



**REPORT  
OF THE EXPERT PANEL  
IN THE PROCEDURE OF INITIAL ACCREDITATION OF THE  
PROFESSIONAL GRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMME  
MANAGEMENT IN TRADE – UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED  
SCIENCES LAVOSLAV RUŽIČKA IN VUKOVAR**

**Date of accreditation:**

30 January 2025

March 2025



**ESF+**  
**Učinkoviti ljudski  
potencijali**



**Sufinancira  
Europska unija**



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## INTRODUCTION

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

All study programmes delivered by public and private higher education institutions are subject to the procedure of initial accreditation of study programmes conducted by the Agency in accordance with the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Science (Official Gazette 151/22) and by following the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and good international practice in quality assurance of science and higher education.

The Agency's Accreditation Council appointed an independent Expert Panel for the evaluation of the professional graduate study programme Management in trade University of Applied Sciences Lavoslav Ružička in Vukovar.

Members of the Expert Panel (in the same order as in the Decision to appoint the expert panel):

- Andrijana Kos Kavran, PhD, prof. prof. stud., Međimurje University of Applied Sciences in Čakovec, Republic of Croatia,
- Prof. Vito Bobek, PhD, University of Applied Sciences FH Joanneum, Republic of Austria,
- Prof. Mathias Moersch, PhD, Heilbronn University of Applied Sciences, Federal Republic of Germany,
- Assist. prof. Mikus Dubickis, PhD, Riga Technical University, Republic of Latvia, panel chair,
- Tea Pernar, student, Zagreb School of Economics and Management, ZSEM, Republic of Croatia.

The Expert Panel held meetings with the following groups:

- Management,
- Head of the study programme,
- Full-time teaching staff that will participate in the delivery of the study programme,



- Meeting with external stakeholders—representatives of professional organisations, business sector/industry sector, professional experts, non-governmental organisations, external lecturers.

The Expert Panel visited the laboratories, the library, the student administration office and the classrooms.

The Expert Panel drafted this Report on the initial accreditation of the professional graduate study programme Management in trade University of Applied Sciences Lavoslav Ružička in Vukovar based on the Proposal of the Professional Graduate Study Programme Management in Trade of the University of Applied Sciences Lavoslav Ružička in Vukovar, other relevant documents and the site visit.

The Report contains the following elements:

- Basic information about the study programme;
- Detailed analysis of each quality standard, recommendations for improvement and quality grade for each standard,
- Final recommendation of the Expert Panel,
- Appendices (quality grade summary by each assessment area and standard, and the site visit protocol).

In the analysis of the documents, site visit and the meetings held at the University of Applied Sciences Lavoslav Ružička in Vukovar and writing of the Report, the Expert Panel was supported by:

- Matan Čulo, coordinator, ASHE,
- Prof. Marija Omazić, PhD, interpreter.





## BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDY PROGRAMME

**Name, seat and PIN (Personal Identification Number) of higher education institution:**

University of Applied Sciences "Lavoslav Ružička" in Vukovar, Blago Zadro Street 2, 32000 Vukovar, PIN: 21720825730

**Title and type of study programme:**

Professional graduate study programme Management in Trade

**CroQF/EQF/QF-EHEA level:**

Level 7

**Scientific or artistic area and field of study programme:**

social sciences, economy

**ISCED FoET classification:**

ISCED 7; 04 – Business, administration and law

**Programme duration:**

2 years

**Number of ECTS points acquired on completion of study programme**

120

**Academic or professional degree / qualification obtained upon the completion of the study programme (if the study programme has several specialisations, the issued degree/qualification cannot be named according to the specialisation, but at the level of the study programme):**

master's degree in management in trade (MEcon.)

**Language of delivery:**

Croatian

**Place of delivery of the study programme (at the head office or outside the head office of the higher education institution):**

Vukovar





**Method of delivery of the study programme:**

Classic

**Admissions quota (for full-time and part-time students):**

25/25

**Academic year in which the study programme delivery is to commence:**

2025/2026

**In case of joint programmes delivered by Croatian higher education institutions, please include a list co-providers/partners:**

N/A

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

1. to issue a licence





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

### I. Internal quality assurance

**1.1. Clear justification for the introduction of the new study programme has been provided with regard to the mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution, as well as economic and societal needs.**

#### Analysis:

According to the Expert Panel members who met with the management of the higher education institution (HEI), the institution has several advantages. It benefits from a strategic geographical position as the only HEI in the region, boasts well-developed infrastructure—including a new building and a dormitory—and enjoys strong support from the local government. Studies are conducted in small groups, so an individual approach is possible. The HEI cooperates well with organisations in neighbouring countries, such as Serbia. The institution finances the academic staff's doctoral studies. According to the information in the Self-Assessment Report the HEI has surveyed students and graduates of the existing Bachelor's programme, who have shown interest in the new Master's programme. To justify the development of the programme, the HEI also organized meetings with external stakeholders. The new Master's programme will continue the existing Bachelor's programme in Commerce. In planning and proposing the new study programme, the HEI created it based on its competencies. During the site visit, the head of the programme openly acknowledged that he could not be entirely certain that there was no overlap with similar programmes. During the site visit, the experts recognised the infrastructure and other advantages which set it apart from other HEIs. In planning and proposing the new study programme, an analysis of programme alignment with the mission and strategic goals of the HEI was taken into account. The analysis is provided in the Self-Assessment Report. However, the Expert Panel noticed that the strategic goals outlined in the documents were stated in very general terms. The HEI's strategy defines the activities to be carried out to achieve the goals, but performance indicators and their target values are missing.

