

REPORT OF THE EXPERT PANEL ON THE REACCREDITATION OF THE UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE (DOCTORAL) PROGRAMME Cultural Studies

UNIVERSITY JOSIP JURAJ STROSSMAYER IN OSIJEK

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INTRODUCTION

The Expert Panel appointed by the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE) created this Report on the Re-accreditation of the University Postgraduate (Doctoral) Study Programme *Cultural Studies* on the basis of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) of the Programme, other documentation submitted and a visit to the University Josip Juraj Strossmayer in Osijek.

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

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

The Report contains the following elements:

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

Members of the Expert Panel:

Dr Igor Štiks, University in Edinburg and Faculty for Media and Communication

Professor Dibyesh Anand, University of Westminster

Dr Daniela Angelina Jelinčić, Institute for Development and International Relations

Assoc. professor Peter W. Zuidhof, University of Amsterdam

Dr. Teresa Murjas, School Director of Academic Tutoring for Theatre & Television and the School of Arts & Communication Design, Reading University, UK

Marko Radenović, Princeton University and McKinsey & Company,

Katja Simončič, Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana

Matteo Tracchi, Human Rights Centre of the University of Padova, Italy

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

- Dr Igor Štiks, University in Edinburg and Faculty for Media and Communication
- Dr. Teresa Murjas, School Director of Academic Tutoring for Theatre & Television and the School of Arts & Communication Design, Reading University, UK
- Dr Daniela Angelina Jelinčić, Institute for Development and International Relations
- Professor Dibyesh Anand, University of Westminster
- Assoc. professor Peter W. Zuidhof, University of Amsterdam
- Matteo Tracchi, Human Rights Centre of the University of Padova, Italy
- Katja Simončič, Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana

Members of the Panel that primarily participated in the report writing:

- Dr Igor Štiks, University in Edinburg and Faculty for Media and Communication
- Dr Teresa Murjas, School Director of Academic Tutoring for Theatre & Television and the School of Arts & Communication Design, Reading University, UK
- Dr Daniela Angelina Jelinčić, Institute for Development and International Relations
- Katja Simončič, Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana

In the analysis of the documentation, site visit and writing of the report the Panel was supported by:

• Filip Vukuša, coordinator, ASHE.

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

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

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme contained in the licence: Cultural Studies postgraduate interdisciplinary university study program

Institution delivering the programme: Josip Juraj Strossmayer University in Osijek Institution providing the programme: Josip Juraj Strossmayer University in Osijek

Place of delivery: Osijek

Scientific area and field: Social Sciences (Information and Communication Sciences, Economics, Interdisciplinary Social Sciences), Humanities (Philosophy, Philology, History, Art History,

Interdisciplinary Humanities, Art Science), Arts (Interdisciplinary field of arts)

Number of doctoral candidates: 105 Number of funded doctoral candidates: 15

Number of self-funded doctoral candidates and those funded by employer: 90

Number of inactive doctoral candidates: 38

Number of teachers: 50

Number of supervisors: 32 officially appointed, it is hard to ascertain the total number of potential supervisors from the SER

Number of doctoral candidates with officially appointed supervisors: 36

Learning outcomes of the study programme:

Upon fulfilment of all study obligations, and completion and public defence of their doctoral theses, candidates will be able to:

- *LO.1.* Identify, analyze and comprehensively and critically reflect on the research ethics in projects and areas of research included in the doctoral study program.
- *LO.2.* Carry out research and dissemination of research results with academic integrity and in accordance with the values, principles and standards promoted by the academic community.
- *LO.3.* Individually identify and define research problems and conduct independent research of subjects in different scientific fields within social sciences and humanities and arts.
- *LO.4.* Take a critical stand towards contradictory attitudes in the areas of own research, as well as in relation to the research of other stakeholders.
- *LO.5.* Manage and participate in complex interdisciplinary tasks and research in various scientific fields within social sciences and humanities and the field of art domestically and internationally.
- *LO.6.* Evaluate existing and encourage the application of new research methodologies in different scientific fields within social sciences and humanities and the field of art.
- *LO.7.* Publish scientific and artistic publications, manuals and textbooks and participate in national and international scientific debates, seminars and workshops (masterclass) in their field of activity.

Structure of programme:

30 ECTS compulsory joint courses for all modules (3 courses - methodology, ethics, culture and history) + 20 ECTS module specific compulsory courses (2 courses) + 10 ECTS elective courses (2 courses) = 60/180 ECTS in coursework

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

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

Issue a letter of recommendation for the period \underline{up} to $\underline{1}$ year in which period the higher education institution should make the necessary improvements.

The letter of recommendation <u>does not include suspension of student enrolment</u>. However, the panel recommends to the Agency <u>to suspend student enrolment if the required changes</u> <u>are not implemented within one year period</u>.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

- 1. The governance issue should be resolved, i.e. a confusing legal status of the doctoral school needs to be clarified as soon as possible as to keep up with the re-accreditation standards and the reputation of the doctoral school.
- 2. It is recommended to focus on internationalisation / regionalisation: to develop Osijek as a regional centre by building common research projects, by inviting guest professors and by recruiting doctoral students regionally. There is also a necessity to offer courses in English and to improve public presence in English language as well.
- 3. It is necessary to enhance the quality of research, which would have direct impact on the overall quality of the defended doctoral dissertations. The defended theses in most cases fail to provide concise methodological approaches and are not well-structured. This does not comply with the international criteria, thus many theses resemble the master-level and not PhD-level works.
- 4. It is necessary to pay special attention to the quality of dissertations in artistic / creative practice. They cannot be descriptive of artistic process and work but should aim to satisfy clearly prescribed research / academic criteria. We strongly recommend the examination of the existing models of practice-based research (such as the ones at UK universities). This type of dissertations should be, among other things, longer in length, and have clearly defined research methods and a developed academic bibliography. They should show an analytical approach to the problems treated in creative practices and should be strongly aware of ethics in art-based research. Only by establishing clear academic criteria for artistic PhDs would the HEI avoid an irresponsible inflation of this particular degree and preserve the quality (and thus the appeal) of its doctoral programme.
- 5. The programme should define thematic scope of cultural studies. Not everything can be accepted under the term of cultural studies and be put under the carpet of 'interdisciplinarity' but only those projects that correspond with the established field of cultural studies, including its canonical literature and research methods, and are clearly positioned between defined disciplines. This includes firm knowledge of these disciplines

