



agency for science and higher education

**REPORT
OF THE EXPERT PANEL
ON THE
RE-ACCREDITATION OF
THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY OF SPLIT**

Date of site visit: 21 - 23 November 2023

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION.....	6
BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES	9
ADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION.....	9
DISADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION	9
LIST OF INSTITUTIONAL GOOD PRACTICES	10
EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE.....	10
ANALYSIS OF EACH ASSESSMENT AREA, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY GRADE FOR EACH ASSESSMENT AREA	11
I. Internal quality assurance and the social role of the higher education institution	11
II. Study programmes.....	12
III. Teaching process and student support	14
IV. Teaching and institutional capacities.....	15
V. Scientific/artistic activity.....	16
DETAILED ANALYSIS OF EACH STANDARD, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY GRADE FOR EACH STANDARD.....	18
I. Internal quality assurance and the social role of the higher education institution	18
II. Study programmes.....	27
III. Teaching process and student support	32
IV. Teaching and institutional capacities.....	44
V. Scientific/artistic activity.....	48
APPENDICES	56

INTRODUCTION

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

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

The Agency's Accreditation Council appointed an independent Expert Panel for the evaluation of the School of Medicine, University of Split.

Members of the Expert Panel:

- Assoc. Prof. Nandu Goswami, MD, Ph.D., Medizinische Universität Graz, Republic of Austria, Panel chair,
- Prof. Nenad Bogdanović, Klinisk neurovetenskap, Karolinska Institutet, Kingdom of Sweden,
- Prof. Ivana Čuković-Bagić, School of Dental Medicine, University of Zagreb, Republic of Croatia,
- Prof. Zrinka Rajić, Faculty of Pharmacy and Biochemistry, University of Zagreb, Republic of Croatia,
- Luka Medić, student, School of Medicine, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Republic of Croatia.

During the site visit, the Expert Panel held meetings with the following stakeholders:

- Management,
- Quality Assurance Committee,
- Alumni,
- External stakeholders, representatives of professional organisations, non-governmental organisations, external lecturers,
- Students,

- Head of the Office for Research, Postgraduate Studies and International Cooperation, Office for Lifelong learning and professional practice, ECTS coordinator and representative of the Ethics Committee,
- Full-time teaching staff,
- Heads of research projects,
- Teaching assistants and postdoctoral researchers.

The Expert Panel members had a tour of the work facilities, laboratories, library, IT classrooms, student administration office and classrooms, and attended sample lectures, where they held a brief Q&A session with students.

In accordance with the site visit protocol, the Expert Panel examined the available additional documents and study programme descriptions (learning outcomes).

The Expert Panel drafted this Report on the re-accreditation of the School of Medicine, University of Split on the basis of the School of Medicine University of Split self-evaluation report, other relevant documents and the site visit.

The Report contains the following elements:

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

In the analysis of the documentation, site visit to the School of Medicine, University of Split and writing of the Report, the Expert Panel was supported by:

- Iva Žabarović, coordinator, ASHE,
- Maja Šegvić, assistant coordinator, ASHE,
- Irena Škarica, on site interpreter and translator of the Report.

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

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

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

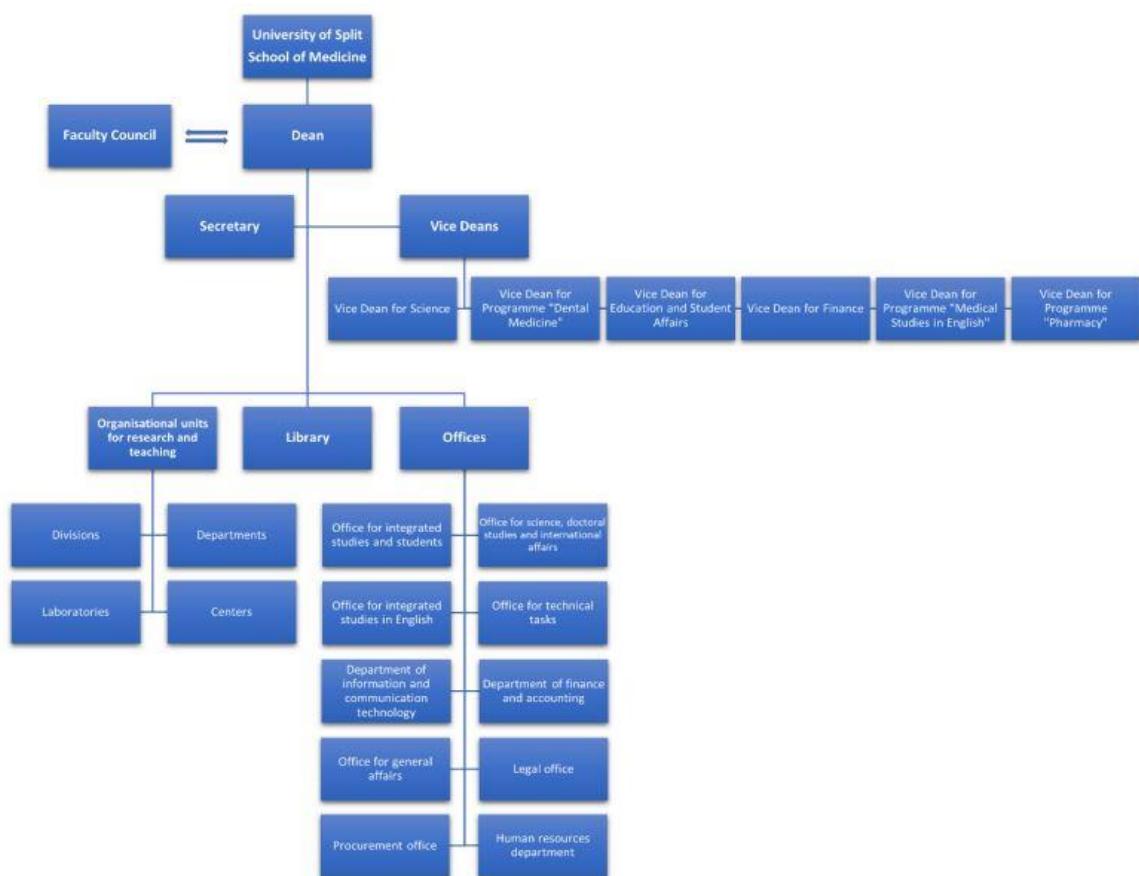
SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

NAME OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: School of Medicine, University of Split

ADDRESS: Šoltanska 2, Split

DEAN: Professor Ante Tonkić, MD, Ph.D.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE:



STUDY PROGRAMMES:

- Pharmacy, integrated undergraduate and graduate university study programme,
- Medicine, integrated undergraduate and graduate university study programme,
- Dental Medicine, integrated undergraduate and graduate university study programme,

- Medical Studies in English, integrated undergraduate and graduate university study programme,
- Cancer Biology, postgraduate (doctoral) university study programme,
- Evidence-based Clinical Medicine, postgraduate (doctoral) university study programme,
- Translational Research in Biomedicine, postgraduate (doctoral) university study programme,
- Anaesthesiology, reanimatology and intensive care medicine, postgraduate specialist university study programme,
- Cardiology, postgraduate specialist university study programme,
- Clinical Radiology, postgraduate specialist university study programme,
- Overall, there are 16 postgraduate study programmes offered by the School.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS:

Analytic supplement to self-evaluation report, table 3.1. Number of students per study programme for the evaluated academic year

Study programme name	Full-time students	Part-time students
Pharmacy (1483), integrated undergraduate and graduate university study programme, Split	158	0
Medicine (1588), integrated undergraduate and graduate university study programme, Split	572	0
Cancer Biology (1593), postgraduate (doctoral) university study programme, Split	31	0
Evidence-based Clinical Medicine (1597), postgraduate (doctoral) university study programme, Split	30	0
Dental Medicine (1598), integrated undergraduate and graduate university study programme, Split	197	0
Translational Research in Biomedicine (1599), postgraduate (doctoral) university study programme, Split	45	0
Medicine in English (1600), integrated undergraduate and graduate university study programme, Split	302	0
Anesthesiology, reanimatology and intensive care medicine (1603), postgraduate specialist university study programme, Split	6	0
Cardiology (2176), postgraduate specialist university study programme, Split	7	0
Clinical Radiology (2213), postgraduate specialist university study programme, Split	10	0
Total	1.358	0

NUMBER OF TEACHERS:

Analytic supplement to the self-evaluation report, table 4.1.a Staff Structure in the evaluated academic year

Staff*	Full-time staff		Cumulative employment		External associates	
	Number	Average age	Number	Average age	Number	Average age
Full professors with tenure	13	58,08	24	61,67	9	63,56
Full professors	8	47	14	58,93	9	57,88
Associate professors	14	45,43	42	54,71	19	55
Assistant professors	16	41	42	55,55	79	51,4
Scientific advisor (permanent/with tenure)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Scientific advisor	-	-	-	-	1	0
Senior Research Associate	-	-	-	-	-	-
Research Associate	1	40	-	-	-	-
Teaching grades	2	46	-	-	10	50,11
Assistants	42	30,4	2	44,5	137	49,68
Postdoctoral researcher	2	36	-	-	18	40,76
Employees on projects	-	-	-	-	-	-
Expert assistants	-	-	-	-	252	42,18

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

The School of Medicine, University of Split, (hereinafter referred to as the School), was founded in 1997. The organizational units of the School are research and teaching organizational units (divisions and departments), research organizational units (centres and laboratories), the library and the dean's office. The School conducts four integrated undergraduate and graduate studies, and within the Doctoral School three postgraduate university doctoral studies and a larger number of postgraduate specialist university study programmes.

BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. Excellent infrastructure and available equipment for preclinical courses;
2. Study programmes of Medicine and Pharmacy aligned with the Croatian Qualification Framework;
3. Motivated students;
4. High number of scientific projects;
5. Excellent research production and access to relevant scientific journals;
6. Students are encouraged to do research;
7. Highly motivated teachers, who carry out excellent teaching in classrooms, and in small groups;
8. High standards of teaching in specific departments (e.g. Anatimedia www.anatimedia.com);
9. Great facilities for visiting professors' accommodation;
10. Well-organized and efficient Office for Research.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. Complex internal organization of the institution;
2. Large number of committees, with the vice deans heading many of them, which potentially hampers/limits democracy;
3. Lack of teachers at all study programmes (more visible at Dental Medicine and Pharmacy);
4. Limited number of/ Lack of university-employed teachers;
5. Lack of teaching staff in QA field (Office, Committee);
6. Lack of sufficient (university) facilities for clinical work placement, especially in dental medicine;
7. Lack of employment strategy regarding the Professional Chamber analysis;
8. Lack of gathered information on formal action steps after conducted analysis;
9. Lack of quality assurance monitoring on clinical work. This therefore leads to a questioning of the standardised records for student clinical teaching process;
10. Lack of data on employment of the graduates (Medicine, Medical Studies in English);
11. Objective structured clinical examinations (OSCE) system is rarely implemented;
12. Missing prerequisites for introducing the new programmes in English while teachers in Croatian programmes are overloaded;
13. List of "German" professors is not visible/transparent, as well as selection criteria for recruitment of faculty members in Germany;
14. A lot of informal and undocumented cases of resolving students' problems in writing;

15. High-quality science is not evaluated enough. Specifically, there is no strategy for science improvement;
16. Dental member of the Committee for writing self-evaluation report was omitted;
17. Conducting the study programme “Medical Studies in English” in Germany for the period of 3 years, which is not listed in the official approval document of the Ministry of Science and Education. That is, Germany was not listed as a site to carry out teaching related activities in the official license.