The HEI's vision is to *become the first choice for students of professional studies*. When asked during the site visit how this goal is measured, the institution's representatives stated that they already hold this position and assess it through the centralised student application system. On the one hand, this is an outstanding achievement that confirms



demand, which is very important. On the other hand, a vision, by definition, is something an organisation aims to achieve in the future, e.g., in the next 10-20 years. Therefore, the suggestion is to define a more ambitious vision.

The HEI has been working on identifying the needs of the modern labour market. However, a more comprehensive and documented labour market needs analysis is recommended. During the site visit, the external stakeholders confirmed that the proposed study programme is aligned with labour market needs and ensures students' employability. They expect the graduates to work in different middle-level management positions. During the visit, external stakeholders named potential graduate positions, such as sales manager, purchasing manager and human resource manager. Considering that the programme currently has a higher proportion of marketing study courses than other functional areas of organisation, a sales manager could be a possible position for graduates, but a human resource manager is questionable.

Admission quotas are discussed at the institutional level. In the HEI's opinion, they are aligned with labour market needs and the capacity of the HEI. They are part of the institution's strategy and align with the number of undergraduate programme graduates. The new Master's programme does not intend to prepare graduates for further studies at the doctoral level, considering that it is a professional study programme. However, considering the inclusion in the common European higher education area, it would be advisable to consider implementing the study programme so that graduates are provided with the opportunity (basis) to continue their studies at the highest level.

The proposed study programme is comparable to similar accredited programmes. The Croatian Employment Service gave a negative opinion on the programme's compatibility with the labour market. The head of the study programme considers this opinion to be advisory. It is believed that there is a demand for the study programme—potential students would come from the institution's existing Bachelor's programme. Local employers are demanding more Master's graduates.

In general, it can be concluded that societal and economic needs were considered when designing and proposing the new study programme. Still, a few suggestions are made below.

#### Recommendations:

- Establish a more ambitious vision for the institution. Conduct a more in-depth and well-documented analysis of labour market needs. Additionally, it would be beneficial to structure the study programme in a way that enables graduates to continue their studies at the doctoral level.

#### Quality grade:

Fulfilled



## **1.2. The study programme has undergone an appropriate internal quality assurance process and has been formally approved by the higher education institution.**

### **Analysis:**

The HEI has published a Quality Assurance Policy in Croatian on its website ([https://vevu.hr/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/5020\\_2019\\_Politika-kvalitete\\_OzK\\_2019-11-25.pdf](https://vevu.hr/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/5020_2019_Politika-kvalitete_OzK_2019-11-25.pdf)). European Standards and Guidelines, ISO 9001, and ISO 21001 are the main reference points for the internal quality management system. The policy outlines the mechanisms designed for its implementation within the institution. However, the policy does not define what quality and quality culture mean in the institution. It would be advisable to define these terms so that the stakeholders have a common understanding—for example, quality as continuous improvement, fitness for purpose, value for money, etc. Stakeholders participating in the meeting with the Expert Panel showed great enthusiasm and shared many ideas, and the institution should use their potential more by organising brainstorming sessions more often.

The stakeholders whom the members of the Expert Panel met during the site visit mentioned various suggestions they made during the process, thus confirming their involvement in the design of the new study programme. The academic staff was approached to develop the study courses taking into account the intended learning outcomes at the study programme level. There are Committee meetings once a semester to review the study programmes. The Committee includes the vice dean, student, academic staff representative, employers' representative, and head of the department. Although a more comprehensive and documented labour market needs analysis is suggested (as mentioned in the analysis of Section 1.1.), it can be concluded that the HEI collected and analysed relevant data when deciding to introduce the new programme.

The decision to adopt the new professional graduate study programme *Management in Trade* was made by the Council of the HEI based on the proposal of the Business Department. The decision to approve the proposal of the Council for the establishment of a new study programme was made by the Administrative Council.

### **Recommendations:**

- It would be advisable to define quality and quality culture in the Quality Policy so that the stakeholders have a common understanding of those terms.

### **Quality grade:**

Fulfilled



### **1.3. The higher education institution will collect, analyse and use relevant data for the effective management and continuous enhancement of the study programme in accordance with the published quality assurance policy.**

#### **Analysis:**

The management and continuous enhancement of the programme are aligned with the quality assurance policy of the HEI. More attention should be paid to the quality mechanisms at the programme level because the policy emphasizes institutional-level mechanisms. It is also the case if we are talking about quality indicators—the institution lacks programme-level performance indicators and target values. Appropriately defined programme-level performance indicators and their target values will also help employ mechanisms to assess and adapt delivery mode and teaching methods, as well as student assessment and examination.

