REPORT
OF THE EXPERT PANEL
ON THE
RE-ACCREDITATION OF
Međimurje Polytechnic in Čakovec

Date of preliminary site visit:
22 March 2021

Date of on-line re-accreditation:
24– 25 March 2021

March 2021

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INTRODUCTION

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

All public and private higher education institutions are subject to re-accreditation, which is conducted in five-year cycles by the Agency, in accordance with the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education (Official Gazette 45/09) and subordinate regulations, and by following *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG) and good international practice in quality assurance of higher education and science.

The Agency's Accreditation Council appointed an independent Expert Panel for the evaluation of the Međimurje Polytechnic in Čakovec.

Members of the Expert Panel:

- Prof. Ben Hicks, Ph.D. Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Bristol, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Panel chair,
- Prof. Martyn Roderick Jones, Ph.D. School of Science and Engineering, University of Dundee, Scotland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,
- Assoc. prof. dr. sc. Alen Jakupović, college professor, The Polytechnic of Rijeka, Republic of Croatia,
- Asst. prof. dr. sc. Danijela Ferjanić Hodak, Faculty of Economics and Bussines, Republic of Croatia,
- Assoc. prof. dr. sc. Sanja Kalambura, college professor, The Polytechnic of Velika Gorica, Republic of Croatia,
- Rebeka Kušnjer Basi, VERN University, Republic of Croatia, student.

During the on-line re-accreditation, the Expert Panel held meetings with the following stakeholders:

- Management,
- Quality Assurance Commission,
- Students,
- Heads of Department,

- Full-time teaching staff,
- External lecturers,
- Head of Student affairs office,
- ECTS and ERASMUS coordinators,
- Head of lifelong learning programs,
- Heads of professional practice,
- Representatives of Mobility Commission,
- Alumni,
- External stakeholders.

Croatian Expert Panel members went to a preliminary site visit on Monday, 22 March 2021, and had a tour of the work facilities, laboratories, library, IT classrooms, student administration office and classrooms, and attended sample lectures, where they held a brief Q&A session with students.

During the preliminary site visit, the Expert Panel examined the available additional documents and study programme descriptions (learning outcomes).

The Expert Panel drafted this Report on the re-accreditation of Međimurje Polytechnic in Čakovec on the basis of Međimurje Polytechnic in Čakovec self-evaluation report, other relevant documents, preliminary site visit and online meetings.

The Report contains the following elements:

- Short description of the evaluated higher education institution,
- Brief analysis of the institutional advantages and disadvantages,
- List of institutional good practices,
- Analysis of each assessment area, recommendations for improvement and quality grade for each assessment area,
- Detailed analysis of each standard, recommendations for improvement and quality grade for each standard,
- Appendices (quality assessment summary by each assessment area and standard, and protocol),
- Summary.

In the analysis of the documentation, preliminary site visit to the Međimurje Polytechnic in Čakovec, online meetings and writing of the Report, the Expert Panel was supported by:

- Matan Čulo, coordinator, ASHE,
- Emita Blagdan, assistant coordinator, ASHE,
- Marko Hrvatin, interpreter at the preliminary site visit and during online meetings,
- Jelena Pataki, translator of the Report.

On the basis of the re-accreditation procedure conducted, and with the prior opinion of the Accreditation Council, the Agency issues a following accreditation recommendation to the Minister for Higher Education and Science:

1. **issuance of a confirmation on compliance with the requirements** for performing the activities, or parts of the activities
2. **denial of license** for performing the activities, or parts of the activities
3. **issuance of a letter of expectation** with the deadline for resolving deficiencies of up to three years. A letter of expectation can include the suspension of student enrolment within a set period.

The accreditation recommendation also includes a quality grade of a higher education institution, and recommendations for quality improvement.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

NAME OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION:
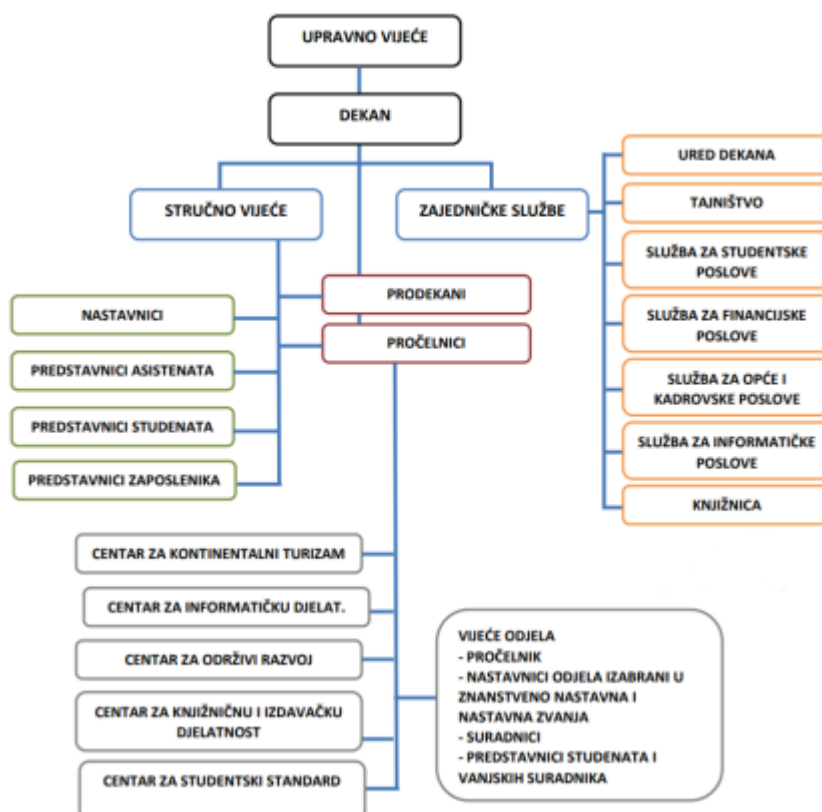Međimurje Polytechnic in Čakovec

ADDRESS:
Ul. bana Josipa Jelačića 22a, 40000, Čakovec

DEAN:
Asst. prof. dr. sc. Igor Klopotan

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE:

STUDY PROGRAMMES:

- Undergraduate professional study Computer Engineering;
- Undergraduate professional study Management of Tourism and Sports;
- Undergraduate professional study Sustainable Development;
- Specialist graduate professional study Management of Tourism and Sports.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS:

Table 3.1. Number of students per study programme for the evaluated academic year

Study programme name	Full-time students	Part-time students
Computing; specialisations in: Software Engineering, Computer Systems and Network Engineering (1489), professional undergraduate study programme, Čakovec	148	69
Tourism and Sport Management (1490), professional undergraduate study programme, Čakovec	162	200
Sustainable Development (1493), professional undergraduate study programme, Čakovec	51	50
Tourism and Sport Management (1494), specialist graduate professional study programme, Čakovec	42	46
Total	403	365

NUMBER OF TEACHERS:

Table 4.1.b Structure of staff - for POLYTECHNICS AND COLLEGES in the evaluated academic year

Staff	Full-time staff		Cumulative employment		External associates	
	Number	Average age	Number	Average age	Number	Average age
College professors with tenure	2	55,5	-	-	-	-
College professors	4	40	-	-	1	57
Senior lecturers	15	48,93	1	58	7	52
Lecturers	3	43	-	-	20	50,05
Lectors	-	-	-	-	-	-
Full professors with tenure	-	-	-	-	1	64
Full professors	-	-	-	-	-	-
Associate professors	-	-	-	-	2	66,5
Assistant professors	-	-	-	-	1	69
Expert assistants	-	-	-	-	-	-
Assistants	-	-	-	-	-	-
Technical staff	1	57	-	-	-	-
Administrative staff	11	42	-	-	-	-
Support staff	3	53,67	-	-	-	-

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Međimurje Polytechnic in Čakovec is a public institution whose main activity is organizing and conducting professional studies in accordance with the Science Activity and Higher Education Act and the Statute of the Polytechnic. The Decree and the Decree amending the Decree stipulate that the founder of the Polytechnic is the Republic of Croatia, and that the ministry in charge of higher education will perform the rights and duties of the founder. The need for the establishment of the Polytechnic of Međimurje in Čakovec is based on an overall analysis of the state of the economy in six northern Croatian counties (Međimurje, Varaždin, Krapina-Zagorje, Koprivnica-Križevci, Bjelovar-Bilogora and Virovitica-Podravina), and the Polytechnic has profiled itself over the years as one of the key elements in strengthening the educational structure of Međimurje.

The Polytechnic of Međimurje in Čakovec is a public higher education institution that organizes and conducts professional studies in accordance with Article 74 of the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education and the Statute of the Polytechnic of Međimurje in Čakovec.

The activity of the Polytechnic is: organization and implementation of undergraduate professional studies in the field of social and technical sciences, lasting at least three years, with a minimum of 180 ECTS credits and the professional title of bachelor (baccalaureus/baccalaurea) of the relevant profession; in accordance with a special law, organization and implementation of specialist graduate professional studies lasting from one to two years, with 60 to 120 ECTS credits and the professional title of professional specialist (specialist) with an indication of the profession or part of the profession in accordance with the name of the study program that can be used with a professional title acquired in undergraduate professional study or undergraduate university study; organization and implementation of educational programs based on the principles of lifelong learning; performing highly professional development and research work according to special regulations; publishing activities including: editing, publishing, selling, popularisation and distribution of books, scripts, brochures, journals, yearbooks, offprints, professional and scientific catalogues and other printed and otherwise reproduced publications intended for the public; publishing textbooks and magazines, manuals, monographs and other special editions; library and information activities related to the core business, retail of books and scripts; organizing courses, seminars, professional and scientific conferences, and organizing professional and other exams required to obtain appropriate permits, authorizations, licenses, etc.

BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. HEI has ambition and opportunity to lead both education and science in the region.
2. Ambitious plan and new staff/management team with fresh ideas and common drive.
3. Mission is exciting but needs to embed aspects such as entrepreneurship in the programmes.
4. Unilateral support from the community and business in the region.
5. Good quality labs and programme of procurement of advanced capabilities to underpin growth.
6. Involvement of polytechnic in regional activities to obtain the necessary information on market trends to improve employment and competitiveness of its students in terms of acquired knowledge.
7. Communication between teaching staff and students is on a good level, teaching staff is available to all students.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. Small team/staff numbers will limit capacity to develop all areas. Need to plan accordingly.
2. Staff recruitment for new programmes may also pose a challenge and give rise to the risk of not covering the necessary content and compromising learning outcomes.
3. Culture is one of acceptance and conformity. Staff and students need to be open and honest, and work together to increase quality and environment for all.
4. Internal communication is limited, meaning that students are not fully aware of all the changes and improvements made by the HEI, particularly in response to student surveys.
5. Access to learning resources (library and e-books) is limited.
6. HRK 4000 is not sufficient for the staff to develop a national or international reputation in science.
7. The polytechnic website does not have enough information about the institution and does not update the information quickly enough.
8. Implementation of proposals obtained from student surveys is not on the level that it needs to be.

LIST OF INSTITUTIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE
1. Ambition to focus and be a regional centre of excellence. HEI is aware that they will never be a large HEI. Focus on quality not quantity.
2. Use of a large number of external teachers with current/up-to-date industrial experience.
3. Partnerships with other HEIs e.g., Slavonski Brod.
4. Increasing involvement in EU projects.
5. Student Council's involvement in promoting ERASMUS.
6. Student professional practice is maturing into an example of good practice in terms of QAS.

ANALYSIS OF EACH ASSESSMENT AREA, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY GRADE FOR EACH ASSESSMENT AREA

I. Internal quality assurance and the social role of the higher education institution

Analysis

The foundations of the QAS have been designed, are appropriate, and the majority of functions have been implemented. The next stage for the HEI is to transition its QAS from paper into 'business-as-usual'. This will involve embedding the QAS into practice for all staff and integrating the various processes, including data flows (e.g., surveys, student feedback, pass rates, plagiarism, etc.) and key performance indicators, into routine review and planning meetings. The HEI will also need to define mechanisms to 'close the loop' and take appropriate action. Related to standard III, it is necessary to provide some transparency and communicate/report the issues and actions of the QAS to different stakeholder groups, including students, where appropriate.

The HEI has successfully implemented recommendations from previous accreditations which provide the building blocks for much of the current QAS.

The HEI has set an ambitious strategy. A fully functioning and embedded QAS will be essential for realising this vision and ensuring that the quality level and continuous improvement of current programmes is maintained as new programmes are implemented and scaled.

The mission of the HEI includes reference to entrepreneurial spirit. This ethos, and how it is to be encouraged/developed within the programmes and by the institution, is not evident in the programmes of study. This should be addressed or the focus on entrepreneurial spirit reviewed/removed.

As with the QAS system, various processes, tools and mechanisms have been implemented to resolve complaints and eliminate unethical practice, such as plagiarism, but their operationalisation and embedding into the HEI needs to be improved.

Presently, the HEI has limited to no specific support for disadvantaged, vulnerable or minority groups. This situation should be reviewed and addressed urgently.

The HEI ensures that basic information is available for prospective and current students. If the HEI is to realise its ambition to become a scientific institute, information relating to scientific capability (expertise equipment, publications, funding, etc.) will need to be

prepared and made available. Such information will also be essential for the HEI to further develop its social role and transfer knowledge to business/industry.

The HEI has actively supported Lifelong learning and aims to increase its offering in this area. To achieve this, the institution will need to adopt a longer-term and more coordinated approach to the planning, dissemination and delivery of courses and events, such as an annual programme. This might also include entrepreneurship.

Recommendations for improvement

- QAS needs to be embedded into practice and mechanisms designed to enable feedback and action within appropriate timescales.

- A set of key performance indicators needs to be established (agreed), monitored and reviewed at key times throughout the academic year.

- The culture with regard to QAS is presently one of compliance (box ticking). The culture must change to one of continuous improvement with appropriate feedback and timely/efficient loops e.g., annual cycles.

- The inclusion of entrepreneurial spirit and how programmes support this should be reviewed and enhanced where necessary.

- Review requirements for creating specific mechanisms/support for disadvantaged, vulnerable or minority groups.

- Embed tools, such as plagiarism detection, into all programmes/courses and record evidence.

- Expand website to cater for external audiences other than students – community and industry.

- Co-design an annual programme for lifelong learning and publicise this well in advance via website and regional marketing.

Quality grade

Minimum level of quality

II. Study programmes

The development strategy of the Polytechnic of Međimurje in Čakovec for the period from 2020 to 2026 also includes strategic goals with appropriate action plans related to study programmes. This ensures that they are in line with the strategy of the HEI. The study programmes are generally in line with the mission of the HEI. Namely, it is not entirely clear how study programmes contribute to the development of entrepreneurial spirit (especially the study of Computer Engineering and Sustainable Development). Also, among the learning outcomes of study programmes there are those to which only one course contributes. Therefore, the success of the adoption of these learning outcomes is questionable.

According to the content of learning outcomes, study programmes belong to the appropriate level of the Croatian Qualifications Framework (6th and 7th) and cover all categories in the context of the Dublin descriptors. It is necessary to review the learning outcomes of study programmes in order to reduce their number to the desirable 15 to 20. Each verification method should check some learning outcome and it is desirable to avoid re-checking already passed learning outcomes.

All study programmes include student internships. It is necessary to increase the number of hours for student internships and to avoid internships taking place in the summer months when employees in companies take vacations.

In the development of study programmes, the HEI uses data obtained by surveying employers during student internships and by surveying students during the academic year. An economic council was also established. In conversations with external stakeholders, alumni and external lecturers, the potential for their stronger involvement in the process of modifying existing and developing new study programmes was identified. In the conversation with the students, it was found that they are not familiar with the results of the surveys and the measures taken.

- Include a learning outcome at the level of the study programme, which will clearly show that the study programme contributes to the development of entrepreneurial spirit. In particular this applies to the undergraduate professional study of Computer Engineering and Sustainable Development.

- Only one course contributes to the achievement of some learning outcomes at the level of the study programme. It is unlikely that students will acquire the

competencies described by such learning outcomes upon completion of their studies. All such learning outcomes need to be revised so that they are supported with more courses.

- It is desirable that the total number of learning outcomes at the level of the study programme be between 15 and 20. Accordingly, change the learning outcomes in the undergraduate professional studies Management of Tourism and Sports and Sustainable Development.

- Each way of checking students' knowledge should be related to some learning outcome. In this context, student activity on the classes should be linked to some learning outcome. Passive class attendance cannot be used as a way to check learning outcomes.

- In order to standardize the process of taking a course, it is necessary to precisely describe the entire procedure in the Ordinance on student assessment (e.g., whether students should retake the once passed learning outcome, what are the conditions that a student must meet in order to take the exam, etc.).

- Increase the number of hours of student internship (especially in undergraduate professional studies) and organize the internship so that it does not enter the summer months when company employees take vacations.

- Strongly encourage cooperation with employers, alumni and external lecturers in the process of modifying existing and developing new study programmes.

- Students need to be given clear feedback on survey results and other data collected and linked them to corrective actions taken.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

III. Teaching process and student support

Analysis

Support for students is visible through the availability of teaching staff for students and their inquiries, and the conditions of enrolment for each year are clarified. Some areas need innovations to create better experience, such as student surveys and the polytechnic website.

MEV conducts regular analysis of student employment and based on information gathered from environment, improves the courses in order to better prepare students for the labour market.

The polytechnic is part of the Erasmus program, where it has some experience with incoming and outgoing students, but for better impression, it is necessary to motivate students more for the whole process and they need to provide lectures in English for a group of students.

The role of tutor is commendable, but it is necessary to delegate certain responsibilities to others, to highlight the main role of the tutor. Tutor is also present in Career development centre project, and the idea of the project itself is very commendable, well developed in theory, but it must be implemented and all information available on the polytechnic's website changed accordingly.

Due to private obligations of former students, the alumni club is not fully functional. The Polytechnic receives feedback from former students through various surveys and it is always good for a polytechnic to know ways to improve efficiency of their work.
The polytechnic issues diplomas and diploma supplements in accordance with completed programmes, and it is necessary to continue with good practice.

Recommendations for improvement

- Website of the Polytechnic needs to be upgraded and modernised with relevant information about the MEV and enrolment. Information displayed on website needs to be updated more often.

- Check the student knowledge necessary for following certain courses and assure preparation for the course when necessary (with student demonstrators or "zero" course).

- Focus on formal and informal education of staff concerning teaching methods.

- The status of the Career Development Center and the role of the tutor needs to be determined, as well as the responsibilities of tutors.

- The Polytechnic needs to pay more attention to surveys in general, especially students surveys, and they need to take action to address students' suggestions and recommendations.

- Provide appropriate psychological and health support at the polytechnic or in other health care institutions.

- Increase the number of bilateral agreements and cooperation with foreign universities.

- Create several courses taught in English in classroom (which could also be available for MEV students).

Quality grade

Minimum level of quality

IV. Teaching and institutional capacities

Analysis

Teaching capacities at Međimurje Polytechnic are in line with requirements for an institution of this size and status. There are 25 employed teachers; 24 teachers are full-time, while 1 teacher is part-time. The current teacher-student ratio is satisfactory. The Polytechnic recognises the weight and importance of the administrative roles at the institution, the adjustment of teaching hours for staff with administrative duties. The Expert Panel is, however, mindful of the Polytechnic's growth plans and their potential impact on teaching capacities. These areas have not been addressed to the extent that we would welcome. Another major concern is the lack of provision of practice-based teaching in the institution. At the moment the Polytechnic over-relies on the delivery of practical skill sets and knowledge bases by external partners. Students must find a place to do their internship on their own which is not acceptable.

During the interviews with external associates and students, the Expert Panel received information that external associates actively include in the teaching process knowledge and examples from the labor market, as well as real business situations. The quality of work and competencies of teachers are assessed by conducting a student survey. In the initial stage a peer review process is conducted. Reviewing the work is carried out by a teacher and the review is made in written form and submitted to the heads of departments. The problem is that the process stops in this phase.

The overall space can be regarded as sufficient for teaching purposes, but there is a significant difference in the infrastructure among different studies. During the discussions with students and external professors, it was voiced that part of the equipment in the computer labs is outdated.

The management of financial resources is transparent, which is evident from the publicly available annual financial reports and the adopted procedures and regulations for regulating financial operations.

