



**REPORT
OF THE EXPERT PANEL
IN THE PROCEDURE OF INITIAL ACCREDITATION OF THE
STUDY PROGRAMME
PROFESSIONAL SHORT STUDY PROGRAMME AGRICULTURE -
KRIŽEVCI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES**

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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 short study programme Agriculture at the Križevci University of Applied Sciences.

Members of the Expert Panel:

1. Prof. Irena Jug, PhD, Faculty of Agrobiotechnical Sciences, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University in Osijek, Republic of Croatia - Panel Chair,
2. Assoc. prof. Mihaela Blažinkov, PhD, University of Slavonski Brod Biotechnical Department, Republic of Croatia,
3. Dr. sc. Ivana Dminić Rojnić, prof. prof. stud., Polytechnic of Rijeka, Republic of Croatia,
4. Prof. Andreja Borec, PhD, Faculty of Agriculture and Life Sciences, University of Maribor, Republic of Slovenia,
5. Anton Miletić, student, University of Applied Sciences of Rijeka, Republic of Croatia.

The Expert Panel held meetings with the following groups:

- Management,
- Vice dean for teaching and students,
- Head of the Department for professional undergraduate study programme,
- Teachers and external associates who will participate in the delivery of the proposed study programme,
- Representatives of the business sector, potential employers.

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 short study programme Agriculture at the Križevci University of Applied Sciences based on the Proposal of the study programme Agriculture at the Križevci University of Applied Sciences, other relevant documents and the site visit.

The Report contains the following elements:

- Basic information on the study programme,
- Detailed analysis of each quality standard, recommendations for improvement and quality grade for each standard,
- Final recommendation of Expert Panel members,
- 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 Križevci University of Applied Sciences, and writing of the Report, the Expert Panel was supported by:

- Frano Pavić, coordinator, ASHE.



BASIC INFORMATION ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Name, seat and PIN (Personal Identification Number) of the higher education institution: **Križevci University of Applied Sciences, Milislava Demerca 1, 48260 Križevci, PIN 75480885018**

Title and type of study programme: **professional short study programme Agriculture**

CroQF/EQF/QF-EHEA level: **level 5 of the CroQF**

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

Scientific field of Agriculture (agronomy)

ISCED FoET classification: /

Programme duration: **2 years/ 4 semesters**

Number of ECTS credits acquired on the completion of study programme: **120**

Academic or professional degree / qualification obtained upon the completion of the study programme

(if the study programme has several specializations, the issued degree/qualification cannot be named according to the specialization, but at the level of the study programme): ***pristupnik poljoprivrede***

Language of delivery: **Croatia**

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

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

Admissions quota (for full-time and part-time students): **50 full-time students and 40 part-time students**

Academic year in which the study programme delivery is to commence: **2024/2025**

In case of joint programmes offered by Croatian higher education institutions, please list co-providers/partners: **not applicable**



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

1. to issue a licence

2. to deny the issuance of 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:

In the course of planning and proposing the new study programme, the higher education institution made sure that the study programme was specific and did not overlap with similar programmes in central and south-eastern Europe and the neighbouring countries, as well as in the Republic of Croatia in general. The proposed study programme Agriculture is also aligned with the mission and strategic goals of the Križevci University of Applied Sciences (hereinafter: the University of Applied Sciences). Justification for delivering the study programme with regard to economic needs was provided at the stage of planning and proposing the study programme.

The submitted documentation (letters of recommendation and surveys completed in the employer's organizations) indicates the potential justification for launching a short professional study programme in the biotechnical field, specifically agriculture. However, it does not demonstrate the justification for establishing the proposed study programme designed as a generally oriented programme.

The justifications provided in support of the proposed professional study programme, particularly regarding economic needs, are only partially acceptable because the documentation from the Application form, letters of recommendation from potential employers, survey results and discussions with external stakeholders led to the conclusion that the labour market demands specific qualifications necessary for specialized jobs (e.g., organic production, dairy farming, plant production, sale of agricultural products and equipment, use of digital technology in agriculture, etc.). As a result, the short professional study programme Agriculture only partially meets these needs with a rather general curriculum.



The Recommendations for the Educational Enrolment Policy and Scholarship Policy for 2023, published by the Croatian Employment Service (Annex 12 in the document Initial Accreditation Procedure Application Form of Professional Short Study Programme Agriculture, Križevci University of Applied Sciences), do not indicate that study quotas in the area of agriculture refer to an educational programme that requires an increase in the number of enrolled pupils or students although it is evident that there is no recommendation for reducing these quotas either.

