

Report of the Expert Panel on the Reaccreditation of the University Postgraduate (Doctoral) Programme Croatian Culture Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

The Report contains the following elements:

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

Members of the Expert Panel:

- President of the Expert Panel, Dr. Igor Štiks
- Emeritus Dr. Svein Mønnesland, University of Oslo, Norway,
- Dr. Catherine MacRobert, Oxford University, United Kingdom,
- Dr. Katrin Boeckh, University of Munich, Germany,
- Dr. Ljiljana Šarić, University of Oslo, Norway,
- Dr. Ljiljana Reinkowski, Universität Basel, Switzerland,
- Dr. Rozita Dimova, Ghent University, Belgium,
- Dr. Vladimir Unkovski-Korica, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom,
- Dr. Harm Goris, Tilburg University, Netherlands,
- Dr. David Maxwell, Emmanuel College Cambridge, United Kingdom,

- Dr. Elzbieta Osewska, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland,
- Dr. Mikhail Dmitriev, Central European University, Hungary,
- Dr. Andrej Blatnik, Univerza v Ljubljani, Slovenia,
- Dr. Vincent Gaffney, University of Bradford, United Kingdom,
- Dr. Mika Vahakangas, Lund University, Sweden,
- Dr. Nicole Butterfiled, Marie Curie Fellow, Seged University, Hungary,
- Dr. Elżbieta Gajek, University of Warsaw, Poland,
- Dr. Kyle Jerro, University of Essex, United Kingdom,
- Dr Nadia Mifka-Profozic, University of York, United Kingdom,
- Dr. Moreno Mitrović, University of Cyprus, Cyprus,
- Dajana Vasiljevicová, Charles University, Prag, Czech Republic,
- Dr. Christian Neuhäuser, Universitaet Dortmund, Germany,
- Dr. Dries Bosschaert, KU Leuven, Belgium,
- Dr. Oliver George Downing, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom,
- Dr. Hanoch Ben-Yami, Central European University, Hungary,
- Dr. Vieri Samek Lodovici, University College London, United Kingdom,
- Anna Meens, Leiden University, Netherlands,
- Kevin Kenjar, University of California, Berkeley, United States of America,
- Sonja Kačar, University Toulouse II Jean Jaurès, France,
- Garrett R. Mindt, Central European University, Hungary,
- Mišo Petrović, Central European University, Hungary.

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

- Emeritus Dr. Svein Mønnesland, University of Oslo, Norway,
- Professor Dr. Ljiljana Reinkowski, Universität Basel, Switzerland,
- Assotiate Profesor Dr. Andrej Blatnik, Univerza v Ljubljani, Slovenia
- Dajana Vasiljevicová, PhD Student, Charles University, Prag, Czech Republic,
- Kevin Kenjar, PhD Student, University of California, Berkeley, United States of America.

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

• Lida Lamza, coordinator, interpreter at the site-visit and translator of the Report, 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: Postgraduate doctoral study of Croatian Culture

Institution delivering the programme: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb

Place of delivery: Zagreb

Scientific area and field: 5. Social sciences (all fields), 6. Humanities (all fields)

Number of doctoral candidates: 47

Number of HEI funded doctoral candidates: 5 (2 assistants, 1 lecturer, 2 scholarship holders)

Number of self-funded doctoral candidates: 42

Number of inactive doctoral candidates: 10

Number of teachers: 48 (33 from Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, 15 from other higher education and scientific institutions)

Number of supervisors: 55 officially appointed supervisors (here SER counted in those candidates which have defended their thesis in the accreditation period)

Number of doctoral candidates to whom a supervisor was officially appointed: 53 (here SER counted in also those candidates which have defended their thesis in the accreditation period)

Ratio of officially appointed supervisors and their doctoral candidates: 1:1.2

Taught / research ratio: 120/60 ECTS

Taught component: (120 ECTS): 25 ECTS for doctoral workshops, 15 to Recent Scholarly Problems in Social Sciences and Humanities.

