



agency for science and higher education

**REPORT
OF THE EXPERT PANEL
ON THE
RE-ACCREDITATION OF THE
University of Dubrovnik**

**Date of re-accreditation:
11-14 November 2023**

January 2024.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....3

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION.....6

BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES 10

ADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION..... 10

DISADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION 10

LIST OF INSTITUTIONAL GOOD PRACTICES 10

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE..... 10

ANALYSIS OF EACH ASSESSMENT AREA, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY GRADE FOR EACH ASSESSMENT AREA 11

I. Internal quality assurance and the social role of the higher education institution 11

II. Study programmes..... 13

III. Teaching process and student support 15

IV. Teaching and institutional capacities..... 17

V. Scientific/artistic activity 20

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF EACH STANDARD, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY GRADE FOR EACH STANDARD..... 23

I. Internal quality assurance and the social role of the higher education institution 23

II. Study programmes..... 35

III. Teaching process and student support 47

V. Scientific/artistic activity 62

APPENDICES 71

SUMMARY 77

INTRODUCTION

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

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

The Agency's Accreditation Council appointed an independent Expert Panel for the evaluation of the University of Dubrovnik.

Members of the Expert Panel:

- Dr. sc. Monika Metykova, Senior lecturer, School of Media, Arts and Humanities, University of Sussex, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Panel chair,
- Prof. dr. sc. Dubravka Božić Bogović, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka, Republic of Croatia,
- Prof. dr. sc. Daniela Malnar, Faculty of Health Studies, University of Rijeka, Republic of Croatia,
- Assoc. prof. dr. sc. Božena Krce Miočić, University of Zadar, Republic of Croatia,
- Asst. prof. dr. sc. Marko Horvat, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing, University of Zagreb, Republic of Croatia,
- Ivana Protrka, student, University of Zadar, Republic of Croatia, student.

During the re-accreditation, the Expert Panel held meetings with the following stakeholders:

- Management,
- Self-Evaluation Report Committee,
- Students,
- Heads of study programmes,
- Full-time teaching staff,
- Assistants and junior researchers,

- Heads of doctoral programmes and leaders of research projects,
- Alumni,
- Representatives of the business sector, potential employers.

Expert Panel members went on a site visit on 13, 14 and 15 November, when they had a tour of the workshop facilities, laboratories, libraries, radio studio, IT classrooms, student administration offices and classrooms, and when they observed some lectures. Meetings with stakeholders were also held during the site visit.

During the site visit, the Expert Panel examined the available additional documents and study programme descriptions (learning outcomes).

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

The Report contains the following elements:

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

In the analysis of the documentation, the site visit to the University of Dubrovnik, meetings and writing of the Report, the Expert Panel was supported by:

- Vlatka Šušnjak Kuljiš, coordinator, ASHE,
- Frano Pavić, assistant coordinator, ASHE,
- Ivana Rončević, interpreter at the site visit, ASHE
- Marija Omazić, translator of the Report, ASHE.

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

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

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

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

NAME OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION:

University of Dubrovnik

ADDRESS:

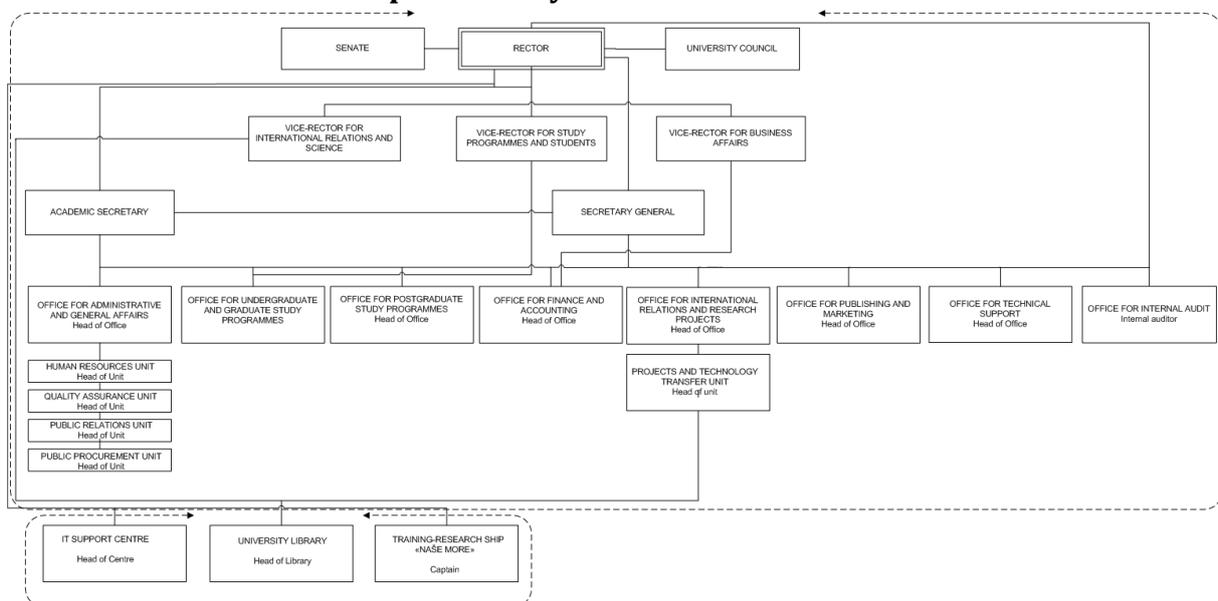
Branitelja Dubrovnika 41, 20000 Dubrovnik

