



agency for science and higher education croatia

**REPORT  
OF THE EXPERT PANEL  
IN THE PROCEDURE OF INITIAL ACCREDITATION OF THE  
PROFESSIONAL UNDERGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMME OF  
MIDWIFERY AT THE JOSIP JURAJ STROSSMAYER UNIVERSITY  
OF OSIJEK, FACULTY OF DENTAL MEDICINE AND HEALTH IN  
OSIJEK**

**Date of accreditation:**  
4 June 2025

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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 undergraduate study programme of Midwifery Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Dental Medicine and Health in Osijek.

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

- Assoc. prof. Tea Štimac, PhD, University of Rijeka, Faculty of Medicine, Republic of Croatia,
- Assist. Prof. Marin Dominovic, PhD, University of Rijeka, Faculty of Biotechnology and Drug Development, Republic of Croatia - Chair of the Expert Panel,
- Assoc. prof. Ingrid Marton, PhD, Catholic University of Croatia, Republic of Croatia,
- Assoc. prof. Jurij Dolensek, PhD, University of Maribor, Faculty of Medicine, Republic of Slovenia,
- Ivona Skrinjar, student, Catholic University of Croatia, 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,
- Representatives of the business sector, potential employers.

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

The Expert Panel drafted this Report on the initial accreditation of the professional undergraduate study programme Midwifery, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Dental Medicine and Health in Osijek, based on the Proposal of the professional



undergraduate study programme of Midwifery, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Dental Medicine and Health in Osijek, 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 higher education institution Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Dental Medicine and Health in Osijek, and writing of the Report, the Expert Panel was supported by:

- Frano Pavić, coordinator, ASHE,
- Ivana Rončević, translator of the report, ASHE.



## BASIC INFORMATION ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME

**Name, registered office and PIN (Personal Identification Number) of the higher education institution:** Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Dental Medicine and Health in Osijek, 31000 Osijek

**Title and type of study programme:** Midwifery, professional undergraduate study programme

**CroQF/EQF/QF-EHEA level:** 6. st/6/1

**Scientific or artistic area and field of study programme:** Biomedicine and health, clinical medical sciences

**ISCED FoET classification:** 09 - Health and Welfare, 0913 - Nursing and midwifery

**Programme duration:** 3 years (six semesters)

**Number of ECTS credits acquired on the completion of study programme:** 180

**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):** *prvostupnik/prvostupnica (baccalaureus/baccalaurea) primaljstva (bacc. obs.)*

**Language of delivery:** Croatian

**Place of delivery of the study programme (at the registered office or outside the registered office of the higher education institution):** outside the registered office - Orahovica, Republic of Croatia

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

**Admissions quota (for full-time and part-time students):** 15 part-time students

**Academic year in which the study programme delivery is to commence:** 2025/2026

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



# 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:

The mission of the HEI is published on the website: <https://www.fdmz.hr/images/dokumenti/ured-za-kvalitetu/2020/misija-i-vizija.pdf>.

In short, the mission of the HEI is to educate future healthcare professionals. The vision of the HEI is published on the website: <https://www.fdmz.hr/images/dokumenti/ured-za-kvalitetu/2020/misija-i-vizija.pdf>. In short, the vision of the University is to be a modern educational institution with the highest quality standards, educating motivated and competent students with an emphasis on scientific achievements. The Strategy of Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek 2021–2030 (physically presented during the visit to the HEI) includes Strategic Objective 1.1: to monitor the labour market situation and adapt study programmes accordingly. The Expert Panel concluded that the proposed new study programme is aligned with the short-term and long-term strategic objectives and the mission of the HEI. The Croatian Employment Service issued a document on 23 April 2024 confirming that there is a shortage of study programme Midwifery graduates, meaning there is a high demand for this profession at the national level (around 180 in 2023) as well as at the local level (4 in 2023). The HEI also received a positive opinion from the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Croatia, dated 6 December 2024, confirming that midwifery is a needed occupation in the Republic of Croatia, as well as a positive opinion from the Croatian Chamber of Midwives (10 April 2024). The higher education institution also emphasized that comparable programmes are offered only in Rijeka and Split, and that there are no other midwifery programmes locally. Furthermore, the HEI refers (in the Initial Accreditation Application Form - Study Programme) to data from the Croatian Chamber of Midwives indicating that a large proportion of midwives are between 54 and 64 years of age and that in the next 10 years Croatia will lack 600 midwives, making new students necessary to ensure sustainability. In addition, in the Initial Accreditation Procedure Application Form - Study Programme, the HEI stated that, according to data from the Croatian Employment Service, in 2023 there was a need for 50 midwives in 5 local counties. Furthermore, external stakeholders confirmed during the meeting that there is a significant need for midwives at the local level (the hospital in