- and not just the use of their elements. Interdisciplinarity cannot be an umbrella term for thematic anarchy, unclear methodologies and superficial research.
- 6. The panel strongly recommends a new model of the distribution of collected funds. The programme should offer to cover tuition fees for the best candidates (and thus attract them) as well as redistribute more funds for student activities such as field trips and conference presentations.
- 7. The HEI should establish clear guidelines for supervisors: they should develop a feasible research plan with every student, and periodically write supervisory reports (supervision log) completed by students and tutors after each supervision, in order to keep track of supervisors process and any changes taking place. In addition to that, supervisors must become more research active by publishing in internationally recognized academic (not only Croatian or regional) journals and outlets.
- 8. We recommend to the Programme to establish a doctoral colloquium (in addition to what is called doctoral seminar or occasional meetings) at which students will, in the presence of other students and professors, present their research plan, research questions and methodology. This will help to reinforce a close-knit academic and intellectual community.
- 9. The doctoral school should establish a clear strategic action plan for the 1-year period needed for implementation of the panel recommendations.

ADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

- 1. Several modules which makes it a comparative advantage in relation to other studies (e.g. Rijeka);
- 2. A broad range of mentors with different backgrounds;
- 3. A possibility to formulate original topics covering various scientific fields and approaches (see above for the risks attached to this advantage and for the need for firm supervision)

DISADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

- 1. Weak publishing activities by the teachers (both in terms of the quantity of papers as well as the quality/rank of journals they are published in);
- 2. Poor involvement in research projects by the teaching staff;
- 3. Rare examples of involving students in research activities;
- 4. Practically non-existent international exposure of the teachers;
- 5. No international mobility of doctoral candidates;
- 6. Poor dynamism of the programme;
- 7. Old fashioned approach to teaching;
- 8. Dispersion of classes so there is no interaction among students;

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

- 1. Presentation of doctoral students' research results in the library (once per month);
- 2. Extremely helpful administrative support;

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

Minimal legal conditions:	
1. Higher education institution (HEI) is listed in the Register of Scientific	NO. *
Organisations in the scientific area of the programme, and has a positive	
reaccreditation decision on performing higher education activities and	
scientific activity.	
* The University is not listed in the Register. Newly founded Academy of Art and	l Culture that
coordinates the programme in Cultural Studies is also not registered in the Regist	
2. HEI delivers programmes in the two cycles leading to the doctoral	NO.*
programme, i.e., first two cycles in the same area and field/fields (for	
interdisciplinary programmes), and employs a sufficient number of teachers as	
defined by Article 6 of the Ordinance on the Content of a Licence and Conditions	
for Issuing a Licence for Performing Higher Education Activity, Carrying out a	
Study Programme and Re-Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions (OG	
24/10).	
* The University does not deliver programmes in the two cycles leading to	the dectoral
programme in the fields and areas listed above nor does it employ a number of st	
	taii suiiicieiit
for delivering the programme in those fields.	NO *
3. HEI employs a sufficient number of researchers, as defined by Article 7 of the	NO.*
Ordinance on Conditions for Issuing Licence for Scientific Activity, Conditions	
for Re-Accreditation of Scientific Organisations and Content of Licence (OG	
83/2010).	
* Same as above.	
4. At least 50% of teaching as expressed in norm-hours is delivered by teachers	NO.*
employed at the HEI (full-time, elected into scientific-teaching titles).	
* Same as above.	
5. Student: teacher ratio at the HEI is below 30:1.	NO*
* Same as above.	
6. HEI ensures that doctoral theses are public.	NO*
* Doctoral theses are uploaded and listed on DABAR repository, but not readily	available on
open access.	
7. HEI launches the procedure of revoking the academic title if it is determined	YES.
that it has been attained contrary to the conditions stipulated for its attainment,	
by severe violation of the studying rules or based on a doctoral thesis	
(dissertation) that has proved to be a plagiarism or a forgery according to	
provisions of the statute or other enactments.	
Additional/ recommended conditions for passing a positive opinion	
1. HEI has at least five teachers appointed to scientific-teaching titles in the	NO.
field, or fields relevant for the programme involved in its delivery.	
2. In the most recent reaccreditation, HEI had the standard Scientific and	NO.*
Professional Activity marked as at least "partly implemented" (3).	
* There was no accreditation of the University.	
There was no accreated on the only croity.	

The recommendation in the re-accreditation of the Department of Cultural Studies in 2014 was to deny the licence for preforming higher education activities. Various other constituent parts of the University listed as contributors to the programme were graded < 3 in the relevant criterion during the previous re-accreditations (Faculty of Law, Faculty of Economics). Newly founded Academy of Art and Culture that took over study programmes in Cultural Studies is also not registered in the Registry. 3. The doctoral programme is aligned with the HEI's research strategy. NO.* * There is no specific research strategy at the University level. The constituent parts have their research strategies as listed above. 4. The candidate: supervisor ratio at the HEI is not above 3:1. YES. 5. All supervisors meet the following conditions: NO* a) PhD, elected into a scientific title, holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position and/or has at least two years of postdoctoral research experience; b) active researcher in the scientific area of the programme, as evidenced by publications, participation in scientific conferences and/or projects in the past five years (table 2, Supervisors and candidates); c) confirms feasibility of the draft research plan upon admission of the candidate (or submission of the proposal); d) ensures the conditions (and funding) necessary to implement the candidate's research (in line with the draft research plan) as a research project leader, coleader, participant, collaborator or in other ways; e) trained for the role before assuming it (through workshops, cosupervisions); f) received a positive opinion of the HEI on previous supervisory work. * Only 10 out of expected 32 appointed supervisors are listed in the table. a) YES for those listed in table 2. b) NO, the data is incomplete but still telling (for instance, Šafar seems to have no works listed in CROSBI since 2010, 2 are retired); c) NO, the research plan is not mandatory upon admission; d) NO, out of 10 listed supervisors, 3 have project activity listed in the last 5 years; e) YES, according to SER, all supervisors (including external) attended a workshop; f) YES. 6. All teachers meet the following conditions: a) YES. a) holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position; b) NO.* b) active researcher, recognized in the field relevant for the course. *Partial or incomplete data for many teachers. 7. The supervisor normally does not participate in the assessment committees. NO. *Supervisor is a member of the assessment committee. 8. The programme ensures that all candidates spend at least three years doing NO.* independent research (while studying, individually, within or outside courses), which includes writing the thesis, publishing, participating in international conferences, field work, attending courses relevant for research etc. *According to SER, coursework alone takes 1/3 of the programme ECTS (60 ECTS).