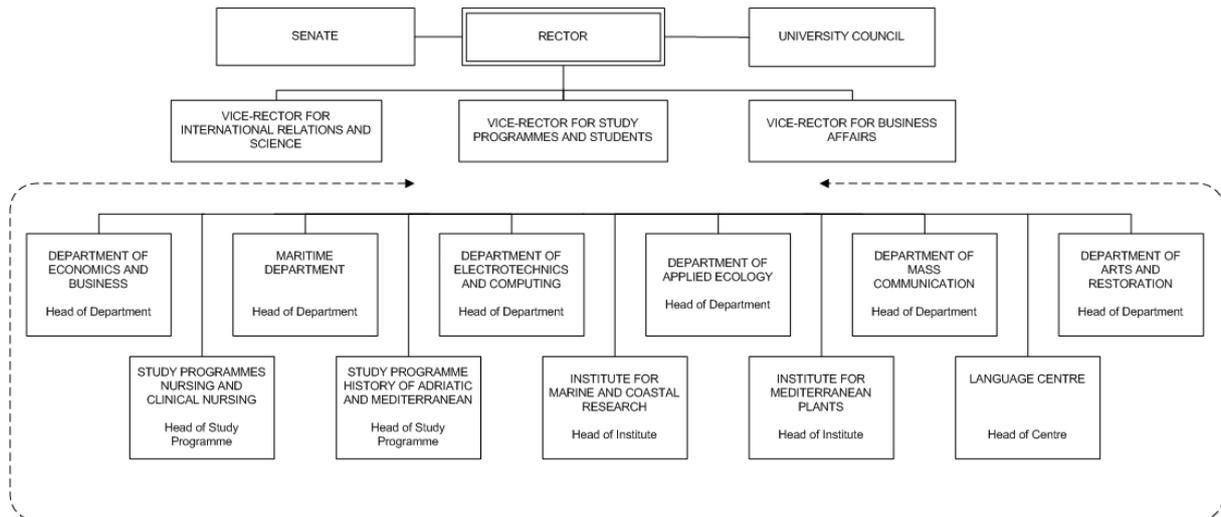
RECTOR:

prof. dr. sc. Nikša Burum

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE:

Based on the information provided by the institution:





STUDY PROGRAMMES:

University Undergraduate studies

Electrical Engineering and Maritime Communication Technology

Applied Computer Science / Information Management

Naval Engineering

Nautical Studies

Maritime Technologies of Yachts and Marinas

Aquaculture

Business Economics; specialisations in: Tourism, Marketing, International Trade; IT Management

Public Relations

Media and Culture of Society

History of the Adriatic and Mediterranean

Conservation – Restoration; specialisations in: Wood, Paper, Textile, Metal, Ceramics

Professional Undergraduate studies

Nursing

Financial Management

Hospitality and Culinary Arts

University Graduate studies

Mariculture

Business Economics; specialisations in: Tourism, Marketing, International Trade

Economics

Electrical Engineering and Communication Technologies

Conservation – Restoration; specialisations in: Wood, Paper, Textile, Metal, Ceramics

Maritime Studies
Media
Applied/Business Computing
Public Relations

Professional Graduate studies

Clinical Nursing
Hospitality
Financial Management

University specialist study

Quality and Sustainable Development Management in Tourism

Doctoral studies

Applied Marine Sciences (with the University of Split)
Business Economics in Digital Environment (with the University of Zagreb)

Accredited English-language study programmes

University Undergraduate study

Business Economics

University Graduate studies

Business Economics; specialisations in: Tourism

Mariculture

Applied Business/Computing

Economics

Mass Communication

Conservation-Restoration

Doctoral study

Business Economics in Digital Environment (with the University of Zagreb)

Studies in which University participate as partner institution

Graduate double degree programmes (with the University of Palermo, Italy)

Economics

Business, specializations in Marketing; Tourism

Doctoral studies

Molecular Biosciences (with the University of Osijek and the Ruđer Bošković Institute)

Biology of Neoplasms (with the Universities of Split, Zadar and the Ruđer Bošković Institute)

Maritime Studies (with the Universities of Rijeka and Zadar and other institutions)

NUMBER OF STUDENTS:

According to data provided by the institution, in the academic year 2022/23 there was a total of 810 full-time students in all undergraduate and graduate study programmes and a total of 542 part-time students. An additional 23 part-time students were registered in the postgraduate study programme of Business Economics in Digital Environment.