Našice, the hospital in Slavonski Brod, and many others). A strong indicator of the urgent need expressed by external stakeholders is the large number of stakeholder representatives present during the visit to the HEI, as well as the fact that all of them strongly supported the launch of this programme. Moreover, a representative from the hospital in Našice stated that the hospital could immediately employ 15 students. Therefore, the Expert Panel concluded that the proposed study programme and the number of students (15 part-time students) are aligned with labour market needs and will ensure good employability of students both in Croatia and locally. The Expert Panel also concluded that the number of 15 students represents a good compromise between available resources and labour market needs, with an emphasis on quality over quantity. Considering that the proposed undergraduate study programme falls under regulated professions, the Expert Panel also concluded that the proposed study programme meets comparable minimum institutional requirements.

**Recommendations:** No recommendations

**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 Regulations on the Implementation of the Study Programmes Evaluation Procedure at the HEI clearly describes the procedures for launching new study programmes. Based on submitted documents, the Expert Panel established that the Faculty Council of the HEI and the University Centre for Quality Assurance and Improvement of Higher Education of the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek adopted the proposal of the study programme. The Faculty has a publicly available quality assurance policy (<https://www.fdmz.hr/index.php/hr/ustroj/ured-za-kvalitetu>), which includes the Commission for Quality Monitoring and Quality Assurance in Higher Education and the University Centre for Quality Assurance and Improvement of Higher Education of the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek. In short, the Quality Policy encompasses monitoring the implementation of the Faculty's Development Strategy, overseeing the quality of study programmes, teaching methods and learning outcomes, as well as tracking the professional development of academic and support staff. The Quality Policy also includes regular monitoring of students and staff, with students, academic staff, and external stakeholders participating in these processes. The Faculty publishes the Quality Policy ([https://www.fdmz.hr/images/dokumenti/ured-za-kvalitetu/politika\\_kvalitete.pdf](https://www.fdmz.hr/images/dokumenti/ured-za-kvalitetu/politika_kvalitete.pdf)), Regulation on the Organization of the Quality System in Higher Education (<https://www.fdmz.hr/images/dokumenti/ured-za-kvalitetu/ured-za-kvalitetu.pdf>),



[kvalitetu/2020/pravilnik-o-organizaciji-sustava-kvalitete-visokog-obrazovanja.pdf](#)), the Quality Procedures aligned with ISO 9001:2015 ([https://www.fdmz.hr/images/dokumenti/ured-za-kvalitetu/poslovnik\\_kvalitete.pdf](https://www.fdmz.hr/images/dokumenti/ured-za-kvalitetu/poslovnik_kvalitete.pdf)) and the Quality Manual ([https://www.fdmz.hr/images/dokumenti/ured-za-kvalitetu/prirucnik\\_za\\_kvalitetu.pdf](https://www.fdmz.hr/images/dokumenti/ured-za-kvalitetu/prirucnik_za_kvalitetu.pdf))

**Recommendations:**

- The Expert Panel recommends that the Faculty establish the position of Vice Dean for Quality Assurance to make the quality assurance process more effective.