Recommendations for improvement

- Workload of teachers should be monitored as well as the total number of courses per teacher to boost the teaching quality and to free up time for scientific activity and professional and personal development.

- Put more emphasis on improving teaching mobility within the EU, based on the ERASMUS+ program.

- Setting up and funding of a training programme for teachers.

- Making teachers aware of alternative teaching strategies.

- Organisation of workshops for improving external teacher competencies.

- The Polytechnic should strive to hire young professionals whose professional and scientific output indicates that they are following the world's leading trends.

- The Expert Panel urges the Polytechnic to implement strategic long-term recruitment planning that is in line with the institution's key strategic goals.

- Peer review process needs to be improved.

- It is recommendable that that the improvement of teachers' pedagogical competencies should become a part of regular institutional activities.

- The Polytechnic should try to equalise the level of equipment and laboratories for all study programmes, i.e. to significantly improve the opportunities for practice in tourism sector.

- Acquisition of most up-to-date literature that relates to study programme learning outcomes.

- The Expert Panel recommends the development of detailed strategic plans related to the long-term financial sustainability of the institution.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

V. Professional and/or scientific activity

Analysis
The Panel were concerned that there was no active strategy document describing how professional research was planned, coordinated, measured and success assessed. It was also felt that leadership in this area was not clear.

Professional activity is too reliant on the in-house journal. This has resulted in a low h-index for the institution. Publication numbers are similar to the previous assessment period and have not progressed significantly.

Although staff reported that the level of funding for attending conferences was adequate, the Panel felt it was too low and should be increased.

A number of staff had completed their PhDs with more underway. This was seen as positive and that the institution should ensure these are completed in a timely manner.

Recommendations for improvement
- A clear 5-year rolling strategy for research needs to be developed and must have 'ownership' by all research active staff. It is recommended that a dedicated Vice-Dean is appointed to develop the research strategy and ensure it is communicated to the relevant staff. The Vice-Dean should also determine the appropriate quality assurance and control systems to ensure targets are being achieved.

- Part of the research strategy should be aimed at a broader balance of submissions to highly ranked international journals as well as the in-house journal.

- A strategy is required to be developed for the institution to become scientifically research active. The institution will need to identify a specific area of work associated with the investments in new laboratory facilities.

- The level of provision of funds for international conference attendance should be increased.

- Ensure the progress of staff undertaking PhD programmes is reviewed annually and subject to internal review.

Quality grade

Minimum level of quality

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

I. Internal quality assurance and the social role of the higher education institution

1.1. The higher education institution has established a functional internal quality assurance system.

Analysis

The HEI has designed and documented a QAS systems based on ISO:9001 guidance, ESG standards and adaptation of the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle for continuous improvement. The QAS handbook is on its sixth edition. Evidence of application and maturity of the QAS is limited. Records show relatively few recorded meetings that are of limited scope. There is evidence that the HEI collect data across all major areas/activities but the application of this data to drive improvements is less evident.

The foundations of the QAS have been designed, are appropriate, and the major of functions (activities) appear to be implemented. The next stage for the HEI is to transition the QAS from a 'design' into 'business-as-usual'. This will involve embedding the QAS into practice for all staff and integrating the various processes, including data flows (e.g., surveys, student feedback, pass rates, plagiarism, etc.) and key performance indicators, into routine review and planning meetings. The HEI will also need to define mechanisms to 'close the loop' and take appropriate action. Related to standard III, it is necessary to provide some transparency and communicate/report the issues and actions of the QAS to different stakeholder groups, including students, where appropriate.

In summary, the QAS is relatively immature, which is to be expected given its implementation post previous accreditation. The QAS needs also to be complemented by a cultural change where staff do not view the QAS as a threat but a tool to realise continuous improvement and to achieve and maintain the highest standards in education and science. The Panel noted that many of the faculty leadership team and the Department management teams only took up their roles in the last 12 or so months. This refresh presents a unique opportunity to positively influence culture and pursue high quality in all areas.

The QAS procedures developed for professional practice is maturing toward an example of good practice with clear learning outcomes and review thereof, an exit survey for companies and subsequent review and action by Head of Professional Practice.

The HEI has a clear strategy that includes establishing new study programmes, research centres and intensifying cooperation with industry to become a regional centre of excellence. The strategy is entirely appropriate and plans to operationalise this are documented. As part of the plan, the following recommendations must be implemented to ensure that the education is not/has not been compromised.

Recommendations for improvement:

- QAS needs to be embedded into practice and mechanisms designed to enable feedback and action within appropriate timescales.

- As set of key performance indicators needs to be established (agreed), monitored and reviewed at key times throughout the academic year.

- The culture with regard to QAS is presently one of compliance (box ticking). The culture must change to one of continuous improvement with appropriate feedback and timely/efficient loops e.g., annual cycles.

- Plan-Do-Check-Act should be developed in real. More focus on Act part is necessary.

- In the term of Efficient QAS Quality Politics needs to be implement and understandable, visible.

- Integration of all quality indicators in all parts of the Polytechnic.

- Prepare a SWOT analysis for all standards.

Quality grade

Minimum level of quality

1.2. The higher education institution implements recommendations for quality improvement from previous evaluations.

Analysis

The 2014 reaccreditation highlighted the following recommendations:

1. The vision of the Polytechnic contains unnecessary details (financial operations, reviews of papers, etc.)
2. Mixing of the concepts of Vision and Mission, which was corrected in the document.
3. The current teacher-student ratio is 1:32, which does not meet one of the criteria for quality teaching.
4. The ratio of the number of full-time teachers and external associates is not satisfactory, which may indirectly have an impact on the teaching process.
5. Enrolment quotas are not compliant with the number of full-time teachers and their unfavourable number towards the number of students (1:32), as well as the number of unemployed professionals.
6. Deficiencies in quality assurance are sought to be confirmed only by applying the ISO: 9001: 2008 standard.
7. Despite good preparations and activities so far, the lack of accommodation capacity is an obstacle to the readiness of the Polytechnic for international exchange of teachers and especially students.
8. The student standard is not fully developed, given the lack of accommodation and student meals.
9. Uncertainty of learning outcomes for conducting professional practice.

Recommendations 1 and 2 have been addressed via a revised statement of mission and vision, and a detailed strategy for 2020-2026. The strategy includes establishing new study programmes, research centres and intensifying cooperation with industry to become a regional centre of excellence. This is entirely appropriate. The mission of the HEI includes attention to entrepreneurial spirit. This ethos and how it is to be encouraged/developed is not evident in the programmes of study.

Recommendations 3, 4 and 5 now fall within guidelines/limits. A major factor in the observed correction is the revoking of licence for the programme in Sustainable Development which was only reissued a licence in 2020. As the admissions increase the HEI will need to monitor key ratios (teacher:student) carefully.

Recommendation 6 has been addressed by tailoring of a QAS from other Croatian HEIs based on ISO:9001.

Recommendation 7 and 8 have been addressed through the construction of a dormitory and restaurant.

Recommendation 9 has been addressed for all study programmes and the overall QAS relating to professional practice has been improved in terms of student reporting, exit surveys and validation of learning outcomes.

Recommendations for improvement:

- The inclusion of entrepreneurial spirit and how programmes support this should be reviewed and enhanced where necessary.

- As the admissions increase for Sustainable Development careful attention should be given to teacher:student ratios.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

1.3. The higher education institution supports academic integrity and freedom, prevents all types of unethical behaviour, intolerance and discrimination.

Analysis

A student handbook/code of ethics is produced and is given to all new students. Evidence of teachers positively reinforcing ethical behaviour and the consequences of unethical behaviour during classes was observed during meetings.

A functioning student council exists and members of the council sit on each Department council. A complaints process and suggestion box have also been established and there is evidence of operation. A student ombudsman has also been established.

A plagiarism detection tool has recently been procured and is being implemented. Evidence of application and results were limited. Procedures (ordinances) are in place for the responsibilities and behaviours of students and employees.

Specific mechanisms/support for disadvantaged, vulnerable or minority groups were not identified.

The HEI arranges and supports many practical placements for students. In many cases contracts are in place between the HEI and the external organisation, which promotes deep cooperation and mutual understanding. In some cases, students arrange their own placements. Such placements pose a risk for the student and their learning. HEI staff

work hard to support all placement students and maintain regular communication throughout. However, an exit survey for students regarding the quality of their placement should be implemented.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Review requirements for creating specific mechanisms/support for disadvantaged, vulnerable or minority groups.
- Embed tools, such as plagiarism detection, into all programmes/courses and record evidence.
- Develop and implement an exit survey for students for professional practice/placement.

Quality grade

Minimum level of quality

1.4. The higher education institution ensures the availability of information on important aspects of its activities (teaching, professional and/or scientific and social role).

Analysis

Basic information is provided and available for both prospective and current students. This includes detailed information on the programmes and course content. The material is up-to-date and appropriately detailed for all courses. A dedicated website has been created for Erasmus exchanges, which is good practice. Information on pass rates and employability are also available via the website.

Little if any information is provided about individual staff on the website. For scientific reputation such information will be necessary. Information on facilities, new initiatives and EU programme participation is also very limited. Various social media platforms are used, including Facebook and Twitter.

An excellent initiative is the publication twice a year of proceedings for student work. This should be commended and is an excellent motivator for the students.

There are two areas where the HEI can make significant improvements. The first is in terms of external communications with stakeholders that are not students – industry

and the community. The second is internal and regards communication with all students about, for example, changes, opportunities and improvements.

- Expand website to cater for external audiences other than students – community and industry.
- Implement formal mechanisms to communicate to all students and staff improvements, and changes, opportunities and successes e.g., the HEI quarterly newsletter.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

1.5. The higher education institution understands and encourages the development of its social role.

Analysis

The HEI is currently involved in three EU-funded collaborative projects which have brought benefits to the region in terms of inclusivity and sustainability and helped to enhance the education programmes and future strategy. HEI staff have also been extensively involved in career development and outreach events for school children. The HEI holds regular open days for prospective students. The HEI has also opened its facilities to host events for the local community. An impressive list of guest speakers/lectures has been provided.