LIST OF INSTITUTIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. Implementation of the teacher-mentor system from the first year of study;
2. Elaborate the system of awards and recognition of employees in place;
3. The organization of the Research Office as well as motivated staff that work there;
4. Excellent communication and community engagement via social media, the radio station;
5. High standards of teaching in preclinical courses (especially anatomy);
6. Centre for psychological help very well organized;
7. Large number of university manuals and handbooks;
8. Large number of incoming Erasmus students;
9. Encouragement of students towards research (as is evident from the creation of the Dean’s awards as well as the Rector’s awards).

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

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

Analysis

In this Report, our grades are related to all approachable studies conducted in Split, only. Three years of the Medical Studies in English which are conducted in Germany, (<https://www.regiomed-kliniken.de/Studieren-bei-REGIOMED.aspx>) were not accessible.

Although the School has adopted all required formal documents, appointed the Quality Assurance Committee and established the Office for Quality Assurance, satisfactory level of quality is not met. The School conducts many surveys, but there is a lack of evidence of the activities conducted after the analysis of the results. Participation of all stakeholders is lacking, whereas the management participates in too many committees. Since the re-accreditation procedure in 2015, the School has adopted a part of the recommendations of the Expert Panel, but the majority, regarding limiting the number of students, lack of teachers and their teaching overload, the need for greater involvement of students and respect of their opinion, and encouragement of international student mobility was not met or addressed sufficiently. Therefore, an efficient system for the implementation of recommendations from the conducted evaluations should be developed. As the overload of teachers is clearly present, the School should increase the number of teachers, especially in the fields of Pharmacy and Dental Medicine, before introduction of new study programmes in English. On the other hand, the School has adopted positive regulations in the field of ethics, liability of teachers, associates and students, and gender equality. There are not major issues in that field, except the involvement of the management and a lack of involvement of students, which was also mentioned earlier in the text. All relevant information is available on the website, and on social media platforms. The School is active in the society, through different projects, giving premises, popularization of science, etc., although the participation of students could be increased. The School should encourage application of projects with industry and SME, technology transfer and research commercialisation. Life-long learning programmes are regularly organized.

Conduct of the study programme "Medical Studies in English" in Germany for the period of three years is, however, not listed in the official approval document of the Ministry of Science and Education. That is, Germany was not listed as a site to carry out teaching related activities in the official license. The prerequisites for introducing the new programmes in English were not provided. Teachers in Croatian programmes are overloaded, as they must teach also in the English programme. List of "German"

professors, who teach in Germany, when the students are in Germany for the last three years is not visible/transparent. In addition, the selection criteria for recruitment of faculty members in Germany (if any) was not provided.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Establish internal procedures for documentation of quality assurance activities and processes.
- Ensure participation of all stakeholders in the quality assurance system.
- Increase the participation of students and reduce the participation of Management in committees.
- Develop an efficient system for the implementation of recommendations from the conducted evaluations.
- Encourage application of projects with industry and SME, technology transfer and research commercialisation.

Quality grade: Minimum level of quality

II. Study programmes

Analysis

According to the Register of Study Programmes of the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia, there are officially accredited twenty-three (23) study programmes at USSM. All study programmes are licensed. For all study programmes, Split is defined as a place where all of them should be carried out.

The School has four (4) University integrated undergraduate and graduate study programmes: Medicine; Medical Studies in English; Dental Medicine; and Pharmacy (in cooperation with the Faculty of Chemical Engineering and Technology, University of Split).

Postgraduate studies are comprised of three (3) Postgraduate university (doctoral) study programmes: Translational Research in Biomedicine TRIBE; Evidence-Based Medicine and Biology of Neoplasms; and two (2) University postgraduate specialist study programmes (out of specialization): Sleep Medicine; and Clinical Epidemiology. The School has also accredited fourteen (14) University postgraduate specialist study programmes within the clinical specialization: Anaesthesiology, reumatology and intensive medicine; Pathology and cytology; Paediatrics; Ophthalmology and optometry; Gastroenterology; General internal medicine; Oncology and radiotherapy; Cardiology; Psychiatry; Neurology; Clinical radiology and Abdominal surgery.

The only study programme, which is not carried out in Split in total (although it should be, according to the license) is Medical Studies in English, for those students who chose studying the 4th, 5th and 6th year in Germany. The agreement between Regiomed Kliniken (Medical School REGIOMED GmbH) and University of Split was signed after getting the license and after the last reaccreditation of the School, in 2015. Change of the place of delivery of the programme for the half of the study programme content (last 3 years) is inevitably connected to the quality control and quality assurance processes (students, teachers, teaching process, teaching facilities, etc.). According to the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Science, the initial accreditation procedure should be done when place of studying is changed (as in the case of Medical Studies in English which are carried out in Germany instead of Split).

It should be considered that those students of Medical Studies in English, who are studying in Germany, as well as German teachers, were not available for the assessment of the quality assurance by this external evaluation process, so they are not included in this Report of our Expert Panel group.

The School has a defined vision, mission and development strategy aligned with the needs of society. The general goals of the study programmes are in line with the mission and strategic goals. Learning outcomes are generally well described and minor and major changes to most study programmes were made for the purpose of gaining qualifications for national and international market/needs. In spite of that, some topics which are mandatory in all EU curricula (following the demographic changes) are not included (e.g. geriatric medicine, etc.).

The School implements various procedures for evaluating the quality of teaching as well as for checking the achievement of learning outcomes. OSCEs are carried out only to a lesser extent of subjects. Surveys are an important source of information, but students, professional organizations and employers are not always quite well informed about the activities that include procedures of planning, proposing, and approving new programmes or revising/closing the existing ones, as well as about the results of surveys.

The student workload is generally adequate, except the discrepancies in the ECTS allocation between student clinical practice in all four of the university integrated undergraduate and graduate study programmes (Medicine, Medical Studies in English, Dental Medicine, Pharmacy), but teachers are overloaded.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Conduct a detailed analysis of the actual workload of students and teachers;
- Apply objective and standardized methods of evaluating clinical skills;

- Precisely determine the procedures for proposing a new study programme, revision and cancellation of existing programmes;
- In the case of the introduction of new study programmes (e.g., Dental medicine in English which is put as a priority in Action Plan for 2022/23), perform a high-quality SWOT analysis and consultations with professional stakeholders (Chambers) prior to the decision;
- The School must attain initial accreditation for the Medical Studies in English, which encompasses three years in Croatia and three years in Germany.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

III. Teaching process and student support

Analysis

The School conducts enrolment processes in accordance with active laws and regulations. When evaluating the enrolment process for studying medicine in English, we come across the issue of objectivity, and Expert Panel suggests that the enrolment process should be more transparent with elaborate and structured guidelines for compiling a ranking list as well as an objectively compiled list of interview questions. The Expert Panel suggests that it would be useful and in line with practice to introduce a test of practical skills when enrolling in the study programme of dental medicine.

The School regularly monitors the progress of students and monitors their satisfaction through various questionnaires. Analysing the above, Panel members see that the turnout for the surveys and questionnaires is extremely low, and we believe that based on these results, it is not possible to draw useful conclusions about the improvement of studies. Accordingly, the Panel members understand that it is not possible to make significant progress in the performance of studies based on student experience.

The School is oriented entirely towards students and uses various learning methods in teaching processes. In the last few years, European standardized test methods have been introduced, but not equally for all years, studies and majors. Exams are implemented in accordance with current regulations and legal acts, but students report a lack of additional exam deadlines.

In accordance with the presented documents and through conversation with students, the Expert Panel found that students are extremely satisfied with the support during their studies in the form of assistance during studies, counselling centres for psychological help, counselling centres for postgraduate training and specializations and much more. Adequate support is provided to students with special needs as well as to

everyone in special life situations. Students have the opportunity to participate in international activities and spend part of their studies at another higher education institution, but with the passing of distinction exams upon their return. Although all of the above is in accordance with the currently active regulations, the School should strive to harmonize the ECTS credit system with the institutions with which they have signed contracts on international cooperation.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Objectify the process of enrolling in Medical Studies in English;
- Introduce a skills test when enrolling in the study of dental medicine;
- Increase turnout on questionnaires about satisfaction and student suggestions;
- Increase the number of exam terms;
- Harmonize of the ECTS credit system with international institutions to facilitate student mobility.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

IV. Teaching and institutional capacities

Analysis

Despite the current restrictions of employment of new faculty members, the School has taken the initiative to create the Medical Studies in English programme to boost its revenues. While this is to a certain extent helpful, as more funds are now available to recruit the much-needed teachers, it has also placed an additional strain in the workload of existing teachers. Several part-time faculty members are now employed to complement the workload of full-time faculty. But, as repeatedly pointed out in this Expert Panel report, the teacher recruitment, advancement and re-appointment is an area of concern. Teacher recruitment was also a concern that was highlighted in the previous panel report (2015).

There are objective and transparent procedures, which the School has put in place to ensure the selection of excellent teachers, this task is rather challenging due to a lack of financial resources, limited number of available full-time faculty, as well as the required teaching and administrative workload.

Teachers are regularly provided with some courses related to professional development to develop the teaching and research skills of the teachers. However, there is no clear requirement that states that each faculty member must complete these courses. Similarly, it was difficult to ascertain how many faculty members actually had a formal educational background related to pedagogical practices.

The School has clearly improved its infrastructure and space, since the last review of the School was carried out in 2015. There are now excellent and fully equipped patient-centred services as well as research laboratories. The students are also encouraged to carry out research activities, especially when they work with highly motivated teachers and have access to world-class facilities and excellent infrastructure with well-equipped laboratories and clinical spaces.

The library space and the library equipment are rather limited.

The School has rationally managed its financial resources. The initiative of the School to create the study programme of Medical Studies in English to boost its revenues is an excellent one. The interaction with the industry, local community as well as other stakeholders is, however, rather limited.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Employ more full-time faculty staff, for the Medical, Dental and Pharmaceutical disciplines;
- Clearly outline who is responsible for teaching in Germany in the new English programme in Medicine, which is administered by the School;
- Ensure that the completion of pedagogical and didactic courses is compulsory, especially for those who are newly appointed;
- Overall, there is an urgent need for the School to encourage the assessment and improvement of teaching competencies based on the peer-review recommendations and the student-satisfaction surveys;
- Increase space allocation for the library;
- Improve the interaction with small to medium enterprises, industry as well as the local community that more money can be raised in cross-cutting projects (e.g. Industry-Academia projects).

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

V. Scientific/artistic activity

Analysis

The School, an exemplary higher education institution, demonstrates academic excellence through the dedicated efforts of its teachers and associates, resulting in an impactful scientific legacy. Emphasizing quality, efficiency, transparency, mentorship, and global engagement, the School actively shapes the future of knowledge and contributes

meaningfully to societal advancement. Elevating Participation in Scientific, and Professional Organizations: the School's commendable practice of active involvement in scientific and professional organizations enriches individual academic and professional development, fostering a positive impact on the university's ethos. Recognizing the School's commitment to excellence and the accomplishments of its academic community, the Expert Panel applauds the institution for creating an innovative, research-driven environment. Acknowledging the School's significant impact on the academic and professional landscape, the Expert Panel commend all contributors for their outstanding efforts. The Panel applauds the School's holistic approach to research and arts development, emphasizing strategic vision, resource commitment, and dedication to continuous improvement. These practices strengthen the institution and contribute significantly to broader academic and creative communities. The School dedication to integrating space, equipment, ongoing research, and professional activities into teaching processes reflects a commitment to providing a holistic and cutting-edge education. This approach prepares students for field-specific challenges and positions the School as a leader in fostering a symbiotic relationship between teaching and institutional achievements.