**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 higher education institution has established an excellent quality assurance system. The Faculty published the Quality Policy ([https://www.fdmz.hr/images/dokumenti/ured-za-kvalitetu/prirucnik\\_za\\_kvalitetu.pdf](https://www.fdmz.hr/images/dokumenti/ured-za-kvalitetu/prirucnik_za_kvalitetu.pdf)), in which the standards, indicators, target values, deadlines and responsible persons are clearly specified, with the standards covering regular periodic review of study programmes and the quality of academic staff. The Commission for Quality Monitoring and Quality Assurance in Higher Education includes student and external stakeholder representatives. The higher education institution conducts regular surveys and analyses of technical support for studying (for example, for Nursing [https://www.fdmz.hr/images/dokumenti/ured-za-kvalitetu/2021/sestrinstvo\\_izvjesce\\_o\\_provedenoj\\_studentskoj\\_anketi\\_o\\_tehnickoj\\_opremljenosti\\_fakulteta\\_2021.pdf](https://www.fdmz.hr/images/dokumenti/ured-za-kvalitetu/2021/sestrinstvo_izvjesce_o_provedenoj_studentskoj_anketi_o_tehnickoj_opremljenosti_fakulteta_2021.pdf)) as well as for surveying graduates (for example, [https://www.fdmz.hr/images/ustroj/ured\\_za\\_kvalitetu/izvjesce\\_o\\_provedenoj\\_internoj\\_studentskoj\\_anketi\\_za\\_studente\\_zavrshnih\\_godina\\_u\\_akademskoj\\_godini\\_2020--2021.pdf](https://www.fdmz.hr/images/ustroj/ured_za_kvalitetu/izvjesce_o_provedenoj_internoj_studentskoj_anketi_za_studente_zavrshnih_godina_u_akademskoj_godini_2020--2021.pdf)). Students actively participate in the development of new study programmes, including through involvement in the Commission for Quality Monitoring and Quality Assurance. During discussions with the Expert Panel, the head of the proposed study programme and the head of the University Centre for the Enhancement and Assurance of Quality in Higher Education (University Quality Centre) provided a more detailed explanation of the quality policy. The system includes monitoring student progress through annual surveys that students are required to complete before enrolling in the next academic year. It also includes surveys tracking student workload (conducted at the end of individual courses), which are then discussed within the respective departments. During the visit to the Faculty, the Expert Panel was presented with the Action Plan for



2023–2028, which served as an example for the action plans that are published each year. The Action Plan covers internal quality assurance, study programmes, student support, the HEI's capacities and academic training, with clear steps, deadlines, key indicators and responsible persons. During the visit, the Expert Panel was also shown examples of student surveys (for the courses Methodology of Nursing Education and Theory of Nursing for the academic year 2024/25), which cover students' opinions on workload, course and teaching quality, and provide opportunities for students to express their views in writing. The Expert Panel was also presented with an analysis of the Unified University Student Survey for 2023/2024, which examines several thousand student responses regarding the teaching staff. Additionally, the HEI provided the minutes from the 2021 meeting of the Department of Nursing and Palliative Medicine, during which student surveys for that course were analysed. The Expert Panel concluded that the quality system at the HEI is effective and proactive.

**Recommendations:** No recommendations

**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:**

The Faculty has well-organized and searchable website (<https://www.fdmz.hr/index.php/hr/>) where information on study programmes and quality assurance can be found. The website is regularly updated, as evidenced by more than 16 news posts in the news section in just one month (May 2025). The website is also available in English. Admission requirements, intended learning outcomes, teaching methods, assessment methods and final qualifications are clearly defined on the webpages for individual study programmes (e.g., for the undergraduate study programme in Nursing at <https://www.fdmz.hr/index.php/hr/studij/preddiplomski-sveucilisni-studij-sestrinstvo>). In addition, the Faculty provides precise information on its website about the opportunities available to students after graduation (e.g., for further studies), as well as detailed curricula and course syllabi. The Faculty also publishes short videos to promote its study programmes (for example, Nursing in Slavonski Brod: <https://youtu.be/yaU35rC1FA0>). Furthermore, the higher education institution participates in the Festival of Science in order to popularize their studies and science in general (for example, invitation to this year's festival: <https://www.fdmz.hr/index.php/hr/vijesti/posjetite-ovogodisnji-festival-znanosti>).

The higher education institution is also very active on social media (for example, Facebook >16 posts in May 2025).



**Recommendations:** No recommendations

**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:** There is no qualification standard listed in the Croatian Qualifications Framework Register for the proposed study programme, therefore, the standard is not applicable.

**Recommendations:** not applicable.

**Quality grade:** Not applicable.

### 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:**

Based on the analysis of contents and goals of the programme, the student will have the following competencies after graduation:

- Independently, responsibly and ethically performing midwifery duties in all areas of healthcare for women, pregnant women, mothers, postpartum women and newborns.
- Applying acquired knowledge in the field of biomedical, clinical, public health and social sciences in everyday midwifery practice.
- Participating in a multidisciplinary healthcare team and communicating effectively with patients, their families and colleagues.
- Conducting education, counselling and health promotion for women, pregnant women, mothers and newborns.
- Implementing and documenting midwifery care processes, including maintaining medical records and using information technology in healthcare.
- Recognizing and responding promptly to emergency and pathological conditions during pregnancy, childbirth, the postpartum period and in newborn care.
- Applying principles of professional ethics and legislation in daily practice.
- Continuously improving professional skills and keeping up to date with contemporary scientific and professional knowledge in midwifery.