NUMBER OF TEACHERS:

Based on the data provided by the institution, in 2022/23 there were 6 full professors with tenure, 9 full professors, 33 associate professors, 36 assistant professors, 3 scientific advisors with tenure, 1 scientific advisor, 19 staff in teaching grades and 21 assistants employed full-time at the University.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

The University of Dubrovnik was established in 2003 and in 2004/2005 the first generation of students was enrolled in 12 undergraduate and six vocational degree programmes in the fields of technical, biotechnical and social sciences. Today, the University of Dubrovnik consists of six departments: the Department of Economics and Business, the Department of Maritime Studies, the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computing, the Department of Applied Environmental Science, the Department of Communication Sciences and the Department of Arts and Restoration. The University offers 14 three-year undergraduate university programmes, 3 three-year undergraduate professional programmes, 11 two-year graduate university programmes, 3 two-year specialist graduate programmes, 1 specialist postgraduate programme and 6 inter-university postgraduate (doctoral) programmes.

In 2005, the University established the Institute for Marine and Coastal Research as its scientific constituent, which includes the Aquarium in the Fortress of St. John. The Institute is engaged in basic and applied research on the natural conditions of the Adriatic Sea and its coast, especially the study of the structure and processes in the ecosystem. In 2011, the University acquired the Institute for Mediterranean Plants that focuses on research into agriculture significant for the southern Croatian region. More recently, the following business and research centres have been established at the University: the Laboratory for Intelligent Autonomous Systems – LARIAT, the Centre for Research of Digital Transformation – CREDO, Behavioural Research Laboratory (AXON) and Information Fact-Checking and Civil Resilience Centre (DU-CHECK).

BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. A research culture that is strongly supported by the institution and has resulted in impressive improvements to outputs and research projects.
2. Internationalization when it comes to home students gaining international experience and the University's educational offer for foreign students.
3. The provision of graduate joint degree programmes with the University of Palermo.
4. Excellent facilities and infrastructure for the delivery of study programmes and the conducting of scientific research.
5. A well-functioning system for student internships – compulsory as well as voluntary ones.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. An ongoing decline in student enrolment as well as high drop-out rates in some study programmes.
2. Small numbers of full-time University staff in some departments, particularly on study of Nursing.
3. An internal quality assurance system that needs improvement.
4. Insufficiencies in the alignment of learning outcomes at the level of study programmes with the level and profile of qualifications gained, and inadequate allocation of ECTS credits.
5. Under-resourced support for students, particularly regarding counselling.

LIST OF INSTITUTIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. Introduction of the Committee for Animal Welfare to protect lab animals used for scientific purposes and adoption of the Gender Equality Plan.
2. Clear financial incentives for research activities.
3. Awards that support excellence.
4. Responsible and transparent management of the University's finances.
5. The hiring practice in place in the Department of Economics and Business and the Department of Mass Media and Communication. These departments use additional conditions that complement the basic prerequisites specified in the Act and Ordinance that enable the attainment of strategic goals.