Research component: (60 ECTS): 30 is assigned to supervisory work and 30 for the completion and defence of doctoral dissertation.

Learning outcomes of the study programme:

- **LO 1:** demonstrate understanding of research problems through critical analyses of previous scientific publications
- LO 2: analyze and compare fundamental scientific theories of the research subject
- **LO 3:** independently formulate new theoretical paradigms based on original research and current scientific achievements in the discipline
- **LO 4:** apply scientific research methodologies to his/hers research questions, issues and problems
- **LO 5:** evaluates results of qualitative and quantitative analysis
- **LO 6:** demonstrate knowledge and understanding of ethical principles and standards in executing scientific research
- **LO 7:** communicate his/hers research in the academia through written and oral presentations
- **LO 8:** demonstrate ability to plan, organize and conduct domestic and international research projects
- **LO9:** promote Croatian culture by respecting scientific, professional and ethical principles.

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

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

Issue a letter of expectation for the period of two (2) years in which period the higher education institution should make the necessary improvements. Suspension of student enrolment for the defined period is not recommended.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

- 1. Ensure 3 years of the candidate's independent research by reducing classroom obligation. Ensure work on the doctoral thesis from year one. Reduce number of obligatory courses by introducing certain research fields that the student can choose from in the first semester. Instead of thematic courses introduce courses on scientific work, research methods and writing. Get students involved in research projects.
- 2. A draft research plan connected to a (if necessary provisional) supervisor should be a requirement upon admission of the candidate to the programme.
- 3. Internationalisation. Students should spend one semester at a foreign institution. Students should be included in international networks. Parts of funds collected could serve the scientific work of the studies, including funding for the active participation at conferences.
- 4. More workshops, including academic writing workshops for English language.
- 5. Use better the electronic platform to represent the programme and its goals as well as to ensure prompt and comprehensive information about assessments and other programme requirements.
- 6. The department could do more to educate students about external funding.
- 7. General recommendations, not dependent on the Programme: Less workload for teachers and supervisors; better economic conditions for students; working hours in PhD programmes should be recognised as part of the regular working-load for the staff; Faculty-wide doctoral program in order to optimize the use of financial and administrative resources and generic training might be one way to make the system more lean and flexible.

ADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

- 1. High quality of teachers and supervisors.
- 2. Covers fields not represented at other universities. Croatian culture is defined in a broad sense, with several interdisciplinary aspects. This attracts students from all over Croatia.
- 3. Offers a wide range of elective subjects by the Faculty members and supervisors.
- 4. Flexibility of study direction.
- 5. Good study conditions, access to several databases/periodicals in Faculty library and close proximity of archives and university library.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. Overload in the study programme. Too many ECT points, too much classroom obligation. Students are obliged to go through a rather big program and attend lectures that are offered, but

that are not always necessarily connected with their doctoral thesis and take (even elective) courses that they do not need. The intensive attending of different courses on specific topics should be reduced in favour of courses on scientific work (design and implementation of research project), research methods and research writing.

- 2. Teachers have too much workload.
- 3. Research strategy to be revised.
- 4. All doctoral theses have to be accessible, including online.
- 5. Low percentage of finished theses.
- 6. There is no effective admission system to ensure the enrolment of appropriately qualified and motivated students, given the dropout rate and the explanation that many students had no idea what they were getting into. The low completion rate is related to other factors as well not only to the admission criteria: the lack of funding (for instance, self-funded students rarely finish the programme), too many courses prolong the programme beyond 3 years, research projects are not scientifically justified or feasible, supervisors not available or not involved, etc.
- 7. No internationalisation in the programme.
- 8. Students seem not to participate in supervisors' or department research.
- 9. No contract in place delineating the terms of the program, student rights, and mutual expectations between students and their supervisors.
- 10. An exceedingly drawn-out program causes high costs for the institution as well as for the students. The students are the ones who carry the major part of the costs, since most of them finance their study themselves. That means that they have to come up with the costs for a) tuition fees, b) travel expenses from their living places to Zagreb c) each participation with scientific meetings etc., d) all expenses for their fieldwork (if any).