Considering the information obtained in the interviews during the site visit, the Expert Panel members are convinced that student, staff and other stakeholder feedback will be used to improve the programme continuously. The same applies to using ECTS credit distribution, ILOs, and student workload feasibility monitoring results. However, a shortcoming can be identified with student workload calculation—currently, there is no distribution of class work and independent work for each topic in the course descriptions. In this case, implementing courses in practice can be inconsistent and chaotic without specifying the hours devoted to particular topics. Without specified hours, the teaching staff does not have the opportunity to apply lesson planning consistently, and students do not have the chance to obtain information about the expected amount of independent work in the context of each topic to be learned. Without indicating the number of hours, the programme director and academic staff cannot ensure that the number of topics to be learned is feasible and realistic relative to the number of ECTS defined in the course. In addition, there can be situations when the independent work is too little or too much, which must also be monitored. It is necessary to survey students about each course right after its implementation to obtain students' assessment of the progress of courses.

Based on the information provided by the institution's representatives during the visit, it is likely that monitoring processes will use data on programme duration, completion rate, and drop-out rate. As the institution's representatives acknowledged, some monitoring results are published, while others, which are more intended for internal use, are not published. The institution has published its strategy, but the programme-level action plans are not publicly available.



#### Recommendations:

- Define programme-level performance indicators and target values. There should be a distribution of class work and independent work for each topic in the course descriptions. It is necessary to survey students about each course right after its implementation to obtain students' assessment of the progress of courses. The institution should consider publishing programme-level action plans.

#### Quality grade:

Partly fulfilled

**1.4. The higher education institution informs the public about the study programmes it offers, as well as plans to offer new programmes, i.e. changes made to existing ones.**

#### Analysis:

Although mostly available in Croatian, the HEI's website is up to date, providing students with current and recent updates. The website is well organized and the categorisation helps users quickly navigate and find needed information. The HEI publishes information on admission requirements (<https://www.vevu.hr/upisi>), intended learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods (see e.g., [https://vevu.hr/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/50Ishodi-ucenja-opisi-predmeta-FIZIOTERAPIJA v2.pdf](https://vevu.hr/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/50Ishodi-ucenja-opisi-predmeta-FIZIOTERAPIJA-v2.pdf)). The Career Development Centre (<https://czrk.vevu.hr/>) provides individual counselling related to students' career development, CV creation, motivation letter/application, interview simulation, test preparation, and education on the use of job search tools to prepare students for entering the labour market.

#### Recommendations:

None

#### Quality grade:

Fulfilled



## II. Study programme

### **2.1. The proposed study programme is compatible with the qualification standard in the Croatian Qualifications Framework Register.**

#### **Analysis:**

The qualification standard is not currently recorded in the Croatian Qualifications Framework Register (CQF); therefore, the standard is not applicable.

**Recommendations:** N/A

**Quality grade:** N/A

### **2.2. The intended learning outcomes at the level of the study programme are aligned with the competences a student should gain by completing the study programme, as well as with the CroQF and EQF level.**

#### **Analysis:**

The programme is structured around 14 intended learning outcomes. These learning outcomes are aligned with level 7 of the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CroQF) and the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF). They, therefore, contribute to the achievement of the necessary competences required from graduates of the programme in Management in Trade. The learning outcomes for the Bachelor's programme were provided to the Expert Panel members upon request. The Expert Panel members confirmed a clear differentiation of learning outcomes compared to the undergraduate programme from which a large number of students are likely to be sourced. Several national and international institutions were used as benchmarks when developing the learning outcomes, including business programmes in Barcelona, Bologna, and Reutlingen. While the intended learning outcomes also include both transversal and profession-specific competencies, the structuring of the learning outcomes is unclear and should be improved (for a more in-depth analysis of this point and the corresponding recommendations, see 2.3).

#### **Recommendations:**

No recommendations

#### **Quality grade:**

Fulfilled



### **2.3. The intended course outcomes are aligned with the intended learning outcomes at the level of the study programme.**

#### **Analysis:**

The intended learning outcomes are available for all courses and to all students in the course syllabus. As in the case of the programme learning outcomes, different types of skills (such as transversal and profession-specific skills) are targeted with the learning outcomes. Upon request, the Expert Panel members were provided with a comprehensive mapping of all programme learning outcomes with the course learning outcomes. However, this mapping is not reflected in the course syllabi. In addition, a grouping of learning outcomes around different areas of learning (for example, Knowledge, Skills, Behaviour) is not apparent in either course learning outcomes or programme learning outcomes.

During the site visit, the head of the study programme had difficulty explaining the relationship between the intended learning outcomes of the study programme components and the intended learning outcomes of the study programme. The head of the study programme should be familiar with the current situation since ILO mapping is a continuous process that is the basis for making further changes and improvements in the programme. This is especially relevant when starting to implement a new study programme, because when implementing it, it is necessary to make sure in practice that what is planned corresponds to the situation and that changes can be promptly made in case of deficiencies. The suggestion in the future is to go over the mapping of intended learning outcomes about once a year and make the necessary improvements.