Given the strategy of the HEI is to develop research centres and its scientific activities, opportunities and associated mechanisms to exploit these capabilities for the region will need to be identified and developed. These will include, for example, providing access to equipment and facilities, access to expertise of staff and provision of industry-facing services e.g., consultancy or joint R&D. Some of the industry partners involved in the accreditation process raised this as an important and valuable future opportunity for them and the HEI.

In addition, a number of staff expressed a desire to create student projects/activities based on regional issues/opportunities, e.g., housing or specific tourism opportunities. Such initiatives offer an excellent opportunity to enhance the social role of the HEI.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Consider how online tools/technologies during the coronavirus pandemic can be used to increase the impact (audience) of guest lectures and curate an archive.
- Develop mechanisms to enable scientifically active staff to transfer knowledge to industry and regional partners.
- Maximise the opportunities for students and staff to engage with regional programmes/challenges and contribute to real-life projects. This could be part of their formal studies or student clubs.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

1.6. Lifelong learning programmes delivered by the higher education institution are aligned with the strategic goals and the mission of the higher education institution, and social needs.

Analysis

A range of Lifelong learning programmes are reported in the self-evaluation document. Clearly, the pandemic has impacted some of the programmes but the Head of Lifelong Learning adapted the format and delivery to enable parts of the programme to continue in 2020. A number of academies are reported but do not appear to be 'running' e.g., CISCO and Mikrotik. A pipeline of future programmes was not provided.

The mission of the HEI includes entrepreneurial spirit and this is an aspect of both the undergraduate and Lifelong learning programmes that is not currently well supported but could be very valuable to students and the region.

The HEI prides itself on relevance to regional businesses/industries and various mechanisms are used to provide inputs into all aspects of the HEI's programmes. More formal mechanisms to, for example, co-design and co-deliver Lifelong programmes should be considered.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Co-design an annual programme for lifelong learning and publicise this well in advance via website and regional marketing.
- Explore partnership opportunities to co-deliver lifelong learning programmes.
- Investigate opportunities and potential programmes in entrepreneurship to meet the HEI's mission.

Quality grade

Minimum level of quality

II. Study programmes

2.1. The general objectives of all study programmes are in line with the mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution and the demands of the labour market.

Analysis

The development strategy of the Polytechnic of Međimurje in Čakovec for the period from 2020 to 2026 states as a mission "education of experts with the entrepreneurial spirit ready for independent application of acquired knowledge and competencies, directed towards the future profession with emphasis on expertise specific to each area of interest." From the learning outcomes of study programmes, it is not entirely clear how study programmes contribute to the development of an entrepreneurial spirit. This is especially related to the undergraduate professional studies in Computer Engineering and Sustainable Dvelopment.

The Development Strategy of the Polytechnic of Međimurje in Čakovec for the period from 2020 to 2026 indicates in Chapter 3.1.1. a number of strategic goals and appropriate action plans related to study programmes. The implementation of the action plan guarantees the compliance of study programmes with the set strategic goals.

According to the SER, the HEI collects data on the needs of the labour market in various ways (e.g., analysis of the Croatian Employment Service, implementation of a student survey on the day of their promotion). The HEI publishes the results of the student employability surveys on the website. In defining the enrolment policy, the HEI also follows the recommendations of the Croatian Employment Service.

It is desirable that the needs of the labour market are met by the HEI directly by surveying employers and alumni (there is a survey of employers during student internships which affects only one group of employers - it is desirable to survey employers at local, regional and national level).

In the SER, the HEI states a series of statistical data that justify the implementation of study programmes (e.g., data from the Croatian Employment Service on the needs of staff in the STEM area, data on the number of sports associations). It is also stated that an analysis of the resources required for the implementation of study programmes is carried out, and as a result of the conducted analysis, the establishment of various laboratories (e.g., within the centre of sustainable development, computer laboratories) is stated. In conversation with students, it was found that it is desirable to analyse whether computers meet the needs of teaching especially in the study of Computer Engineering (students cited problems such as blocking the teacher's computer during classes, the slowness of computers on which exercises are conducted).

The HEI does not conduct study programmes that lead to regulated professions.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Include a learning outcome at the level of the study programme which will clearly show that the study programme contributes to the development of entrepreneurial spirit. This is especially related to the undergraduate professional study of Computer Engineering and Sustainable Development.
- Include surveys of employers (at local, regional and national level) and alumni in gathering labour market needs.
- Analyse whether computers in computer laboratories meet the requirements of the teaching process. This is especially related to the study of Computer Engineering.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

2.2. The intended learning outcomes at the level of study programmes delivered by the higher education institution are aligned with the level and profile of qualifications gained.

Analysis

The HEI conducts three undergraduate professional studies (Computer Engineering, Management of Tourism and Sport and Sustainable Development) and one graduate professional study (Management of Tourism and Sport). All study programmes have defined learning outcomes and their content is in line with the mission and strategic goals of the HEI.

However, the part of the mission of the HEI related to the development of entrepreneurial spirit is not sufficiently covered by learning outcomes (especially in the studies of Computer Engineering and Sustainable Development).

It is desirable that the total number of learning outcomes at the level of the study program be between 15 and 20 (e.g., the undergraduate professional study of Management of Tourism and Sport has 22, and the study of Sustainable Development 28).

The matrix of learning outcomes (document "TOPIC 2 - STUDY PROGRAMS") shows the existence of learning outcomes at the level of the study programme to which only one course contributes – Computer Engineering: 7 of them 20, Sustainable Development: 1 of them 28, graduate professional study Management of Tourism and Sport: 6 of them 18. It is unlikely that a student will achieve a learning outcome at the level of a programme covered with only one course.

The HEI conducts three undergraduate professional studies (Computer Engineering, Management of Tourism and Sport and Sustainable Development). From the content of learning outcomes at the level of the study programme, it can be concluded that they correspond to level 6 of the Croatian Qualifications Framework. In the context of the Dublin descriptors, the learning outcomes of study programmes cover all its categories.

The HEI conducts one graduate professional study (Management of Tourism and Sport). The content of its learning outcomes corresponds to level 7 of the Croatian Qualifications Framework and covers all categories in the context of the Dublin descriptors.

Since 2019, the HEI has been participating in the EU project "Implementation of the CROQF in professional computer studies". It is desirable that HEI apply the adopted CROQF methodology to their other study programmes.

It is also necessary to revise the number of learning outcomes at the level of the study programme so that their number is between the desirable 15 and 20.

To define learning outcomes, the HEI uses the results of employer surveys during student internships. An economic council has also been established, one of the tasks of which should be to participate in defining learning outcomes.

At the meeting with external stakeholders, it was established that they participate in processes such as student internships, defining the topics of final thesis, participation in classes as invited lecturers, participation in the work of the Economic Council. But their participation in changes to study programmes has not been established. At the meeting, they made a number of suggestions for improving study programmes (e.g., inclusion of various software development frameworks, specialization in machine programming, inclusion of data analytics, business software development).

At the meeting with the alumni, it was not established that they actively participate in changes in study programmes. They also made a number of suggestions (e.g., including Linux operating systems, strengthening the acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies, organizing additional elective courses in the field of robotics and Industry 4.0).

At a meeting with external lecturers, it was determined that they participated in the revision of study programmes. They also stated at the meeting that they have some ideas for developing new courses that would be based on what they do in their companies.

All of the above indicates the need to strongly encourage the work of the Economic Council and cooperation with employers at the local, regional and national levels, alumni and external lecturers in the process of modifying existing and developing new study programmes.

The contents of the learning outcomes of study programmes are the basis for the acquisition of competencies necessary for employment, continuing education or other needs. However, some learning outcomes need to be defined more generally so that more courses can contribute to their achievement.

- As already stated in 2.1, it is necessary to include the learning outcome at the level of the study programme in order to ensure the development of entrepreneurial spirit in students (especially see the studies Computer Engineering and Sustainable Development).
- It is desirable that the total number of learning outcomes at the level of the study programme be between 15 and 20. Accordingly, change the learning outcomes in the undergraduate professional studies Management of Tourism and Sport and Sustainable Development.
- Only one course contributes to the achievement of some learning outcomes at the level of the study programme. It is unlikely that students will acquire the competencies described by such learning outcomes upon completion of their studies. All such learning outcomes need to be revised so that they are supported with more courses.
- Use the participation in the EU project "Implementation of the CROQF in professional computer studies" in order to adopt the CROQF methodology and to apply it to other study programmes.
- Strongly encourage the work of the Economic Council.
- Strongly encourage cooperation with employers, alumni and external lecturers in the process of modifying existing and developing new study programmes.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

2.3. The higher education institution provides evidence of the achievement of intended learning outcomes of the study programmes it delivers.

Analysis

The syllabi of the courses list the methods in which the knowledge of students with associated assessment percentages is verified. A matrix is also provided in which the learning outcomes and the method of verification are linked. For each learning outcome, the percentage of assessment that can be achieved by some method of verification is stated.

Class attendance and class activity are mentioned as one of the methods of verification. But these methods of verification are not related to any of the learning outcomes. While

teaching activity could also be linked to a learning outcome, it is not clear which learning outcome can be assessed with class attendance.

At the meeting with the students, it was emphasized that some teachers strongly resent their absence from classes (e.g., part-time students do not always come to classes due to work).

The SER does not clearly state the procedure for taking the course (e.g., it is stated that the course is successfully passed if the student has achieved at least 50% points for each learning outcome but does not state whether the student should retake the learning outcome he has already passed). The Ordinance on student assessment (from 2012) does not describe the assessment procedure at all, which is based on the assessment of learning outcomes.

At the meeting with the heads of the study programmes, it was determined that the teachers independently decide whether the students should retake the already passed learning outcomes.

At the meeting with the students, dissatisfaction was expressed that in some courses they need to retake the learning outcomes they have already passed.

Examples of final theses showed that there is no uniform form but that the form differs with regard to the study programme within which the final thesis was made.

The HEI conducts a survey of students on the teaching process. Students can also express their opinion anonymously via the comments box.

Although there are methods by which the HEI collects students' opinions, at the meeting with students it was determined that they do not receive feedback on the results of surveys and are not convinced that based on the results of the survey something changes.

It cannot be concluded from the SER whether the higher education institution conducts an analysis of the pass rate of individual courses.

The HEI conducts a "Peer review" - collaborative evaluation of teachers. At the meeting with the heads of the study programme, it was determined that teachers do not receive formal feedback after the evaluation.