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

- 1. The students confirmed good experience in finding all the necessary information and orienting themselves within this large Faculty.
- 2. The HEI is monitoring and analysing the research productivity of supervisors and candidates. It is collecting and analysing feedback from candidates on a yearly basis through anonymous questionnaires. In some cases, changes have been implemented on the basis of these procedures.
- 3. Flexibility in courses.
- 4. Students are acquiring the competence that encourages them to conduct independent research and cooperate with other public institutions.
- 5. Students tended to agree that there was system in place for them to voice their complaints.

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

Minimal legal conditions:	YES/NO				
	notes				
1. Higher education institution (HEI) is listed in the Register of Scientific	YES				
Organisations in the scientific area of the programme, and has a positive					
reaccreditation decision on performing higher education activities and scientific					
activity.					
2. HEI delivers programmes in the two cycles leading to the doctoral programme,	YES				
i.e., first two cycles in the same area and field/fields (for interdisciplinary					
programmes), and employs a sufficient number of teachers as defined by Article					
6 of the Ordinance on the Content of a Licence and Conditions for Issuing a Licence					
for Performing Higher Education Activity, Carrying out a Study Programme and					
Re-Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions (OG 24/10).					
3. HEI employs a sufficient number of researchers, as defined by Article 7 of the	YES				
Ordinance on Conditions for Issuing Licence for Scientific Activity, Conditions for					
Re-Accreditation of Scientific Organisations and Content of Licence (OG					
83/2010).					
4. At least 50% of teaching as expressed in norm-hours is delivered by teachers	YES				
employed at the HEI (full-time, elected into scientific-teaching titles).					
5. Student: teacher ratio at the HEI is below 30:1.	YES				
6. HEI ensures that doctoral theses are public.	NOT				
	ENTIRELY*				
* Full texts of the programme's doctoral theses are not accessible through national repository					
DABAR as expected. Instead, these are only available at Faculty of Humanities and S	ocial Sciences				
repository DARHIV. Furthermore, the accessibility is incomplete. From 48 defended theses 27					
are available under department label, some of them are accessible only upon written request.					
Reportedly author can legally block open access up to three consecutive years after the defence					
of thesis.					
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.					
*Before being published on the repository, plagiarism checks are made by an undisclosed					
software. The procedure for detecting plagiarism had been evoked in bygone period as one of					
the doctoral theses was anonymously reported to University of Zagreb. After formal accusation					
the originality of the thesis was investigated, plagiarism and forgery assessment written, then					
documents forwarded to university body as the process of title revocation	is legally in				
jurisdiction of University of Zagreb.					

YES/NO
(notes)
YES
YES
YES*
termine if it is
YES
a) YES
b) *
c) NO*
d) NO*
e) NO*
f) NO*

- b) Despite the provided table, information is not sufficient to clearly determine if all supervisors have had the required number of activities in the past five years since several supervisors had zero data available.
- c) Requirements for admission are average grade higher than 3.5 and motivational letter of candidate, no submission is required upon admission, neither there is assessment of feasibility of students draft research plan until the second year of study.
- d) The self-assessment states YES however drawing on ASHE requirements for the role of supervisors and discussion with PhD. students about the inclusion of doctoral candidates in supervisor's research project, answer should be NO.

Neither of the enrolled students was recipient of departmental funding for their research, current students are self-funded and usually work elsewhere in private sphere, albeit one of them did attain employment in open competition at a different department.

While PhD. students expressed satisfaction with conditions necessary to implement their research, neither of them appeared to be well informed about research infrastructure, nor familiarized with available support for research abroad.