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

		Quality assessment ("high level of quality" or "improvements are necessary") and the explanation of the Expert Panel
1.	RESOURCES: TEACHERS, SUPERVISORS, RESEARCH CAPACITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE	
		Improvements are necessary
1.3	. HEI is distinguished by its scientific/artistic achievements in the discipline in which the doctoral study programme is delivered.	Currently, for this HEI, Cultural Studies might still be regarded as an emergent idea. There is not yet in existence a robust and clearly defined Cultural Studies doctoral programme, working from a stable centre of identity and delivered consistently by an appropriately trained academic staff team. There is not yet a fully developed distinctive vision that would enable effective strategic positioning within national and international institutional frameworks. It is notable that across the faculties and institutions from which supervisors are drawn – including some from within international contexts – there is evidence of innovative research, some of which is funded and some of which intersects with professional creative practice, demonstrating wider research impact. However, the programme's hybrid structure does not currently constitute an absolutely persuasive and effective model for enabling students to ambitiously and convincingly articulate the position of their individual researches within the Cultural Studies field, nor their engagement with genuinely inter-disciplinary research methodologies. There does currently exist a strong institutional assertion of the strategic importance of such a programme, an assertion that communicates both passionate enthusiasm as well as the broad cultural and personal needs of both students and staff. All of these are crucially important and should by no means be discounted. It is possible that the currently rather 'foggy' legal status of the doctoral school renders the establishment of a robust model of delivery for the programme particularly complex, and stymies levels of commitment to its development and expansion in a variety of ways, which is a great shame. The panel can understand and appreciate that there is a rationale for the programme's existence, rooted in both

educational and cultural imperatives relating to the HEI's location and profile. A coherent programme that embeds flexibility and diversity as key principles and that enables and supports students in moving towards the realisation of their assertively-expressed professional ambitions, talents and personal needs would not be out of place. On this basis, the hybrid structure that has been developed provides a plausible *starting point* for an effective programme and the level of conviction expressed in it by some of those working at the HEI, and particularly by its students and alumni, is in its own way persuasive. It is suggested that the following might all contribute to building the programme and raising its profile and reputation:

- clarity in terms of legal status of doctoral school;
- increased strategic commitment to supporting the development of academic staff at a range of career stages;
- the articulation of a coherent vision and missionstatement for the programme so that it moves beyond its currently rather uneasy amalgamation of studies of cultural practices, into a thematically clearly-defined Cultural Studies programme.

The conditions are present for creating a competitive programme, that prioritises independent research and that is both socially relevant and academically progressive. Alternatively, the HEI may wish to re-consider whether the programme title is under the circumstances the best one, as there is a range of alternative possibilities that might better encompass and express what is being – and what can be – offered, without compromising its attractiveness to students, its significance for Croatia and the region, and ultimately its competitiveness. In addition, this would not necessarily cancel out the possibility of developing inter-disciplinary research as a unique aspect of the programme's over-arching identity.

1.2. The number and workload of teachers involved in the study programme ensure quality doctoral education.

Improvements are necessary

There are teachers with workload that exceeds the workload prescribed by the Collective Agreement (360 norm hours) by 50% or more (a drastic example is a teacher with 930 norm hours). In pedagogic terms, this means that the likelihood of a drop in academic staff morale is increased and that the openness of academic

staff to working through effective collaboration is severely compromised. Given the stage in the programme's development, a more strategic resolution for these problems than is currently in place is necessary, as a collective approach is what is required in order to more sharply define the programme's identity and its marketing profile. The argument that each student's project is supported by a bespoke supervisory approach is not sufficiently persuasive in this context, though it has of course been attracting those students wishing for particular kinds of autonomy to the programme.

In terms of individual researchers, it is evident that those students the panel members were able to speak with are committed and inspired by contact with their supervisors and that they appreciate their work. A range of students noted on a number of occasions that they would find more diverse opportunities to present their research to each other extremely beneficial. There is a strong rationale for enabling this, as students interested in developing interdisciplinary methodologies can learn a great deal from working with and listening to each other, over a sustained time period. Of course this has further workload implications for staff and implies the need for a more developed leadership infrastructure, which includes some delegation, for the programme. It would however assist in further ensuring high quality doctoral provision. Feedback from students also indicates the extent to which research community is of importance. While it is not always possible for students to attend all research events, given their other commitments, the presence of a 'centre' is vital. This is just one of the reasons why the suggestion made during the site visit of plans to move to a distance learning model is somewhat alarming under the circumstances described above.

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

Improvements are necessary

A significant number of teachers are listed with partial or no information on their recent scientific activity in Table 1. While the researchers appear qualified, from the information provided not all appear to maintain active research profiles, which would be important in providing students with vital connections to current critical and theoretical debates, and methodological approaches. Given the breadth of the research interests brought to the programme by students, it is logical that the programme

director should also seek supervisory expertise beyond institutional boundaries. However, what is compromised here is the kind of focus on consolidating programme identity that is described in 1.1 above.

In addition, in order to ensure quality doctoral education, expectations for staff need to be more clearly identified than is currently the case regarding research profile development. These would need to include information about what research training is available and necessary, what research collaborations are desirable, how much time should be dedicated to producing research within overall realistic workload models, how many research outputs should be produced within a given time-frame and which publications and creative forums are most appropriate for their dissemination. In terms of workload this needs to be considered alongside other teaching commitments, levels of seniority and experience, and administrative and leadership responsibilities. Given that norm hours relating to the Collective Agreement are being exceeded, these measures do not currently appear to be in place.