The said learning outcomes have been aligned with the corresponding level 6 sv. of the Croatian Qualifications Framework and they are appropriate for the level of the proposed study programme. The intended learning outcomes of the study programmes clearly



reflect the competencies required for employment and further education. The intended programme outcomes are comparable with the intended outcomes of comparable programmes in the Republic of Croatia and EU Member States.

**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:**

Table 2 in the document Initial Accreditation Procedure Application Form - Study Programme shows the matrix of the alignment of the study programme's learning outcomes (LOs) with the learning outcomes of individual courses. Each course is clearly linked to the corresponding learning outcomes of the study programme, which is indicated by a "+" sign in the matrix. Each learning outcome of the study programme defines a specific competence or a set of competences that the student is expected to acquire, and the courses are structured so that their content and teaching activities enable the achievement of these competences. Most courses contribute to achieving multiple learning outcomes of the study programme, which ensures a comprehensive education for students. For example, the course "Midwife Care during Childbirth" covers almost all learning outcomes, whereas basic biomedical courses such as "Anatomy and Histology" cover a smaller number of outcomes, but they are essential for understanding the foundations of the profession. The course descriptions clearly indicate the learning outcomes of each course and how they contribute to the learning outcomes at the level of the study programme.

The current matrix clearly demonstrates the connection and contribution of individual courses to the study programme's learning outcomes, and systematic monitoring and updating of the matrix allows for the continuous assurance of quality and relevance in the teaching process - especially in the dynamic field of healthcare, where knowledge and professional requirements evolve rapidly. Regular reviews ensure that each course continues to contribute to the achievement of the intended competences, while students and teachers have transparent insight into the importance and role of each course in the overall education. Students and teachers should be actively involved in the evaluation and updating of the matrix through student surveys and professional workshops, in order to enhance transparency and collaboration in creating a high-quality study programme.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Include students and teachers in the process of evaluating and updating the matrix through student surveys and professional workshops.



**Quality grade:** Fulfilled

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

### **Analysis:**

The professional undergraduate study programme in Midwifery at the Faculty of Dental Medicine and Health in Osijek is clearly structured so that students achieve all the intended learning outcomes through compulsory and elective courses, theoretical and practical teaching and clinical practice. Each course has a defined objective, content, expected learning outcomes and method of assessment, ensuring that students acquire the key competences necessary for the midwifery profession through the learning activities. Additionally, the prerequisites for enrolling in each course are well described. The matrix of course and study programme learning outcomes (Table 2 in the document Initial accreditation procedure application form - study programme) shows that each course contributes to achieving at least one learning outcome at the programme level, and most courses cover multiple outcomes, enabling a comprehensive education for students. Clinical practice is included in every year of study, ensuring the acquisition of practical skills and the application of theoretical knowledge in real work settings.

According to quality standards and legal provisions (the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Science, OG 151/22), study programmes are required to ensure both horizontal and vertical student mobility. The document Proposal of the Midwifery Study Programme explicitly states that mobility is ensured through the following elements:

*Horizontal mobility:* Students have the opportunity to have ECTS credits earned at other higher education institutions in Croatia and abroad recognized. The Faculty has an established procedure for recognizing earned credits, and students are regularly informed about opportunities for international student mobility and participation in programmes such as Erasmus+. Clinical practice can also be completed outside Croatia, further promoting international mobility and the exchange of experience.

*Vertical mobility:* The study programme allows students to continue their education in related graduate programmes in the field of biomedicine and health, which is clearly highlighted in the programme descriptions and on the Faculty's website. Students are informed about opportunities for further education and the admission requirements for graduate study programmes.

The content of the study programme enables students to achieve all the intended learning outcomes through a comprehensive and structured education, while both horizontal and vertical student mobility are ensured in accordance with legal standards and European educational frameworks.