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

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

Analysis

The University of Dubrovnik has an internal quality assurance system and a Quality Assurance Office that was established in 2013. The University has a valid ISO 9001 certificate issued by the Croatian Register of Shipping and Bureau Veritas Croatia. The University has adopted several strategic documents, including the Quality Assurance Strategy. Other strategic documents were also analysed by the expert panel, which found some discrepancies and overlaps as well as gaps when it comes to the University's strategic planning and the implementation of these plans. The University regularly collects and analyses data on the structure of enrolled students, enrolment quota fulfilment, and student survey results; however, it is not clear whether other methods of information collection are used and in what way the collected and analysed data were used for the improvement and development of the University's activities. The University has adopted documents that regulate and promote the training of its staff and work towards effective human resource management; the award regulations define the types of awards and the criteria for awarding them. Most departments and programmes that were reaccredited in the period from 2011 to 2015 submitted reports on the implementation of action plans which were adopted and approved in 2022 and 2023. While it is clear that improvements have been made based on the recommendations of these, there remain gaps, especially at the overall University level, which include the continuing low enrolment/high drop-out rates, key performance indicators as the basis for evaluating outcomes related to various strategies, pressures on teaching capacity in some areas and similar. The University's Quality Policy was adopted in 2021 and it aims, among other things, to ensure ethics, independence and transparency of work and business. The University has a Code of Ethics for academics, teachers and staff, conclusions on the application of the Code of Ethics, a set of rules on the procedure for the withdrawal of professional and academic titles and degrees, and a set of rules on the disciplinary responsibility of students. The Ethics Committee deals with questions of implementation and violations of the Code of Ethics, and the University also has a student ombudsman. The University is committed to ensuring and promoting academic integrity and freedom while respecting ethical principles, and has developed mechanisms to prevent and sanction unethical behaviour. An example of good practice in the field of dedication to ensuring ethics and equality is the introduction of the Committee for Animal Welfare to protect lab animals used for scientific purposes and the adoption of the Gender Equality Plan. The University ensures the availability of relevant information on its websites in Croatian and English, as well as on social networks. The University and its constituents cooperate very actively with schools in the implementation of programmes

for potential future students. The University has defined its mission to realise societal interests through the delivery of education through its study programmes, through lifelong learning, scientific research, artistic and professional work. It actively focuses on the transfer of knowledge through the establishment of research centres and laboratories that produce scientific ideas and results of greater social and economic significance. The staff and students at the University are highly active in numerous programmes aimed at popularizing science, the University also offers retraining for people with disabilities in cooperation with the local authorities and public administration. The University recognizes the need to develop lifelong learning programmes and lifelong learning programmes in tourism (e.g. a course for tourist guides and foreign language courses for tourism) and seafaring (e.g. seafarer training programmes in Croatian and English and special education programmes for seafarers) have been organized in Dubrovnik. At present, the University does not conduct a systematic analysis of the needs of the labour market for the development of lifelong learning programmes. The University has some prescribed procedures related to lifelong learning which are described in the Ordinance on the Evaluation of Lifelong Learning Programmes and relate mainly to proposals for lifelong learning courses, but do not deal with the actual implementation of lifelong learning courses.

Recommendations for improvement

The expert panel strongly recommends that the University conducts significant work on its strategic planning, its implementation and the monitoring of its outcomes. Introducing internal evaluation procedures for the system of internal quality assurance is also recommended. The expert panel advises the University to prepare action plans within reasonable deadlines after the evaluations; regular monitoring and the assessment of outcomes are highly desirable. The panel strongly recommends that the University leadership considers how relevant recommendations that go beyond the level of departments can be implemented. The expert panel recommends that the University takes measures to better inform students and employees about the mechanisms for protecting their rights. The University should also provide additional training for students on issues of academic integrity, freedom and ethics. The expert panel encourages the University to continue its work on website improvements. The expert panel recommends that the University publishes analyses of various indicators that may be of interest to the public and that it extends the information about co-operations to a wider variety of actors. The expert panel recommends that the University continues with programmes that support its social role. The expert panel strongly recommends that the University establishes a regulatory framework, an operational plan for implementation and a quality monitoring system for its lifelong learning programmes.

Quality grade

Minimum

II. Study programmes

Analysis

The general objectives of the study programmes implemented by the University are in accordance with the mission and strategic goals set out in the University's strategic documents. The University of Dubrovnik, like many other higher education institutions, is facing a noticeable decline in the number of enrolled students; therefore, it decided to expand its study programmes. The enrolment quotas for certain degree programmes are set too high and are not in line with the demand or need for these programmes. The small number of students enrolled on some study programmes raises questions about their financial viability. From the available data, it appears that the majority of graduate students are employed. The self-evaluation report states that learning outcomes are set at the level of programmes and courses and are established according to Bloom's taxonomy, although these are often not set at the appropriate level. It is of the utmost importance that the learning outcomes are aligned with the Croatian Qualifications Framework, i.e. that each qualification corresponds to the relevant level of learning outcomes for that qualification. There are a number of issues with the learning outcomes; overall, greater attention needs to be paid to the level at which the learning outcomes are set, as there should be a clear indication of progression from one level of study to the next. The expert panel found that the learning outcomes often use verbs from Bloom's taxonomy, but they tend to be from lower levels of study (which may be used but should not be predominant, especially not on a degree programme). We also found that the linking of course learning outcomes to the overarching degree programme-level learning outcomes is often inadequate. The distribution of ECTS credits that capture the workload required to master the knowledge, skills and competence on a course should link to the number and nature of learning outcomes. However, the principles guiding this were not evident from the course descriptions. During the site visit the expert panel had an opportunity to look at seminar papers, final theses, exam papers etc. and in some cases the panel was not satisfied with the quality of these. This may be linked to the issues with learning outcomes that are not set at appropriate levels. The University has study programmes that are regulated by external bodies (government and professional ones) and in these cases the completion of studies depends directly on completing the required assessments. In a discussion with the Vice-Rector for Study Programmes and Students, it was established that there are no defined procedures for recognising informal and non-formal learning. The Senate of the University of Dubrovnik has decided to establish the UNIDU Alumni Club in order to create a lasting connection between the University of Dubrovnik and its former students and to promote common goals and interests. In the discussion with students, the expert panel was informed that they were actively involved in the revision of study programmes. However, from meetings with alumni and external stakeholders the expert panel had the impression that they were not involved in the process of amending and/or supplementing individual study programmes in a significant