- Each method of validation of students' knowledge should be related to some learning outcome. In this context, class activity should be linked to some learning outcome. Passive class attendance cannot be used as a method to check learning outcomes.
- If the student has acquired the conditions for taking the exam, it is desirable not to re-examine the already passed learning outcomes.
- Instruct teachers to look more objectively at the absence of students from classes. Teacher resentment due to student absence affects the teacher's objectivity in assessing the adoption of learning outcomes.
- In order to standardize the procedure for taking the course, it is necessary to precisely describe the entire procedure in the Ordinance on student assessment (e.g., whether students should retake the 'passed' learning outcome, what are the conditions that a student must meet to be able to take the exam, etc.).
- Standardize the form of final thesis so that it is the same in all study programmes.
- Provide students with clear feedback on the results of surveys and other collected data related to the teaching process and link them to corrective measures that are taken.
- Include data on the passing of individual courses in the analysis of the teaching process.
- Give formal feedback to teachers who participated in collaborative evaluation.

Quality grade

Minimum level of quality

2.4. The HEI uses feedback from students, employers, professional organisations and alumni in the procedures of planning, proposing and approving new programmes, and revising or closing the existing programmes.

Analysis

The HEI develops study programmes based on data collected through employers' surveys during student internships and student surveys during the academic year. A procedure has been established according to which new courses are included in study programmes and according to which the syllabi of existing courses are changed. An economic council has also been established, one of the tasks of which is the development of study programmes.

In the conversation with external stakeholders, it was determined that they participate in some processes related to teaching, but it was not determined that they participate in the development of study programmes. A similar finding was made at a meeting with alumni. Both external stakeholders and alumni made a number of suggestions at these meetings to improve study programmes.

At the meeting with external lecturers, it was established that they participated in the development of study programmes, but that they also have additional suggestions for improvement.

It is obvious that there is potential in external stakeholders, alumni and external lecturers as important factors that should be strongly involved in the development of study programmes.

The SER shows that the HEI uses various statistical data (e.g., Croatian Employment Service, Central Bureau of Statistics) in the development of study programmes, but also monitors compliance with various strategies (e.g., Međimurje County Development Strategy, National Development Strategy).

The HEI has prepared a study for the new graduate professional study Applied Computing, which is in the process of initial accreditation. At the meeting with external stakeholders, strong support was expressed for the new graduate study.

The latest versions of study programmes that include a list of courses by semesters with teaching load have been published on the official website of the HEI. An implementation plan has also been published, and each course has a link to its syllabus.

It is clear from the SER and the attached documents that there have been changes in the study programmes. However, it is not possible to simply determine the sequence of changes, i.e., the reasons for a change, the proposal of the change itself and the analysis of its expediency.

Recommendations for improvement:

- As already stated in point 2.2. the HEI should use the potential of external stakeholders, alumni and external lecturers in the development of study programmes through a strong incentive for cooperation.

- Determine the method of recording changes in the study programme so that it enables the traceability of changes (the reason for the change, the proposed change and the analysis of its expediency).

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

2.5. The higher education institution ensures that ECTS allocation is adequate.

Analysis

It is evident from the SER that the HEI conducts a survey of students related to ECTS credits. From the presented results it can be concluded that students are satisfied with the distribution of ECTS credits. The HEI has a procedure according to which ECTS credit points can be changed, and examples of such corrections are visible in the documentation.

At the meeting with the students, it was determined that they were not familiar with the results of the conducted surveys and the measures taken.

From the syllabus of the course, it can be concluded that students have practical classes and that there are ways to check learning outcomes that test practical knowledge.

At the meeting with the students, the position was expressed that it is necessary to include more practical teaching, but also more professional courses.

Recommendations for improvement:

- As already stated in point 2.3. students need to be given clear feedback on survey results and other data collected and linked to corrective actions taken.
- Analyse the possibility of increasing practical teaching in courses and include additional professional courses in study programmes.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

2.6. Student practice is an integral part of the study programmes.

Analysis

All study programmes conducted by the HEI include student internships. All undergraduate professional studies have an internship with a workload of 4 ECTS. The graduate professional study has an internship with a workload of 12 ECTS.

Students do student internships in companies. At the meeting with the head of the internship, it was established that there is no procedure according to which cooperation agreements are signed with companies related to the performance of student internships.

It is evident from the SER that the HEI has a prescribed and implemented procedure according to which student internships are conducted. There is also a survey of employers related to students on student internships.

In addition to this survey, it is necessary to implement a survey of students related to employers with internships and the results of this survey should be further used to increase the quality of student internships.

At the meeting with the quality assurance committee, the position was expressed that it is necessary to increase the number of hours of student internship, and that it is necessary to organize it in several cycles in the third year of study.

At the meeting with the students, the position was also determined that it is necessary to increase the number of hours of student internship.

The need to increase student internships is also evidenced by the results of surveys provided to the expert panel.

At the meeting with external stakeholders, the problem was identified that student internships are held in the summer months when most employees in companies take vacations and therefore it is difficult to organize quality internships.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Establish and implement a formal procedure for signing cooperation agreements with companies related to the student internships.

- Increase the number of hours of student internship (especially in undergraduate professional studies) and organize the internship so that it does not enter the summer months when company employees take vacations.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

III. Teaching process and student support

3.1. Admission criteria or criteria for the continuation of studies are in line with the requirements of the study programme, clearly defined, published and consistently applied.

Analysis

The self-evaluation documentation provides the necessary information on all evidence for this standard. The criteria for student enrolment are clearly and published on the website and on the bulletin board of the Polytechnic. The text of the Tender contains data on the number of vacancies for enrolment per professional study, the conditions of enrolment, especially for applicants with passed or for those who have not passed the State Matura Exam, the right to direct enrolment, documents necessary for application and enrolment, tuition fees, and deadlines for application and enrolment. Students are enrolled on the basis of a public tender announced by the Polytechnic at least six months before the start of classes.

Due to provided documentation, the criteria for admission or continuation of studies are consistently applied and ensure the selection of candidates with appropriate prior knowledge, which is aligned with the requirements of the study programme. Furthermore, the higher education institution has effective mechanisms for recognising prior learning. Due to student experience, process of recognition of prior learning is easy, transparent and fast.

The lack of the whole enrolment process is insufficient accuracy. Applicants who won from 1st to 3rd place in several specified competitions have the right to direct enrolment in a study programme connected with the theme of the competition. One of mentioned competitions, Gastro, does not exist for three years and it is incorporated into World Skills Croatia competition which involves all vocational high school competitions. However, World Skills is missing in the enrolment criteria.

Furthermore, the survey examining the satisfaction of students who have transferred from other higher education / study programmes is not available in the documentation, but one of students who came from another higher education institution has a very positive experience with the recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and previous learning in case of continuing studies.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Update admission criteria – concerning student competition.
- Constantly be up-to-date with the information related to the enrolment of new students.
- Modernise the website (the part connected with the admission and enrolment) in order to attract more students.
- Provide a survey for students who have transferred from other higher education institutions to MEV.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

3.2. The higher education institution gathers and analyses information on student progress and uses it to ensure the continuity and completion of study.

Analysis

The analysis of the completion and drop-out is conducted regularly, until the end of January for the previous year. The Polytechnic also provided data on student pass rates (visible on the MEV website), as well as the measures that are used by the MEV to increase the pass rate for each academic year. Based on the conducted analyses, activities are carried out in order to improve the teaching process with a tendency to increase the success and higher pass rate of students.

The Polytechnic has established a tutoring system to enable students to study more productively. Students are very satisfied with the tutor system. This activity, together with the extraordinary exam deadlines lead to the reduction of study duration.

However, there are several courses which were characterized as „difficult" and hard to pass, which should be taken into consideration while planning further actions.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Organize student demonstrators for courses which are "difficult",
- Create "zero" course without ECTS points to provide necessary preparation,

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

3.3. The higher education institution ensures student-centred learning.

Analysis

MEV encourages different ways of teaching in accordance with the foreseen learning outcomes which includes lectures, seminars, exercises, laboratory exercises, fieldwork, practical classes, projects, consultations, mentoring, mid-term exams, exams, and other forms of knowledge testing and professional practices, as defined by the course syllabuses. Furthermore, the Polytechnic supports experiential learning (study trips, fieldwork and financially provides the necessary funds for the implementation of such forms of teaching).

Feedback on the appropriate teaching process quality and the adequacy of the application of teaching methods is obtained through the results of student surveys conducted on a semi-annual basis. Although they collect survey, they are not "closing the loop", due to the fact that students do not know what actions are taken for the teachers graded lower than 3.00. Due to this fact, they are not motivated to fill in the survey. The Polytechnic also has "Peer Review" process where one teacher is assessed by another teacher, after which they conduct an informal interview. This process is useful, but should be more formalized.

Several student surveys mentioned the number of hours of practice, where students require more hours of practical training, and the same feedback comes from employers. Also, according to the surveys, students want to learn more foreign languages.

- Take actions due to student survey results and inform students on those actions.
- Formalize the peer review process.
- Check the student knowledge necessary for following certain courses and assure preparation for the course, when necessary (with student demonstrators or "zero" course).
- Increase the number of hours of practical classes.
- Identify the needs of full-time and part-time students in terms of timetable.
- Motivate students to achieve better results through scholarships, set a higher GPA for obtaining a scholarship.
- Improve the website of the polytechnic and keep up to date information displayed on the website of the Polytechnic.
- Improve existing equipment – ensure new computers and necessary programmes.
- Focus on formal and informal education of staff concerning teaching methods.

Quality grade

Minimum level of quality

3.4. The higher education institution ensures adequate student support.

Analysis

As shown in the Self-evaluation Report, in the introductory lecture of the Dean, first-year students are introduced to the structure and operation of the Polytechnic, their rights, obligations, and opportunities provided to them by studying at the Polytechnic. All relevant information is published on the website. However, students pointed out that their website should be improved. It is important to keep the website up-to-date so that all information is accurate and timely, as this is the first contact of potential students with the polytechnic. Teaching and non-teaching staff is available to students and they are promptly responding to all inquiries.