### Recommendations:

- Periodically review the workload and distribution of ECTS credits in relation to students' actual experiences, especially in clinical practice, to ensure an optimal balance between theory and practice and to support the continuous development of practical skills.
- Continue to develop and expand elective options, particularly in the higher years of study, including contemporary topics in public health, communication skills and digital competencies in healthcare.
- Continue the development and improvement of practical teaching in collaboration with work-integrated learning centres. Regularly update course content in accordance with new scientific findings and professional guidelines.
- Ensure a transparent approach to demonstrating the alignment between course content and the study programme's learning outcomes, and regularly review and update syllabi to ensure that each course contributes to all relevant competences for the midwifery profession.
- Continue to develop and promote opportunities for horizontal and vertical student mobility through clear communication about the rules for recognizing ECTS credits and options for further study, both in Croatia and within the European higher education area.
- As an additional recommendation for improvement, it is important to regularly monitor and evaluate students' experience related to mobility and the transparency of credit recognition, and to continuously ensure that the information on opportunities for further education and international exchange is accessible and understandable to all students. This will ensure that the study programme not only meets quality standards but also actively promotes student mobility, which is essential for modern higher education.

**Quality grade:** Fulfilled

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

### Analysis:

The allocation of ECTS credits is based on the actual student workload, taking into account the number of hours of lectures, exercises, seminars and clinical practice. Each course has a clearly defined ECTS value proportional to the workload and requirements of the course. A total of 180 ECTS credits is distributed over six semesters, in line with European standards, allowing for an even workload for students throughout their studies. Each academic year has a detailed timetable (lectures, exercises, seminars) and the assigned number of ECTS credits per course.



Clinical practice has the highest number of hours, but a relatively low number of ECTS credits. In the 1st year: 660 hours of practice = 3 ECTS (for practice, if only "Clinical Midwifery Practice 1" is considered, but the descriptions make it clear that the total number of practice hours is large while the ECTS credits are relatively low). Clinical Midwifery Practice 1: 0 lectures, 0 exercises, 200 hours of practice – 3 ECTS

Clinical Midwifery Practice 2: 0 lectures, 200 hours of practice, 0 seminars – 5 ECTS

Some courses with a high number of hours have relatively few ECTS credits, while others with fewer hours have more ECTS credits. For example: Anatomy and Histology: 60 hours (30 lectures + 15 exercises + 15 seminars) – 5 ECTS Clinical Midwifery Practice 1: 200 hours of practice – 3 ECTS

It would be expected that courses with more hours have more ECTS credits. This difference can be justified by the fact that ECTS reflects not only contact hours but also the student's independent work.

#### **Recommendations:**

It is necessary to pay attention to the ratio of course hours to ECTS credits, as in cases such as clinical practice courses, which have a high number of hours but relatively few ECTS credits.

**Quality grade:** Fulfilled

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

##### **Analysis:**

Student practice, in accordance with modern higher education standards and legal provisions, is an integral part of the study programme where applicable, particularly in professional and applied programmes. In professional programmes, such as the study programme Midwifery, practice is almost always mandatory and constitutes a significant portion of the students' overall workload. The practice complements theoretical knowledge with practical skills, provides work experience in a real environment, fosters professionalism, and connects students with potential employers. An appropriate number of ECTS credits is assigned for the practice, ensuring that students' work and progress during practice are recognized as part of their academic workload. Practice is conducted outside the higher education institution, in collaboration with the labour market, with clearly defined objectives, learning outcomes, tasks, student responsibilities and methods of assessment. There are mechanisms in place to ensure the quality of practice, including practice logs, evaluation questionnaires, feedback from employers and mentors and regulations on professional practice. Student practice is clearly defined in the study plan and programme, with a detailed description of objectives, learning outcomes, content, ECTS credits and assessment methods. It enables students to acquire practical skills,



connect with the labour market, and prepare for future professional work, all in accordance with national and European standards of higher education quality.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Practice should be integrated with theoretical teaching content so that students can apply the knowledge they have acquired in real work conditions.
- Faculty and mentors should encourage reflective learning and the connection of practice with theory through tasks and questions that promote critical thinking.
- The implementation of practice should be monitored and evaluated, including feedback from students and employers.
- It is also essential to develop and strengthen collaboration with employers and the business sector to ensure the relevance and currency of the practice.

