates' training (individual course plans, generic skills etc.).</p>	<p>High quality</p> <p>Courses delivered are flexible and annually adapted to individual academic needs and research plans. The HEI uses examples and/or programme structure to demonstrate that teaching is individualised and adapted to candidates' research plans. The panel was not shown candidates' individual annual research plans.</p>
<p>4.8. The programme ensures quality through international connections and teacher and candidate mobility.</p>	<p>High quality</p> <p>The programme enjoys a relatively high degree of international connections which is achieved on several levels: Visits of foreign lecturers from Regensburg, various universitiess in Italy and the region which drew attention.</p>

	<p>Joint postgraduate workshops of which there were three in the period leading to this evaluation which were well publicised and documented.</p> <p>Some of the professors are very active and have a raised international profile (Jakovina, Goldstein, Roksandic, Iveljic, Duda, etc), participating in international projects, conferences, etc., which helps their candidates establish international connections and mobility. Others are less internationally active or not visible beyond Croatia.</p> <p>Faculty has a number of Erasmus exchange contracts and are working to conclude more.</p> <p>An agreement with Italy gave the opportunity to write one thesis in Italian language and another is being supervised as co-mentorship.</p> <p>On the other hand there is no systematic presentation or coordination of these international activities and opportunities that would encourage student mobility, i.e. dedicated web site information, booklet or similar.</p> <p>Except for a collaboration with Italy the programme has attracted a relatively negligible number of candidates outside of Croatia or Zagreb for that matter.</p> <p>Candidates are encouraged to participate in international conferences but not in a systematic manner. Students complain on the lack of information on funding but department says that no students ever contacted them about this opportunity which they would consider on case by case basis. There is no readily available information on research collaborations with foreign HEIs and their benefits for the candidates.</p> <p>No specific awards (ECTS points) for the international engagement.</p> <p>There is no possibility to replace the thesis by publication in internationally recognized outlets.</p>
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*** 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.