Recommendations for improvement:

The School should aim to enhance its participation in European projects, attract visiting experts, and improve living conditions in Split for scientific endeavours. The strategy includes:

- Establishing collaborative networks and partnerships with European universities, research institutions, and funding agencies;
- Introducing a Visiting Experts Programme and enhancing living conditions with supportive services such as language courses;
- Promoting Split as an attractive destination for research through online presence, showcasing cultural heritage, natural beauty, and quality of life on the School website;
- To strengthen the School international position and attract top talent, the approach involves staying flexible and adaptive to the evolving needs of the scientific community;
- Continued support for teachers and associates participating in such activities solidifies the School as a hub for academic and professional excellence;
- Recognizing the importance of growth and innovation in dental medicine and pharmacy, the School is encouraged to spearhead initiatives for national and international impact;
- Addressing emerging needs, especially between preclinical and clinical projects, reinforces the School's commitment to positive societal impact through research. In selecting projects spanning preclinical and clinical themes, the focus should be

on health concerns relevant to a broad population. Project ideas include Early Detection and Intervention for Neurodegenerative Diseases, Lifestyle Interventions for Chronic and Age-related Diseases, and Telemedicine and Remote Health Monitoring.;

- Choosing projects aligned with available expertise and forming interdisciplinary teams fosters comprehensive approaches to health concerns.

Quality grade: High level of quality

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

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

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

Analysis

The Faculty Council of the School has adopted all required formal documents, the Strategy of the School 2021-2027, the Quality Assurance Policy, the Ordinance on the Quality Assurance System of the School and the Quality Assurance Handbook, which regulate the task, evaluation area, organization and operation of the quality assurance system at the School. The body in charge of the quality assurance of the School is the Quality Assurance Committee, appointed by the Faculty Council. Members of the Committee are 2 teachers (chair is currently also Vice-Dean for Medical Studies in English), 1 student, 1 postdoctoral associate and 1 external collaborator, employed outside the School. Given the importance of the tasks, i.e. planning, coordinating and analysing all aspects of the School's activities, the Expert Panel believes that human capacities on the committee should be strengthened. Although the Expert Panel recognizes the importance of including a member of the Management in the Committee, we advise against appointing him as a Chair of the Committee, to increase the involvement of other internal stakeholders and transparency. As administrative support for the work of the Committee, the Office for Quality Assurance and Improvement was also established. The Committee meets regularly, but there are plenty of informal arrangements and meetings that are not documented. Although it was recommended in the last reaccreditation cycle (2015), students are still not included as members in some committees connected to their topics, for example: the Teaching Committee, the Ethics Committee, the Committee for Disciplinary Procedures, the PhD Thesis Committee. Since plans to increase involvement of students exist, the School of Medicine should conduct an analysis and increase the

involvement of students in the processes at the School. On the other hand, it seems that the collaboration with external stakeholders is well developed. Contacts with alumni exist, but they are informal in nature. The School developed the Alumni web-application, however alumni activity in that application does not exist.

The Strategy of the School 2021-2027 includes a SWOT analysis, strategic goals, specific goals and activities, which are associated with indicators that measure the success of the implementation of individual tasks, responsible persons and deadlines in which the goals are expected to be achieved. Action plans for the execution of the strategic objectives (for 2022 and 2023) were adopted, and the implementation of strategic objectives in 2022 was reported at the meeting of the Faculty Council. Most of the goals set were achieved, and some activities are being carried out continuously.

The School conducts a list of surveys/questionnaires, mainly for students: the Questionnaire for student evaluation of teaching work, the Questionnaire for student evaluation of the work of professional and administrative services and other aspects of student life, the Survey questionnaire for student evaluation of the entire study, the Survey questionnaire for students on satisfaction with professional practice/clinical rotations, the Survey for student evaluation of teaching load and ECTS credits and also the Teacher Questionnaire for the evaluation of scientific and teaching work. In the academic year 2022/2023, the School of Medicine started implementing peer-to-peer review and teacher and associate self-evaluation of teaching. The analysis of the Questionnaire for student evaluation of teaching work is regularly performed. For teachers who have been assessed with a grade less than 3.0 or got the grade lower than 2.0 for one of the questions, and for whom a gross violation of ethical norms is evident from the students' comments, an interview is organized with the Dean, the head of research and teaching department and the head of the Quality Assurance Committee. Improvement measures are proposed and their implementation, i.e., the outcome, is monitored. The Expert Panel has been informed that those teachers' grades improved in the evaluation in the next academic year. The participation of students is not as high as it should be and the Committee for Quality Assurance should prepare a plan to increase the participation of students. Although we strongly support conducting surveys on different aspects of study programmes/student/teacher issues, the Panel was not provided with the documentation on the analysis of other surveys, nor plans for improvements and results of those improvements. Changes are being introduced based on the results of the surveys, but informally.

The internal organization of the School is complex, and it includes research and teaching organizational units (divisions and departments), research organizational units (centres and laboratories), library and the dean's office. The School employs 43 administrative

staff, which seems a lot compared to the 222 employees involved in the teaching process and research. We recommend conducting an analysis of the internal organization of the School and reducing the number of departments, since some of them conduct classes in a very small number of courses, with the goal of reducing the administrative burden on teaching and non-teaching staff.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Ensure student participation in all committees of their interest;
- Increase the number of members of the Quality Assurance Committee; it is not recommended that a Vice Dean is the head of the Committee;
- Reduce the participation of the Management members in Committees and Working Groups, instead involve a larger number of other stakeholders;
- Establish internal procedures for documentation of quality assurance activities and processes;
- Regularly conduct analysis of data obtained by conducting surveys, based on the analysis plan for improvement, and present the results of improvement to all stakeholders;
- Encourage student participation in surveys;
- Simplify the internal structure of the school by merging some departments, with the aim of reducing the administrative burden on teaching and non-teaching staff.

Quality grade: Minimum level of quality

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

Analysis

In the past period, the School has undergone two re-accreditation procedures conducted by the Agency for Science and Higher Education. In the academic year 2014/2015, the procedure of re-accreditation of the institution was carried out (visit of the Expert Panel in March 2015). Based on the Expert Panel's report from April 2015 a letter of expectation was issued with regard to the study programme of Pharmacy, and a certificate was issued upon fulfillment of the conditions for performing part of the activity. The second re-accreditation procedure (conducted in the academic year 2016/2017, the visit of the Expert Panel in December 2016) concerned the re-accreditation of the postgraduate doctoral study programmes of Biology of Neoplasms, Clinical Evidence-Based Medicine and Translational Research in Biomedicine – TRIBE.

In the report of the Expert Panel in 2015, a number of recommendations for quality improvements were made. The School of Medicine has fulfilled part of the recommendations. The reform of two doctoral study programmes, Biology of Neoplasms

and Clinical Evidence-Based Medicine was carried out, which were restructured and their quality significantly improved, thus meeting the recommendations from the process of re-accreditation of doctoral studies. The School has no problem attracting postgraduate students, especially because of the improved system of enrolling candidates in doctoral studies. The School has good cooperation with external stakeholders, and the Expert Panel is of the opinion that it works well. Most of the recommendations in the field of science have been implemented. Scientific research is at a high level, although it is necessary to increase research in the field of pharmacy. The implementation of the Strategic Plan in the field of scientific research includes monitoring of implementation performance indicators. The system of rewarding teachers is elaborated in detail in the relevant regulations for the evaluation of various scientific and teaching achievements. Space and equipment at the School have been improved since the last re-accreditation, especially equipment at the study programme of Dental Medicine. However, most of the recommendations regarding limiting the number of students, lack of teachers and their teaching overload, the need for greater involvement of students and respect of their opinion and encouragement of international student mobility were not met or sufficiently addressed.

The School was careful in increasing the enrolment quota of students and the number of enrolled students increased only in the study programme of Medical Studies in English (60 to 70). However, from the Action Plans for 2022 and 2023, discussions with the Management Board and data on the appointed Working groups for the preparation of the Study programme of Pharmacy and Dental Medicine in English, the Expert Panel learned that there are plans for the introduction of two new study programmes, Pharmacy in English and Dental Medicine in English, which will lead to a significant increase in the number of students at the School. Although the School has made efforts to hire new teachers, there are still limitations in teaching staff in the fields of Pharmacy and Dental Medicine, as well as their overload, according to data from Tables 4.2. and 4.3 of the Analytic Supplement. Therefore, the Expert Panel believes that the School of Medicine should first strengthen the teaching staff in the fields of Pharmacy and Dental Medicine, and then introduce new study programmes. According to the data from Table 4.3, a significant teaching overload exists, especially for teachers employed in the clinic. It is necessary to further increase the number of teachers, which will consequently lead to a reduction in the teaching load (provided that the School of Medicine does not increase the quotas for student enrolment and does not introduce new study programmes).

International student mobility remained relatively modest, although the School carried out a number of actions (such as the establishment of the Office for International Relations, upgrade of the Mobility link at the webpage, signing of bilateral and multilateral agreements). The main reason for less mobility is the nonrecognition of completed, and possibly passed courses at a foreign university, and the organization of courses at the

School (fixed schedule of round classes), which prevents flexibility for students who want to participate in international exchange.

The School has revised the Ordinance on the conditions and procedure of appointments to ranks in 2019 and introduced into the Ordinance as additional conditions publishing scientific papers in journals with impact factors (JCR) > 1.0 or in journals classified in Q1/Q2 (WoS). However, we believe that the quality criteria are quite modest and it would be advisable to set stronger criteria. The higher education institution encourages publication of papers in open access journals, but it is necessary to take into account the quality of these journals, due to the existence of predatory journals.

As stated earlier in Standard 1.1., students are currently not included in all committees of their interest. Additional efforts should also be made to ensure the quality of the exams (explained later in standard 3.8). The results of different student surveys are presented at the sessions of the Faculty Council, but a lot of communication after obtaining feedback takes place informally and it is necessary to conduct analyses after conducting surveys and formalize the procedures for improving quality. Contacts with alumni exist, but they are informal in nature. The School developed the Alumni application, however no alumni activity was observed in that application. More efforts should be done in the field of research commercialization, particularly patenting. The role of the International Advisory Committee is not clearly defined and should include experts from the fields of pharmaceutical sciences and dental medicine.

The School of Medicine conducted an internal assessment of the quality assurance system in 2019, based on which the appropriate Action Plan was drawn up. The School introduced improvements based on the above recommendations, but the recommendations until the completion of writing self-evaluation report were not fully adopted.

In conclusion, since most of the recurring recommendations from the external re-accreditation procedure in 2015 were not adopted, the School should develop an effective system based on which it will analyse recommendations for improvements and carry out appropriate activities.

Recommendations for improvement

- Develop an efficient system for the implementation of recommendations from the conducted evaluations;
- The School should not consider introducing new study programmes given the lack of teachers and their overload;
- Encourage scientific research in the field of pharmacy;

- Revise the Ordinance on the conditions and procedure of appointments to ranks, in such a way as to tighten the criteria of scientific excellence and the quality conditions of published scientific papers;
- Students should be members of all committees of their interest, such as the Ethics Committee, the Teaching Committee, the Disciplinary Procedures Committee, PhD Thesis Committee;
- Increase the number of fully employed teachers in the field of Pharmacy and Dental Medicine;
- Reduce the teaching load on teachers to ensure sufficient time for scientific work;
- Define the role of the International Advisory Board and involve experts in the fields of pharmaceutical sciences and dental medicine;
- Encourage international student exchange by adjusting the schedule of courses and facilitating the recognition of exams passed at a foreign university.

Quality grade: Minimum level of quality

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

Analysis

The School has adopted positive regulations and ordinances relating to the field of ethics (the Code of Ethics of the School, the Code of Ethics of the Teachers of the School, the Code of Ethics of the Students of the School), liability of teachers, associates and students (the Ordinance on Employee Liability for the Violation of Obligations from the Employment Relationship, the Ordinance on Disciplinary Liability of Teachers and Associates, the Ordinance on Behaviour and Disciplinary Liability of Students), and gender equality (the Gender Equality Plan). Policy against discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment and the Protocol on action and protective measures against discrimination and sexual harassment were adopted at the level of the University of Split, that also published the Handbook on discrimination and mobbing in the workplace. The School has the Ethics Committee, the Committee for Disciplinary Procedures, the Committee for Protection against Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Harassment, and has appointed a Confidential Person, in accordance with the Regulation on the Procedure of Internal Reporting of Irregularities and Appointment of a Confidential Person. From the discussion the Expert Panel learned there were no ethical, discrimination or harassment issues in the evaluation period.