way. Nevertheless, both the alumni and external stakeholders believed that students graduating from the University of Dubrovnik had well-developed skills and knowledge needed for their work and emphasised the importance of the high-quality tutor-student relationship. In the meeting with heads of department and staff, there was confusion about how changes are made to study programmes and whether in the case of major changes in study programmes the reaccreditation of the programme was carried out as prescribed. Workshops for teaching staff on learning outcomes are organised when degree programmes are revised; however, in the meeting with the heads of department the expert panel learnt that some had not been revised since 2011. The University regularly conducts anonymous surveys on the actual workload of students. The surveys are carried out every semester, by subject area and academic year. The University analyses the surveys and compares the ECTS credits with the actual workload based on feedback from those involved in the teaching process. Although it is clear that some work has been carried out on the alignment of ECTS credits and workloads, the expert panel was not provided with enough information and evidence to be able to judge the quality of this work and its outcomes. Professional practise is a compulsory part of certain degree programmes and students also have the opportunity to undertake voluntary internships. Students receive ECTS credits for professional internship when it is compulsory and, overall, the expert panel considers student internship well organised and functional. The students and alumni to whom the expert panel talked were highly satisfied with the internship programmes; however, students on the Marine Engineering study programme would welcome on-site teaching.

Recommendations for improvement

The expert panel believes that addressing low enrolment and high drop-out rates needs to be the University's top priority. The expert panel strongly encourages the University to undertake significant work on learning outcomes, allocation of ECTS credits and alignment with teaching methods and modes of assessment across its study programmes. The expert panel strongly advises the University to prioritize the work on aligning study programmes with the Croatian Qualifications Framework as this will also improve the achievement of learning outcomes at the required standard. Work on better aligning of ECTS credits with workloads is also necessary. The University should introduce a way in which it can better monitor and assess the achievement of degree-level learning outcomes especially at a time when work on these is in progress. The University should adopt guidance on informal and non-formal learning. The University should consider the introduction of a regular internal periodic review of study programmes that would create a procedural and temporal framework for evaluating and revising study programmes. The University appears to rely extensively on outside actors and processes (such as re-accreditations etc.) when it comes to revising and updating its study programmes. It needs to be stressed, however, that the periodic review should not become a bureaucratic

exercise. If done correctly, such a review is an opportunity to conduct in-depth analyses of study programmes and make revisions that improve quality and make the programmes more relevant and appealing to applicants. The expert panel encourages the University to continue its work on providing students with internship opportunities (compulsory as well as voluntary) and to expand this provision where possible. The University can also explore ways of incorporating learning that takes place in the field or on other sites (e.g. in the case of Marine Engineering). The University plans to expand its number of international students who will be taught in English and it should prepare for a potential increased demand for internships in English.

Quality grade

Minimum

III. Teaching process and student support

Analysis

The criteria for admission or continuation of studies are published online and are consistently applied during the admission process and the University has recognition procedures in place. The University collects data on admission criteria and on student performance; however, more analytical work is required, especially in the light of the high drop-out rate and its potential link to the admissions criteria and admissions process. The University and its constituents have established monitoring procedures that are clearly defined. The University is in the initial stages of a project that will address the high drop-out rates and introduce effective measure to handle these. The University encourages the use of different teaching methods, including research, fieldwork and practice/internships. The University has a large number of part-time students and this may pose its own challenges when it comes to the delivery of teaching. The University has made a significant investment in providing state-of-the art facilities. The University enables its students to take electives in other programmes and the teaching staff make an active effort to be part of innovative teaching and exchange programmes. Student surveys are conducted on a regular basis. The University has established regulations on studying and new students are provided with information on various aspects of their studies and student life. The various degree programmes require different facilities and services and the panel was particularly concerned about how part-time students' needs are met. Library services and the availability of literature varies across degree programmes and some student support and counselling services are established at the University. The feedback that the panel had from current students and alumni confirmed the dedication of the teaching staff, and positive feedback from students and alumni also related to the mobility programmes and support they received for these. There was less positive feedback on the career guidance provided by the University and on counselling services. The University has its Student Union, a student ombudsman and students are