Recommendations:

Since there are no such programmes in the area of biotechnical sciences in Croatia, based on examples from other EU member states with years of experience in implementing similar programmes (as referenced in the study programme proposal), the Expert Panel recommends that the University of Applied Sciences develop a professional short study programme (or multiple programmes) specialized in a specific area of agriculture. Alternatively, the Panel suggests designing a programme that includes mandatory and elective courses, allowing students to specialize further based on their interests and the needs of the labour market and economy.

Quality grade: Partially 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:

Based on the submitted documents and conversations with various stakeholders, the Panel concludes that the HEI published the Quality Assurance Policy as part of the Development Strategy (2023 - 2028). The Development Strategy, the Quality Assurance Policy and the study programme professional short study programme Agriculture were approved at the University Council session. Likewise, the Expert Panel concludes that alumni, employers, local community, etc. were familiar with the programme Agriculture and it was supported as such.

Recommendations: none

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:**

Based on examination of the Application Form (Initial Accreditation Procedure Application Form of Professional Short Study Programme Agriculture Križevci University of Applied Sciences) and the conversations with various stakeholders, the Expert Panel determined that the accredited study programmes of the University of Applied Sciences undergo regular quality assessments through the assessment of alignment of ECTS credits allocation with actual student workload, assessment of achievement of the planned learning outcomes of the study programme, assessment of alignment of course teaching and assessment methods with the intended learning outcomes, etc. The University has defined key indicators for monitoring the quality of study programmes delivery, including student satisfaction with teaching, the quality of individual courses, the study programme, professional practice, etc. The mechanisms for monitoring the quality of study programmes include: analysis of data on the attractiveness of study programmes, analysis of exam pass rates, analysis of study success, analysis of employment data of graduates, analysis of the quality of teaching and teachers (student evaluations), teacher self-assessment, internal teaching control procedures and analysis of lifelong learning and professional development of teachers. The existing study programmes are continuously improved through adopted procedures and they are regularly revised, evaluated and amended in cooperation with students and other stakeholders.

Monitoring processes make use of data on programme duration, completion rate and drop-out rate. Monitoring results and action plans are published on the University's website.

All the aforementioned analyses will also be applied to the new study programme.

Recommendations: none

Quality grade: **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. change made to existing ones.

Analysis:

Based on examination of the proposal, interviews with various stakeholders and examination of the website, the Expert Panel determined that the University informs the public about the accredited study programmes, enrolment criteria, learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods and all required legal acts through its official website. Likewise, the University informs all the interested parties about the option of continuing the studies through their mentors, heads of departments and the Vice-Dean for Teaching and Students and they organize career counselling workshops in collaboration with the employment office.



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 has not been added to the Croatian Qualifications Framework Register, therefore, this standard is not applicable.

Recommendations: none

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 intended learning outcomes of the proposed study programme are not completely clearly defined and they are not aligned with the competencies the student should acquire after completing the study programme at level 5 of the CroQF (according to Annex A to the Act - learning outcome descriptors). Certain units of learning outcomes at the level of the study programme are at a level lower than legally defined, although it was stated in the Application form that all units of learning outcomes belong to levels 5 and 6 of the Croatian Qualifications Framework. Out of a total of 19 learning outcomes at the level of the study programme, 8 of them contain verbs at a lower level than required, most often involving level 3 of learning in the cognitive domain – the application of knowledge to solve problems, rather than at level 4, 5 or 6, which correspond to analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. In addition to the inappropriate level of the verbs used, learning outcomes of the study programme do not adequately reflect the context and the level of the study programme that a short professional study programme should have.

The proposed short professional study programme Agriculture is not aligned with the Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity (Article 63, paragraph 1) in which it was defined that the short professional study programme prepares students for employment in specific specialized professional roles. The programme is too general, more based on general knowledge in the field of agriculture rather than on the acquisition of specialized knowledge and skills. A rather general programme such as this one does not train students for work on specific specialized professional jobs.

During discussions with external stakeholders, the Expert Panel concluded that the labour market demands a study programme that equips students with practical, application-oriented skills incorporating modern knowledge and competencies in agricultural production (e.g., organic farming, dairy farming, crop production, sales of agricultural



products and equipment, application of digital technologies in agriculture, distribution of plant protection products, etc.). This programme should also integrate practices and measures aligned with the European Green Deal and all strategic documents of the EU and the Republic of Croatia, which the proposed programme, in its current form, does not fully provide.