It may be that active research engagement is made difficult for some researchers given their workload, in which case both the formulation and transparent implementation of a strategic, realistic research plan alongside a reduction in the size of doctoral student intake onto the programme should be prioritised, in order to properly build effective supervisory capacity and confidence. Investing in the of more development integrated, consistent supervisory arrangements not simply in order to meet the research-support needs of individual projects but also in order to train and develop younger academic researchers would pay dividends. These are strategic leadership responsibilities to address concerns where a fully adequate infrastructure does not yet exist.

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

Improvements are necessary

It would be of considerable concern if all the doctoral researchers whose studies are currently suspended were to return. Notwithstanding this, the documentation provided seems to suggest that in order to support currently active student numbers, there are a requisite number of supervisors available. Whereas some have an admirable level of research activity and funding success, this is by no means exclusively the case. As already

mentioned, the focus or responsibility here rests institutionally at the intersection of:

- developing a sustainable yet ambitious research strategy;
- addressing issues connected with research culture;
- commitment to ensuring career-long research training for staff;
- considering carefully which candidates are admitted onto the programme and whether their research interests are a genuine match within the parameters of the programme's identity and individual supervisory research capacities.

The establishment of opportunities for students to submit practice-as-research PhDs (i.e. PhD in creative practice) is cause for celebration and this was clear in the positive energy with which students responded to the panel's questions regarding this area of the programme offering. However, students and tutors need to become more aware of, and conversant in, current debates relating to the role of creative practice relative to research and discourses surrounding practice-as-research, practice-led research, practice-based research and so on. This did not consistently come across in the meetings with supervisors - only one of whom seemed fully aware of these debates - and especially with students, who did not seem aware of the grounds on which the practical component of their overall thesis would be assessed, other than referring to the expertise of their tutors and examiners as a guiding factor. The grounds for assessment and the relationship between the practical and theoretical dimensions of PhD submission are not currently clear and transparent, and the relationship between professional artistic practice and doctoral practice-as-research needs to be more carefully workedthrough and made evident in written documentation. While it is acknowledged that there needs to be an individualised approach to the definition of a PhD topic, the examples of practice-led submissions to date lacked terms of articulating sophistication in methodological approaches, and in terms of developing critically-grounded documentation of the practical submission (e.g. digital submission had no markers indicating how the practical work addressed a series of research questions).

The problem of how students can be guided towards

developing practice-as-research PhDs that integrate research questions relevant to the field of Cultural Studies is also significant here. If intersectional approaches are indeed relevant, then students should be able to articulate how and why they are deploying these methods, and what inter-disciplinarity means both for the research profile of staff who are teaching them and for the doctoral research culture, as well as for them as individual researchers.

Improvements are necessary

1.5. The HEI has developed methods of assessing the qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors.

Whereas the qualifications of supervisors may not be in question within the existing framework, there does not appear to be a robust system for building and incentivising teacher and supervisor competency, and regularly assessing it. There is evidence that staff attended a training workshop, for example, run by a specialist, which is positive. However, this is a somewhat constrained approach given the work that needs to be done on developing the programme identity and the extremely diverse needs of active students. The panel was not provided with evidence of a staff mentoring system, or staff development review programme, for example, where positive feedback and/or any concerns and training needs might be formally raised by both supervisors and their line managers. While there are opportunities for students to provide feedback, as articulated during the site visit, these appear rather ad hoc, and this raises concerns regarding transparency in relation to how feedback operates and how its consequences are ultimately implemented.

Improvements are necessary

It is evident that:

1.6. The HEI has access to high-quality resources for research, as required by the programme discipline.

1. Greater financial resources can be made available to students for the needs of their research, based on information about programme income (the amount of collected fees) available at the site visit. No consistent information was provided across the self-evaluation document and the site visit regarding funds available to students for, for example, conference travel and creative research production, what the application procedures are, how equitably these are distributed and who decides on the allocation of funds. For students working on established research projects, it seems that tutors are at liberty to allocate funding, but how this ultimately feeds into establishing parity of approach across all funded,

partially-funded and self-funded student groups was not clear. 2. The panel was not shown any space dedicated exclusively to doctoral students for work and activities during the site visit. 3. There is a reliance on accessing literature via online resources. Students can use the town library and faculty libraries to access these. However, the limited resources available in Osijek might put at disadvantage students studying here vis-à-vis their peers studying, for instance, in Zagreb. The information provided here is somewhat limited in order to enable an assessment concerning the sufficiency of provision, which could always be invested in further, in parallel with the development of a distinctive programme identity. 4. The panel was introduced to one administrator who appears to cover two programmes. The provision of one administrator, given the number of students and supervisors, seems somewhat limited and there should be scope for building an administrative team if the panel's suggested measures for achieving accreditation are successfully put in place. 2. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE PROGRAMME Improvements are necessary As notes above, the minimal legal conditions are not met. There is a serious problem with legal status of the doctoral school within which the Cultural Studies programme is delivered. Legal status has to be addressed as a matter of priority. The Expert panel recommends to the HEI to solve 2.1. The HEI has established and accepted the issue within a 1 year period in order to continue this effective procedures for proposing, doctoral programme. approving and delivering doctoral education. The procedures include The panel concludes that the needs are generally identification of scientific/ artistic, identified: offering a programme that can compete with the cultural, social and economic needs. Rijeka doctoral programme in cultural studies (by offering a PhD degree in art / creative practice). The dire socioeconomic and demographic situation of the Slavonia region

2.2. The programme is aligned with the **Improvements are necessary** HEI research mission and vision, i.e.

between Croatia, Hungary, Serbia and Bosnia.