During the meeting with teachers, several of them showed a good understanding of the system of learning outcomes and confirmed their participation and input in the process of creating and defining the learning outcomes.

#### **Recommendations:**

- In the first step, it is recommended to structure the learning outcomes at the programme level to align with different competencies (for example, Knowledge, Skills, Behaviour). Based on this systematic structure of the learning outcomes, the link between course learning outcomes and programme learning outcomes should be shown in the syllabus of each course. In other words, an explicit mapping between programme and course learning outcomes should be presented for each course. The suggestion in the future is to go over the mapping of intended learning outcomes about once a year and make the necessary improvements.

#### **Quality grade:**

Partly fulfilled



## **2.4. The study programme content allows students to achieve all the intended learning outcomes.**

### **Analysis:**

The proposed study programme aims at the acquisition of a broad set of skills and competencies, which enable graduates to assume positions at the level of mid-management in a wide range of occupations. During the meeting with external stakeholders, this broad orientation was expressly supported by the representatives from the world of practice. They see an ideal fit between well-rounded and broadly educated graduates and the needs of the local labour market. The graduates receive advanced education in the main fields of business, namely management, marketing, and finance, with a specific focus on IT-skills, including artificial intelligence. A strong programme focus is placed on the acquisition of broad competencies such as critical thinking, communication skills, project management, ethics and responsibility, and teamwork. The relevance of teaching these skills is apparent in the course syllabi and learning outcomes. During the discussions with the teachers in the programme, it was evident, for example, that the consequences of ethical behaviour are discussed in several courses. Nonetheless, no dedicated course on ethics is included in the current curriculum. Also, transportation and logistics, another central aspect in the management of trade, is not a part of the curriculum.

A well-structured allocation of ECTS assures horizontal and vertical student mobility in the national and European education area. Most mandatory courses are assigned 5 ECTS, while 4 ECTS are awarded for electives. The total of 120 ECTS is evenly distributed over 4 semesters.

### **Recommendations:**

- The institution should consider adding a dedicated core course in the field of transportation and logistics. The institution should also consider introducing a separate core course in business ethics, which would lay the foundations for the discussion of ethical behaviour in other courses.

### **Quality grade:**

Fulfilled



## **2.5. ECTS distribution is aligned with the anticipated actual student workload.**

### **Analysis:**

The contents of the individual courses were structured based on the assigned ECTS and the stipulation that one ECTS point represents thirty hours of average student work. Rulebooks provide the framework for formal verification of the compliance of the number of ECTS points with the expected actual student workload. These are the Rulebook on Quality Assurance, Handbook for Quality Assurance, Rulebook on the Procedure for Improving Study Programmes and Rulebook on Studying. The Committee for Periodic Review and Improvement of Study Programmes consists of professors, representatives of external stakeholders and students. This Committee also assesses the appropriateness of ECTS allocations among other tasks.

Once implemented, a continuous revision process for the programme will be in place. One important instrument for gathering information is the collection of student feedback on workload via surveys. Students also have regular (usually monthly) meetings with their group mentors. These meetings also allow the collection of feedback and discussions about the appropriateness of the workload.

### **Recommendations:**

No recommendations

### **Quality grade:**

Fulfilled

## **2.6. Student/professional practice is an integral part of the study programme (if applicable).**

### **Analysis:**

The internship is an important aspect of this applied programme. It is mandatory and takes place in the fourth semester. Fifteen ECTS corresponding to 300 hours are allocated to the internship. The internship starts with ten hours of consultation by the student with the supervisors of the professional internship. During this preparatory phase, students are required to create a professional practice plan and familiarise themselves with the organisation where they conduct the internship and the IT infrastructure for the documentation management. The internship is structured along a professional Practice Plan created in cooperation between the student, manager, and mentor. The achievements during professional practice are documented in a signed professional



practice diary. In this diary, students will analyse and connect the acquired theoretical knowledge with the acquired practical experience. The Rulebook on Professional Practice specifies all issues related to the mandatory internship. The administration and implementation of professional internship is well supported by the Career Development Centre. In addition, it became apparent during the interviews that several representatives from the business environment actively support internships by offering suitable placements. All fourteen intended learning outcomes are assigned to the mandatory internship. Achieving all of these learning outcomes within a limited time frame seems challenging. Also (see 2.3), the learning outcomes lack a clear structure and grouping. Especially during the internship, this may make it difficult to show how they have been achieved.

**Recommendations:**

- The assignment of all fourteen intended learning outcomes to the mandatory internship seems excessive. It is recommended to reduce it to a more manageable number. It is also suggested to structure the professional practice diary along the learning outcomes to measure their achievement efficiently. Consider mapping key learning outcomes to specific internship phases, allowing for a more precise assessment of student progress and achievement.

**Quality grade:**

Fulfilled

**2.7. If the completion of the study programme allows students access to a regulated profession, the programme is aligned with national and European regulations and the recommendations of national and international professional associations.**

**Analysis:**

The standard not applicable. The successful completion of the programme does not allow access to a regulated profession.