Learning outcomes at level 5 and 6 of education are clearly defined by the Croatian Qualifications Framework Act adopted in 2021 (OG **22/13, 41/16, 64/18, 47/20, 20/21**). The anticipated learning outcomes of the study programme cannot be compared with the learning outcomes of related programmes in the Republic of Croatia in the field of biotechnical sciences, specifically agriculture, as such a programme is not currently offered in Croatia. Based on the number of ECTS and duration of the study programmes the form of the short professional programme carrying 120 ECTS is similar to some study programmes in EU countries (Portugal, Slovenia): [Técnicos superiores profissionais - Universidade de Aveiro \(ua.pt\)](https://www.ua.pt/), <https://www.bc-naklo.si/visja-sola/studij-na-visji-soli/programi/>; [https://www.vs.grm-nm.si/sites/vs/files/datoteke/GRM%20knjizica%20VS%C5%A0%20jan23 GRM%20N M.pdf](https://www.vs.grm-nm.si/sites/vs/files/datoteke/GRM%20knjizica%20VS%C5%A0%20jan23_GRM%20N_M.pdf), but it is not similar based on the concept of the study programme (the said short study programmes at level 5 are specialized rather than general).

Recommendations:

Align the programme and learning outcomes of the study programme with the competencies a student should gain by completing the studies at level 5 of CroQF in accordance with the Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity (OG 119/2022, Article 63, Paragraph 1) by proposing a professional short study programme which is both up-to-date and specialized.

The learning outcomes of the study programme should be aligned with the appropriate level of the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CroQF). This includes using verbs that correspond to the appropriate CroQF level. If lower-level verbs are used, it is necessary to ensure that the learning outcome fits within the descriptor's context and assess how well it corresponds to the required level. Each learning outcome should use the correct verb that corresponds to the method of knowledge assessment for that outcome. Based on the defined learning outcomes of the study programme, courses, course content, and course learning outcomes should be created, ensuring that they are also at the appropriate level. The Expert Panel recommends using practical work methodologies and directing potential knowledge toward solving various professional problems in the field of agricultural production.

The Expert Panel believes that it is essential to include a foreign language (the language of the profession) in the study programme. Additionally, the absence of a selection of elective courses is considered a shortcoming. The Expert Panel suggests introducing them to allow students to independently shape their desired professional profile.



Quality grade: Not fulfilled

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

Analysis:

Learning outcomes at the level of courses are not appropriately aligned with programme learning outcomes (Subjects by sets of learning outcomes of the study programme from the Appendix to the Application form, Table 2.1.) Student practice is not represented in as many as 8 learning outcomes of the study programme out of a total of 19 LOs. Certain profession-specific courses (Storage and Quality Management of Agricultural Products, Cattle Feeding, etc.) are covered by only one or two programme learning outcomes, while some general courses (for example, Basics of Mathematics in Agriculture) are covered by 8 programme LOs.

Intended learning outcomes for each course and the acquired student competences are less aligned with learning outcomes according to the relevant CroQF level. The verbs used for defining learning outcomes in the syllabi are often at the lower level than those defined by the CroQF standard. Out of a total number of 35 courses, eight courses (28.57%) have nonmeasurable verbs which were not recommended by CroQF. (<http://www.kvalifikacije.hr/sites/default/files/documents-publications/2017-08/Preporu%C4%8Deni%20glagoli%20pri%20oblikovanju%20ishoda%20u%C4%8Denja.pdf>). Other learning outcomes are mostly written for lower levels, and verbs of the 1st and 2nd level (describe, explain, list, recognize, identify, etc.) are used very frequently. Therefore, the intended learning outcomes at the level of certain courses are not aligned with the competences a student should gain by completing the study programme, as well as with the CroQF level (level 5).

Only three courses in the syllabi (Basics of Mathematics in Agriculture, Informatics in Agriculture and Basics of Management and Financing in Agriculture) contain the description of the methods of LO assessment (examples of exam questions), which ensures a thorough evaluation of the learning outcome, while other courses indicate that assessment will be done through mid-term exams, written, oral exams, etc., without examples of assessment and scoring of assessments by outcomes.

Recommendations:

Course learning outcomes have to be at an adequate level (according to CroQF). The use of "lower-level" verbs may be acceptable if the descriptors are in line with the complexity of cognitive processes, i.e., in addition to the correctly selected verb of the appropriate level, the LO should be defined in the context of the descriptor (LO descriptors: analysing, synthesizing and evaluating specialized facts, concepts, procedures, principles and theories in a field of work and/or learning; interpreting, estimating, selecting and



creatively applying various relevant facts, concepts and procedures required to generate solutions and for solving complex tasks or problems within a specific field of work and/or learning...). The Expert Panel proposes to the HEI to adjust the course learning outcomes to the appropriate level and the appropriate course objective. For each learning outcome, examples of evaluation should be written, and care should be taken to ensure that each form of evaluation clearly defines which learning outcome it refers to and how points will be distributed. The Expert Panel's proposal is to create a study programme that contains a smaller number of general courses (theoretical knowledge in the field of agriculture), and that each of the proposed courses has a smaller volume of material, which will significantly affect the number of course learning outcomes and the method of evaluating them. At the same time, the material should be interconnected, but repetition of the same material across different courses should be avoided. It would be advisable to avoid a large number of courses with fewer hours and focus on a smaller number of courses with sufficient hours.