pushes for such initiatives. The panel recommends to the programme to use the geographical position of Osijek to establish itself within the wider trans-border region

	research strategy.	The programme seems to be in line with the strategic vision of the University of Osijek for 2011-2020. SER cites that one of its strategic goals is the establishment of doctoral schools (p. 30). Due to the legal issues mentioned above, it is clear that this vision has not been followed by adequate legal provisions that would be in line with the accreditation procedures and ensure the future and the quality of this doctoral programme.
2.3.	The HEI systematically monitors the success of the programmes through periodic reviews, and implements improvements.	Improvements are necessary The panel recognises the fact that the HEI did introduce some important changes after the negative review in 2014. But, to further consolidate the programme, it is necessary to set up an annual review exercise to account for true needs of both staff and students. SER claims that the HEI has conducted a review in 2017-18 among doctoral students (those who completed the programme and those still enrolled). Still, the panel has not been provided with the results or a report on implemented improvements. The very fact that only 13 doctoral degrees have been awarded so far in the programme (out of 105 enrolled students) is in itself alarming. The review has to be done as soon as possible to detect the problems students face in completing their degree and to implement the changes within the 1-year period.
2.4.		The panel recognizes the fact that mechanisms are in place to change supervisors during the programme and to mediate between students and supervisors. However, it is unclear how the HEI monitors supervisor's performance, especially those employed at external institutions. Often students work with their supervisors entirely outside of the HEI. It is crucial to monitor mentors' research profile before and during their appointment as mentors.
2.5.	HEI assures academic integrity and freedom.	High level of quality YES. It seems that mechanisms are in place such as Turnitin software. Generally, it seems that the atmosphere is supporting freedom of research.
2.6.	The process of developing and defending the thesis proposal is transparent and objective, and includes a public presentation.	Improvements are necessary Yes, the process is transparent and objective, although it does not include a public presentation. Students however

		have an opportunity to present publicly their doctoral work.
		Improvements are necessary
2.7.	Thesis assessment results from a scientifically sound assessment of an independent committee.	The panel has no reasons to doubt the independence of examination committee, although the fact that supervisors participate in the examination does pose a problem. However, the defended theses vary greatly in quality, form and scientific methodology. As mentioned earlier, this is alarming. Some theses that the panel examined would not meet international standards for a doctoral dissertation i.e. are scientifically at the level of master theses. They either do not formulate scientifically sound research questions or fail to explain both the arguments and the used methodology. Some are limited to description, mechanical archiving of the materials, and secondary literature. The PhD theses in artistic field should be given special scrutiny. They should primarily enhance their scientific quality as well and should not be reduced—in the written part—to a mere description of artistic / creative process. The existing models (such as those in the UK) should be used to establish clear criteria for this type of doctoral dissertation in order to prevent an inflation of these degrees and subsequently erode the quality of this doctoral programme.
2.8.	The HEI publishes all necessary information on the study programme, admissions, delivery and conditions for progression and completion, in accessible outlets and media.	It seems that the information on the study programme is only announced on the HEI's website. The HEI should reach towards media outlets as well. There is clearly no international outreach. As part of its internationalisation / regionalisation strategy the programme should be announced in neighbouring countries and internationally (mailing lists, academic outlets, social networks etc.) The panel is happy to see that the programme is presented in English at the department's website: http://kulturologija.unios.hr/en/ However, English has to be improved so to avoid confusing and meaningless translations such as this one: "
		incessantly perplexed with professional practice".
2.9.	Funds collected for the needs of doctoral education are distributed	
		According to the reports, the funds (and not all) are used to provide for professors' and external faculty remuneration,

development of doctoral education (ensures that candidates' research is doctoral education can be completed successfully).

whereas there is effectively no funds available for students.

carried out and supported, so that The panel found very limited institutional support for candidates' field research or participation in academic conferences (unless specifically organized by the HEI or the Programme). This is despite financial reports showing that the programme revenues are regularly and considerably outpacing the costs (in 2016, revenues collected were ~75% higher than costs; in 2017, ~150% (!) higher) which suggests that there should be available funds for investment in supporting the students and their research, or that tuition fees could be decreased.

> The panel urges the HEI to allocate a portion of the funds for students' research, research trips, presentations outside the HEI and abroad. Or simply reduce the fees. The funds should be clearly made available for students and allocated based on the established criteria. The panel recommends to the HEI to allocate funds for the best candidates (not employed at the university) and cover their tuition fees. This might be a way to attract very good candidates and ensure a comparative advantage to other similar regional programmes.

Improvements are necessary

2.10. Tuition fees are determined on the basis of transparent criteria (and real costs of studying).

The tuition fees look rather like a lump, rounded sum than an amount based on real costs. It corresponds to other doctoral programmes in Croatia in this respect. It is thus difficult to assess their justification. According to the table provided in SER (p. 35), the price calculation is based on the estimate of what percentage should cover what costs. The financial reports show a surplus (see 2.9.) so there is definitely a space here for intervention, both when it comes to the costs of the programme, distribution towards students and the award of stipends for best candidates.

3. SUPPORT TO **DOCTORAL CANDIDATES** AND **THEIR PROGRESSION**

Improvements are necessary

3.1. The HEI establishes admission quotas with respect to its teaching and supervision capacities.

The ratio of the number of mentors and enrolled doctoral students is very favourable and amounts to 1:2.3. This is due to the fact that 40 in-house teachers and 10 teachers from other institutions are lecturing at the study program, which is sufficient to bear the mentioned ratio since there

are 10 students per modules (three sub-programmes). Besides, students are encouraged to search for a supervisor outside of this pool of teaching staff, so the ratio is even more favourable. However, some supervisors' workload seems to exceed the existing legal thresholds, which puts additional burden on their supervision.

The panel is concerned with the fact that the competencies of supervisors are often not aligned with the candidates' research proposal. HEI states that: "When submitting the topic of the doctoral dissertation, the mentor must prove his/her competences in the field of the proposed topic of the doctoral dissertation (a list of five published papers in the last five years related to the doctoral dissertation topic)." (SER, p. 32) This seems not to be the case i.e. the rule is not implemented consistently. We urge HEI to redefine the rule. Competent supervisor is someone who published 5 papers over the last 5 years, or a significant monograph over the last 10 years, within study area for which dissertation topic is relevant.