**Recommendations:** N/A**Quality grade:** N/A



### III. Teaching process and student support

**3.1. Admission requirements and criteria as well as the admissions procedure are clearly defined and transparent, and guarantee that students will possess the necessary prior knowledge.**

**Analysis:**

The criteria for admission or continuation of studies are clearly defined, published in time and the conditions of the public competition for the enrolment of students are publicly available on the website. The conditions also ensure the selection of candidates with appropriate prior knowledge and are aligned with the requirements of the study programme Management in Trade. Procedures of recognition of prior learning are prescribed in the Rulebook on the Transfer of Students from Other Higher Education Institutions and the Decision on the Conditions for Transfer and Enrolment from Other Higher Education Institutions (Pravilnik o prijelazu studenata s drugih visokih učilišta Klasa: 003-01/14-01/09 Urbroj: 2196-115/14-01-14 i Odluka o uvjetima prelaska i upisa s drugih visokih učilišta Klasa: 003-01/24-03/126, Urbroj: 2196-115/01-24-02). The anticipated number of students is adequate—25 full-time, and 25 part-time students.

**Recommendations:**

No recommendations

**Quality grade:**

Fulfilled

**3.2. The planned teaching methods guarantee student-centred teaching and the achievement of all intended learning outcomes.**

**Analysis:**

The programme delivery modes align with the learning outcomes and include individual projects, group projects, problem-based learning, fieldwork, and student practice in the last semester. The classes are intended to be conducted separately for full-time and part-time students; therefore, the teaching methods are adapted to this student population. The teaching methods for incoming mobility students and students with disabilities are not directly stated in the course syllabi but are regulated by the Handbook for Students with Disabilities (Priručnik za studente s invaliditetom, Klasa: 602-01/22-05/01, Urbroj: 2196-115/01-22-17), while the incoming mobility students have consultative classes. There are no courses offered in the English language, which would help increase incoming



mobility students and language skills for the teachers and, overall, all students. The procedure for monitoring the delivery and the use of proposed teaching methods is clear and stated in the Handbook for Quality Assurance (Priručnik o osiguravanju kvalitete, Klasa: 003-01/22-03/89, Urbroj: 2196-115/01-22-04) and in the Regulations on the Procedure for Processing the Evaluation of Teaching, Teachers, and Courses Conducted by Students (Pravilnik o postupanju po provedenoj evaluaciji izvedbe nastave, nastavnika i kolegija od strane studenata, Klasa: 003-01/14-01/12, Urbroj: 2196-115/14-01-06). The teachers use the Merlin e-learning system to distribute lecture materials and other information for the students.

#### Recommendations:

- The HEI should consider offering mandatory/elective courses in English, which would contribute to a higher number of incoming international students and help improve language skills.

#### Quality grade:

Fulfilled

### **3.3. The higher education institution has provided evidence that adequate support will be ensured for future students.**

#### Analysis:

The support for students is at a high level as the HEI implements a wide range of student support services. The HEI has ensured individual and group mentorship guidance for students and appointed tutors for every generation and study programme. The mentorship procedure is regulated by the Rulebook on Mentorship of Teachers (Pravilnik o mentorskom radu nastavnika, Klasa: 003-01/22-03/76, Urbroj: 2196-115/01-22-04). The HEI effectively plans and executes student guidance and career counselling through the Career Centre, academic and psychological support by appointing a person for psychological and pedagogical counselling (Decision on Providing Individual Counselling Services to Students/Odluka o pružanju usluge individualnog savjetovanja, Klasa: 602-01/20-05/30, Urbroj: 2196-115/01-20-01), and mobility assistance by an Erasmus coordinator, which is regulated by Regulations on International Mobility of Student, Teaching, and Non-Teaching Staff Within the Erasmus+ Programme/ Pravilnik o međunarodnoj mobilnosti studenata, nastavnog i neneastavnog osoblja unutar Erasmus+ programa, Klasa: 003-01/17-04/25, Urbroj: 2196-115/17-01/09). The HEI website provides essential information (info packages for new and international students)



regarding admissions, study programmes, financial aid, student support, extracurricular activities, and contact details. Additionally, the HEI organizes Open Days, career guidance events, school visits, and education fairs to offer prospective students detailed insights into academic and career opportunities.

**Recommendations:**

No recommendations

**Quality grade:**

Fulfilled

**3.4. Objective and consistent evaluation and assessment of student achievements are planned so as to ensure the achievement of all intended learning outcomes.****Analysis:**

The HEI ensures that evaluation and grading criteria are clearly defined and publicly available before the beginning of each course using the Merlin e-learning platform. The Study Regulations (Pravilnik o studiranju, Klasa: 003-01/23-03/112, Urbroj: 2196-115/23-01-09) and the Rulebook on Assessment (Pravilnik o ocjenjivanju, Klasa: 003-01/21-03/53, Urbroj: 2196-115/01-21-08) detail these processes. Each syllabus includes a description of assessment criteria and methods, and teachers must also publish them on the HEI website. The grading system aligns with the ECTS, while the course descriptions and syllabus ensure that grading criteria correspond with expected learning outcomes. The assessment process integrates various methods, including colloquiums, seminar papers, project assignments, practical work, and written and oral exams. Evaluation procedures can be modified based on medical documentation for a certain group of students, with Dean's decisions allowing individualised assessment procedures. The HEI has a student appeals process detailed in the Rulebook on Assessment mentioned above.