However, the analysis of the composition of the committees revealed that members of the management are in two of those committees, and that the confidential person is also a member of the management. Furthermore, students are not members of the Ethics

Committee and the Committee for Disciplinary Procedures. Although the Panel has learned from the management that they plan to include students as members of those committees, the School of Medicine should also revise the composition of the committees to decrease the involvement of the management.

Ethical issues in research areas are handled by the Ethics Committee which acts in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Ethics Committee for Biomedical Research, while the Animal Welfare Committee actively participates in checking protocols for research involving experimental animals. In general, researchers at the School respect provisions governing ethical issues in research.

The School of Medicine regularly uses Turnitin software for verification of the originality of student theses at all levels of study. PhD theses are published on the website 30 days prior to the PhD defence, and Diploma/PhD theses are registered in the Digital Academic Archive and Repository Dabar, which is a legal obligatory according to the Scientific Activity and Higher Education Act.

Recommendations for improvement

- Include students as members in the Ethics Committee and the Committee for Disciplinary Procedures;
- Change the composition of the Committees in such a way that the management is present in as small numbers as possible;
- The appointed Confidential Person should not be a member of the management, to ensure transparency and democracy.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

The School informs the public about their teaching and research activities on its website, but also through social media, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube and LinkedIn, which represents a good communication channel with potential students and general public.

The School shares all relevant information about its integrated and postgraduate studies (Medicine, Dental Medicine, Pharmacy, Medical Studies in English, doctoral studies, postgraduate specialist studies), conditions for the enrolment of the first and senior years of study, enrolment deadlines, call for application, curriculum, schedule, obligatory and elective courses, learning outcomes, etc. Information about divisions, departments, their members, their teaching activities, courses they perform at each study, and research

projects are given. General information about research activities at the School of Medicine, and individual research groups, laboratories, centres and their projects are also presented in the designated area and are well organized. Information about different indicators, such as pass rate analysis and enrolment of new students, is regularly presented at the Faculty Council. The information is available in Croatian and in English, but the English website does not contain all information as the website in Croatian contains, and is mainly focused on the students that are studying Medicine in English.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Improve the website in English, so that it contains all the information as the website in Croatian.
- Update the existing brochures for the first-year students in Croatian, to facilitate the beginning of their student life.

Quality grade: High level of quality

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

Analysis

The School recognizes its social role in the development of the local community. The Strategy of the School for the period 2021-2027 includes as a part of the mission of the School serving the community, expanding the social responsibility of the School of Medicine by promoting health and disease prevention in the immediate and wider community.

The School contributes to the development of the local community by the realization of projects which aim at strengthening the capacities and role of the civil society, promoting public health, popularization of science and STEM, giving premises to the local community, associations, and societies for organizations of conferences, symposia, lectures, etc. Teachers employed at the School are recognized in the society, even in the fields beyond biomedicine. Furthermore, teachers are actively involved in the implementation of projects and activities of popularization of science and STEM, socially significant projects, marking health-related events, public debates, panels, seminars, various working groups of professional organizations and agencies, in the field of legislative proposals and drafting of strategic documents.

However, there are not many examples of student involvement in these projects, as well as examples of implementing student projects, although there are many active student organizations at the institution. A weaker point in this standard are also contribution to

the development of economy, although there are some examples of collaboration with the private sector, as well as technology transfer and research commercialisation.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Encourage applications of projects in collaboration with the economic sector;
- Encourage technology transfer, patenting and research commercialisation on the level of teachers and young researchers;
- Encourage applications of student projects.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

Lifelong learning programmes which are delivered by the School of Medicine are aligned with the Strategy of the School for the period 2021-2027, as systematic development of lifelong education programmes is listed as one of the strategic goals. The School has adopted the Ordinance on Continuing Medical Education, and has a Committee for Continuing Medical Education, which oversees applications and implementation of the continuing Medical Education programme. The Office for Lifelong Learning and Professional Practice is a part of the Office for Science, Postgraduate Studies and International Cooperation. The administrator which is employed at the Office provides support in the organization of educational programmes, which are in the fields of basic education, general medical education and narrower specialist education. After completion of the course, the organizer has the obligation to submit a written report to the Committee, which contains a course summary, assessment of the course, including results of the conducted survey, number and profile of participants and exam results, as well as the financial part.

In general, participants are satisfied with the courses, but the Expert Panel suggests to the organizers to use the information obtained from those surveys and to improve the educations based on those results. To get to a high level of quality, the School of Medicine should carefully analyse the current guidelines, practices and emerging trends to define the needs of professionals working in the fields of medicine, dental medicine and pharmacy. On the basis of those needs the Committee for Continuing Medical Education should provide on a list of education events in the next period/year and motivate teachers for organization of those educations.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Conduct an analysis of the needs of three professions (Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Dental Medicine, Master of Pharmacy) for lifelong learning programmes and based on those results develop a programme of educations.
- Based on the analysis of the received comments after the lifelong learning education, revise the education programme.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

II. Study programmes

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

Analysis

The objective of all study programmes is, generally, in line with the mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution defined by the Developmental Strategy of the School of Medicine Split for period from 2021 to 2027. This Strategy has three main strategic goals connected to the: teaching activity; science, research, and public activity; and organization and management, infrastructural development and quality assurance system.

All three goals are tightly connected with the study programmes. Quality (of teaching) implies updating and modernization of existing study programmes. Curricula and course syllabi must be modernized continuously and in line with the demographic changes and society needs. Three programmes (Medicine, Medicine in English and Pharmacy) went through the process of both, lesser changes (a few times) and bigger changes (once), but Dental Medicine (from 2010) underwent only through the lesser changes.

The justification for implementation and delivering study programmes, regarding social and economic needs, is provided, except for the Dental Medicine. Changes and reduction of the local labour market needs for Doctor of Dental Medicine should be considered and the enrolment quota should be harmonized with the documents of the Croatian Employment Service and Croatian Dental Medicine Chamber (enrolment quotas for study programmes have not been changed in the period covered by last re-accreditation process). Because of the differences in curricula, students are not motivated to go abroad for the Erasmus exchange.

The School delivers study programmes achieving the degrees of regulated professions - they are in line with the rules of professional organizations that govern their licensing.

The graduates from the School are competitive professionals for national and EU labour markets. Data on graduate employment are partially missing, probably because of the rapid integration of medicine graduates into the global labour market (outside Croatia).

Recommendations for improvement:

- The study programme of Dental Medicine should be refreshed and changed in accordance with the labour market needs, as well as the content of the study programme.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

The intended learning outcomes of the study programmes of the School are aligned with the level and profile of the qualifications acquired through them and are publicly available on the School website. Specifically, the School checks and ensures that the learning outcomes at the level of courses are aligned with the learning outcomes at the programme level.

The number of learning outcomes defined for the integrated undergraduate and graduate studies in Medicine is 21, for the integrated undergraduate and graduate studies in Medicine in English is 21, for the integrated undergraduate and graduate studies in Dental Medicine is 20, and for the integrated undergraduate and graduate studies in Pharmacy is 24. Descriptors learning outcomes of the mentioned study programmes are harmonized with the levels of the Croatian Qualification Framework and the European Qualification Framework for the 6th and 7th levels. As the School conforms to the professional requirements and internationally recognized professional standards, the programme is up to date. Overall, the intended learning outcomes that are described in the different courses in the degree programmes clearly reflect the competencies required for employment, continuing education or other individual/society needs, especially in healthcare sector.

The School participated in two EU projects for the improvement of study programmes within the Croatian Qualification Framework, and the last major changes and additions were made in 2022 to the study programmes Medicine, Medicine in English and Pharmacy precisely with the intention of harmonizing and improving the study programmes with qualification standards. Such major changes and additions were absent in the study of Dental Medicine.

Recommendations for improvement

- It is necessary to make major changes and additions to the Dental Medicine study programme in accordance with the Elaborate on the evaluation of dental subjects of the Dental Medicine study programme of the School of Medicine of the University of Split, prepared in 2021 as part of the ESF project "Development, improvement and implementation of professional practice at the School of Medicine in Split";
- It is necessary to analyse the employability of all students after graduation.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

The School mostly ensures the achievement of intended learning outcomes of their study programmes. The theoretical part of knowledge is clearly described in learning outcomes, but the practical part is not sufficiently included. There is a good cooperation with external teaching bases where the practical/clinical part of teaching is carried out, but the quality of achieving learning outcomes mostly depends on the motivation of the clinical mentor.

Generally, teachers are available to the students, but students would like to have more clinical practice. The School is collecting a huge amount of evaluation forms from teachers and students about the learning outcomes, but there are complaints that the reaction of the management on improving and changing the learning outcomes is belated or sometimes missing. There is no sufficient evidence that the results of evaluations by students play some particular role – the management has the mechanisms, but their effectiveness is not perfect. Teachers use different methods of evaluating knowledge such as tests, written and oral exams, seminar papers, quizzes, presentations, diploma theses, etc.). OSCE was introduced only in a few subjects. Clinical skills booklet for the study of Medicine, Dental Medicine, as well as Manual for professional training for the Pharmacy study is used to achieve clinical learning outcomes. Control of performed clinical work, as well as the number of performed clinical interventions, is not always in accordance with those prescribed.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Improve the reaction to the results of numerous surveys from teachers and students;

- Inform students and teachers about the changes made;
- Implement a quality control in achieving learning outcomes in clinical skills;
- Make major changes and additions to the study of Dental Medicine, especially as no changes have been made to the dental study programme from the beginning of the programme;
- Implement OSCE in as many courses as possible.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

Changes and additions to the study programmes since the last reaccreditation in 2015 included four integrated university undergraduate and graduate study programmes, in the form of minor changes and one major change and addition each, except for Dental Medicine, which had only minor changes and additions. Numerous surveys are used to collect data on the quality of existing programmes, but there is no evidence that there is involvement of students and external stakeholders (employees, professional organizations, and alumni) in the steps after analysing the results, as well as in procedures of planning, proposing and approving new programmes, or revising/closing existing programmes.

The Committee for Quality Improvement is responsible for planning, harmonizing and analysing the evaluation procedures of the entire system of higher education at the School. Given that, the head of the Committee is in the same time the Vice Dean of the School, so it seems that the objectivity of the assessment may be lacking. The stated priority in the Action Plan for 2022/2023 was preparing a new study programme of Dental Medicine in English, and launching it. External stakeholders and professional organization are not sufficiently involved. There is a possibility of a wrong assessment of the study programme's needs, given the already existing lacking of full-time teaching employees.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Define specific procedures and criteria for proposing new, revising or cancelling existing study programmes as soon as possible;
- Include objective needs assessment methods in the case of introducing new programmes;

- Current lack of teachers could have long-term consequences. Therefore, more teachers should be recruited as soon as possible.

Quality grade: Minimum level of quality

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

Analysis

All study programmes of the School are defined by the European system of credit acquisition and transfer (ECTS). The School's administration states that ECTS credits are aligned with the student's workload in acquiring the learning outcomes. The study programmes of Medicine, Medical Studies in English and Dental Medicine carry 360 ECTS (60 per year), and Pharmacy 300 ECTS. The student survey on workload is conducted regularly (periodically). Although the workload of students in regulated professions is defined, important differences can still be seen in the programmes (e.g. a clinical practice hour in Dental Medicine is worth twice as much ECTS as in Pharmacy), which necessarily needs to be corrected.