- e) While acknowledging the importance of training the new supervisors, there are no workshops for them. In case of first-time supervisor, department supports and promotes co-mentorship.
- f) The institution does not provide continuous evaluation of supervisor's work. Department representatives emphasized student's annual survey as a crucial measure to control quality of supervisors' work. Hypothetically if student express dissatisfaction with supervisor, she/he

could launch official complaint and initiate the process of supervisor change. Rather than launching official procedure students rely on personal intervention and informal guidance from head of the Croatian culture study programme. Students deem these strategies are more effective.

6. All teachers meet the following conditions:

YES*

- a) holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position;
- b) active researcher, recognized in the field relevant for the course (table 1: Teachers).
- *The programme unquestionably selects recognised and relevant figures of their field, however some of the teachers are retired and methodology-based courses, focused on practical issues of rhetoric and public presentation etc., are being led by researches with varied specialisation.
- 7. The supervisor normally does not participate in the assessment committees.

YES

- * Supervisors usually don't participate in the assessment committees, however they could if necessary due to unique topic and upon Dean of the Faculty approval. This exception is allowed by Faculty regulation that became effective in 2017.
- 8. The programme ensures that all candidates spend at least three years doing independent research (while studying, individually, within or outside courses), which includes writing the thesis, publishing, participating in international conferences, field work, attending courses relevant for research etc.

NO*

* Students in general do not spend three years doing independent research since there are no requirements on individual research plan upon admission.

The majority of ECT points is acquired by taking courses. However students stated, that exams are research-oriented and seminar papers contribute to their research, yet they draft research proposal at the third semester earliest. During the first three semesters, the classroom content is focused on basic concepts of Croatian culture through the MA-type teaching courses, acquisition of general knowledge of methodology and scientific skills, all that puts three years of independent research into question. Although some skill-based courses can be replaced with participation at conference and/or publications of papers during the study period, participation at international conference, field work and attendance of courses outside the institution are not obligatory

9. For joint programmes and doctoral schools (at the university level): cooperation between HEIs is based on adequate contracts; joint programmes are delivered in cooperation with accredited HEIs; the HEI delivers the programme within a doctoral school in line with the regulations and ensures good coordination aimed at supporting the candidates; at least 80% of courses are delivered by teachers employed at HEIs within the consortium.

Not applicable

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

1. RESOURCES: TEACHERS, SUPERVISORS, RESEARCH CAPACITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE	
1.1.HEI is distinguished by its scientific/ artistic achievements in the discipline in which the doctoral study programme is delivered.	High level of quality The Faculty of Humanities and social sciences has a high level of quality. It is one of the oldest institutions in Croatia dealing with cultural and social sciences and the staff includes the most distinguished names in Croatian humanities. The members publish in A1 journals, and many have international cooperation.
1.2.The number and workload of teachers involved in the study programme ensure quality doctoral education.	Improvements are necessary The Faculty has enough qualified teachers (80%) and external associates (20%) in order to assure the quality of the PhD programme. Some of the teachers have a heavy working burden, although for the majority it is within the accepted limits, which should ensure quality of the teaching programme. The leader of the programme seems to be very burdened, which arises a question of his ability to organise the programme. During our visit this situation was explained by the fact that it is a general problem: work for the doctoral programme is not included in the normal working load of the teachers. In addition it may be mentioned that the Faculty is in a certain crisis, since during two years, due to demonstrations and disagreement, the Faculty has no board. It is difficult to assess how much this affects negatively the quality of the work of this programme and in general the reputation of the institution, but it certainly does not contribute to higher quality of study. An anonymous comment on the quality of the programme is very negative, mentioning the mentors' (and teachers') lack of concern and their superficial work. However, the comments by the students and alumni were extremely positive. We recommend that the contractual hours of teachers and supervisors should be adjusted to include their contributions to doctoral programme. That would automatically make the programme less expensive.
1.3.The teachers are highly qualified researchers who actively engage with the topics they teach, providing a quality doctoral programme.	High level of quality The teachers have a high level of quality. The quality is evident from the active scientific work and publications. (The presentation of published works in tabular form was,

2. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE PROGRAMME	uatabases.
1.6.The HEI has access to high-quality resources for research, as required by the programme discipline.	High level of quality The Faculty dispose of a new, big and modern library, and the University Library is located in immediate vicinity. These two institutions dispose of the largest fund of books in the field of social sciences in the country. The students stated that they have access to all sources, including databases.
1.5.The HEI has developed methods of assessing the qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors.	High level of quality The quality of the programme is assured in different ways: through the work of <i>Povjerenstvo za doktorske studije</i> at the university level, through the work of the <i>Stručno vijeće</i> appointing supervisors and through the work of <i>Vijeće postdiplomskih studija</i> , that selects teachers for work on the doctoral programme. In addition should be added the general structure of improvement and progress according to which all teachers at the Faculty and similar institutions (external associates) are measured, providing the basis for advancement. The selection for higher positions (usually every 5 years) is decided on the basis of decisions made by special commissions. There is also a system of anonymous evaluations made by students.
1.4.The number of supervisors and their qualifications provide for quality in producing the doctoral thesis.	Improvements are necessary The supervisors who work on the programme according to their qualifications are established and successful researchers, and the number is satisfying. As is the situation with teachers, and partly the same persons are concerned, also here some of the supervisors (6 persons) have too heavy work burden. The programme provides an optimal relation between supervisors and students, since a mentor usually has only one or two students. An exception is the programme leader, who has a somewhat higher number of students (5). The percentage of finished doctoral dissertations is low – of 63 accepted, only 14 students have so far finished. The success of the candidates influences the rating of the supervisors, without having any consequences for their advancement.
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2.1.The HEI has established and accepted effective procedures for proposing, approving and delivering doctoral education. The procedures include identification of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social and economic needs.	High level of quality The procedures have been implemented according to Faculty and university regulations. The external stakeholders present at the consultation have confirmed the HEI is correspondent to their needs. The Study Council is also monitoring the social and cultural needs. However, the future research strategy will have to address this more clearly.
2.2.The programme is aligned with the HEI research mission and vision, i.e. research strategy.	Improvements are necessary The research strategy available at the HEI website was outdated; since we were informed that the new long-term strategy is in preparation and will be implemented by the new Study Council, we presume it will demonstrate the HEI's research focus and potentials more clearly and more focused as the one available at the website.
2.3.The HEI systematically monitors the success of the programmes through periodic reviews, and implements improvements.	High level of quality The HEI is monitoring and analysing the research productivity of supervisors and candidates. It is collecting and analysing feedback from candidates on a yearly basis through anonymous questionnaires. In some cases, changes have been implemented on the basis of these procedures.
2.4.HEI continuously monitors supervisors' performance and has mechanisms for evaluating supervisors, and, if necessary, changing them and	High level of quality The HEI is monitoring and analysing the supervisors. It is collecting and analysing feedback from candidates on a yearly basis through anonymous questionnaires. In some cases, changes have been implemented on the basis of these
mediating between the supervisors and the candidates.	1.
	and replacing the supervisor. The students have adequate mechanisms of validation on the work of supervisor. In cases of complaint, the HEI has established adequate procedures. High level of quality