A tutor is a great solution for working with different groups of students to mediate between the wishes of students and the polytechnic. The role of the tutor is explained as responsibility for career guidance of students, providing support to students,

preparing students for the whole process of attending lectures at the polytechnic and taking exams, and gathering information from students to improve the quality of a particular study programme.

The Self-evaluation Report pointed out that there is a career development centre that is not fully developed, while the website of the Polytechnic does not indicate that the career development centre has not been implemented, which needs to be pointed out and amended.

It is also necessary to provide better support to part-time students, where, for example, the library only works on Wednesdays until 6 p.m. Although the dean pointed out that there were several computers bought for students who do not have conditions for online classes, students did not have the information on this possibility.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Determine the status of the Career Development Center and determine the action plan.
- Determine the responsibilities of the tutor and link him/her exclusively with the career development centre or as student support.
- Set library working hours to be available for part-time students several times a week.
- Students should be informed better on their possibilities (e.g. computers for online lecturers).

Quality grade

Minimum level of quality

3.5. The higher education institution ensures support to students from vulnerable and under-represented groups.

Analysis

The Polytechnic monitors the different needs of students from vulnerable and underrepresented groups. It has provided access for people with disabilities and has established certain rules where it is possible to write exams on the ground floor. There

are two parking spaces for students with disabilities, while dormitory has six beds for students with disabilities.

Scholarships are provided to students with disabilities and those students with lower socio-economic status. However, to have quality support for vulnerable and under-represented groups several actions should be taken. When asked about taking care of students with psychological problems, management said that they do not have this kind of cases. This implicates that a lot of work still needs to be done.

During our visit, lectures were held without epidemiological measures (social distancing). Students informed us that the majority of them had been infected due to the fact that epidemiological measures were not respected.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Increase the number of parking spaces for students with disabilities.
- Provide information for students so they could use all possibilities (e.g. laptops for online classes).
- Provide appropriate psychological and health support at the polytechnic or in other health care institutions.
- Ensure lectures in which epidemiological measures are respected.

Quality grade

Minimum level of quality level

3.6. The higher education institution allows students to gain international experience.

Analysis

The Polytechnic has a well-developed standard related to Erasmus program, including all procedures related to student departure and completion of all necessary documents. The obtained documentation also contains copies of the Erasmus charter. The person in charge of student mobility is prominent, the vice dean for quality and international cooperation and the Erasmus coordinator. Although the ECTS coordinator is not listed in the obtained documentation, there is a name and surname of ECTS coordinator, on the website of the Polytechnic, but not the document by which he was appointed.

The whole procedure is set up well, but it is necessary to have more examples of students' mobility. The number of students involved in Erasmus in 2014 – 2020 period did not increase significantly. The Polytechnic has 29 bilateral agreements on cooperation with institutions in Europe and beyond, and in the academic year 2019/2020 six more new agreements were signed.

Students are well informed on Erasmus options. Some of them stated that they would like to have more options for mobility (more countries involved), while other students are satisfied with the current offer.

Previous students' experiences of studying abroad can have a motivating effect on future Erasmus participants. Student feedback on their satisfaction with the overall experience is too extensive. The text that the students write about the entire experience is too broad and no answers are given to specific questions related to the whole procedure and evidence that would be important for the polytechnic. Also, there is no student survey about support that they got from the Polytechnic regarding Erasmus program.

Recommendations for improvement

- Increase the number of bilateral agreements.
- Increase the number of students participating in mobility.
- Create a more focused survey related to student satisfaction with the procedure.
- Use the text that the students write about their stays in a foreign institution to promote the Erasmus program among students.

Quality grade

Minimum level of quality

3.7. The higher education institution ensures adequate study conditions for foreign students.

Analysis

The Polytechnic participates in student exchanges within the Erasmus+ international exchange program. An English version of the website was created on which all important documents are published. Incoming students attend English classes together

with full-time students, while classes from other courses are held consultatively in English in agreement with the subject teacher.

Number of students who spent one or two semesters at the Polytechnic as part of an exchange program is increasing each year. The Buddy System at the Polytechnic helps incoming students to meet the environment. Incoming students share their experiences which can be found on MEV website.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Increase cooperation with foreign universities to increase the number of foreign students.
- Create several courses taught in English in classroom (which could also be available for MEV students).
- Improve English version of the website (e.g. photos of the Polytechnic and infrastructure, easier search of information).
- Introduce every incoming student with an introduction to the Croatian language and culture.
- Create a survey for incoming students, which they fill out before leaving.

Quality grade

Minimum level of quality

3.8. The higher education institution ensures an objective and consistent evaluation and assessment of student achievements.

Analysis

In the syllabus, every teacher defines the method of evaluation and assessment, i.e. the elements of monitoring and checking, and the methods of shaping the final grade. But, students said that it not always the case. Some teachers do not provide all necessary information at the beginning of the semester or change them during the semester. Furthermore, students pointed out a problem with passing learning outcomes. For example, if they pass several learning outcomes, not all of them, they have to repeat all outcomes. This is not the case with all courses, only with some.

Part-time students have to participate 30% or 50% of lecturers to be able to approach the exam. They passive presence is also part of the grade, which should be changed in the future.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Exclude passive presence from course grading.
- Reconsider obligatory participation of part-time students in classes.
- Increase the number of training and education for teaching staff to achieve better results in the teaching process.
- Simplify the procedure for student complaints.

Quality grade

Minimum level of quality

3.9. The higher education institution issues diplomas and Diploma Supplements in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Analysis

The Polytechnic issues diplomas and diploma supplement in accordance with regulations. Upon completion of their studies, students of the Polytechnic receive a diploma in which the acquired qualification, achieved competencies and the level, content and status of the studies they attended and successfully completed are stated. The diploma contains personal data, data on ECTS credits, the date of completion of studies, data on the level of qualification, study, module and academic title. Beside diploma, students receive a diploma supplement with the details of the completed study programme.

Recommendations for improvement:

-n/a

Quality grade

High level of quality

3.10. The higher education institution is committed to the employability of graduates.

The Polytechnic cooperates with the Employment Service in a way that it analyses the status of graduates. Furthermore, they conduct surveys of graduates and their employability. In the reports they analyse data on the number of graduates who decide to continue their education, number of employed graduates, satisfaction with the acquired competencies, and suggestions for improving the studies are collected.

Information gathered from former students should be used for improvement in order to increase the competitiveness of students in the labour market. During the meeting with the former students, we received recommendations on what would be useful to advise MEV, and it refers to organizing a certain course or education for better preparation for running your own company/craft/business. Also, organizing new lifelong learning programmes after which certificates (e.g. CISCO) are obtained, as well as courses of future such as robotics would be useful.

The Polytechnic provides support to students in planning future careers, but their new Career Development Centre should be in charge of this activity. The activities of the Alumni club did not come to life at the expected level.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Implement the Career Development Canter completely and determine the action plan of the centre.
- Take actions due to alumni recommendations from the survey.
- Increase the activities of the Alumni club.
- Increase the number of lifelong learning programmes.
- Change the information on the website related to the work of the Career Development Center.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

IV. Teaching and institutional capacities

4.1. The higher education institution ensures adequate teaching capacities.

Analysis

Teaching capacities at Međimurje Politehnic are in line with requirements for an institution of its size and status. There are 25 employed teachers, 24 teachers are full-time, while 1 teacher is part-time. The teacher-student ratio at the Polytechnic is 1: 23.90, and at this moment it is satisfactory. The Polytechnic recognises the weight and importance of the administrative roles at the institution, the adjustment of teaching hours for staff with administrative duties. The workload of teachers at the home institution is 445 - 495 hours. For teachers involved in projects, the workload is 300 - 450 hours, for vice deans 210 - 260 hours, and for the dean 70 hours.

The Expert Panel is, however, mindful of the Polytechnic's growth plans and their potential impact on teaching capacities. These areas have not been addressed to the extent that we would welcome. Another major concern is the lack of provision of practice-based teaching in the institution. At the moment the Polytechnic over-relies on the delivery of practical skill sets and knowledge bases by external partners. Students must find a place to do their internship on their own which is not acceptable.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Workload of teachers should be monitored as well as the total number of courses per teacher to boost the teaching quality and to free up time for scientific activity and professional and personal development.

- Put more emphasis on improving teaching mobility within the EU, based on the ERASMUS+ program.

- Setting up and funding of a training programme for teachers.

- Making teachers aware of alternative teaching strategies, including the periodic evaluation of the alignment of teaching methods and learning outcomes (ongoing process).

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

4.2. The higher education institution ensures appropriate quality of external associates.

The Polytechnic's teaching process includes the required number of external associates. In 2019/2020, a total of 50 external associates were involved in the teaching process, with 31 of them with appropriate elections to teaching grades and 19 external associates without elections.

During the interviews with external associates and students, the Panel received information that external associates actively include in the teaching process knowledge and examples from the labour market, as well as real business situations.

Students do internships in the institutions of external associates, who also mentor them during the internship, which often results in final and specialist final theses, and sometimes employment.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Organisation of workshops for improving external teacher competencies.

- Continue to attract high-quality external associates.

- The recommendations from the current accreditation report should be implemented more consistently, as compared to the recommendations from the previous reaccreditation period.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

4.3. Teacher recruitment, advancement and re-appointment is based on objective and transparent procedures, which include the evaluation of excellence.

Analysis

The employment of teachers is based on the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education. The process of hiring teachers begins with announcing a public tender which

is published in the Official Gazette, the daily press, on the website and bulletin board of the Polytechnic, on the official internet portal for jobs in the European Research Area and the Croatian Employment Service. After announcing the tender, candidates apply and submit documentation (within 30 days) including curriculum vitae, evidence of meeting the requirements of the Council of Polytechnics and Higher Education Institutions, and other documents required in the tender. The Expert Council appoints an expert commission that reviews the documentation, determines whether the applicant meets the conditions, and gives an opinion in the form of a report.

Recommendations for improvement:

- During the recruitment process for teachers or external associates, a candidate's minimum qualification should not be sufficient for employment.

- The Polytechnic should strive to hire young professionals whose professional and scientific output indicates that they are following the world's leading trends.

- The Expert Panel urges the Polytechnic to implement strategic long-term recruitment planning that is in line with the institution's key strategic goals.