Quality grade: Not fulfilled

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

Analysis:

The professional short study Agriculture is designed to acquire primarily basic knowledge from the agricultural profession, which, as it is stated, would create a solid basis for deepening knowledge. The contents of individual courses are not fully aligned with the intended course learning outcomes because certain teaching units are not covered by learning outcomes and evaluations.

The description of each course provides the number of ECTS credits as well as the assessment method and criteria, but the syllabuses of only three courses (Basics of Mathematics in Agriculture, Informatics in Agriculture and Basics of Management and Financing in Agriculture) contain examples of exam questions through which the evaluation of learning outcomes is enabled. The courses list the topics (teaching units) that enable students to achieve the course level learning outcomes. The sequence of individual courses is not fully clearly defined, nor is the justification for the absence of prerequisites for enrolling in each individual course (especially in the 3rd and 4th semesters).

Recommendations:

Given that the entire study programme is designed as a general programme that is too general and based on general knowledge in agriculture, and less on acquiring specialized skills in agricultural production that would enable students to work in certain specialized



professional jobs, the recommendation has already been given in the previously discussed units (topics) of the quality standards listed so far.

Quality grade: Partially fulfilled

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

Analysis:

ECTS credits are allocated in accordance with rules and recommendations applicable in the European Higher Education Area. The higher education institution assigned an appropriate number of ECTS credits based on a survey conducted among students, who evaluated all the elements relevant for measuring student workload. The Expert Panel is of the opinion that the proposed number of ECTS credits is low in relation to student workload, considering the volume of material that needs to be mastered within certain courses. The distribution of ECTS credits by years and semesters is appropriate, but the distribution of ECTS credits by individual courses is not.

Recommendations:

The Expert Panel is of the opinion that too few ECTS credits are allocated to courses and that the number of courses is too high. The recommendation is to reduce the scope of the course material in accordance with the allocated ECTS credits or to reduce the number of courses, thereby increasing the value of ECTS credits for individual courses if the scope of the course material remains unchanged. The Expert Panel is of the opinion that too few ECTS credits have been allocated for professional practice (a total of 14 ECTS out of a total of 120 ECTS credits in the proposed study programme). The recommendation is to increase the representation of professional practice in the study programme by increasing ECTS credits.

Quality grade: Partially fulfilled

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

Analysis:

The University of Applied Sciences has many years of cooperation with industry and business entities in which students conduct practical training. The University of Applied Sciences has many years of experience in organizing final professional practice in cooperation with the labour market within the framework of existing study programmes. The implementation of practice in existing study programmes is regulated by the Regulation on the Manner and Conditions of Conducting Professional Practical Training. In the proposed professional short study programme Agriculture, professional practice is



divided into four courses carrying a total of 14 ECTS (out of a total of 120 ECTS points in the study programme). The Expert Panel is of the opinion that the professional practice has not been assigned an appropriate number of ECTS credits.

Recommendations:

The number of ECTS credits should be adjusted (the number of awarded credits should be increased) in accordance with the number of hours of professional practice.

Quality grade: Partially 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: Since the proposed study programme is not in the field of regulated professions, this standard is not applicable.

Recommendations: none

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:

By reviewing the Application form and examining the KUAS website, the Expert Panel has determined that admission requirements, criteria, and admission procedure were defined for accredited study programmes in the academic year 2023/2024. Specifically, for the short professional study programme Agriculture, the Expert Panel has found that this type of study programme is defined by the Study Regulations and that the Application form outlines the admission requirements, criteria, and procedure and that in the case of a positive evaluation, these will be promptly defined and proposed to the Academic Council for adoption and will be publicly available no later than 30 days before the submission of enrolment applications. The procedures of recognizing prior learning have been defined.

Recommendations:

The Expert Panel recommends that, in the process of recognizing prior learning for the short professional study programme Agriculture, non-formal and informal learning should also be included in addition to formal education (courses at undergraduate/graduate levels). These are defined by the Adult Education Act (OG 144/21) and may include various qualifications obtained through, for example, Croatian Employment Service education vouchers, lifelong learning programmes, work experience in the profession, etc.