**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 professional undergraduate study programme Midwifery is fully aligned with national legislation (Midwifery Act, Higher Education and Science Act) and European directives regulating education for the midwifery profession. The programme has been developed according to the recommendations and guidelines of national and international professional associations. The right to independently perform midwifery duties is acquired exclusively upon completion of an accredited study programme that complies with the Midwifery Act of the Republic of Croatia, the Higher Education and Science Act, and relevant European directives and professional association recommendations. The conditions for admission, duration, and content of the programme are clearly defined, including compulsory and elective courses, as well as extensive clinical practice, which is strongly represented and integrated throughout all three years of the professional undergraduate programme Midwifery. This structure meets the requirements of the regulated profession of bachelor in midwifery, ensuring the acquisition of specific professional knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for the responsible, ethical, and independent performance of midwifery duties across all segments of healthcare for women, pregnant women, postpartum women and newborns.



**Recommendations:**

- Regularly monitor changes in national and European regulations as well as recommendations from professional associations, and update the programme as needed.
- Continue collaboration with the Croatian Chamber of Midwives and relevant European bodies.

**Quality grade:** Fulfilled



### 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 admission requirements, admission criteria and enrolment procedure for the study programme are partially clearly defined. Based on the principles of equality and the vertical and horizontal mobility within the education system, the study programme provides a clear framework for continuing education for individuals who have completed a four-year secondary school and passed the state matura examination in the Republic of Croatia. A prerequisite for enrolment is proof of health and psychophysical fitness for the study, not older than six months. However, the scoring system for admission to the study programme is only partially clearly defined. Grades from secondary school are evaluated, with overall result as a mandatory criterion carrying 40%, and the subject Healthcare as an optional criterion carrying 10%. It is necessary to further specify which secondary school subjects will be evaluated and which types of completed secondary schools are eligible (e.g., general nursing, assistant midwife, etc.).

Furthermore, the evaluation of the state matura examination is clearly defined; however, the admission criterion lists the B-level Croatian language exam, which has not been conducted since the academic year 2022/2023. Therefore, this requirement needs to be updated and retained only for future applicants who completed the state matura before the academic year 2022/2023. Other mandatory requirements (B-level foreign language 15%, B-level mathematics 0%) and biology as an optional criterion carrying 15% are clearly defined. The admission requirements for candidates who completed a four-year secondary education before 2010 are not described. Since such students are also expected to enrol in the programme, this section needs to be supplemented in accordance with the provisions of the Regulations on Studies and Studying.

The website of the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Dental Medicine and Health in Osijek, is clearly structured and easy to navigate, providing prospective applicants and students with straightforward access to information regarding admission requirements and criteria. The admission requirements for higher years of study are clearly defined in the Regulations on Studies and Studying.

##### Recommendations:

- Describe the process of evaluating grades in Healthcare from secondary school (specifying which subjects and for which educational profiles).
- Revise the description of the state matura examination in the Croatian language in accordance with current regulations.



- Add the admission requirements and selection procedure for candidates who completed a four-year secondary education before 2010.

**Quality grade:** Partially fulfilled.

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

#### **Analysis:**

The planned methods of teaching and instructional approaches are aligned with the intended learning outcomes. The syllabuses, as well as the course coordinators responsible for delivering the courses, are clearly defined and qualified for their roles. In addition to lectures, practical classes in small groups are planned to be conducted at various work-integrated teaching facilities, led by a competent and motivated teaching staff. Conditions for working in small student groups are ensured. In addition to theoretical instruction, practical training is planned - that is, clinical exercises in small groups conducted in skills labs and hospital settings. The syllabuses include independent assignments in the form of seminars and the possibility of consultations with mentors, either in person or via email.

The teaching methods are adapted to a diverse student population, and the classes are appropriately distributed throughout the academic year, with clinical exercises taking place in hospitals closest to the students' place of residence.

Students also have access to digital platforms.

They are provided with opportunities to study in a well-equipped student library with working hours adapted to their needs.