2.7.Thesis assessment results from a scientifically sound assessment of an independent committee.	Improvements are necessary The committee is appointed according to the thesis' topic. Some of the candidates are verifying their research work through publications with an internationally competitive peer-review in the field of the thesis. The thesis is publicly accessible though not in a most visible way which enables the information strategy of the HEI some room for development.
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.	Improvements are necessary The students confirmed good experience in finding all the necessary information and orienting themselves within such large Faculty. They are lacking, though, more visible information about seminars, conferences, grant possibilities etc., i.e. the accompanying possibilities in their area of study.
2.9. Funds collected for the needs of doctoral education are distributed transparently and in a way that ensures sustainability and further development of doctoral education (ensures that candidates' research is carried out and supported, so that doctoral education can be completed successfully).	Improvements are necessary The library collection and the access to the academic publications and databases is adequate to the needs of the study programme. Parts of funds collected could serve the scientific work of the studies, including funding for the active participation at the conferences. The Panel though did not have an access to the information on distribution of the funds collected from students and external funders and therefore cannot assess how much money is spent on resources, on students' activities, conferences, workshops etc. General experience at the institution and broader is that the funds are usually used for teaching honoraria or the Faculty's general needs and some or none for the needs of students. Therefore here we can only make a general but strong recommendation that part of the funds should be used to facilitate students' research and international mobility.
2.10. Tuition fees are determined on the basis of transparent criteria (and real costs of studying).	Improvements are necessary The tuition fees are in the average area compared to other national institution. However, as already noticed, parts of funds collected could serve the scientific work of the studies, including funding for the active participation at the conferences.
3. SUPPORT TO DOCTORAL CANDIDATES AND THEIR PROGRESSION	
3.1.The HEI establishes admission quotas with respect to its teaching and supervision capacities.	Improvements are necessary Admissions are not directly based on supervision capacities.

Rather, the drop-out rate and the "two mentor" program seems to prevent mentors from being overburdened within the program, though many mentors are from outside the program. Improvements are necessary Admissions do not appear to be directly tied to these needs. Although a fair amount seem to be pursuing the PhD while employed elsewhere (retaining their jobs), the question here is whether both the programme and the admission quotas correspond to stated needs. In principle, they should. 3.2. The HEI establishes admission quotas on HEI should rethink what are current needs for such a the basis of scientific/ artistic, cultural programme/admission quotas, how many PhD holders in social, economic and other needs. Croatian culture Croatia needs etc. While doing this, programme management should seriously take into account students' motivation (majority being employed full time at non-academic jobs which will result in big drop-out) and available funding (that should be actively procured by the HEI for new enrolments). Improvements are necessary There is a very small percentage of funded students. This is 3.3. The HEI establishes the admission quotas a serious issue, insofar as international and European taking into account the funding available criteria for a quality program require that admitted to the candidates, that is, on the basis of candidates are fully funded or co-funded. While the Ministry the absorption potentials of research of Education may be largely responsible for this, the projects or other sources of funding. department could do more to educate students about external funding, as students seem entirely unaware or illinformed about outside funding opportunities. 3.4.The HEI should pay attention to the **Improvements are necessary** Supervisors are not appointed from point of admission. number of candidates admitted as to provide each with an advisor (a No concrete research plan is made upon entry into the potential supervisor). From the point of program. admission to the end of doctoral There is not an effective admission system to ensure education, efforts are invested so that appropriate students, given the drop-out rate and the each candidate has a sustainable explanation that many students had no idea what they were research plan and is able to complete getting into. All these are serious improvement areas for the doctoral research successfully. programme. Improvements are necessary Students had noted that there are significant barriers to foreign students with diminished command of the academic 3.5. The HEI ensures that interested, talented Croatian language. Some accommodation can be made for and highly motivated candidates are dissertations written in English, German, etc. and therefore recruited internationally. accommodating the needs of international or local students who want to write in foreign languages about Croatian

culture. While anyone who wants to study 'Croatian culture'