Additionally, HEI does define basic and very broad obligations of supervisors, candidates and research teams, However in an effort to improve the scientific quality of the candidates' finished product we recommend more detailed guidelines to be established in regards to supervision. See 3.9.

Improvements are necessary

The expert panel has not been presented with any valid arguments supporting the fact that admission quotas of the HEI are based on wider scientific, cultural, social and economic needs. Furthermore, as only 13 out of 105 doctoral students have completed the programme so far, it seems that the quotas are not taking into account the real needs.

3.2. The HEI establishes admission quotas on the basis of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social, economic and other needs.

The expert panel is concerned that too many candidates are left behind in the programme, reflecting a lenient admission policy that does not search for the most engaged and talented candidates. We therefore recommend a more critical approach to the selection of doctoral students. While a motivational letter is required as well as an interview conducted, we recommend that the research proposal should be judged by higher scientific standards i.e. that a more elaborated research proposal should be

presented as part of the admission process. Since the admission criteria allows for the opportunity to set the tone of the doctoral programme the panel is convinced that it is imperative that the HEI sends the message to the potential applicants that research and innovative critical thinking are at the core of doctoral studies. Project proposals should likewise be assessed in line with scientific/ artistic, cultural, social, economic and other needs.

Improvements are necessary

15 doctoral students come from the higher education system and these candidates receive full funding through scientific and/or art-research projects at their home institutions. It means that the financing for their research is assured. 82 doctoral students are self-financed while 8 students receive full or partial funding by their employers. This means that they are not automatically given the opportunity for their research to be funded (depending if their supervisor is involved in a research). Therefore, the ratio of research-funded candidates to self/employer-funded ones is 1:6 and the scholarships are not available. In general, the doctoral programme is not concerned how students are going to assure their funding and so far, although planned in future, no grants and scholarships for doctoral students exist.

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

So far only 13 candidates successfully defended their Ph.D. theses which may also relate to funding issues. Given the fact that there is the admission fee surplus, talented students should be financially encouraged. Also, supervisors should be more proactive in providing for research funds in Croatia and internationally.

The distribution of funds collected from tuition fees does not foresee real research costs for candidates. Small sum of funds is used to support the doctoral students' research by enabling enrolment and payment of the full cost of participating and publishing of a scientific paper at a conference organized by the Cultural Studies postgraduate interdisciplinary university study program (in-house conference!). This means that only those costs are covered which directly relate to the University. This may all have negative reflections on the number of successfully defended theses. The expert panel recommends that the HEI takes serious steps in ensuring sources of funding for

the research of doctoral candidates who would otherwise have to pay these costs in addition to the tuition fees themselves. Additionally, only 2 out of 12 supervisors have included students in their research projects. The panel believes that the HEI should make an effort to enable more students the opportunity to participate in research projects

Improvements are necessary

Upon enrolment, a doctoral student selects a study advisor based on a list of study advisors. There are 25 available study advisors who currently assist 2.24 students on average. From the moment the dissertation topic is submitted, the advisory role is taken over by the supervisor (that could be the same person). So far students are equally distributed to the advisors.

However, we find the fact that the supervisor is formally appointed to a candidate much later in their studies less than ideal. We urge the HEI to set clear guidelines for the supervisor (if not the same person as initial advisor) to be appointed, according to research topic, at the end of the 1st year or latest at the beginning of the 2nd year. Doctoral students are meant to work on their individual research projects throughout their doctoral studies which is difficult if one does not have a supervisor. According to the European University Association: "In line with the first Salzburg Principle, the goal of doctoral education is to cultivate the research mindset, to nurture flexibility of thought, creativity and intellectual autonomy through an original, concrete research project. It is the practice of research that creates this mindset." (Salzburg recommendations, European University Association, 2010, p.4).

The expert panel is glad to report that the students present at the site visit were very content with their supervision and commended their supervisors. However, in order to achieve doctoral education standards, there is a need for a more structured plan of conducting research that would ensure a higher level of the candidates' academic work. We recommend an obligatory initial meeting with a supervisor that would take place in the first month after the appointment of the supervisor. During this meeting (skype would suffice) the supervisor and the student should come up with a provisional timetable for the candidate's individual research. The supervisor should, at the

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

beginning of each semester, set up a few dates for research related tasks for the candidate in the form of readings (relevant to the candidate's individual research), writing articles, collecting data and so forth. He or she should, furthermore, invest efforts to make sure that the candidate's research plan is sustainable and that there is a constant progress in the development of his or her ideas throughout the remaining semesters. The communication between the supervisor and the student should nevertheless remain flexible. A log of cooperation should be kept in which the supervisor notes the date, form and topic of communication with his candidate.

Improvements are necessary

Enrolled candidates mainly come from Croatia and a very small number from the neighbouring countries. Wider international recruitment is missing. Although teachers claim to have language capacities as to offer the courses in English, it has not been done so far.

3.5. The HEI ensures that interested, talented and highly motivated candidates are recruited internationally.

The quality of the candidates is verified by the Enrolment Committee; knowledge, skills and motivation of the candidates is evaluated. The motivation letter is structured and requires a potential student also to present his skills. These are allegedly also tested during the subsequent oral interview.

The HEI should take various steps to attract the best international students leaning towards a career in research. A public call to enrol, albeit open to international students, is insufficient. HEI could start by approaching universities that have managed to attract motivated international students and learning from their good practices. HEI should likewise make funds available for the recruitment and funding of international students.

Improvements are necessary

3.6. The selection process is public and based on choosing the best applicants.

Enrolment is carried out based on a public tender. Selection process: 1. review of the documentation (according to SER, a future synopsis of the thesis can be already foreseen in this document; the teaching staff claims that it is mandatory), 2. interview, 3. final selection (sum of

1+2).

This type of the selection process seems to be insufficient to be able to select the best applicants. Although the motivation letter is allegedly structured as to enable some skills testing, the missing internationalisation of the study programme might exclude best candidates.

Persons who completed their studies abroad or elsewhere must undergo the procedure for academic recognition of higher education qualifications. Their diplomas are reviewed by the Doctoral Council. So far there have been no problems with the recognition. Still, it remains unclear on what the decisions about the best candidates are grounded. The process seems rather formal.