The student workload is not always realistically estimated, and such corrections must be made. Examples of correction of ECTS points considering survey results were not documented in writing. Verbal communication with the student is carried out more often than according to the written procedure. The procedure for problem solving is not clear and regulated. ECTS credits are not always awarded in accordance with the objective workload. Students are not informed about the results of the analyses.

Recommendations for improvements:

- It is necessary to analyse thoroughly the workload in the study programmes;
- School of Medicine should adjust either the contents of courses or the ECTS credits to the real situation.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

2.6. Student practice is an integral part of study programmes (where applicable).

Analysis

Student professional practice is an integral part of all four integrated study programmes (Medicine, Medical Studies in English, Dental Medicine and Pharmacy). Students would like to work more in clinical care during the whole study programme, and not only in the final year.

A survey questionnaire for students on satisfaction with practice/clinical rotations is conducted once a year, but the results are presented in total (not separately for medical students in Croatian and separately in German). Students are satisfied, in general, with the organization, but think that the success depends a lot on the motivation of mentors. There are many contracts with employers outside the School as a teaching base for clinical practice/rotations, but the evidence of criteria, which are taking them into account as candidates for teaching bases, is not clear. The mentors are not always clinical specialists in the field, so it could be concluded that the appropriate supervision is needed (which is not documented in writing).

A huge problem is connected to the number of hours in total and related ECTS credits: Medicine 590 hours which brings 20 ECTS, Dental Medicine 500 hours which brings 32 ECTS and Pharmacy 940 hours which brings 30 ECTS credits. It seems that these ECTS are allocated roughly and not based on actual course content. It is important to ensure that the ECTS credits are allocated according to the guidelines of higher education.

Recommendations for improvement:

- There are adequate contracts with many employers, who allow students to visit their clinical practices. However, records related to quality assurance are not present or are not standardized;
- The ECTS credits should be corrected in all study programmes, primarily regarding student practices, especially across different disciplines (Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy).

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

III. Teaching process and student support

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

Analysis

Enrolment conditions as well as enrolment quotas for study programmes of the School are published on the website "Become a student" as well as on the website of the School. The aforementioned enrolment procedure and adequate documentation refer to studies: Medicine in the Croatian language, Pharmacy and Dental Medicine. The invitation to the study programme of Medicine in English (a study programme with the entire education at the School and a study programme that includes clinical education at Regiomed

Kliniken) is available on the website of the School. On the website of the School, there is a timetable for enrolment in the mentioned study programme, together with the necessary mandatory and additional documentation, as well as information on the enrolment quota and tuition costs. At the time of writing this report, the invitation to enrol was not available, and from the interviews with the students and the attached self-evaluation report, the Panel members learn that, despite the aforementioned enrolment process for the studies in English, the process of selection of candidates for enrolment is not entirely clear and transparent. Students state that they do not know which scoring system was applied during their application to study programmes in English. An integral part of the enrolment process is an interview between the committee (appointed by the School) and the candidate, where the committee examines the candidates about their previous experiences, occupations, interests and aspirations. To the Expert Panel's knowledge, there is no objective interview form.

The criteria for enrolment in the higher study year, as well as the criteria for repeating the year and continuing studies, i.e. interruption of studies in case of non-fulfilment of student obligations, are specified in the University's regulations, the Faculty's regulations, and the Faculty's general acts and regulations. All the mentioned documents are available on the website of the School. As part of the application for study programmes in the Croatian language, the enrolment conditions, as mentioned earlier, are integrated into the „Become a student“ system and are based on general success in high school, state matriculation results (compulsory and optional subjects) and additional awards and achievements during secondary school education. All of the above is transparently and clearly explained on the "Become a student" page. With the help of the attached tables in the analytical appendix (3.1, 3.2, 3.3.), the Expert Panel determined that enrolment quotas are respected and are almost always filled, and the average grade per study programme and study year does not fall below 4.0. During the studies, it is also possible to enter a dormant status for justified medical or family reasons, and this is discussed by the Teaching Committee, which submits a proposed solution to the Dean. A psychological counselling centre is also available at the School, which is available daily to all students in need. The conditions for transferring to the study programmes of the Faculty of Medicine in Split from other universities in the Republic of Croatia or from abroad are determined by the Faculty Regulations available on the School website. The conditions for academic recognition and duration of studies from abroad are determined by laws at the national level.

Recommendations for improvement:

It is necessary to work out the enrolment process for Medical Studies in English, that is:

- Set up an accurate point system that will be used to select and grade registered candidates, and to publish the above on the Faculty's website;
- Develop an objective form for interviewing candidates, so that the entire process is more objective and equally applicable to all candidates;
- Test the psychomotor skills for selecting the students for dental medicine programme should be introduced.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

The evaluation of student work is defined by the regulations of the University and the School, which are publicly available, and the School regularly collects data on student enrolment and progress. The collected data are analysed in accordance with the standards of analytical evaluation and were presented to the Expert Panel through analytical graphs and tables within the self-evaluation report and the Analytic Supplement (tables 3.4 and 3.5). By looking at the above data, the Expert Panel found out that the maximum success of students, i.e. 60 ECTS points during one study year (during the first year of study) is achieved in Pharmacy, then in Medicine in Croatian, Medical Studies in English and finally in Dental Medicine. In the cohort of students who enrolled in the study between 2011 and 2017 (for the study programme of Pharmacy) and 2011 and 2016 (for the study programme of Medicine and Dental Medicine), the following observations were made:

- The percentage of graduated students from the largest to the smallest is: Pharmacy, Dental Medicine, Medicine, Medical Studies in English;
- The percentage of students who lost the right to study from the largest to the smallest is: Medical Studies in English, Medicine in Croatian, Dental Medicine, Pharmacy;

The average duration of studies is almost equal to the minimum legally determined duration of studies, that is, it does not exceed an average of 5.1 years for Pharmacy studies and 6.1 years for other studies. Quantitatively weaker graduation results from the Medical Studies in English are explained by students dropping out of studies for personal/family or socioeconomic reasons and transferring to other higher education institutions outside the Republic of Croatia. With a number of questionnaires provided by the Commission for Quality Assurance of Higher Education, the School collects information about difficulties during studies as well as the reasons for lower academic results, dropping out of studies or transferring to other higher education institutions. Student response to the

aforementioned surveys varies and has significantly decreased in recent years, i.e. after the COVID-19 pandemic. As the policy of the University is that solving surveys and questionnaires is optional, the Faculty does not have adequate means of motivating students to solve the mentioned questionnaires and surveys. In the self-evaluation report and the available documents, the Panel members did not find evidence of the implementation of student complaints/proposals in daily practice, nor measures to increase pass rates.

Recommendations for improvement:

- To motivate the students to solve questionnaires about the quality of teaching and study results via a survey, which could be conducted during a class (that is, at the end of a certain turnus/year, but in the School building with the absence of the teacher to ensure a safer and more relaxed environment);
- A formal acknowledgment, analysis of student proposals and objections with the aim to achieve a higher percentage of passing, and ultimately a higher percentage of graduation, especially in the study programme Medical Studies in English should be provided. Student feedback has to be provided formally and, this has to be, documented.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

Teaching at the School takes place within the Faculty's buildings, in teaching bases (hospitals, Galen laboratory, pharmacies, private dental practices, Dental Academicus, ...) through lectures, seminars and exercises. Teaching takes place in rotations, which means that students attend one course at a time and they stated that they like this way of studying very much and it is one of the most important reasons for enrolling in this particular institution. At the end of the rotation, students have the opportunity to pass the exam at the rotation's regular exam term, and after that they have another summer regular period and two autumn regular periods. Students state that they do not like the long distance between the summer term and the summer exam period, and that they would like it if a larger number of student terms were available and that it would be extremely useful for them if they had a break for exams (with the addition of additional deadlines, a break would be possible for a period of two to four weeks during February or March).

In addition to the mentioned teaching modalities, students also attend clinical exercises, professional practice, field teaching and they participate in scientific work. The list of

teaching bases is available on the School's website. Students state that they are satisfied with the available learning modalities, noting that they would like to spend more time in clinics and on practical teaching modalities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Faculty also implemented online classes via MS Teams and Merlin, and they continue to use the above within the framework of possibilities and performance. During their studies, students are also divided into smaller practice groups with the aim of better and easier access to classes and a more personal experience with patients/activities.

The School also started applying OSCE in certain courses (clinical skills 1 and 2, Pharmacy after completion of professional training, Medicine after completion of clinical rotations, ...). The introduction of the OSCE modality of learning and evaluation of knowledge is an example of the desire to implement new methods learning into everyday practice. The School has made a great effort to modernize the technical equipment they use in daily teaching and research, and in addition to excellent technical equipment, their laboratory for animal research, which is arranged according to European quality standards and financed by European funds, is an excellent example of modernization. Students state that professors are constantly available for consultations and any other inquiries during their studies and daily classes.

Communication takes place through the student representative, the student council or directly between the student and the teacher through official communication channels (official mail and Merlin). Students have the opportunity to participate in research under the supervision of a mentor professor, and in this they have a certain amount of autonomy with the goal of training for independent work after graduating from college. At the end of the semester and the study year, many surveys and questionnaires about satisfaction with teaching, learning processes and teachers are available to students. As mentioned earlier however, the turnout for surveys and questionnaires dropped significantly. Evidence of the adoption of student proposals and appeals is not available, and from the conversations with the teaching staff, the Expert Panel learned that student proposals are adopted within the framework of legal and other possibilities of the Faculty.

The work of students in science and clinical practice is also supported and encouraged by the work of student associations and sections, which are available in large numbers at the School, and according to the students, the School of Medicine provides them with financial and logistical support. Student evaluation takes place in accordance with the Regulations of the Faculty and the University (available on the School's website), and detailed criteria for passing and evaluation can be found in the course outline. With the aim of ensuring support for students, the Faculty has provided a mentoring system for all study programmes, which consists of a mentoring programme between students and

professors, but also between students in their senior year and students in their junior year.

In addition to the aforementioned mentoring system, the School also has a Counselling Centre that provides support to students during their studies in the form of psychological counselling and problem solving during teaching/examination processes. The School allows students to adjust the duration, form and date of the exam in accordance with the University Regulations for students with disabilities, and they also provide support to students engaged in extracurricular activities such as sports or scientific work in the same way as to students from less represented groups (students, parents, older students, etc.). Support is manifested through the option of modifying the exam date within the legal framework, as well as compensating classes in case of unavoidable obligations.

Recommendations for improvements:

- Implement of additional exams. This should be done under the stipulation that a student, irrespective of the number of deadlines offered, is limited to a maximum of four exam appointments/dates/deadlines, whether regular or additional, within a single academic year;
- Introduce OSCE in subjects where they are not present at the moment;
- Introduce additional interactive / innovative teaching approaches.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

3.4. The higher education institution ensures adequate student support.

Analysis

Students of the School are welcomed at the Introductory class at the beginning of the first year, during which students receive information about the study programme, e-mail addresses and have the opportunity to ask important questions to the Faculty's management and older students. Information about the schedule and delivery of classes is available via the EduPlan platform, which students access via a unique authentication token. All important information is available on the websites of the School, the University, the EduPlan portal, the Merlin system and ISVU. The previously mentioned mentoring programme in two modalities provides students with adequate support during their studies in the form of advice, help and consultation, and the one-student-one-professor system ensures a very personal approach to studying, and students state that they really like this mentoring model. Students are at the service of the Faculty's committees and commissions, especially the Service for Integrated Studies and Students and the Office for International Cooperation. A mental health counselling centre is available to students, which functions on the principle of announcement, and after the consultation, the

counselling centre, with the consent of the student, also includes the administration of the School or the subject teacher in solving problems, in case it is a problem related exclusively to mental health, independent of teaching process, the student is continuously monitored by the counselling centre. The School, in agreement with the Health Centre of the Split-Dalmatia County, provided local doctors from the mentioned area as well as dentists for students who do not have doctors from primary health care. We found out the above from the self-evaluation report and through conversation with students. Regarding career counselling, once a year the School organizes a career day attended by representatives of external institutions that employ graduate students. According to the Expert Panel's knowledge, legal advice is not available, except for the student ombudsman. The School's library employs two permanent employees who participate in webinars and professional meetings, the contents of which were not presented to the Panel. Student volunteers also participate in the work of the library in the afternoon. By looking at the Analytic Supplement and from conversations with students, we learn that the quantitative norm of mandatory professional literature is not met.