**Recommendations:** No recommendations

**Quality grade:** Fulfilled

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

#### **Analysis:**

The Faculty of Dental Medicine and Health provides extensive support to both prospective and current students. The website is informative, well-organized, regularly updated, and accessible to all users - from students to the general public. Prospective students are offered support through various activities such as presentations for high school graduates, participation in the University Festival, brochures and similar initiatives. The higher education institution has well-developed mobility and internship programmes (Erasmus+), a Student Council, student associations and a library with relevant and up-



to-date literature. The institution ensures good communication with students through official email addresses, online platforms such as Merlin, and by providing students with access to the Office software package. In addition, workshops are organized as part of the Career Week programme. The Faculty also provides psychological support to students as well as assistance for students with disabilities.

**Recommendations:** No recommendations

**Quality grade:** 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:**

The criteria and methods for assessment and grading are clearly defined and aligned with the intended learning outcomes, as established by the Regulation on Studies and Studying at the University of Josip Juraj Strossmayer in Osijek. The planned methods for evaluating and grading student achievements include oral and written examinations, allowing for an impartial assessment of student performance. Exam results are communicated to students no later than 5 days after the examination date. Objectivity in assessing student achievements is ensured by appointing multiple examiners for each exam. Knowledge assessment is adapted for students with disabilities.

Instructors respond clearly and precisely to questions regarding planned teaching and instructional modalities. Instructors have a clear understanding of both the challenges and advantages of conducting classes across multiple teaching facilities. Instructors have experience in teaching and clinical practice. Student evaluation questionnaires, as well as the possibility to file complaints, are already well-established practices at the university.

**Recommendations:** No recommendations

**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.

###### Analysis:

According to the available data in the Initial accreditation procedure application form - study programme and the verification of the submitted employee structure, the Faculty of Dental Medicine and Health in Osijek employs teachers who perform the required minimum of 35% of all forms of teaching in the first year of study. Also, according to data in Table 5. and the submitted contracts it is evident that the higher education institution employs an adequate number of teachers full time on an indefinite term basis.

Upon reviewing Table 3 of the Application form, the calculations, and the documents of appointments submitted at the request of the Expert Panel, the Panel concluded that the ratio of the total number of enrolled students to full-time employed instructors and titular faculty does not exceed 30:1 and is, in fact, 4.6:1. The total annual teaching load of instructors nowhere exceeds 20% of the overall annual teaching load, as shown in Table 4, and the teaching load is generally very favourable, with the exception of a slightly higher load for one staff member due to a shortage of midwifery specialists. By reviewing Table 5 and examining the submitted CVs, contracts, and/or academic appointments, it was established that all instructors and course coordinators are qualified for the courses they teach. Discussions with members of the management confirmed that the higher education institution conducts a three-day mentor training programme and provides instructors with support in developing their competencies.

###### Recommendations:

- In the future, hire additional midwifery graduates to work in the programme, which of course depends on the labour market, with the aim of further strengthening the institution's teaching capacity.

###### 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:

Analysis of the data from Table 5 and the submitted CVs shows that external associates possess relevant work experience. For some external associates, written statements of intent to teach and approvals from the teaching facilities were provided, while others



confirmed their willingness to participate in person during meetings. Furthermore, discussions with the administrations of the teaching facilities revealed a strong interest in participating in the study programme and a readiness of staff to engage in teaching, which is also reflected in the submitted signed cooperation agreements with all teaching facilities. The higher education institution has submitted all signed cooperation agreements with the teaching facilities, thereby supporting the provision of professional practice at the home institutions of external associates. The Panel established that the higher education institution conducts a three-day mentor training programme at three locations - Osijek, Slavonski Brod and Nova Gradiška - and provides external associates with support in developing their competencies.

**Recommendations:**

- Continue expanding the pool of qualified external associates and furthering their professional training.

**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:**

Upon reviewing Table 6 of the Application form and Annex 5 of the mandatory attachments, it was determined that the higher education institution has provided at least 1 m<sup>2</sup> of space per student, specifically 5.25 m<sup>2</sup> per student. A tour of the facilities confirmed that the institution has excellently maintained spaces, modern equipment and the infrastructure necessary to implement the study programme. The procurement process for the skills lab equipment is underway, and due to the complexity of the procedure, the lab will be fully equipped within a maximum of two months. The order for the appropriate skills lab equipment is further documented by the submitted medical equipment procurement request dated May 28, 2025, valued at €52,500. The institution currently has 7 computers in the reading room, which is insufficient for student needs; according to Table 6 of the Application form, the student-to-computer ratio is 7.2:1. However, the institution is in the process of acquiring 10 additional computers, as documented by the submitted computer equipment procurement request dated May 28, 2025, valued at €25,000.