- Teacher recruitment and own source funding.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

4.4. The higher education institution provides support to teachers in their professional development.

Analysis

The Polytechnic states in the Self-evaluation Report that they are doing a lot to improve professional competencies through education in the field of foreign languages, information and communication skills, learning outcomes, quality management, new teaching methods. During the visit this expert team checked all given documents. We can conclude that all of these set mechanisms are in the initial stage.

The quality of work and competence of teachers are assessed by conducting a student survey. The peer review process is in the initial stage. Reviewing the work is carried out

by teacher and the review is made in written form and submitted to the heads of departments. The problem is that the process stops in this phase.

The most successful teachers are rewarded, which is regulated by the Internal Ordinance. The Polytechnic would like to be an accredited scientific institution in 2022.

Recommendations for improvement:

- It is necessary to formalize the support for professional development.

- Peer review process needs to be improved.

- Teachers should change teaching methods after the peer review report.

- It is recommendable that that the improvement of teachers' pedagogical competencies should become a part of regular institutional activities.

- The Polytechnic should encourage teachers and external associates to largely increase their outgoing mobility.

- The Polytechnic should work on teacher exchange more.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

4.5. The space, equipment and the entire infrastructure (laboratories, IT service, work facilities etc.) are adequate for the delivery of the study programmes and ensure the achievement of intended learning outcomes and the implementation of professional and/or scientific activity.

Analysis

The overall space can be regarded as sufficient for teaching purposes, but there is a significant difference of infrastructure between certain studies. For example, lack of good computers and software are obviously a problem. During the discussions with students and external professors, it was voiced that part of the equipment in the computer labs is outdated.

The new laboratory for Sustainable development will improve studying but the problem is that it covers only several subjects. For other study programmes (Tourism) this expert team did not receive any proof for practice lessons.

Dormitories and student restaurant are modern and very well equipped.

Recommendations for improvement:

- The Polytechnic should try to equalise the level of equipment and laboratories for all study programmes, i.e. to significantly improve the opportunities for practice in the tourism sector.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

4.6. The library and library equipment, as well as access to additional resources ensure the literature necessary for ensuring high-quality of study and scientific and teaching activity.

Analysis

The Library of the Polytechnic is located in the building of the Student Dormitory Čakovec, on an area of 62.862 m2, equipped with 22 seats and 10 computers. Working time is not fully applicable to part-time students, they can come to borrow the book but not to use the library reading facility.

The issues such as availability of the most recent literature related to all study programmes, access to internationally significant literature/databases overall for the use of students as well as staff need to be addressed urgently in relation to the institution's plans for growth.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Acquisition of most up-to-date literature that relates to study programme learning outcomes.

- Literature should be more on an international level and in electronic version.

- The current space for individual and group work that forms part of the library needs to be enlarged and its purpose needs to be carefully considered.

- Provide access to a range of electronic tools for teaching, professional and research activities.

Minimum level of quality

4.7. The higher education institution rationally manages its financial resources.

The management of financial resources is transparent, which is evident from the publicly available annual financial reports and the adopted procedures and regulations for regulating financial operations. The Polytechnic has provided additional sources of funding through international and domestic projects. The Polytechnic applies the Ordinance on the Distribution of Revenues.

This document regulates the manner of using its own or non-earmarked funds. According to the Ordinance, revenues generated from the use of facilities by third parties are intended to cover operating expenses, 60% is used for improvement of the basic activity of the Polytechnic. Of the revenues generated from the publishing activity, 10% is allocated for the improvement of the activity of the Polytechnic.

20% of revenues from contracted professional projects and programs, which are not financed from the state budget, are distributed to improve the activity of the Polytechnic, to cover part of the common costs of the Polytechnic, and to stimulate other activities.

Recommendations for improvement:

- The Expert Panel recommends the development of detailed strategic plans related to the long-term financial sustainability of the institution.

- It is necessary to ensure future laboratory maintenance in the financial plan.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

V. Professional and/or scientific activity

5.1. Teachers and associates employed at the higher education institution are committed to the achievement of high quality and quantity of professional and/or scientific activity.

Analysis

The Institution carries out professional activity (although it has a future ambition to undertake scientific research) and over the past 5 years staff have published a total of 23 papers of the highest category and 91 other papers according to the Ordinance on Conditions for Election to Scientific Grades. There were 94 peer-reviewed papers from scientific and professional conferences, 34 professional papers and 29 papers in journals of the Polytechnic (cf 60 professional and 60 scientific papers in the 2014 review). There has been some increase in numbers of outputs, but the number at the highest international grade are fairly limited. As this is not a scientific institution this is adequate but underlines the considerable amount of work that will be required for the Polytechnic to achieve this status.

A number of staff (5) had completed their PhD studies and a further 9 were currently undertaking studies. This is encouraging for the future of scientific ambitions of the Polytechnic.

The institution does provide funds for staff to attend conferences and, although the Panel felt this sum was too low, staff reported that it was adequate for their needs.

The Panel noted the Polytechnic publishes its own journal (Proceedings of the Polytechnic of Međimurje in Čakovec) which many staff contribute to. While this is positive it does mean that outputs have a limited exposure and the resulting average h-index for staff is very low (2).

Recommendations for improvement:

- Develop an overall strategy for Professional (and in due course) Scientific Research. This requires 'ownership' by both senior staff and active researchers. To enable this, we suggest that a new post of Vice Dean for Research is created to shape, drive and monitor the success of this strategy.

- Develop a strategy to balance the ratio of submissions to local and international peer-reviewed journals. This will be particularly important for the institution to develop a scientific research base.

- Increase the number of submissions to leading international journals.

- Improve the average h-index of the staff using the above.

- Implement a process to ensure timely completion of PhDs to include annual reporting and internal review.

Quality grade

Minimum level of quality

5.2. The higher education institution proves the social relevance of its professional and/or scientific research and transfer of knowledge.

Analysis

The Polytechnic has organised 3 international conferences over the review period which was seen as a positive contribution. The description of the contribution to knowledge transfer was not clear. The self-evaluation just describes a long list of meetings with industry and memberships of technical committees but provides no actual evidence of any achievement from knowledge transfer.

A similar issue exists with staff mobility – the self-evaluation report gives a long list of Cooperation Agreements but no detail of what has been achieved through these partnerships.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Provide evidence and actual examples of knowledge transfer.

- Provide evidence and actual examples of what is achieved through the cooperation agreements with other institutions. Provide evidence of the planning, aims and objectives of Cooperation Agreements. These should be included as part of the overall strategy documentation.

Satisfactory level of quality

5.3. Professional and/or scientific achievements of the higher education institution have been recognized in the regional, national and international context.

Analysis

From meetings of the Review Panel with industry representatives, it was clear that there was strong support for the work of the Polytechnic. However, there was limited reported recognition of professional achievements of the Polytechnic beyond a prize for a presentation at a conference. The self-evaluation goes on to list the various projects that the Polytechnical is involved in but does not describe how these demonstrate recognition in the regional, national and international context.

The Panel noted that there are active partnerships with other HEIs in several different countries, which was highly positive. Again, the Panel would like to see the aims of these partnerships clearly articulated in the Research Strategy.

The Panel noted the development of new laboratory facilities, particularly the Sustainable Development Laboratory and the access the Metals Laboratory. This is a positive development but at the time of the meeting the new lab facilities were not fully operational and able to support education or other activities of the HEI, such as Lifelong Learning or Knowledge Transfer.

Recommendations for improvement:

- The Polytechnic should develop a clear strategy to enable its work to be recognised beyond the local context and ensure evidence and data is gathered to access the success of this work (and be included in future reviews).

- A strategy for the students using the new laboratories needs to be developed and linked to the overall Research (both Professional and Scientific) and Teaching Strategies.

Quality grade

Minimum level of quality

5.4. Professional and/or scientific activities and achievements of the higher education institution improve teaching.

Analysis

Again, this is an area where the Self-evaluation Report provides a long list of projects, which state that students were involved but there is no evidence presented of examples of how professional activities improve teaching. The Panel's meetings with students, external lecturers and employers were very positive and it was noted that the teaching programmes had been changed and improved to include content that was of importance to employers.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Develop a strategy for the improvement of teaching through professional activities.

- Collect data and evidence for this and assess it against the strategy and ensure this is included in future self-assessment reports.

Quality grade

Satisfactory level of quality

APPENDICES

1. Quality assessment summary - tables

Quality grade by assessment area				
Assessment area	Unsatisfactory level of quality	Minimum level of quality	Satisfactory level of quality	High level of quality
I. Internal quality assurance and the social role of the higher education institution		X		
II. Study programmes			X	
III. Teaching process and student support		X		
IV. Teaching and institutional capacities			X	
V. Professional and/or scientific activity		X		

Quality grade by standard				
I. Internal quality assurance and the social role of the higher education institution	*Unsatisfactory level of quality*	*Minimum level of quality*	*Satisfactory level of quality*	*High level of quality*
1.1. The higher education institution has established a functional internal quality assurance system.		X		
1.2. The higher education institution implements recommendations for quality improvement from previous evaluations.			X	
1.3. The higher education institution supports academic integrity and freedom, prevents all types of unethical behaviour, intolerance and discrimination.		X		
1.4. The higher education institution ensures the availability of information on important aspects of its activities (teaching, professional and/or scientific and social role).			X	
1.5. The higher education institution understands and encourages the development of its social role.			X	
1.6. Lifelong learning programmes delivered by the higher education institution are aligned with the strategic goals and the mission of the higher education institution, and social needs.		X		

Quality grade by standard				
II. Study programmes	Unsatisfactory level of quality	Minimum level of quality	Satisfactory level of quality	High level of quality
2.1. The general objectives of all study programmes are in line with the mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution and the demands of the labour market.			X	
2.2. The intended learning outcomes at the level of study programmes delivered by the higher education institution are aligned with the level and profile of qualifications gained.			X	
2.3. The higher education institution provides evidence of the achievement of intended learning outcomes of the study programmes it delivers.		X		
2.4. The HEI uses feedback from students, employers, professional organisations and alumni in the procedures of planning, proposing and approving new programmes, and revising or closing the existing programmes.			X	
2.5. The higher education institution ensures that ECTS allocation is adequate.			X	
2.6. Student practice is an integral part of the study programmes.			X	