According to the opinion of the Panel, the Faculty employs a sufficient number of administrative staff. However, the organizational structure is quite complex. The School supports students in student activities through the work of student associations, organizations and sections (a more detailed explanation was given earlier). In this standard too, it is important to emphasize that student feedback regarding quality is not represented in sufficient numbers to be representative.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Provide a sufficient number of copies of mandatory professional literature (minimum 20% for each course);
- Facilitate a measurable rise in student feedback to uphold the excellence of the student support process;
- Create a comprehensive guide for students, available in both print and digital formats, to assist them with their university life. This guide should not only acquaint them with the study programme but also inform them about various student opportunities, including financial support, involvement in scientific work, accommodation options, and avenues for cultural and personal growth;
- Establish a reliable legal service to offer students accessible legal advice, should issues arise in the teaching processes.

Quality grade: High level of quality

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

Analysis

The School respects the decisions of the University and the laws on additional conditions that are taken into account when enrolling students from vulnerable groups (children of deceased, detained or missing veterans, children of 100% war invalids, students with disabilities, etc.). All of the above is in accordance with the Act on the Protection of Military and Civil War Invalids, and the conditions and procedure are described and available on the “Become a student” page. Support for students with disabilities is in accordance with the Regulations of the University, and a coordinator is available at the Faculty who, in cooperation with the Vice-Dean for Students and the Office for Students with Disabilities of the University, resolves current difficulties.

The Counselling centre mentioned earlier is available and of great importance for students from vulnerable groups and students with disabilities. The teaching buildings of the School and teaching bases are infrastructurally accessible and adapted to students with disabilities, which the Expert Panel saw during the tour of the above. The course, time and form of the exam can be adapted to students with difficulties according to the need. The data collected about students of this category, as well as all personal information, are strictly protected, and access is granted only to authorized persons (vice dean for teaching, coordinator for students with disabilities and students from vulnerable groups). Students in need (pregnancy, death, etc.) have the right to suspend their studies, which is decided by the School administration led by the vice dean for students, and the suspension period is not counted as an interruption of studies nor is it evaluated with negative points during employment.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Initiate some support in the financial form for the students;
- Support the students in accommodation related issues.

Quality grade: High level of quality

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

Analysis

The School has an active Office for International Cooperation that provides administrative support to students seeking international experience. All ERASMUS/ERASMUS+ programmes available for students of the Faculty are published on the websites of the

School and the University, the programmes take place through the University, and the Faculty is an intermediary. The programmes are bilateral or multilateral depending on the destination and the university. The School is also a member of SEA-EU.

The Rulebook on International Mobility of USSM is also active at the School. Scientific and professional exchanges are also available through the CroMSIC association, which as a member of the IFMSA (International Federation of Medical Students Association) signs bilateral and multilateral contracts with various countries of the world and provides exchange students in the summer period (for medical students, at the same time, the largest percentage of medical students attend precisely these exchange programmes).

The evaluation of the mobility programme is carried out at the level of the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes in the case of ERASMUS/ERASMUS+ programmes, and in the case of exchanges within CroMSIC, the evaluation is carried out internally within the association. Upon completion of the programme, students receive a certificate of completed programme, passed exams and skills, and the School recognizes the acquired qualifications and knowledge within the legal framework and translates them into ECTS credits that are entered into the ISVU system. The ECTS coordinator decides on the recognition of attended and passed courses in accordance with the study contract and on the basis of the issued certificate of passed exams (transcript of grades). In the observed period, more than a hundred students went through one of the mobility programmes. Students state that the programme is more accessible to students of Dental Medicine and Pharmacy, while medical students rarely decide on ERASMUS/ERASMUS+ programmes due to the inconsistency of the ECTS credit system with other countries and due to rotation classes.

The ECTS credit system is harmonized at the level of the Republic of Croatia. Evidence of mobility in the form of recognition of ECTS credits acquired abroad was not part of the presented documentation. ERASMUS+ programmes are often used by students on doctoral and postgraduate studies. We obtained data on mobility through Analytic Supplement 3.6 and directly from conversations with students.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Harmonize the ECTS credit system with other institutions in Europe to ensure opportunities for gaining international academic experience that will be recognised in Croatia without the need of taking additional exams.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

The School has developed a unique model for the study of medical education in English. The students can decide whether they wish to complete the last three years of medical education in Split or in Germany. In fact, some of the Scandinavian students who were interviewed, informed the Panel that, in some cases, the students could drop out in Split and complete their last three years of study (clinical component) in their different home (Scandinavian) countries. Scandinavia even supports their citizens financially. These study conditions and opportunities are certainly very attractive to foreign students from different parts of Europe.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Encourage student recruitment from different regions of the world.

Quality grade: High level of quality

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

Analysis

The Regulations on studies and study system of the School are harmonized with the Regulations on studies and study system at the University level and describes the students' rights and obligations (methods of registering and taking exams, methods of student evaluation, attendance of classes, etc.). The problem is that almost in every School body, some of the school management member is present, which, according to the opinion of some School members compromises democracy of decisions. The Panel did not see any written complaints about any of the received grades, and subsequently, written final decision, as well as reply to the complaint. Unfortunately, the Panel did not meet/talk to the student ombudsman of the School.

There was no evidence that the School harmonizes the criteria and methods for evaluation and grading with the teaching methods used. The School provides support to the assessors in the development of skills related to the testing and assessment methods. The higher education institution does not have any written feedback to ensure objectivity and reliability of grading. There are no examples of double grading to ensure objectivity assurance and reliability.

The evaluation procedures consider special circumstances of certain groups of students (modifying examination procedures to suit e.g. students with disabilities), while at the same time ensuring the achievement of intended learning outcomes. There was no evidence regarding meta-evaluations. The students do not receive feedback on the evaluation results, and guidelines for the learning process based on these evaluations.

There are no written examples of adaptation of examination procedures for students with disabilities, although it is said that they have a study support system for such persons.

Recommendations for improvements:

- Harmonize evaluation and assessment methods with teaching methods;
- Discrepancies have been observed in articulating the learning outcomes for some courses. Some courses only partially outline or detail their learning outcomes;
- Document communication and problem solving regarding the evaluation and evaluation of student achievements;
- Analyse passing/failing of all students and provide adequate feedback to the students regarding their performance;
- Make available the list and the number of skills that need to be acquired within a particular clinical subject and hold classes in accordance with the list.

Quality grade: Minimum level of quality

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

Analysis

According to the Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity, the Act on Academic and Professional Titles and Academic Degrees, the Ordinance on the Content of Higher Education Diplomas and Diploma Supplements, the Ordinance on the form of the diploma, the form of the supplementary study document, the content and the form of the certificate, diploma container and certificate of the University of Split, upon the completion of a study programme the School issues a diploma and a diploma supplement. Diplomas are awarded at a public graduation ceremony each year, except for the study of Pharmacy every two years. The diploma supplement (in Croatian and English) contains the name of the qualification, name of the study programme, information about the university, language and duration of the study programme, level of qualification, beginning and end of studies, all courses taken, and exams passed with associated ECTS points, achieved level of learning outcomes, graduation thesis, professional status and any additional information.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Organize a public graduation ceremony and awarding of diploma for the study programmes of Pharmacy each academic year, as for other study programmes.

Quality grade: High level of quality

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

Analysis

In principle, the School aims to maintain good contact with its graduates since they are considered as a valuable asset for the School. The School analyses the employability of its graduates. There are currently several graduates of the School, who are employed by the institution. In addition, the School maintains regular contact with its Alumni through Aliae Matris Alumni Facultatis Medicinae Spalatensis (AMAFMS), who are now prominent scientists in different parts of the world. Moreover, the School has ways to inform prospective students about the opportunities to continue education or find employment after graduation and may support them regarding future career planning. Indeed, regular exchange of current students and staff (faculty, post-docs) occurs in the laboratories of former graduates of the School. Since there is a lack of the medical doctors at the market, admission quotas aligned with social and labour market are not a necessity at this moment.

Finally, the School motivates its alumni to work in Split and neighbouring areas in the County.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Provide incentives for former graduates to return to/ contribute towards the School's strategic goals;
- Recognize former graduates who contribute towards the development of the School during convocation ceremonies or via awards as well as development support services at the level of the University or the University constituent;
- To establish a task-specific system and a database of contacts with alumni and employers;
- Actively offer visiting professorships/positions to former graduates to ensure that such an initiative is sustained and maintained.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

IV. Teaching and institutional capacities

4.1. The higher education institution ensures adequate teaching capacities.

Analysis

The number and qualifications of teachers were found to be adequate for the delivery of study programme and achievement of the intended learning outcomes and performing scientific activity. Not only does the School have high quality teachers but also several teachers who are excellent in research.

The Panel felt that the ratio of students and full-time teachers at the School is not very proportionate. Currently, in Croatia the recruitment of new teachers is restricted. Similarly, resource allocation to the higher educational institutions to carry out their academic and research activities is not optimal. The School, however, has taken the initiative to create the Medical Studies in English to boost its revenues. While this is to a certain extent helpful, as more money is now available to recruit the much-needed teachers, it has also placed an additional strain on the workload of existing teachers.

Despite being overloaded with teaching, the teacher workload is in line with relevant legislation and policies, regulations of competent bodies, and collective agreements.

As outlined above, despite being overloaded with teaching, the teachers ensure appropriate distribution of teaching activities, conduct excellent scientific activities, are involved in professional and personal development and carry out administrative duties.

To overcome shortages of full-time teaching staff, several part-time faculty members are now employed by the School to complement the workload of full-time faculty. But, as repeatedly pointed out in this Expert Panel report, there is still a lack of full-time faculty to carry out the additional work related to the new study programme Medical Studies in English.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Employ more full-time faculty staff as well as teaching assistants', for the Medical, Dental and Pharmaceutical disciplines
- Clearly outline who is responsible for teaching in Germany in the new study programme Medical Studies in English, which is administered by the School.

Quality grade: Minimum level of quality

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

Analysis

There are objective and transparent procedures, which the School has put in place to ensure to ensure the selection of excellent teachers. When appointing and evaluating teachers as potential faculty members, the School considers their previous activities (e.g. basic qualifications and/or pedagogical expertise, teaching experience, research activity including publications record and funding acquired, evaluation from students, etc.). The School has comprehensive methods for the selection of the best candidates for each position and, in addition to the prescribed national minimum conditions for each position, it has prescribed competitive criteria ensuring the selection of excellent candidates. This task is, however, challenging due to the lack of financial resources. This has led to a limited number of available full-time faculty for teaching and administration.

The promotion of teachers into higher grades is based on the evaluation and rewarding of excellence and the School considers important scientific achievements (e.g. number of publications in high IF journals, books or book chapter published, competitive funding attracted, completion of successful peer reviewed projects, participation in scientific conferences, supervision of students' research including students' theses as well as community outreach). Excellent teachers are promoted in line with their scientific, teaching and professional work outputs and contribution to the development of the higher education institution.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Ensure a greater recruitment of teachers;

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

Teachers are regularly provided with short courses related to professional development. These cover the development of the teaching and research skills of the teachers. However, there is no clear requirement that states that each faculty member must complete these courses. Similarly, it was difficult to ascertain how many faculty members actually had a formal educational background related to pedagogical practices.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Ensure that the completion of pedagogical and didactic courses is compulsory, especially for those who are newly appointed;
- Ensure that a certain percentage of the teaching staff/ full-time faculty are allowed enough financial resources and time to complete professional development, especially in the areas of medical didactics and pedagogy;
- Overall, there is an urgent need for the School to encourage the assessment and improvement of teaching competencies based on the peer-review recommendations and the student satisfaction surveys.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

4.4. The space, equipment and the entire infrastructure (laboratories, IT services, work facilities etc.) are appropriate for the delivery of study programmes, ensuring the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and the implementation of scientific/artistic activity.