Quality grade: Fulfilled

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

Analysis:

Having examined the submitted documentation for the short professional study programme Agriculture, the Expert Panel determined that the programme largely contains planned teaching methods in the form of lectures and practicals, because this form of teaching method is most represented in the programme and syllabi, and a smaller part is focused on seminars and practical work, while independent assignments and fieldwork are almost not included in the teaching methods. From the Application form and attachments to that document that refers to Table 4. the value of all types of direct instruction included in the study programme, it is evident that out of a total of 1874 teaching hours, 785 hours refer to lectures, 665 to practicals, 65 to seminars, 360 hours



to practice (a total of 2540 hours of teaching with 2 groups of practicals is planned in the Application form). Seminars are included in the programme/syllabi for a small number of courses (7 out of a total of 35 courses) or are planned to be conducted but is not precisely defined in the syllabi (such feedback was obtained from discussions with the teaching staff). Practical training was planned as a separate course with a total of 360 hours of teaching planned (19.2% of total teaching hours) which the Expert Panel considers inadequate for this type of study programme.

Recommendations:

Develop syllabi that will define in detail the planned teaching methods that guarantee student-centred teaching and the achievement of professional competencies.

Quality grade: Partially fulfilled

3.3. The higher education institution proves that adequate support for future students is ensured.

Analysis:

Having examined the documentation, the Expert Panel determined that KUAS does not have an employed expert who would provide appropriate professional guidance to future students. Based on many years of experience in higher education, mentoring work at the level of the study year mentor and final professional practice leader, legal service, student services, various committees, lectures and other forms of on examples of accredited study programmes, students are partially provided with counselling on studying and career opportunities. Study year mentors are proposed by the Vice-Dean for Teaching and confirmed by the Professional Council at the beginning of each academic year.

KUAS did not foresee functional procedures for psychological and legal counselling and support for students with disabilities.

Recommendations:

The recommendation of the Expert Panel is to hire professional staff to guide students in their studies, and to provide psychological and legal advice.

Quality grade: Partially fulfilled

3.4. An objective and consistent assessment and grading of student achievements is planned in order to ensure acquisition of intended learning outcomes.

Analysis:

Having reviewing the submitted documentation for the short professional study programme Agriculture, the Expert Panel determined that the syllabi insufficiently



define the methods of assessment and grading of student achievements in individual courses, and that the acquisition of all intended learning outcomes cannot be objectively and consistently assessed. It was already mentioned in item of standard 2.3 and it refers to this standard and it reads as follows: *Only three courses in the syllabi (Basics of Mathematics in Agriculture, Informatics in Agriculture and Basics of Management and Financing in Agriculture) contain the description of the methods of LO assessment (examples of exam questions), which ensures a thorough evaluation of the learning outcome, while other courses indicate that assessment will be done through mid-term exams, written, oral exams, etc., without examples of assessment and scoring of assessments by outcomes.*

Furthermore, for some courses, an excessive number of learning outcomes has been identified, which also raises concerns about the objective and consistent assessment and evaluation of student achievements.

Recommendations:

The Expert Panel proposes aligning the syllabi in terms of course content (section 1.4 of the syllabus) and course learning outcomes (section 1.3 of the syllabus), and further alignment with the learning outcomes of the study programme (Learning Outcomes Matrix for the Study Programme and Courses – source: Annex to the Initial Accreditation Application Form, Table 2.1). Additionally, the methods for assessing and grading student achievements should be precisely defined in relation to all course learning outcomes (sections 1.7 and 1.9 of the syllabi). The Expert Panel also recommends that, for courses with more than six learning outcomes, the course content be structured around a smaller number of outcomes to enable more objective and consistent assessment of student achievements.

Quality grade: Not 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.

Analysis:

In the first year of studies, during the 1st semester, it is planned to conduct classes in 9 courses and Professional Practice 1, and during the 2nd semester, it is planned to conduct classes in 8 courses + Professional Practice 2. In the first year of study, teaching is planned for 17 courses and professional practical training 1 and 2, eight courses and two professional practical trainings are entirely covered by the existing staff. For three courses, in addition to the existing staff, the engagement of a new assistant is planned, and the recruitment process is underway. Joint engagement of internal staff and external associates is planned for the remaining five courses.