	should be expected to have a good command of Croatian language, perhaps the HEI can do more than allowing English or German written dissertations. If HEI wishes to reach high level of quality in this aspect, it should ensure an international recruitment and develop further accommodations in the programme to potential foreign students.
3.6.The selection process is public and based on choosing the best applicants.	Improvements are necessary See point 3.4 on admission policy recommendations (it should include research draft and supervisor). The process is public, but if it means that everyone willing to pay, with GPA above 3.5, is accepted, it obviously does not ensure that only best candidates are accepted. Instead, there should be clear criteria for admission based on research excellence (research proposal at the admission, for instance). Furthermore, and connected to this, applicants are apparently ill-informed about the nature of a PhD program, which accounts for, in part, the high drop-out rate.
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.	them to voice their complaints, although it is hard to assess
3.8.There is a possibility to recognize applicants' and candidates' prior learning.	Improvements are necessary Grades, CVs, statements of interest are taken into account during admissions, but the Panel did not find any documentation of existing procedure of recognition of candidates/students prior learning. Perhaps there should be a HEI-wide document/guidelines for programmes to approach students individually in this. There is only a small number of candidates approaching with mr.sc./Master of Science, and HEI should develop procedure of recognition beyond this. It should include clear information to students how can credits be attained and transferred and what can be recognised from previous coursework (e.g. if a candidate already completed another master degree, etc.).
contract on studying that provides for a	Improvements are necessary No contract in place delineating the terms of the program, student rights, and mutual expectations between students and their supervisors.

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

Improvements are necessary

support While there is institutional support at the level of the FFZG and the department, but more should be done in light of the high drop-out rate to ensure successful progression through the program.

4. PROGRAMME AND OUTCOMES

Improvements are necessary

The programme is interdisciplinary, which explains the variety and quantity of the courses given. The interdisciplinary nature makes it different from specialised studies, e.g. in language or literature, and more similar to area studies. This implies both positive and problematic aspects.

The number of courses is 7 obligatory and 6 elective, which makes a number of 130 ECTS. This is much more than average (50), and much more than what is recommended (30) and practised in some other countries. Most of the first year is filled with courses. Only the third year is 'free', devoted only to the dissertation. This structure was justified with the need to give first year students the necessary general knowledge of cultural studies. By getting acquainted with different aspects of culture they would easier choose their topic for dissertation, if they had not decided previously. Also several candidates stated that the courses had been extremely valuable, giving them new insights that would be important in their future work. Nobody seemed to find the classroom obligations too burdensome. Since the number of courses and other obligations obviously is much greater than what is recommended, this raises some serious questions. Could the first year be organised in a more structured way, according to the special interests of the students, in addition to generic skills? If the study is organised in some defined areas (e.g. language and society, national identity, minorities and diaspora, European context), the students could choose courses more directly associated with their own research, and the number of obligations could be reduced and give more time for research. This possibility was suggested by the programme leaders. This would perhaps imply that the range of topics has to be restricted (and refused if not within the competence of the department). E.g. several theses concern music, without this being the academic competence of any of the staff of the department.

The number of subjects covered by teachers is extremely high (about 80), and covers a wide variety of topics. This

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

gives the students the possibility to have (elective) courses closely related to their special interests. They will contact the teacher and agree consultations. For an interdisciplinary study this seems to be a positive solution.

Programme content: The notion of interdisciplinarity is interpreted in a wide sense, including 'everything' connected to Croatian culture. Introductory courses are of a general character (Historical development of Croatian culture, Croatian cultural heritage on UNESCO's World Heritage List, 'High' and 'low' in Croatian literature and culture, Cultural-anthropological studies of Croatian culture and identity). The other obligatory topics include Academic writing, Methods of research and Doctoral workshop. If a student wants to write on a topic not covered by teachers at the department, they are free to find supervisors at other academic institutions. This means that the staff at the department to a certain degree 'loses contact' with the student. A solution would be always to have one supervisor from the department, in addition to one external, if necessary.

An interdisciplinary study of Croatian culture seems to fulfil a role. It was stated that they attract students from all parts of the country. Here it is possible to choose topics that would not be accepted at more specialized departments. If this is the only place in the country allowing such dissertations, it plays obviously an important role. As an example was mentioned a study on a literary topic (a poet), which would not fit into the literary department, since it was too much of a social study, not strictly literary.

The dissertations seem to be of satisfactory international standard.

The conclusion is that the Programme does not provide 3 years of independent research, as regulated by the Croatian Qualifications Framework. The Programme leaders are aware of this problem, and it should be possible to reduce the workload without destroying the interdisciplinary study offered. This will imply a restructuring especially of the first year of study.