Analysis

The School has clearly improved its infrastructure and space, since the last review of the School was carried out in 2015. Currently, the School has excellent teaching and research facilities:

- Dental Academicus is a state-of-the-art centre for dental students to practice their clinical dental skills, and it represents a good start that should be expanded in the future (other clinical facilities are now outside the School, in private dental offices according to agreements with the School);
- Animal facilities are well established and carry out regular, excellent world-class research;
- Laboratories are well-equipped and operational. Students are encouraged to carry out research together with the faculty;
- New clinical skills lab for OSCE has been introduced. Students can practice their clinical skills and carry out clinical examinations in the well-equipped OSCE/clinical skills laboratory.

There are also several service contracts with excellent and fully equipped patient-centred services (e.g. emergency department, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, including neonatology, as well as the Oncology Centre). The students have access to these excellent clinical departments.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Continue the great work that is currently being carried out.

Quality grade: High level of quality

4.5. The library and library equipment, including the access to additional resources, ensure the availability of literature and other resources necessary for a high-quality study, research and teaching.

Analysis

As pointed out in section 3.0 above, the library and the library equipment need to be further upgraded. This was also a recommendation in the previous expert panel report. Specifically, aspects related to space availability, the limited number of books and access to publications were raised in the previous report. The School has now taken into account several of these recommendations based on the self-evaluation reports. Despite this, several challenges related to space allocation need to be addressed.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Increase space allocation for the library;
- Ensure that more books are available (see section 3 above);
- E-books should be provided, where possible.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

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

Analysis

As pointed out in section 4.1, the School has rationally managed its financial resources. The initiative of the School to create the Medical Studies in English programme to boost its revenues is an excellent one. This is certainly helpful, as more money is now available to recruit the much-needed teachers.

Additional sources of funding are used for the School development and improvement via ongoing regional, national and international projects, which ensure the financial sustainability and efficiency in the School activities.

The School manages its financial resources transparently, efficiently and appropriately. Regular financial project reports are submitted for international projects, and they are done in accordance with the required national and international guidelines.

The interaction with the industry, local community as well as other stakeholders is, however, rather limited.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Improve the interaction with small to medium enterprises, industry as well as the local community that more money can be raised in cross-cutting projects (e.g. Industry-Academia projects).

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

V. Scientific/artistic activity

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

Analysis

In the period of 8 years, the School has increased its international recognizable in accordance with Strategic Plan of the School 2021-2027 by growing publications in the high-quality journals which has significantly contributed to the development of the USSM. The number of citations of all publications and the H-index by authors participating in the scientific and teaching activities are well documented using diverse data bases; Web of Science Core Collections (WOS CC) database and the SCOPUS database. The significant increase of publications is in the category of journals belonging to quartile Q1, and in quartile Q2.

In the dynamic landscape of higher education, the commitment to fostering a culture of innovation and intellectual growth is paramount. The teachers and associates of the School have not only embraced this commitment but have also exceeded expectations in contributing to the academic realm through a commendable number of high-quality scientific publications, in accordance with well written Science Strategic Plan of the School 2021- 2027. Moreover, for the purpose of monitoring and evaluating, as well as analysing the scientific potential of the School and the long-term development plan, the School has recently established an international advisory board.

The dedication to advancing knowledge is not only reflected in the quantity of publications but, more importantly, in the unwavering pursuit of excellence. The School has established efficient procedures that actively encourage and support the production of high-quality scientific publications. These procedures are designed to nurture an environment where creativity, critical thinking, and ground-breaking research thrive, ensuring that scientific research at medical faculty in Split remains at the forefront of their respective fields.

A verification to the School commitment to scholarly impact is their accurate record-keeping of publications. They track publication indices, citation impact, and h-indices, where applicable, to gauge the influence and reach of our scholarly endeavours. This

commitment to transparency and accountability reinforces their dedication to excellence and serves as a benchmark for continuous improvement.

The scholarly achievements of the School extend beyond publications, as evidenced by the impactful contributions to the academic community through Ph.D. theses. These theses not only showcase the depth of knowledge cultivated within the School but also serve as a testament to the mentorship and guidance provided by the School. Their commitment to nurturing the next generation of scholars is exemplified by the quality and rigour exhibited in these doctoral theses.

Furthermore, their teachers and associates actively champion the School scientific and artistic achievements at both national and international conferences. By participating in these forums, the School ensures that its ground-breaking research and creative endeavours receive the recognition they deserve on a global scale. This active promotion not only elevates the profile of the School but also fosters collaborations and partnerships that extend the impact of their academic community.

In summary, the School as a higher education institution stands as an example of academic excellence, where the tireless efforts of their teachers and associates have resulted in a productive and impactful scientific and artistic legacy. Through a commitment to quality, efficiency, transparency, mentorship, and global engagement, they continue to shape the future of knowledge and contribute meaningfully to the advancement of society.

Recommendations for improvement:

To promote the involvement of the School in European projects, attracting visiting experts, and enhancing the living conditions in Split to make it more appealing for scientific endeavours the Panel proposes considering the following strategies:

- Establishing the collaborative networks and facilitate partnerships with European universities, research institutions, and funding agencies;
- Introducing a Visiting Experts Programme and improving living conditions through supportive services, such as housing assistance, language courses for visiting experts to ease their transition and make living in Split more appealing;
- Promoting and marketing Split and its surroundings as an attractive destination for research and living. Showcase the city's cultural heritage, natural beauty, and quality of life via online presence on the School website;
- Staying flexible and adaptive to the evolving needs and preferences of the scientific community.

By implementing these strategies, the School can strengthen its position in the international scientific community, attract top talent, and contribute to the advancement of research and innovation in the region.

Quality grade: High level of quality

5.2. The higher education institution provides evidence for the social relevance of its scientific / artistic / professional research and transfer of knowledge.

Analysis

Societal Alignment in Research Planning: The School recognizes the importance of aligning its research activities with the needs of society and the labour market. Currently, there is a conscientious effort to monitor and consider these needs in the planning stages. However, acknowledging the ever-evolving landscape of societal demands and labour market trends, there is a recognized need for continuous improvement in this aspect. A more dynamic and responsive approach to identifying and addressing emerging needs especially between preclinical and clinical projects will further solidify the School commitment to serving as a catalyst for positive societal impact through its research endeavours.

Fortifying Knowledge Transfer and Technology Engagement: The School boasts an efficient support system for research and the transfer of knowledge and technologies. This infrastructure serves as a vital conduit for translating research outcomes into tangible benefits for society and industry. To amplify this impact, there is a recognized necessity to foster more active engagements. Strengthening collaborations with industry partners, actively participating in technology transfer initiatives, and fostering an environment that encourages researchers to proactively engage with external stakeholders will further enhance the efficacy of the School's knowledge and technology transfer mechanisms.

Elevating Involvement in Scientific, Arts, and Professional Organizations: The active participation of teachers and associates in scientific, and professional organizations is a commendable practice at the School. This involvement not only enriches the academic and professional development of individuals but also contributes to the broader academic and professional community. The high appreciation for such engagement is indicative of the positive impact it has on the university's overall ethos.

Recommendations for improvement:

- A more dynamic and responsive approach to identifying and addressing emerging needs especially between preclinical and clinical projects will further solidify the School's commitment to serving as a catalyst for positive societal impact through its research endeavours;

- Recognizing the value of this practice, continued support and encouragement for teachers and associates to participate in these activities will further solidify the School position as a hub for academic and professional excellence.

Quality grade: Satisfactory level of quality

5.3. Scientific/artistic and professional achievements of the higher education institution are recognized in the regional, national and international context.

Analysis

We wish to express our profound appreciation for the achievements and contributions of the academic community at the School. The commitment to excellence demonstrated by teachers, associates, and professional staff has significantly elevated the institution's standing at the university, national, and international level.

Awards for Exemplary Achievements:

The School takes pride in the accomplishments of its teachers, associates, and professional staff who have received accolades at the university, national, and international level. These awards, recognizing scientific, artistic, and professional achievements, underscore the dedication and exceptional talent within the institution's academic ranks.

Prolific Engagement in Diverse Projects:

The School stands as a beacon of innovation and research, boasting a commendable portfolio of scientific, artistic, and professional projects. The institution's involvement in a diverse range of projects, spanning university, national, and international spheres, exemplifies its commitment to advancing knowledge and contributing meaningfully to various academic and professional domains.

Dynamic Participation in Conferences:

The intellectual vibrancy of the School is evident through the active involvement of teachers, associates, and professional staff as invited lecturers in numerous national and international conferences. Their participation not only enriches the academic discourse within the institution but also extends the reach of the School's expertise, fostering collaborations and knowledge dissemination on a global scale.

Leadership Roles in Academic and Professional Communities:

Teachers and associates at the School demonstrate leadership in their respective fields by serving as esteemed members of scientific, artistic, and professional boards of conferences, as well as editorial boards of renowned scientific journals. This active

involvement reflects the School's dedication to shaping the trajectory of academic and professional discussions at both national and international levels.

In recognizing the School's commitment to excellence and the notable accomplishments of its academic community, we applaud the institution for creating an environment where innovation, research, and collaboration thrive. The School's impact on the academic and professional landscape is undoubtedly significant, and we commend all those involved for their outstanding contributions to the pursuit of knowledge and advancement of their respective fields.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Recognizing the importance of continuous growth and innovation in the field of dental medicine and pharmacy, we advocate for significant advancements at the School. The potential for ground-breaking contributions to these crucial disciplines is immense, and we encourage the School to spearhead initiatives that elevate its impact on both a national and international scale.

Quality grade: High level of quality

5.4. The scientific / artistic activity of the higher education institution is both sustainable and developmental.

Analysis

The Panel extends its sincere appreciation for the exemplary alignment and commitment demonstrated by the School in fostering research and development. The following key aspects showcase the School's dedication to excellence and vision in advancing scientific and artistic pursuits:

Strategic Alignment with Development Vision:

The research and arts development strategy at the School stands out for its seamless alignment with the broader vision of institutional development. This strategic coherence ensures that academic and creative pursuits are harmoniously integrated into the institution's overarching goals, contributing meaningfully to its growth and advancement.

Integration into Strategic Programmes:

Scientific and artistic activities at the School are not isolated endeavours but are instead integral components of the institution's strategic programmes. This approach reinforces the importance of research and artistic expression within the fabric of the School's academic agenda, creating a conducive environment for intellectual exploration and creative endeavours.

Allocation of Adequate Resources:

The School's commitment to excellence is further underscored by the provision of appropriate resources for scientific and artistic activities. Adequate funding, human resource management, spatial resources, modern equipment, and a comprehensive collection of relevant literature collectively empower researchers to thrive in their respective fields.

Recognition and Rewards for Achievements:

The acknowledgment and rewarding of scientific and artistic achievements of the School's employees exemplify a culture that values and celebrates intellectual and creative accomplishments. This not only motivates individuals to pursue excellence, but also fosters a community that cherishes and promotes a culture of continuous improvement.

Continuous Improvement Mechanisms:

The School commitment to the ongoing enhancement of scientific and artistic activities is evident through its multifaceted approach. The institution continually invests in appropriate financing, human resource management, spatial resources, equipment, and literature. Additionally, the School supports the dissemination of research results and actively contributes to the development of doctoral theses, ensuring a dynamic and evolving academic and artistic landscape.