A number of potential doctoral students for the artistic module are already selected during their undergraduate studies or by way of their artistic work which gives an opportunity to select best candidates but from a limited pool.

As stated in 3.2, the panel recommends a more critical approach to the selection of doctoral students. While a motivational letter and a research proposal are required as well as an interview conducted we urge HEI to judge the research proposal by high scientific standards.

High level of quality

3.7. The HEI ensures that the selection procedure is transparent and in line with published criteria, and that there is a transparent complaints procedure.

Final ranking of candidates who qualify for enrolment is public (website). There were not many rejected candidates, and their rejection occurred due to their poorly elaborated motivational letter. Rejected candidates have the right to check the documentation and selection procedures and the reasons for their refusal is explained.

High level of quality

applicants' and candidates' learning.

Previous achievements can be recognised upon demand of 3.8. There is a possibility to recognize the doctoral student at the time of the enrolment. Doctoral prior | School Council can recognise specific ECTS credits with the consent of the course teacher, in some cases. The administration officers are extremely supportive in that matter as well as the Doctoral Council which works without delays.

Improvements are necessary

Candidates' rights and obligations are regulated by the University Statute, Ordinance on Postgraduate Study Programs and other University legal acts. Besides, students sign a study agreement regulating mutual rights and obligations. Additionally, rights and obligations are jointly discussed with the head of the programme. The obligations by the teachers/supervisors are not regulated in the study agreement but are defined by other university documents. No complaints in that matter have been noticed.

3.9. Candidates' rights and obligations are defined in relevant HEI regulations and a contract on studying that provides for a high level of supervisory and institutional support to the candidates. However, the fact that the candidates' rights and obligations are defined in relevant HEI regulations and in the study contract, does not, in itself, provide for a high level of supervisory and institutional support. Clear guidelines for supervisors should be established, which would include: the obligation to meet (live/skype/phone call) with the candidate at least once a month; the obligation to work on the candidate's research from the time the supervisor is appointed and to keep a log of cooperation in regards to these meetings in order to be able to trace the candidate's progress towards a relevant contribution to the scientific field. Research proposal or study plan should entail a hypothesis or a research question that has the potential to develop into an original research and reflects the candidate's eagerness in uncovering new knowledge in the field of cultural studies. It should likewise include the plan for operationalization and the development of research methodology.

3.10.There are institutional support mechanisms for candidates' successful progression.

Improvements are necessary

The panel was content to hear from the doctoral students that the advisors and supervisors encourage them to publish and to present papers in conferences. They published 126 scientific papers in the last five years and actively participated in 115 international conferences. The expert panel believes that the number could be drastically improved. Only two students out of 19 present during the site visit mentioned that the costs of the conference they attended were covered by the research project their supervisors included them in. Likewise, only two out of 12 teachers present during the site visit involved their students in their research projects. The expert panel finds the number to be low and urges supervisors and teachers

		to include their students in their research projects more frequently. Likewise, more funds should be available for students attending international conferences.
4.	PROGRAMME AND OUTCOMES	
		Improvements are necessary
		Doctoral students do not have sufficient opportunities during their study to participate in projects due to the lack of infrastructure when it comes to obtaining and launching such projects in Croatia. Only few teachers are involved in research projects so their students have the opportunity to be involved in an organised research and thus provided a longer and deeper research experience. Besides that, the methodological background they are offered within their core course on methodology is allegedly of a high quality. This does not reflect on the quality of doctoral theses which seem to be very different in terms of their length, methodology and research contents. Some of them are comparable with the quality of research on other universities but some of them lack serious scientific apparatus.
4.1	. The content and quality of the doctoral programme are aligned with internationally recognized standards.	Great emphasis is put on independent work (120 ECTS out of which 70% dedicated to extracurricular activities) which seems to be the advantage of the Programme.
		Mentors' publications are not distinguished at the international level. There is an extremely low number of papers published in international journals (mainly national, SouthEast European or Central European journals). Mentors at the artistic module are active in their artistic work and are internationally visible which may leave them less time for publication activities.
		The expert panel finds that while the doctoral programme is, in theory, research-oriented, in practice students do not carry out research that is of a higher academic level. Furthermore, since most students' supervisors are appointed in the 3 rd semester of their studies, the whole first year of studies is not dedicated to the student's development of his or her thesis. The panel recognizes that the programme is focused on the candidate's independent work and that teaching is to a large extent adapted to the candidate's needs. However, the programme does not

enable the candidate to acquire generic (transferable) skills $\,$

and international experience. See 4.6 for recommendation on generic (transferable) skills.

Admission criteria and admission procedures likewise seem to be in accordance with international HEI standards, however, in practice it appears that most people who apply to HEI are accepted, reflecting a lenient admission policy. When listing the reasons for candidates joining this doctoral programme, the management listed reasons such as the need for a promotion in a cultural institution and the need to climb the academic ladder, while the desire to conduct original and innovative research, which is the central trait of high quality doctoral studies, was not mentioned.

The expert panel is happy to report that the students present at the site visit were very content with their supervision and recommended their supervisors. However, in order to achieve doctoral education standards there is a need for a more structured plan of conducting research that would ensure a higher level of the candidates' academic work.

Improvements are necessary

Learning outcomes (LO) are clearly defined. Emphasis is put on the independent and critical thinking. Competencies to be achieved relate to academic writing, research ethics, research development (principles). The achievement of the LOs are checked against the doctoral seminar work as an important form of independent research activity. However, the doctoral seminar is not internationally comparable. It consists of the presentation of the topic/progress to a small number of students without real feedback.

candidates will develop during the doctoral programme, including the ethical standards of scientific work. English competencies, however, are not very well developed since some teachers are not fluent in English.

Submitted theses demonstrate that the acquired research competencies, such as collecting information and sources, critical reading and identifying biases, interviewing skills, construction of measuring instruments etc. cannot be labelled as high quality. According to the European University Association: "The core component of doctoral

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

training is the advancement of knowledge through original research." (Salzburg II recommendations, European University Association, 2010, p.4) which was not sufficiently reflected in the theses.