also represented on relevant University-wide bodies. The University has a special regulation for the admission of applicants from certain vulnerable groups and it provides scholarships to full-time students who are socio-economically underprivileged. The University appointed a coordinator for students with disabilities and examples of adjustments to assessments and teaching materials were provided to the panel. The University has a high share of students involved in outgoing as well as incoming mobility and the Erasmus+ programme is working particularly well. The University offers a double degree programme with the University of Palermo and the offer of English language courses for incoming students is well developed. There are also some opportunities for internships abroad. The University has a series of regulations and processes in place that ensure the consistency and objectivity of evaluation. The assessment criteria and methods are publicly available on the University website and are also published on the intranet. The University has a functional appeals process and adjustments that take disabilities etc. into account are made based on individual requests. The University provides diplomas and diploma supplements in line with the relevant regulations; the diploma supplements contain all the prescribed information. The University analyses employment data related to its graduates and takes the demands of the labour market into account in its planning. The University has developed connections particularly with local and regional employers; these are particularly important for study programmes with compulsory work experience. In 2017, the University established its Alumni Club.

Recommendations for improvement

The University should engage in more in-depth analyses of the admissions criteria and student performance as well as student retention. The analyses should also include the impact of measures that have been introduced to improve the admission process. The expert panel strongly encourages the University to develop the initial work on the measures for increasing pass rates. While the University carries out work on learning outcomes, it is also essential to review teaching methods and the expert panel recommends making the alignment of the revised learning outcomes with teaching methods a priority. The University has many part-time students and the suitability of teaching methods for these students should be regularly assessed. The panel has concerns about the provision of administrative and other services in some departments that are small or have a student population that studies largely part-time. The University should conduct an audit of its support staff and make adjustments in light of the needs of its current student body and also of its planned expansion of English-language study programmes. The panel strongly encourages the University to reconsider the way it runs its Service for Professional Orientation and Counselling of Students and Alumni and to strengthen the provision provided. The University is doing high-quality work in the provision of English-language teaching and the panel's only recommendation is to plan

for the scaling up of English-language programmes so that the quality of the provision can be maintained. The way in which grading and assessment is described in course descriptions should be unified so that it includes all the key information: assessment modes, their weighting and also a grading scale. The panel also recommends that as part of staff development and training, support should be provided to teaching staff in the development of skills related to testing and assessment methods. The panel encourages the University to further develop career support within the Service for Professional Orientation and Counselling of Students and Alumni. The Alumni Club should be part of a broader strategy on the University's engagement with its alumni. Further work in these areas is likely to require an investment in resources, particularly human resources, and the expert panel encourages the University to commit to these.

Quality grade

Satisfactory

IV. Teaching and institutional capacities

Analysis

The ratio of teachers to students at the University of Dubrovnik has been extremely positive in the period from 2017 to 2021. However, this is only partly due to the University's recruitment of teachers; the ratio is influenced by the constantly declining enrolment numbers and the high drop-out rate. Teaching coverage by the University's full-time staff ranges from 33% to 93% with most study programmes within the range of 60% to 80%. This indicator is least favourable in relation to the professional undergraduate study programme in Financial Management and the professional specialist graduate study programme in Financial Management. The lack of full-time staff employed by the University is especially noticeable in the case of the professional undergraduate study programme in Nursing and the professional specialist graduate study programme in Clinical Nursing. The undergraduate university study programme in History of the Adriatic and of the Mediterranean is delivered by a small number of full-time staff. Employees were appointed to scientific-teaching positions in accordance with the relevant legal regulations and hence they are qualified for the subjects they teach. In the upcoming period, the main challenge facing the University is the equalization of the workload among employees. The expert panel raised some of its concerns especially about very high workloads in a meeting while visiting the University and was informed that some of the staff in question have since retired or left the University. When hiring, selecting, and re-appointing teachers, the University complies with all legal requirements and its internal documents are harmonized. All procedures are prescribed by internal acts and are public and transparent. When selecting candidates, their past activities and achievements in scientific, professional, and teaching work are taken into account. As a particularly positive example, the panel highlights the practice in place in the Department