**Recommendations:**

- The HEI should consider adopting best practices, like integrating case studies as a method to assess learning outcomes.

**Quality grade:**

Fulfilled



## IV. Teaching resources and infrastructure

### **4.1. The higher education institution has ensured adequate teaching capacities to deliver the study programme and achieve the intended learning outcomes.**

During the site visit, it was confirmed that the HEI employs 12 full-time teachers in the Business Department who are allocated to the new study programme. These teachers cover at least 35% of all forms of direct teaching load for the first year, in accordance with accreditation and legal requirements. Additionally, part-time and external lecturers help manage the teaching load as needed, contributing to a well-balanced staff structure. The documents specify that the total annual teaching load of all teachers at the HEI does not exceed 20% of the maximum teaching load defined by the Collective Agreement for Science and Higher Education.

The teacher-student ratio of 1:9 was found to be well within accreditation standards, demonstrating the institution's commitment to small class sizes and individualized student support. This ratio enhances teacher-student interaction and fosters an engaging learning environment supporting academic achievement and practical skills development.

All instructors were verified to be fully qualified for their respective courses, with relevant academic credentials and professional expertise. Lead instructors, in particular, possess significant industry experience, ensuring that the curriculum remains aligned with real-world business and trade practices. The HEI has experts in strategic management, financial analysis, digital marketing, and international trade law, ensuring students receive instruction from specialists with academic and practical insights.

The institution has implemented a structured hiring process that ensures the selection of HEI members with appropriate qualifications and expertise. The HEI recruitment procedure prioritizes academic excellence, industry relevance, and pedagogical experience. Additionally, the HEI has a well-defined professional development framework, which includes training programmes, research collaborations, and industry engagement, ensuring that teaching staff remain updated with the latest advancements in their fields.

The institution actively encourages scholarly research, international collaborations, and pedagogical innovation. Opportunities for further education, mentorship programmes, and internal quality assurance evaluations contribute to continuous staff development and curriculum improvement.





### Recommendations:

- Continue monitoring and adjusting the teacher-student ratio to maintain high-quality instruction.
- Expand regular professional development opportunities to enhance teaching effectiveness further.

### Quality grade:

Fulfilled

#### **4.2. The qualifications and professional experience of external associates are appropriate for the delivery of the study programme and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.**

The HEI provided comprehensive documentation, including detailed CVs, academic qualifications, and professional backgrounds of external associates involved in the study programme. These documents confirm that external associates have substantial professional expertise and practical experience in their respective fields, ensuring that course content remains industry-relevant and up-to-date. Many external associates hold senior positions in trade, management, and related industries, contributing practical insights and real-world case studies to the curriculum.

During the site visit, industry stakeholders involved in teaching emphasized their role in aligning course content with current industry demands, regulatory frameworks, and technological advancements. Several external associates also serve as mentors and internship coordinators, further integrating practical learning into the academic environment.

The institution systematically evaluates external associates through student feedback surveys, peer reviews, and periodic performance assessments, ensuring that they meet institutional teaching standards and academic integrity guidelines. External associates are encouraged to participate in staff meetings, professional development sessions, and internal training workshops, further integrating them into the academic community.

Overall, the HEI has implemented a structured and transparent process for selecting, evaluating, and integrating external associates, ensuring their contributions enhance students' academic and professional training.

### Recommendations:

None



**Quality grade:**

Fulfilled

**4.3. The premises, equipment and entire infrastructure (classrooms, laboratories, library, etc.) are appropriate for the delivery of the study programme and ensure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.**

The site visit confirmed that the space allocation per student is 2.93 m<sup>2</sup>, significantly exceeding the legal requirement of 1 m<sup>2</sup> per student. This surplus space enhances student learning conditions, preventing overcrowding and promoting a well-organized and interactive learning environment. Classrooms, lecture halls, and specialized learning spaces were modern, well-ventilated, and equipped with ergonomic furniture, fostering engaging and student-centred learning experiences.

The HEI has invested in well-equipped laboratories and dedicated training rooms, providing students with hands-on learning experiences in trade, management, and digital tools. Classrooms are equipped with projectors, smartboards, video conferencing systems, and multimedia resources, ensuring that both hybrid learning and technology-enhanced education are well supported.

The HEI's IT infrastructure is modern and sufficient, enabling students and teachers to engage in blended learning, digital coursework, and research activities. Innovative teaching tools such as Virtual Reality (VR), Turnitin (for academic integrity), and Microsoft Teams (for collaboration and remote learning), are actively integrated into instruction. The HEI also provides mentoring programmes, field teaching experiences, and professional practice opportunities, ensuring that students gain real-world exposure and industry-relevant competencies.