It is difficult to asses project planning and management competencies of the candidates to the full extent since very few students are participating in research projects. However, according to the theses that we had the opportunity to read, the students in most cases did not develop high quality research proposals. The expert panel strongly encourages the HEI to create clear guidelines for writing a high quality and original research proposal as it represents a fundamental building block in the development of a doctoral thesis.

Likewise, the panel was not convinced that the programme is intent on delivering socially useful research results and a potential social impact to face new social and economic challenges.

Improvements are necessary

Three courses are compulsory for the joint Cultural Studies Programme and their learning outcomes are logically connected with LOs. However, as the selection of the doctoral research topic is not always very focused (the practice of "anything goes" is exerted), the contents included in the supervision and research are not always in line with some learning outcomes (e.g. LO.3, LO.4, LO.5, LO6, LO.7).

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

The management and teaching staff put a lot of emphasis on the fact that the programme is interdisiciplinary, a feature of the programme likewise praised by the students. While the expert panel acknowledges that this doctoral programme offers students a unique combination of topics that they would not be able to research anywhere else in Croatia, it also encourages the HEI to make sure that the staff has adequate competencies to supervise students in their interdisciplinary topics as well as to be able to ensure high quality of these unorthodox research topics. High quality research and a high quality doctoral thesis always have priority over the freedom of students to choose peculiar combinations of disciplines and subjects. Interdiscplinarity cannot be used to justify any approach, or in most cases a lack of scientifically sound approach, nor can it cover obvious research and methodological gaps.

	Improvements are necessary
4.4. The doctoral programme ensures the achievement of learning outcomes and competencies aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF.	The learning outcomes are directly put in relation to completed doctoral theses which are not always comparable internationally. There is a great discrepancy in the quality of the final doctoral theses, some of them are well done or satisfy international standards and the others need serious improvement in quality. The number and the quality of scientific papers by the majority of supervisors as well as the quality of journals they publish in is rather poor; thus, no high quality of joint papers with students is expected. The learning outcomes could also be measured by way of students' participation in (international) conferences where they would be able to benchmark their work and learning outcomes. However, they are only supported to present their research at in-house conferences and in-house proceedings. It is unclear why participation at a domestic conference is scored with a greater no. of ECTS (10-15) than participation at scientific conference with international participation (5-10). Great improvements are required in that matter.
	Improvements are necessary
4.5. Teaching methods (and ECTS, if applicable) are appropriate for level 8.2 of the CroQF and assure achievement of clearly defined learning outcomes.	Great emphasis is put on independent work (120 ECTS out of which 70% dedicated to extracurricular activities). Compulsory and elective activities within the independent work are proscribed and scored. Some complaints have been given to the old fashioned teaching methods (reading from PPT slides). Neither some generic skills have been achieved (e.g. English) nor the specific ones related to research-related LOs.
	Improvements are necessary
4.6. The programme enables acquisition of general (transferable) skills.	Although the programme envisions the following competencies to be achieved (academic writing, research ethics, research development), if measured by some completed theses, some of these have not been fully acquired. Although the achievement of the LOs are checked against the doctoral seminar work, it is not internationally comparable.
	Self-evaluation claims that "teamwork in creating academic, teaching and scientific research platforms" is achieved, but the site visit showed that doctoral seminars

are poorly attended by other students. As the emphasis is put on the independent work, students rarely have an opportunity to work in teams. The good practice of presenting the research work in a public community library may produce some feedback but not by a qualified benchmark. Students also point out the lack of time to participate in doctoral seminars or public events (one Monday per month) in the library. It remains unclear how the development of "organisational and management skills" are checked.

According to an HEI representative, the HEI is aware that the programme does not enable the candidate to acquire generic (transferable) skills, yet it claims that their goal is to allow the candidates to focus on a narrow topic of the candidate's choosing and thus cannot ensure that he or she acquires generic (transferable) skills. The panel disagrees and urges HEI to include the possibility of acquiring managerial skills, presentation, writing and project management skills, applying for funding in the curriculum or offer it as a workshop.

Improvements are necessary

4.7. Teaching content is adapted to the needs of current and future research and candidates' training (individual course plans, generic skills etc.).

The approach to teaching is tailored to the individual scientific or artistic interests of each student. Emphasis is put on a mentoring system that supports the individual approach of the doctoral student which is visible in a number of elective courses student may take as to adapt it to his/her needs. However, as much as the diversity of elective courses may seem an asset, it feeds the "anything goes" practice. Greater focus in topics is therefore recommended.

Improvements are necessary

4.8. The programme ensures quality through international connections and teacher and candidate mobility.

Generally, there is no internationalisation of the thesis defence committee except for the two cases where the theses were done in cooperation with a Romanian and American supervisor.

The info on the possibilities for Erasmus and Erasmus+ exchange is publicly available and the administrative staff regularly informs students about the mobility opportunities. There have been students taking such opportunities although there may be also personal reasons why these numbers are not greater.

So far 6 teachers participated in the Erasmus Individual

Mobility Programme. Only one supervisor, though, participates in the EU project. Their international exposure in terms of their academic publications is rather low. Some art-related supervisors have some international visibility in their artistic work.

Generally, theses can be written in English although only two candidates so far used this opportunity.

There are no English courses. Although the teaching staff claims they have capacities for English teaching, not much faith is put in that claim since a number of them preferred the translation during the site visit.

Neither the number of papers nor the journals of their publication is satisfactory. Except for a very small number of individuals, the academic production is low. Besides, those papers which fall into the internationally recognised category are mainly Croatian; it is more than obvious that academics who manage to publish in such journals are closely linked with the editorial boards of these journals. The academic production of the in-house staff is lesser in comparison with teachers from other institutions. A part of the staff comes from practice, which might explain why scientific production is not that high. Although their knowledge is certainly valuable and adds to some scientific outputs, the doctoral level of the study needs to ensure that the staff has a sound research record (much higher than the newly acquired doctors to whom they teach).

Bilateral agreements with 58 institutions are signed, majority of them being with institutions in the neighbouring countries. However, there is an impression that these agreements are rather formal and not used to their full potential, especially in terms of joint projects.