of Economics and Business and the Department of Mass Media and Communication, which, in addition to the basic prerequisites specified in the Act and Ordinance on Appointment to Associate Grades and Corresponding Positions, also includes additional conditions for the selection of the best candidates. The University has no systematic plan for the development of teachers' competencies; rather training and professional development are carried out in accordance with the means and expressed needs. It is commendable that the University allocates a certain fixed portion of funds to all teachers for dedicated institutional financing of their scientific activity so that each employee can develop their competencies at their own discretion. The University conducts student surveys of the teachers' work each semester and it has procedures in place for poor results. At the time of the re-accreditation, no peer evaluation was in place, for example, peer observations of teaching, etc. The introduction of annual rewards for employees in a number of categories, including teaching activities, is highly commendable. The University has clear rules on the use of sabbatical leave, and some of the teachers have already fulfilled the requirements to obtain the right to use it. The University actively encourages the mobility of both teaching and administrative staff. The award of "Erasmus Without Paper Champions" is particularly commendable. The University of Dubrovnik has exceptionally high-quality premises, equipment, and infrastructure that are sufficient for the delivery of study programmes and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Although the expert panel did not have the opportunity to visit the new student dormitory, it is hugely important in improving the living and study conditions of students, especially under the pressures that Dubrovnik is experiencing in terms of affordable accommodation. The University of Dubrovnik has library premises in different locations depending on the location of the unit to which they are attached. This enables easier access to literature for students and employees. However, there are differences among the funds and resources that are at the disposal of different departments. The panel noted that updates to literature – in Croatian as well as in English – are desirable across the board and students also mentioned that access to literature can be a challenge. The University has a thesis storing system and it also uses Merlin – an e-learning system in higher education. The University of Dubrovnik manages its financial resources transparently. Additional funding sources are used for the improvement and development of the institution. The University has an Ordinance on the Acquisition and Distribution of Income from Own Activities. It is commendable that grants are provided for the excellence of scientific papers and grants to project managers as motivators for further improvement.

Recommendations for improvement

The panel's most important recommendation is to introduce a University-wide systematic approach to the development of staff competencies through: (1) the establishment of a system for determining the training and professional development needs of teachers, (2)

the adoption of a professional development/training plan for a five-year period in accordance with the University Strategy and the needs determined through the previously conducted analyses, and (3) the monitoring of the execution of the plan and its outcomes, particularly the newly developed/improved competencies.

The expert panel recommends that the University monitors the student-staff ratio, particularly once the English-language programmes are launched. The panel strongly recommends that the University addresses staffing in relation to the programmes that have a low proportion of full-time staff employed by the University. The University is also in need of work on the equalization of workloads. Another area in which improvements can be made is the development of support mechanism, e.g. grants for staff in teaching positions who wish to meet the conditions for transitioning to scientific-teaching positions. As the re-accreditation procedure is carried out for the period up to the academic year 2021/2022, it cannot be subject to harmonization with the new Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity (OG 119/22). Nevertheless, it is recommended that the University harmonizes all internal acts with the aforementioned Act as soon as possible. The expert panel recommends that the University applies the example of good hiring practice at the Department of Economics and Business and the Department of Mass Media and Communication across the University and in relation to all posts rather than associate ones only. The expert panel encourages the University to introduce peer evaluations of teaching, particularly for those new to teaching or needing a refresher. The panel also proposes organizing training sessions that would improve the teaching competencies of all participants in the teaching process. The expert panel is very impressed with the work that the University carried out in improving its facilities and equipment. The panel's recommendation relates to monitoring staff and student satisfaction with these facilities. The results of such monitoring will help maintain the quality of the premises and facilities and can also be used in determining future investments. The expert panel strongly recommends that the University prioritizes the introduction of a University-wide literature and study resource procurement plan in accordance with the University's strategic goals. The expert panel encourages the University to continue the work on the allocation/renovation of spaces for the storage of the library stock and study spaces although we acknowledge the significant challenges that the University faces in this respect. The expert panel recommends the introduction of monitoring in relation to staff and student use and satisfaction with library and related services. A monitoring system for satisfaction with the e-learning system is also recommended.