The HEI's maintenance and infrastructure improvement plans were reviewed and found satisfactory. A structured maintenance schedule is in place to ensure that facilities, IT labs, and classrooms remain functional and up to date. Future upgrades include expanding IT resources, enhancing Wi-Fi connectivity, and integrating additional digital learning tools to support emerging trends in online education.

**Recommendations:**

None

**Quality grade:**

Fulfilled



#### **4.4. The library premises and resources, as well as access to additional services ensure the availability of literature and library services for the delivery of the study programme.**

The site visit confirmed that 65% of the library's collection is directly relevant to the study programme. The library provides comprehensive resources in trade, management, entrepreneurship, financial analysis, and digital business tools, including textbooks, scientific journals, industry reports, and case studies.

Students and teachers have access to digital databases, ensuring support for independent study, research projects, and thesis development. These databases include peer-reviewed articles, e-books, and international publications, enhancing remote access and interdisciplinary research opportunities. The library also provides individual and group study areas, computer terminals, and access to online repositories. The library staff offer training sessions and workshops on research methodologies, citation management, and information literacy, equipping students with strong academic skills.

However, several areas require improvement:

1. Limited programme-specific literature—while the library's overall collection is adequate, certain emerging areas in trade and business management, such as digital transformation, supply chain resilience, and AI in business, are underrepresented in physical and digital collections.
2. Restricted library hours— student feedback indicated that current opening hours are insufficient during examination periods, making it difficult for students to access resources when demand is highest.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Increase programme-specific literature, particularly in emerging business and trade areas.
- Extend library hours during peak examination periods to accommodate students' needs.
- Regularly update digital resource subscriptions to ensure continued access to high-quality academic materials.

#### **Quality grade:**

Partly fulfilled



#### **4.5. The higher education institution ensures the availability of the necessary financial resources to organise the activities and provide a high quality of delivery of the proposed study programme.**

During the site visit, the HEI presented a detailed financial plan and programme agreements, demonstrating a structured and sustainable funding model. The institution relies on tuition revenue, government funding, and industry sponsorships, ensuring financial sustainability.

Contingency funds have been allocated to mitigate financial risks and cover unexpected expenses or enrolment fluctuations. Additionally, the HEI has financial monitoring mechanisms in place, including budget reviews, financial audits, and strategic planning sessions, ensuring transparent and efficient financial management.

While the overall financial structure appears stable, potential financial vulnerabilities were noted:

1. Heavy reliance on tuition revenue—although tuition fees constitute a major funding source, fluctuations in student enrolment could impact long-term financial stability.
2. Limited diversification of funding sources—currently, alternative funding streams (such as research grants, EU funding, and private-sector sponsorships) are not fully developed, posing a risk if primary funding sources decline.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Continue to diversify funding sources, including grants, research collaborations, and industry partnerships, to enhance financial sustainability.

#### **Quality grade:**

Fulfilled



## FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS:

- a. ☒ **ISSUE A LICENSE, rationale:** The higher education institution aims to introduce a new master's study programme to continue the existing bachelor's study programme in Commerce. It has justified the need to design the programme, taking into account the needs of external stakeholders. Expert Panel members have identified some shortcomings, primarily related to ILOs, and have provided suggestions and recommendations for improvement. The HEI's infrastructure and resources are at a high level, characterized by extensive and strong cooperation with external stakeholders. Overall, the planned study programme is very good, with nearly all standards being fully met.
- b. ☐ **DENY THE REQUEST FOR ISSUING A LICENSE, rationale:**



## ANNEXES

### 1. Quality grade summary - tables

| <i>Quality grade by assessment area</i>          |               |                     |           |
|--|---------------|---------------------|-----------|
| <i>Assessment area</i>                           | Not fulfilled | Partially fulfilled | Fulfilled |
| <i>I. Internal quality assurance</i>             |               |                     | <b>X</b>  |
| <i>II. Study programme</i>                       |               |                     | <b>X</b>  |
| <i>III. Teaching process and student support</i> |               |                     | <b>X</b>  |
| <i>IV. Teaching resources and infrastructure</i> |               |                     | <b>X</b>  |





| <i>Quality grade by standard</i>  |               |                     |           |
|---|---------------|---------------------|-----------|
| <i>I. Internal quality assurance</i>  | Not fulfilled | Partially fulfilled | Fulfilled |
| 1.1. Clear justification for the introduction of the new study programme has been provided with regard to the mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution, as well as economic and societal needs.      |               |                     | X         |
| 1.2. The study programme has undergone an appropriate internal quality assurance process and has been formally approved by the higher education institution.  |               |                     | X         |
| 1.3. The higher education institution will collect, analyse and use relevant data for the effective management and continuous enhancement of the study programme in accordance with the published quality assurance policy. |               | X                   |           |
| 1.4. The higher education institution informs the public about the study programmes it offers, as well as plans to offer new programmes, i.e. changes made to existing ones.  |               |                     | X         |