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,

Improvements are necessary

The stated learning outcome seem satisfactory but the Panel had difficulties assessing this criteria in terms of weather they have been represented in particular courses (see 4.3). There seems to be little use of colloquia and workshops for developing generic academic skills, and there is little international contact.

including the ethical requirements of doing research.	
logically and clearly connected with teaching contents, as well as the	Improvements are necessary (no information in documentation submitted) It has been difficult to assess the quality of literature included in course reading lists, since only an older version of the Study Plan (of 2007) was available on the internet site of Zagreb University.
4.4.The doctoral programme ensures the achievement of learning outcomes and competencies aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF.	High level of quality The learning outcome achievements seem to be satisfactory, as to the quality of the theses presented. The theses seem to follow the accepted standards and criteria. This assessment rests, however, on a superficial review of different theses, since there was no time for a thorough study of details.
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.	Improvements are necessary There seems to be little use of colloquia and workshops. The students do not normally organize common colloquia. The obligatory courses should be concentrated more on courses that develop student's individual projects and their methodological skills.
4.6.The programme enables acquisition of general (transferable) skills.	Improvements are necessary The PhD students acquire some generic skills, but this could be improved. They get little or no training in project writing, applying for funds, writing for workshops in foreign languages.
of current and future research and	Improvements are necessary Students can choose courses and the outcomes of the courses is then useful for their future dissertations. There is a wide range of elective subjects (80). There is thus a high degree of flexibility. There are, however, areas for improvements concerning generic skills, course workload in general, and the fact that most of the students do not know what they will be researching and therefore cannot work on their projects.
4.8.The programme ensures quality through international connections and teacher and candidate mobility.	Improvements are necessary There is little international contact. This was explained by the programme leaders as programme being concentrated on Croatian studies. However, there are Croatian studies in other countries. Participation in seminars and courses in related topics at foreign universities would be useful. Students should spend one semester at a foreign institution. The programme leaders should try to develop international connections for the benefit of the programme. We did not

ask whe	ether	the	re are fo	reig	n studen	ts an	nong th	ne F	PhD
candidat	tes, b	ut o	ur impre	ssio	n is that t	this is	not th	ie ca	ase.
Theses	can	be	written	in	English,	but	there	is	no
encoura	geme	nt to	o do this.	Inte	rnational	expos	sure of s	stud	ent
work is	there	fore	, unfortui	nate	ly, diminis	shed.			

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Finally, if the Expert Panel has, in accordance with the criteria mentioned above, proposed issuing the certificate of compliance and assessed that, in addition to meeting the minimum quality requirements – i.e. the qualification framework level - for a study programme, the programme should be identified as a doctoral programme of a 'high level of quality', the Expert Panel may propose to the Agency's Accreditation Council that such a doctoral study programme be awarded the 'high quality label'. Thus the Agency, with the consent of the Accreditation Council, grants a higher education institution the right to use the label for their academic and promotional purposes. The 'high quality label' cannot be proposed or awarded to a programme or a higher education institution that does not comply with the requirements laid down by the laws and bylaws mentioned in this document, and any additional requirements recommended by the Accreditation Council. Moreover, the quality assessment awarded to a study programme should reflect a high level of quality inasmuch that at least half of the sub-criteria in each of the quality assessment criteria are assessed as being of high quality. The Accreditation Council of the Agency issues a final opinion on the label awarded. The content and form of the quality labels shall be prescribed by the Agency in a relevant general act.

The Accreditation Council of the Agency discusses the final report with all recommendations and suggestions, and issues their opinion on the report. Based on a prior opinion of the Accreditation Council, the Agency issues an Accreditation Recommendation to the minister responsible for science and higher

education, and upon receipt of the minister's final decision on the outcome of the procedure, awards the 'high quality label" to a higher education institution.