Out of a total of 960 hours of teaching planned for the first year of studies (based on one group of students), 525 hours (54.69%) of teaching are planned to be conducted in courses delivered only by lecturers employed at the University; 255 hours (26.56%) of teaching are planned to be carried out through joint engagement of the University's own staff and external associates; 150 hours of teaching (15.63%) are planned to be covered by the work of teachers employed at KUAS and a newly hired assistant; and 30 hours of teaching (3.12%) are entirely to be conducted by an external associate. Calculating the share of direct instruction conducted by teachers at the University of Applied Sciences (based on one group of students), 73.35% of the teaching in the first year of studies is planned to be conducted by teachers employed at KUAS, 21.88% by external associates, and 6.77% by a future, newly hired assistant. For each course in the study programme, the 'coverage' by teaching staff selected in the relevant field and area of the course in which they participate is planned. The participation of 35 teachers is planned for teaching in the proposed study programme, 30 of which are employed at the University of Applied Sciences, along with the hiring of a new assistant, and 4 external associates selected in the appropriate field and area of the course in which they participate. The University of Applied Sciences in Križevci has a favourable student-to-teacher ratio (according to available data from the previous academic year – 2022/2023, it was 11.4:1), which is suitable for quality studying.

Total annual teaching load of all teachers at KUAS does not exceed 20% of the total annual standard teaching load according to the provided calculations. The total number of hours shown in the tables related to the teacher workload in the study programme and the total workload of teachers at the higher education institution indicates that the total workload averages 1184.75 working hours, which does not exceed 20% of the total annual teaching workload. The standard for a teacher should amount to 1215 working hours per year. The total annual teaching workload of individual teachers at the University of Applied Sciences



is not evenly distributed, which should be given more attention in the future. It is certain that the engagement of teachers in the first year is not the same as the engagement of teachers in higher years of study. Out of a total of 30 teachers involved in the new study programme, seven exceed 20% of the total workload (they have more than 1458 hours). The teaching workload should be adjusted to ensure an even distribution among teachers from related fields who do not exceed 20% of the total workload. All teachers at the University of Applied Sciences are appointed to appropriate teaching and associate positions. Each course in the study programme is taught by teachers who are appointed to the position in the relevant field and area of the course they are involved in. Teachers are continuously trained for new approaches in delivering lessons and professional practice through various workshops, thematic sessions, seminars, professional development at foreign European higher education institutions within the Erasmus+ mobility program, etc. The activities and processes for evaluating teachers are defined in the KUAS Quality Improvement and Assurance Handbook. The University of Applied Sciences encourages various teaching methods that are aimed at achieving the intended learning outcomes. The University of Applied Sciences organizes lectures or workshops for its teachers to improve their teaching competencies and provides opportunities for continuous professional development both within the University of Applied Sciences and outside of it, as well as participation in scientific and professional conferences or gatherings. Teachers have the opportunity to enhance their teaching methods and to lecture at related higher education institutions as guest lecturers. Teachers have the possibility to attend courses, thus earning the right to obtain certificates (e.g., the Merlin system training course, etc.)."

Recommendations: none

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.

Analysis:

All external associates of the University of Applied Sciences possess relevant work experience for teaching classes and have been appointed to scientific-teaching or teaching positions (nominal teacher) which confirms they have the necessary qualifications. Contracts of collaboration are signed with all external associates and they are appointed to adequate academic positions. The HEI plans to engage four external associates in the proposed study programme Agriculture. Given the regular appointments of the staff to teaching positions, external associates participate in scientific and professional research,



the results of which are published in journals, at conferences and/or symposia, or in consultations.

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.

Analysis:

The University has ensured the space per student which significantly exceeds the minimum of 1m² of space per student. Total surface area of the buildings A, B and C is 1539 m², and in addition to Ratarna which has an area of 2.454 m², the total area of all buildings is 3.993 m². The area of the laboratories/practical rooms used in teaching is 206.5 m² (located within buildings C and Ratarna). The area of the lecture rooms (within buildings B, C, and Ratarna) is 641.5 m². The University of Applied Sciences in Križevci conducts classes at three locations, which are approximately 500 meters apart. Building A houses the dean's office, accounting office, and a library with a reading room. Building B contains four lecture rooms, a large and small IT classroom/workshop, and houses the student administration office, council hall, secretariat, IT staff, and faculty offices. C building has two classrooms, two student laboratories, service laboratories and teaching offices. The fourth location is called Ratarna, with a large teaching hall and three smaller ones. Ratarna hosts teaching laboratories, service laboratory, practical zootechnics, machinery and crop production practice areas, barns, greenhouse, garden, orchard, nursery/vineyard, and agricultural land. All KUAS classrooms are equipped with computers and projectors. Four of these classrooms are equipped with smart boards for modern interactive teaching. All KUAS locations are covered by WiFi. Premises, equipment, and overall infrastructure are suitable for conducting professional and/or scientific research. All KUAS classrooms (buildings A, B and C and Ratarna) are equipped with computers and projectors. Four of these classrooms are equipped with smart boards for modern interactive teaching. All KUAS locations are covered by WiFi. KUAS has a large computer classroom (equipped with 27 computers, a projector, and a large interactive monitor) suitable for teaching and, if necessary, online meetings. In addition to the IT classroom there is also a small computer workshop with 11 computers that students use according to their needs, primarily outside of classes. The use of computers in the small classroom is available all day, from 6:00 to 21:00.