| <i>Quality grade by standard</i>   |               |                     |           |
|--|---------------|---------------------|-----------|
| <i>II. Study programme</i>   | Not fulfilled | Partially fulfilled | Fulfilled |
| 2.1. The proposed study programme is compatible with the qualification standard in the Croatian Qualifications Framework Register.   | n/a           |                     |           |
| 2.2. The intended learning outcomes at the level of the study programme are aligned with the competences a student should gain by completing the study programme, as well as with the CroQF and EQF level.                                       |               |                     | X         |
| 2.3. The intended course outcomes are aligned with the intended learning outcomes at the level of the study programme.   |               | X                   |           |
| 2.4. The study programme content allows students to achieve all the intended learning outcomes.  |               |                     | X         |
| 2.5. ECTS distribution is aligned with the anticipated actual student workload.  |               |                     | X         |
| 2.6. Student/professional practice is an integral part of the study programme (if applicable).   |               |                     | X         |
| 2.7. If the completion of the study programme allows students access to a regulated profession, the programme is aligned with national and European regulations and the recommendations of national and international professional associations. | n/a           |                     |           |





| <i>Quality grade by standard</i>  |               |                     |           |
|---|---------------|---------------------|-----------|
| <i>III. Teaching process and student support</i>  | Not fulfilled | Partially fulfilled | Fulfilled |
| 3.1. Admission requirements and criteria as well as the admissions procedure are clearly defined and transparent, and guarantee that students will possess the necessary prior knowledge. |               |                     | X         |
| 3.2. The planned teaching methods guarantee student-centred teaching and the achievement of all intended learning outcomes.   |               |                     | X         |
| 3.3. The higher education institution has provided evidence that adequate support will be ensured for future students.  |               |                     | X         |
| 3.4. Objective and consistent evaluation and assessment of student achievements are planned so as to ensure the achievement of all intended learning outcomes.                            |               |                     | X         |



| <i>Quality grade by standard</i>   |               |                     |           |
|--|---------------|---------------------|-----------|
| <i>IV. Teaching resources and infrastructure</i>   | Not fulfilled | Partially fulfilled | Fulfilled |
| 4.1. The higher education institution has ensured adequate teaching capacities to deliver the study programme and achieve the intended learning outcomes.  |               |                     | X         |
| 4.2. The qualifications and professional experience of external associates are appropriate for the delivery of the study programme and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.                              |               |                     | X         |
| 4.3. The premises, equipment and entire infrastructure (classrooms, laboratories, library, etc.) are appropriate for the delivery of the study programme and ensure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. |               |                     | X         |
| 4.4. The library premises and resources, as well as access to additional services ensure the availability of literature and library services for the delivery of the study programme.                                  |               | X                   |           |
| 4.5. The higher education institution ensures the availability of the necessary financial resources to organise the activities and quality delivery of the proposed study programme.                                   |               |                     | X         |

**2. Site-Visit Protocol****PROTOKOL POSJETA / SITE VISIT PROTOCOL***Mjesto izvođenja studija: Vukovar / Place of study programme delivery: Vukovar**Adresa/Address: Ulica Blage Zadre 2, 32000 Vukovar*

|                      | Četvrtak, 30. siječnja 2025.   | Thursday 30 January 2025  |
|----------------------|--|---|
| <b>9:00 – 9:45</b>   | Sastanak s Upravom ( <i>bez prezentacije</i> )   | Meeting with the Management ( <i>no presentation</i> )  |
| <b>9:45 – 10:45</b>  | Sastanak s voditeljem studijskog programa  | Meeting with the head of the of the study programme   |
| <b>10:45 – 11:00</b> | <i>Pauza i interni sastanak članova Stručnog povjerenstva</i>  | <i>Break and internal meeting of the Expert Panel members</i>   |
| <b>11:00 – 12:00</b> | Sastanak s nastavnicima koji će biti angažirani na studijskom programu ( <i>u stalnom radnom odnosu – nisu na rukovodećim mjestima i vanjskim nastavnicima</i> )             | Meeting with teachers ( <i>employed full time – except those in managerial positions and external teachers</i> )  |
| <b>12:00 – 14:00</b> | Radni ručak Stručnog povjerenstva  | Working lunch   |
| <b>14:00 – 15:00</b> | Obilazak mjesta izvođenja studija (knjižnica, nastavni laboratoriji/praktikumi/informatička učionica, ured za studente, predavaonice)  | <i>Tour of the place of study programme delivery (library, teaching laboratories/practicums, Computer classrooms, Office for students, classrooms)</i>  |
| <b>15:00 – 15:45</b> | Sastanak s vanjskim dionicima – predstavnicima strukovnih i profesionalnih udruženja, poslovna zajednica, poslodavci, stručnjaci iz prakse, organizacijama civilnog društva. | Meeting with external stakeholders – representatives of professional organisations, business sector/industry sector, professional experts, non-governmental organisations, external lecturers |
| <b>15:45 – 16:15</b> | Organizacija dodatnog sastanka o otvorenim pitanjima, prema potrebi  | Organisation of additional meeting on open questions, if needed   |
| <b>16:15 – 16:45</b> | Interni sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstva – priprema za završni sastanak  | Internal meeting of the Expert Panel members – preparation for the exit meeting   |
| <b>16:45– 16:55</b>  | Završni sastanak s Upravom   | Exit meeting with the Management  |