Quality grade by standard				
III. Teaching process and student support	Unsatisfactory level of quality	Minimum level of quality	Satisfactory level of quality	High level of quality
3.1. Admission criteria or criteria for the continuation of studies are in line with the requirements of the study programme, clearly defined, published and consistently applied.			X	
3.2. The higher education institution gathers and analyses information on student progress and uses it to ensure the continuity and completion of study.			X	
3.3. The higher education institution ensures student-centred learning.		X		
3.4. The higher education institution ensures adequate student support.		X		
3.5. The higher education institution ensures support to students from vulnerable and under-represented groups.		X		
3.6. The higher education institution allows students to gain international experience.		X		
3.7. The higher education institution ensures adequate study conditions for foreign students.		X		
3.8. The higher education institution ensures an objective and consistent evaluation and assessment of student achievements.		X		
3.9. The higher education institution issues diplomas and Diploma Supplements in accordance with the relevant regulations.				X
3.10. The higher education institution is committed to the employability of graduates.			X	

Quality grade by standard				
IV. Teaching and institutional capacities	*Unsatisfactory level of quality*	*Minimum level of quality*	*Satisfactory level of quality*	*High level of quality*
4.1. The higher education institution ensures adequate teaching capacities.			X	
4.2. The higher education institution ensures appropriate quality of external associates.			X	
4.3. Teacher recruitment, advancement and re-appointment is based on objective and transparent procedures. which include the evaluation of excellence.			X	
4.4. The higher education institution provides support to teachers in their professional development.			X	
4.5. The space, equipment and the entire infrastructure (laboratories, IT service, work facilities etc.) are adequate for the delivery of the study programmes and ensure the achievement of intended learning outcomes and the implementation of professional and/or scientific activity.			X	
4.6. The library and library equipment, as well as access to additional resources ensure the literature necessary for ensuring high-quality of study and scientific and teaching activity.		X		
4.7. The higher education institution rationally manages its financial resources.			X	

Quality grade by standard				
V. Professional and/or scientific activity	*Unsatisfactory level of quality*	*Minimum level of quality*	*Satisfactory level of quality*	*High level of quality*
5.1. Teachers and associates employed at the higher education institution are committed to the achievement of high quality and quantity of professional and/or scientific activity.		X		
5.2. The higher education institution proves the social relevance of its professional and/or scientific research and transfer of knowledge.			X	
5.3. Professional and/or scientific achievements of the higher education institution have been recognized in the regional, national and international context.		X		
5.4. Professional and/or scientific activities and achievements of the higher education institution improve teaching.			X	

2. Site visit protocol

Edukacija članova stručnog povjerenstva u virtualnom okruženju/Education of panel members in virtual form

	Ponedjeljak, 15. ožujka 2021.	Monday, 15th March 2021
10:00 –	• Predstavljanje AZVO-a • Predstavljanje sustava visokog obrazovanja u RH • Postupak reakreditacije • Standardi za vrednovanje kvalitete *Pauza* • Kako napisati Završno izvješće • Priprema povjerenstva za posjet visokom učilištu (rasprava o Samoanalizi i popratnim dokumentima)	• Presentation of ASHE • Overview of the higher education system in Croatia • Re-accreditation procedure • Standards for the evaluation of quality *Break* • How to write the Final report • Preparation of the Expert Panel members for the site visit (discussion on the Self-evaluation report and supporting documents)

Preliminarni posjet Stručnog povjerenstva visokom učilištu / Preliminary site-visit of Expert Panel members to the HEI

	Ponedjeljak, 22. ožujka 2021.	Monday, 22 March 2021
9:50– 10:00	Spajanje Prof. Jonesa i Prof. Hicksa na poveznicu (link) ZOOM	Joining of 2 members of the Expert Panel (Prof. Jones and Prof. Hicks) to the ZOOM meeting via link
10:00 – 11:00	Sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstva s dekanom i prodekanima	Meeting of the Expert Panel members with the Dean and Vice-Deans
11:00 – 11:10	*Pauza*	*Break*
11:10 – 12:10	Sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstva s predstavnicima Povjerenstva za kvalitetu	Meeting of the Expert Panel members with the representatives of Quality Assurance Commission
12:10 – 13:50	**Analiza dokumenata**	***Document analysis***
13:50 – 15:20	**Ručak**	***Lunch***

15:20 –	**Obilazak Veleučilišta** (predavaonice, inf. učionice, knjižnica, studentske službe, laboratoriji) **i prisustvovanje nastavi**	**Tour of the University** (classrooms, computer classrooms, library, student services, labs) **and participation in teaching classes**

Zoom sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstva / Zoom meeting of the expert panel members

	Utorak, 23. ožujka 2021.	**Tuesday, 23 March 2021**
10:00– 12:00	Virtualni sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstva, diskusija o zapažanjima i impresijama s preliminarnog posjeta	Virtual meeting of the Expert Panel members, discussion of observations and impressions from the preliminary visit

Prvi dan reakreditacije u virtualnom okruženju / First day of re-accreditation in virtual form

	Srijeda, 24. ožujka 2021.	**Wednesday, 24 March 2021**
9:50 – 10:00	Spajanje na poveznicu (link) ZOOM	Joining ZOOM meeting via the link
10:00 – 10:45	Sastanak članova Stručnog povjerenstva s pročelnicima odjela	Meeting of Expert Panel members with Heads of Department
10:45 – 11:00	*Pauza*	*Break*
11:00 – 12:00	Sastanak s nastavnicima (u stalnom radnom odnosu, nisu na rukovodećim mjestima)	Meeting with full-time employed teachers who do not have managerial positions
12:00 – 13:00	*Pauza, Interni sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstava*	*Break, Internal meeting of the panel members*
13:00– 13:45	Sastanak s vanjskim predavačima	Meeting with external lecturers
13:45 – 14:00	*Pauza*	*Break*
14:00 – 15:00	Sastanak sa studentima	Meeting with students
15:00 – 15:45	Organizacija dodatnog sastanka o otvorenim pitanjima – prema potrebi	Organisation of an additional meeting on open questions, if needed

Drugi dan reakreditacije u virtualnom okruženju / Second day of re-accreditation in virtual form

	Četvrtak, 25. ožujka 2021.	Thursday, 25 March 2021
9:50 – 10:00	Spajanje na poveznicu (link) ZOOM	Joining ZOOM meeting via the link
10:00 – 11:00	Sastanak s prodekanicom za nastavu	Meeting with vice dean for teaching
11:00 – 12:00	Sastanak s: • Voditeljicom službe za studentske poslove • Voditeljicom cjeloživotnih programa • Voditeljima stručne prakse • Članovima povjerenstva za mobilnost	Meeting with: • Head of Student affairs office • ECTS and ERASMUS coordinators • Head of lifelong learning programs • Heads of professional practice • Representatives of Mobility Commission
12:00 – 12:10	*Pauza*	*Break*
12:10 – 13:10	Sastanak s vanjskim dionicima - predstavnicima strukovnih i profesionalnih udruženja, poslovna zajednica, poslodavci, stručnjaci iz prakse	Meeting with external stakeholders - representatives of professional organisations, business sector/industry sector, employers, professional experts
13:10 – 14:15	*Pauza*	*Break*
14:15 – 15:00	Sastanak s alumnijima (bivši studenti koji nisu zaposlenici visokog učilišta)	Meeting with Alumni (former students who are not employed by the HEI)
15:00 – 15:45	Organizacija dodatnog sastanka o otvorenim pitanjima – prema potrebi	Organisation of an additional meeting on open questions, if needed
15:45 – 16:00	Završni sastanak s dekanom i prodekanima	Exit meeting with the Dean and Vice-Deans

SUMMARY

The Expert Panel evaluated Međimurje Polytechnic in Čakovec on 22 March 2021 with an aim of assessing the institution in accordance with the Accreditation Council criteria. The Expert Panel comprised six members in order to include the breadth of expertise necessary to evaluate all programmes of the HEI. The accreditation procedure was performed in a hybrid form with four members of the panel visiting the HEI on 22 March 2021 and the remaining two members of the Panel participating via online teleconferencing platform. The Panel studied the Self-evaluation Report submitted by the HEI, examined the data and evidence available in the form of hard copy of sample exam papers, theses, student data, procedures, topic syllabi and learning outcomes, etc., interviewed the HEI management team, external stakeholders, employed lecturers, external lecturers, alumni and students. The representatives of the Panel also visited a number of laboratories, teaching classes and the library.

Based on the evidence, the Expert Panel is pleased to recommend that Međimurje Polytechnic complies with the requirements for performing academic activities in accordance with the criteria set by the Ordinance on the Content of Licence and Conditions for Issuing Licence for Performing Higher Education Activity.

The main observations and recommendations of the evaluation are:

The HEI has made clear and substantial progress since the last review having successfully implemented the recommendations from 2014 and notably: a revised and regionally relevant mission statement; a quality assurance system; student accommodation; and, addressed the low teacher:student ratio. In addition, the HEI has increased its involvement in the EU projects and developed partnerships with other HEIs in Croatia and Slovenia enabling sharing of expertise, resources and transfer of good practice. The HEI has also secured funding for the development of its own laboratories which have the potential to greatly benefit the HEI's teaching, research and industrial collaborations in the region.

With the foundations in place, the next stage for the HEI is to transition its QAS from paper into 'business-as-usual'. This will involve embedding the QAS into practice for all staff and integrating the various processes, including data flows (e.g., surveys, student feedback, pass rates, plagiarism, etc.) and key performance indicators, into routine review and planning meetings. The HEI will also need to define mechanisms to 'close the

loop' by taking appropriate action and reporting the issues and actions to different stakeholder groups, including where appropriate students.

As part of planning, the HEI should formalise strategies and implement annual and five-year plans for research and lifelong learning. With regard to programmes, the HEI should review and update learning outcomes regularly to reflect good practice, incorporate multiple opportunities to achieve learning outcomes and include outcomes that satisfy the HEI's mission, such as entrepreneurship. The HEI should seek to reinforce and extend its collaborations with industry to further improve its programmes and a build a scientific (research) reputation with their support.

Lastly, the HEI should implement a step-change in training and CPD opportunities for its lecturers to include support for timely completion of PhDs and budget to attend quality international conferences. The HEI should also continue to develop international partnerships and promote international exchanges for both its students and staff.