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.

Analysis:

The library of the Križevci University of Applied Sciences is generally equipped with the necessary literature for conducting classes. The library collection is available for open access, and its operations are managed through the Metelwin computer program. The library catalogue is accessible on the KUAS website. Students are provided with an online library visit and access to certain library services, including e-materials, information on materials availability, materials reservations, loan extensions, search requests and interlibrary loan requests. The KUAS library has dedicated spaces for users, sufficient capacity for storing library materials, appropriate library staff (one librarian), and the necessary information and communication infrastructure to support library activities. The library materials are available to students and faculty in printed form, through databases on the Croatian National and University Library (NSK) Electronic Sources Portal, the Hrčak Portal, and electronic publications published by the University of Applied Sciences in Križevci as well as other publishers. With its surface area and equipment, the University library meets the necessary requirements for quality studying.

Recommendations: none

Quality grade: **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.

Analysis:

According to the KUAS calculation stated in the Application form, the estimated cost of the planned short professional study programme Agriculture per student, per year of study, is €3.133. Based on the available materials and discussions with the higher education institution's management, the Expert Panel concludes that the necessary funds are in place for organizing the work and effectively implementing the planned study programme.

Recommendations: none



Quality grade: Fulfilled

☐ **AMEND THE STUDY PROGRAMME**

Rationale:

OPINION OF THE EXPERT PANEL AFTER AMENDMENTS

FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS:

a. ☐ **ISSUE A LICENSE, rationale**

b. ☒ **DENY THE REQUEST FOR ISSUING A LICENSE, rationale:**

Based on the Application form and during discussions with the management and staff of the KUAS, as well as representatives from the business sector, the Expert Panel concluded that the proposed study programme is of a general orientation, covering both crop and livestock production, along with courses from the agro-economic field. The submitted documentation justifies the initiation of a short professional study programme. However, the explanations provided regarding economic needs are partially acceptable. This is because, from the Application form and surveys completed by potential employers, recommendation letters, and conversations with employers, it became apparent that the labour market demands specific qualifications required for performing specialist tasks (such as ecological production, dairy farming, crop production, sales of agricultural products and equipment, application of digital technologies in agriculture, etc.), which means that the short professional study programme Agriculture does not meet these needs with a general programme. This study programme, as currently conceived, is not in accordance with the Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity (OG 119/2022), which, among other things (Article 63, paragraph 1), defines that “a short professional study programme prepares students for employment in certain specialized professional jobs”. The proposed study programme is too general, focused more on general knowledge and less on acquiring specialized skills, which raises questions about whether it properly prepares students for specific specialized professional jobs.

This attitude of the Expert Panel is also based on a review of similar study programmes in the EU, where a clear professional orientation is emphasized. This is exactly what



differentiates the short professional study programmes from undergraduate and graduate programmes.

The anticipated learning outcomes of the proposed study programme are not completely clearly defined and they are not aligned with the competencies the student should acquire after completing the study programme at level 5 of the CroQF (according to Annex A to the Act - learning outcome descriptors). Certain units of learning outcomes in the study programme are at a lower level than legally prescribed. The learning outcomes of the programme do not adequately reflect the context and level of the programme that a short professional study programme should have.

The curriculum for the short professional study programme Agriculture contains 35 courses, 3 of which are Professional Practice 1, 2, and 3, and one course is the Final Professional Practice. The Expert Panel believes that there is an excessive number of courses included in the short professional study programme, and that the content of certain courses is too extensive relative to the proposed number of hours. The frequently used verbs in the learning outcomes of the courses are inappropriate for higher education. The use of "lower-level" verbs would be acceptable if the descriptions were in line with the complexity of the cognitive processes; that is, in addition to the properly selected verb at the appropriate level, the learning outcome should be consistent with the description. The learning outcomes of most courses are not aligned with the learning outcomes of the study programme, particularly in the part concerning professional practice. Following the above mentioned, the learning outcomes at the level of most of the courses are not aligned with the competences a student should gain by completing the study programme at level 5 of the CroQF.

Having reviewed the submitted documentation for the short professional study programme Agriculture, the Expert Panel determined that the HEI primarily plans teaching methods in the form of lectures and exercises in the programme, as these are the most prevalent teaching methods in the programme and syllabi. A smaller portion is focused on seminars and practical work, while independent tasks and fieldwork are almost completely absent from the teaching methods, which the Expert Panel considers a deficiency.