The Panel commends the School for its holistic approach, recognizing that true excellence in research and arts development requires a strategic vision, resource commitment, and a steadfast dedication to continuous improvement. These commendable practices not only strengthen the institution but also contribute significantly to the broader academic and creative communities.

Recommendations for improvement:

- To discuss and select the projects that span both preclinical and clinical themes and addresses health concerns relevant to a broad population is a commendable goal. Here are a few project ideas that align with these criteria such as: a) Early Detection and Intervention for Neurodegenerative Diseases, b) Lifestyle Interventions for Chronic and age-related diseases, c) Telemedicine and Remote Health Monitoring;
- Choose a project that aligns with the expertise and resources available in your research environment. Additionally, consider forming interdisciplinary teams to foster collaboration between preclinical and clinical researchers, ensuring a more comprehensive approach to addressing health concerns.

Quality grade: High level of quality

5.5. Scientific/artistic and professional activities and achievements of the higher education institution improve the teaching process.

Analysis

The ongoing commitment to enhancing teaching processes at the School is commendable, with a focus on integrating space, equipment, and research and professional activities into undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate education. The following key principles underline the institution's dedication to improving the teaching experience:

Integration of Space and Equipment:

The School demonstrates a forward-thinking approach by incorporating space and equipment dedicated to scientific, artistic research, and professional activities directly into teaching at all levels. This integration ensures that students have first-hand exposure to cutting-edge resources, fostering an environment where theoretical knowledge is complemented by practical application.

Student Involvement in Projects:

Engaging undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate students in scientific, artistic, and professional projects is a pivotal strategy employed by the School. This hands-on involvement not only enriches the educational experience but also cultivates a culture of inquiry, innovation, and practical problem-solving among students.

Alignment of Teaching with Institutional Achievements:

The School further distinguishes itself by ensuring a direct reflection of its scientific, artistic research, and professional activities in teaching at both undergraduate and graduate levels. The curriculum, teaching methodologies, and doctoral theses all resonate with the institution's achievements, creating a cohesive and symbiotic relationship between academic instruction and the broader institutional contributions to knowledge and practice.

These integrated practices contribute significantly to the continuous improvement of teaching processes at the School. By intertwining academic instruction with real-world applications, the institution ensures that students not only grasp theoretical concepts but also develop practical skills that are directly relevant to their chosen fields.

The commitment to involving students in projects aligns with contemporary educational principles, fostering a dynamic learning environment where students actively contribute to and benefit from ongoing research and professional endeavours.

Lastly, the alignment of teaching content with institutional achievements ensures that students are exposed to the latest advancements and contribute to the academic legacy of the institution.

In conclusion, the School's commitment to integrating space, equipment, and ongoing research and professional activities into teaching processes showcases a dedication to providing a holistic and cutting-edge education at all levels. This approach not only prepares students for the challenges of their respective fields but also positions the School as a leader in fostering a symbiotic relationship between teaching and institutional achievements.

Recommendations for improvement:

- The observation that teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels may not fully reflect the breadth of scientific and professional achievements within the School's pharmacy and dental sciences is an opportunity for refinement.

Quality grade: High level of quality

APPENDICES

1. Quality assessment summary - tables

2. Site visit protocol

1. Quality assessment summary – tables

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

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

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

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

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

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

<i>Quality grade by standard</i>				
<i>V. Scientific/artistic activity</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory level of quality</i>	<i>Minimum level of quality</i>	<i>Satisfactory level of quality</i>	<i>High level of quality</i>
5.1. Teachers and associates employed at the higher education institution are committed to the achievement of high quality and quantity of scientific research.				X
5.2. The higher education institution provides evidence for the social relevance of its scientific / artistic / professional research and transfer of knowledge.			X	
5.3. Scientific/artistic and professional achievements of the higher education institution are recognized in the regional, national and international context.				X
5.4. The scientific / artistic activity of the higher education institution is both sustainable and developmental.				X
5.5. Scientific/artistic and professional activities and achievements of the higher education institution improve the teaching process.				X

2. Site visit protocol

Reakreditacija Medicinskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Splitu	Re-accreditation of the School of Medicine University of Split
--	---

PROTOKOL POSJETA Medicinski fakultet Sveučilišta u Splitu

VISIT PROTOCOL School of Medicine University of Split

Mjesto događanja: Šoltanska 2, Split

Venue: Šoltanska 2, Split

	Utorak, 21. studeni 2023.	Tuesday, 21th November 2023
9:30 – 10:30	Sastanak s dekanom i prodekanima (<i>bez prezentacije</i>)	Meeting with the Dean and Vice-Deans (<i>no presentation</i>)
10:30 – 10:40	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
10:40 – 11:40	Sastanak s Odborom za unaprijeđenje kvalitete	Meeting with the Quality Assurance Committee
11:40 – 14:00	Obilazak Fakulteta (predavaonice, informatičke učionice, knjižnica, studentske službe, odjeli, zavodi, laboratoriji i klinike) i prisustvovanje nastavi	Tour of the Faculty (classrooms, computer classrooms, library, student services, divisions, departments, laboratories and clinics) and participation in teaching classes
14:00 – 15:30	<i>Radni ručak</i>	<i>Working lunch</i>
15:30 – 16:15	Sastanak s Alumnima	Meeting with the Alumni

16:15 - 16:25	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
16:25 - 17:10	Sastanak s vanjskim dionicima -predstavnicima strukovnih i profesionalnih udruženja, poslovna zajednica, poslodavci, stručnjaci iz prakse, organizacijama civilnog društva, vanjski predavači	Meeting with external stakeholders -representatives of professional organisations, business sector/industry sector, professional experts, non-governmental organisations, external lecturers

	Srijeda, 22. studeni 2023.	Wednesday, 22th November 2023
9:00 - 10:00	Sastanak s • prodekanicom za nastavu i studentska pitanja • prodekanom za studij Dentalna medicina • prodekanom za studij Farmacija • prodekanom za studij Medicina na engleskom jeziku	Meeting with the • Vice-Dean for Teaching and Student Affairs • Vice-Dean for study programme Dental Medicine • Vice-Dean for Study programme Pharmacy • Vice-Dean for study programme Medical Studies in English
10:00 - 10:10	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
10:10 - 11:10	Sastanak sa studentima • Medicine • Dentalne medicine • Farmacije	Meeting with students • Medicine • Dental medicine • Pharmacy
11:10 - 11:20	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
11.20 - 12:00	Sastanak sa studentima studijskog programa Medicina na engleskom jeziku	Meeting with students of study programme Medical Studies in English
12:00 - 13:00	<i>Interni sastanak članova Stručnog povjerenstva (Analiza dokumenata)</i>	<i>Internal meeting of the panel members (Document analysis)</i>

13:00 - 14:00	<i>Radni ručak Stručnog povjerenstva</i>	<i>Working lunch</i>
14:00 - 15:00	Sastanak s nastavnicima (u radnom odnosu, koji nisu na rukovodećim mjestima)	Meeting with employed teachers (except those in managerial positions)
15:00- 15:30	Organizacija dodatnog sastanka o otvorenim pitanjima, prema potrebi	Organisation of additional meeting on open questions, if needed

Četvrtak, 23. studeni 2023.		Thursday, 23 th November 2023
9:00 – 9:45	Sastanak s prodekanicom za znanost, poslijediplomske studije i međunarodnu suradnju	Meeting with the Vice-Dean for Science, Postgraduate Studies and International Cooperation
9:45 – 10:00	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
10:00 – 11:00	Sastanak s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • voditeljicom službe za znanost, poslijediplomske studije i međunarodnu suradnju • voditeljicom Ureda za međunarodnu suradnju • voditeljicom Ureda za cjeloživotno obrazovanje i stručnu praksu • ECTS koordinatorom • predstavnik Etičkog povjerenstva 	Meeting with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Head of the Office for Research • Postgraduate Studies and International Cooperation • the Head of the International Cooperation Office • the Head of the Office for Lifelong learning and professional practice • ECTS coordinator • representative of the Ethics Committee
11:00 – 11:15	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
11:15 – 12:15	Sastanak s voditeljima znanstvenih projekata	Meeting with the Heads of research projects
12:15 – 12:30	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
12:30 – 13:15	Sastanak s asistentima i poslijedoktorandima	Meeting with teaching assistants and postdoctoral researchers
13:15 – 13:45	Organizacija dodatnog sastanka o otvorenim pitanjima, prema potrebi	Organisation of additional meeting on open questions, if needed
13:45 – 14:15	<i>Interni sastanak članova Stručnog povjerenstva</i>	<i>Internal meeting of the panel members</i>

14:15 - 14:30	Završni sastanak s upravom Fakulteta	Exit meeting with the Faculty management
-----------------------------------	---	---

SUMMARY

Since reaccreditation procedure in 2015, the School has adopted a part of the recommendations of the Expert Panel, but the majority, regarding limiting the number of students, lack of teachers and their teaching overload, the need for greater involvement of students and respect of their opinion, and encouragement of international student mobility was not met or addressed sufficiently. Therefore, an efficient system for the implementation of recommendations from the conducted evaluations should be developed.

In addition to the study programmes of Medicine and Pharmacy being aligned with the Croatian Qualification Framework, there are several positive aspects that were seen since the last accreditation in 2015. These include: 1) Innovative approaches to raise funds for the School; 2) The School has highly motivated students, who are encouraged to do research; 3) Highly motivated teachers, who carry out excellent teaching in classrooms, and in small groups. Similarly, high standards of teaching in specific departments (e.g. Anatomy) were seen; 4) Well-organized- and efficient- Office for Research and excellent research output (projects, publications and networks with reputed international institutions). Overall, the School excels in academics, efficiency, transparency, mentorship, and global engagement. The institution actively shapes knowledge's future, contributing meaningfully to societal advancement. The School commendable involvement in scientific and professional organizations enhances academic and professional development, fostering a positive university ethos. The Panel applauds the School for its commitment to excellence, innovative research-driven environment, and significant impact on the academic and professional landscape. The institution's holistic approach to research development strengthens the community and contributes significantly to broader academic and creative realms. The School's dedication to integrating space, equipment, ongoing research, and professional activities into teaching reflects a commitment to providing a holistic and cutting-edge education, positioning it as a leader in fostering a symbiotic relationship between teaching and institutional achievements. The School has a potential to enhance participation in European projects, attract visiting experts, setting up collaborative networks, and promoting Split as a research destination online. Selecting projects aligned with expertise and forming interdisciplinary teams fosters comprehensive health approaches.

On the other hand, several disadvantages of the School were also seen. These include complex internal organization of the institution, with many committees. As the vice deans of the institution are members of many of these committees, this can potentially hamper/limit democracy. There is also a lack of full-time faculty and teaching staff at all study programmes, especially in Dental Medicine and Pharmacy. Currently, the School

does not have a clear employment strategy regarding the Professional Chamber analysis and a lack of gathered information on formal action steps to be taken following the conducted analysis. Quality assurance also seems to be a challenge, especially as there is a lack of quality assurance monitoring in clinical work. This can compromise the standards related to the implementation of the student clinical teaching process. OSCE system is rarely implemented.

Conduct of the study programme Medical Studies in English in Germany for the period of 3 years is, however, not listed in the official approval document of the Ministry of Science and Education. That is, Germany was not listed as a site to carry out teaching related activities in the official license. The prerequisites for introducing the new programmes in English were not provided. Teachers in Croatian programmes are overloaded, as they must teach also in the English programme. A list of "German" professors, who teach in Germany, when the students are in Germany for the last three years is not visible/transparent. In addition, the selection criteria for the recruitment of faculty members in Germany (if any) was not provided.

There also seem to be issues related to proper evaluation of student feedback. For instance, there were a lot of informal cases of resolving students' problems which were not documented in writing. The feedback mechanisms that aim at providing feedback to students are not well defined. There is a lack of data on employment of the graduates (Medicine, Medical Studies in English).

To address the above limitations, the Panel has provided several important recommendations.