**Recommendations:**

- Acquire and install medical and computer equipment as soon as possible.

**Quality grade:** Partially 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. – (Table 7)**

**Analysis:**

Upon reviewing Table 7 of the Application form and inspecting the library facilities in Orahovica, it was determined that the higher education institution has provided the necessary teaching literature for the study programme. Access to library collections as well as information and communication technology resources is ensured. The titles are adequate in number and are of the latest editions. The inspection confirmed that a staff member is employed as the library manager, and the library operates with suitable opening hours. New library spaces are currently being prepared, which will provide even better conditions for use.

**Recommendations:**

- Maintain a continuous acquisition of the latest editions of textbooks.

**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:**

Upon reviewing Table 8 of the Application form, Annex 6 of the mandatory attachments, and the document of the Study Programme Proposal, which presents the financial plan of revenues and expenditures and sources of funding, and through discussions with the management, the Panel determined that the higher education institution has secured the necessary financial resources for organizing operations and ensuring the quality implementation of the planned study programme.

**Recommendations:**

- Continue the successful practice of self-financing.

**Quality grade:** Fulfilled



**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**

The proposed professional undergraduate study programme Midwifery at the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Dental Medicine and Health, is logically structured, based on the HEI's Strategy, and justified by the need for qualified personnel in the Republic of Croatia, particularly in the Slavonia region. 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. The proposed instructors are competent to lead the courses and deliver instruction in the planned courses. Internal quality assurance is clearly defined. The facilities and infrastructure are adequate for conducting the teaching processes. The library is well-equipped and ensures student access to the necessary literature. The higher education institution ensures the necessary financial resources to organise the activities and delivering the proposed study programme. Therefore, following the completed initial accreditation procedure for the above-mentioned study programme, the Expert Panel recommends the issuance of a license.

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>			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.			X



<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. Site visit protocol

**Inicijalna akreditacija  
stručnog prijediplomskog studija *Primaljstvo  
Sveučilišta J. J. Strossmayera u Osijeku, Fakulteta za  
dentalnu medicinu i zdravstvo Osijek***

**Initial accreditation  
of professional  
undergraduate study programme Midwifery at the  
University J. J. Strossmayera u Osijeku, Faculty of Dental  
Medicine and Health**

### **PROTOKOL POSJETA / SITE VISIT PROTOCOL**

*Mjesto događanja / Venue*

*Ul. Bana Josipa Jelačića 19A, 33515 Orahovica*

	<b>Srijeda, 4. lipnja 2025.</b>	<b>Wednesday, 4 June 2025</b>
<b>09:00 – 09:30</b>	<i>Interni sastanak stručnog povjerenstva</i>	<i>Internal meeting of the panel members</i>
<b>09:30 – 10:15</b>	Sastanak s upravom visokog učilišta	Meeting with the Management of HEI
<b>10:15 – 11:00</b>	Sastanak s voditeljem studijskog programa	Meeting with the head of the study programme



<b>11:00 - 11:15</b>	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
<b>11:15 - 12:15</b>	Sastanak s nastavnicima i vanjskim suradnicima koji će biti angažirani na studijskom programu ( <i>u stalnom radnom odnosu - nisu članovi uprave</i> )	Meeting with teachers and external associates ( <i>full-time employees - not members of the management of HEI</i> )
<b>12:15 - 13:00</b>	Sastanak s vanjskim dionicima ( <i>predstavnicima strukovnih i profesionalnih udruženja, poslovna zajednica, poslodavci, stručnjaci iz prakse</i> )	Meeting with external stakeholders ( <i>representatives of professional organisations, business sector/industry sector, professional experts</i> )
<b>13:00 - 14:30</b>	<i>Radni ručak Stručnog povjerenstva</i>	<i>Working lunch</i>
<b>14:30 - 15:30</b>	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> )
<b>15:30 - 15:45</b>	Organizacija dodatnog sastanka o otvorenim pitanjima, prema potrebi	Organisation of additional meeting on open questions, if needed
<b>15:45 - 16:15</b>	Interni sastanak članova stručnog povjerenstva – priprema za završni sastanak	Internal meeting of the panel members – preparation for the exit meeting
<b>16:15 - 16:30</b>	Završni sastanak s upravom	Exit meeting with the Management