The Expert Panel, which has gained its knowledge and professional experience based on scientific-research and expert work in the field of agriculture, believes that the recommendations provided will be recognized by the University as an initiative for establishing a new concept and form of education, which can serve as a guideline for the development of applicable agricultural production in the Republic of Croatia.



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>			X
<i>II. Study programme</i>	X		
<i>III. Teaching process and student support</i>	X		
<i>IV. Teaching resources and infrastructure</i>			X



<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. change 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 proves that adequate support for future students is ensured.		X	
3.4. An objective and consistent assessment and grading of student achievements is planned in order to ensure acquisition of 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 provide a high quality of delivery of the proposed study programme.			X



2. Protokol posjeta

Inicijalna akreditacija stručnog kratkog studija Poljoprivrede, Veleučilišta u Križevcima	Initial accreditation of professional short study programme Agriculture Križevci University of Applied Sciences
PRIPREMA ZA POSJET	PREPARATION FOR THE SITE VISIT
<i>Mjesto događaja: ZOOM sastanak</i>	<i>Venue: ZOOM meeting</i>

	Četvrtak 14. ožujka 2024.	Thursday 14th March 2024
10:00	Interni sastanak Stručnog povjerenstva i priprema za posjet visokom učilištu ZOOM poveznica: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89192821619	Internal meeting of the expert panel members and preparation for site visit ZOOM link: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89192821619



**Inicijalna akreditacija
kratkog stručnog studija *Poljoprivreda*
Veleučilišta u Križevcima**

**Initial accreditation
of professional
short study programme *Agriculture*
Križevci University of Applied Sciences**

PROTOKOL POSJETA / SITE VISIT PROTOCOL

Mjesto događanja / Venue
Milislava Demerca 1, 48260 Križevci

	Četvrtak 21. ožujka 2024.	Thursday 21st March 2024
10:00 – 10:30	Sastanak s Upravom visokog učilišta (<i>dekanica, prodekani i tajnica Veleučilišta - bez prezentacije</i>)	Meeting with the Management of HEI (<i>dean, vice-deans and the secretary of HEI - no presentation</i>)
10:30 – 11:15	Sastanak s prodekanicom za nastavu i studente i pročelnicom Odjela za stručni prijediplomski studij	Meeting with the vice dean for teaching and students and the Head of the department for professional undergraduate study
11:15 – 11:30	<i>Pauza i interni sastanak članova Stručnog povjerenstva</i>	<i>Break and internal meeting of the panel members</i>
11:30 – 12:30	Sastanak s nastavnicima i vanjskim suradnicima koji će biti angažirani na predloženom studiju (<i>bez prisustva uprave</i>)	Meeting with full employed teachers and external associates who will be engaged on a new study (<i>without management of HEI</i>)
12:30 – 14:00	<i>Radni ručak Stručnog povjerenstva</i>	<i>Working lunch</i>
14:00 – 15:15	Obilazak visokog učilišta (<i>knjižnica, nastavni kabineti, informatička učionica, ured za studente, predavaonice</i>)	Tour of the HEI (<i>library, teaching offices, computer classrooms, office for students, classrooms</i>)
15:15 – 16:00	Sastanak s vanjskim dionicima (<i>predstavnicima strukovnih i profesionalnih udruženja, poslovna zajednica, poslodavci, stručnjaci iz</i>	Meeting with external stakeholders (<i>representatives of professional organisations, business sector/industry sector, professional experts, non-</i>



	<i>prakse, organizacijama civilnog društva)</i>	<i>governmental organisations, external lecturers)</i>
16:00 – 16:15	<i>Organizacija dodatnog sastanka o otvorenim pitanjima, prema potrebi</i>	<i>Organisation of additional meeting on open questions, if needed</i>
16:15 – 16:45	Interni sastanak članova Stručnog povjerenstva (priprema za završni sastanak)	Internal meeting of the Expert Panel members (preparation for the exit meeting)
16:45 – 17:15	Završni sastanak s Upravom visokog učilišta	Exit meeting with the Management of HEI



**Inicijalna akreditacija
kratkog stručnog studija Poljoprivreda,
Veleučilišta u Križevcima**

**Initial accreditation of professional
short study programme Agriculture
Križevci University of Applied Sciences**

Rad na završnom izvješću

Drafting the Final report

Mjesto događaja:

AZVO

Donje Svetice 38/V, 10000 Zagreb

Venue:

ASHE

Donje Svetice 38/V, 10000 Zagreb

	Petak 22. ožujka 2024.	Friday 22nd March 2024
09:00 – 13:00	Ocjenjivanje standarada i izrada nacрта završnog izvješća	Assessment of standards and drafting the final report
13:00	<i>Radni ručak Stručnog povjerenstva</i>	<i>Working lunch</i>