Quality grade
Satisfactory

V. Scientific/artistic activity

Analysis

University teachers and associates have been actively publishing a significant number of high-quality scientific publications ranked in the first quartile (Q1), which indicates a high level of quality, and in the second quartile (Q2), indicating above average quality. According to the data in the WoS database, the published papers were cited a total of 2,185 times, and the h-index of the institution was 21 (as of March 2023). The scientific journals published by the University of Dubrovnik were included in the WoS database. The University of Dubrovnik has efficient systems in place for encouraging high-quality scientific publications. The University's scientific activity is evident in PhD theses. The faculty and associates of the University have been actively involved in disseminating their research. The research activities of individual departments are reflected in the teaching programmes, especially in higher years of study and in the graduate and doctoral programmes. However, the incentives programme is still diminutive and cannot achieve its full potential. When planning its research activities, the University of Dubrovnik is oriented towards the needs of society and the labour market. The University engages in the transfer of scientific ideas and knowledge at the local, regional, and national economy levels. They use modern information and communication technology for research purposes, which enhances the sustainability of research and its results through technology and knowledge transfer. The University's faculty and associates publish articles aimed at popularizing science and participate in scientific programmes on radio and TV. The University's faculty and associates actively participate in national and international conferences. Teachers, associates, and professional staff at the University of Dubrovnik have received university, national and international awards for their academic, artistic or professional achievements. The University is also a holder of an adequate number of scientific, artistic, or professional projects. Faculty members have been awarded titles of visiting professor or invited as guest lecturers at other higher education institutions globally. Faculty and staff have held editorship roles in various journals over the last five years. The University's research strategy envisions it becoming an internationally recognized and globally competitive university. The University's internal system for promoting excellence includes the Ordinance on the recognition award, which provides annual awards to researchers for special achievements in scientific research, artistic, and artistic-research work. The University has established a procedure for rewarding the publication of papers in the first quartile (Q1) journals of the WoS database. Despite the University's ongoing work, long-term sustainability and sustainable mechanisms for the formal allocation of resources are not yet fully in place. The University has established a Project Office which, at the time of compiling this report, is staffed by 1 person with another person projected to join in the near future. Allocated resources for project application support are insufficient in practice. Many students at the University of Dubrovnik are part of different research groups or laboratories and use the

necessary scientific infrastructure for the preparation of their theses and dissertations. This infrastructure mostly includes modern equipment that is available to all students, enabling them to acquire knowledge and skills to be competitive in the global labour market. The University strives to make scientific research work an integral part of graduate education, and students often get involved in scientific research by completing a thesis. However, the process of student participation – although currently successful – is informal and more effort should be invested in achieving long-term sustainability and progress. The space, equipment and entire infrastructure, including laboratories, IT services, work facilities and the like are appropriate for the delivery of study programmes, given the current number of enrolled students, and ensure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and the implementation of scientific activities. The library space is sufficient and modern, but the library stock needs to be renewed with modern titles, especially in the fields of mathematics, physics, and STEM.

Recommendations for improvement

In order to increase the quality of publications and project applications, and to enhance academic transparency and quality, the expert panel recommends that the University of Dubrovnik introduces a formal and unified procedure for the internal review of scientific papers, project applications, and reporting by employees on successful project applications in all its constituents. The University should expand the existing successful incentive mechanisms to encompass the promotion of excellence in project applications and other scientific activities, especially for young researchers and students. The expert panel also recommends the introduction of a strategy for technology transfer with the aim of increasing the number of spin-off companies that develop from research activities at the University of Dubrovnik, and to continue developing cooperation with external stakeholders through student internships, student participation in the implementation of scientific projects, and the implementation of solutions achieved through the University's developmental professional and scientific activities. The expert panel recommends that the University continuously informs the general public about its successes in research and development on its websites, through media appearances, at professional and scientific conferences, and strives to do this with uniform frequency and extent for all its constituents. The panel also advises the University to encourage and promote the membership of faculty fellows, especially junior researchers, in international scientific and professional associations. In implementing the recommendations concerning the development of a sustainable and developmental basis for scientific and artistic activities of the University, the following strategies should be methodically employed: 1) identifying opportunities, 2) mentorship and support, 3) recognition and incentives, 4) building networks, 5) professional development workshops, 6) research and publication support, and 7) collaboration with other institutions. The University of Dubrovnik should establish a formal internal structure for scientific research activities based on groups, themes, or

research pillars (or some other structure), rather than rely solely on projects which are by their nature contracted for a specific period. The University of Dubrovnik should continue to implement its Research Strategy and align it with other University strategies. The University needs to continuously invest in the infrastructure and modernization of all laboratories for teaching and research. The University of Dubrovnik should develop a unified plan for the renewal and maintenance of research equipment and instruments, which should be reflected in business and financial plans for specific periods, ensuring a systematic approach to resource management and operational efficiency. The expert panel wants to emphasize that it is crucial that the management and faculty members fully appreciate and support the establishment of formal systems for sustainable development which demand additional short-term efforts and investments in resources; however, these systems are significantly beneficial and essential for the institution's long-term and medium-term success. The University is strongly encouraged to expand the inclusion of skills that are important for scientific training and progress (e.g. structuring scientific papers, information search, scientific and professional expression, knowledge management, etc.) in the curriculum across the board.

Quality grade

High

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

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

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

Analysis

The University of Dubrovnik has an internal quality assurance system and a Quality Assurance Office that was established in 2013. The University has a valid ISO 9001 certificate issued by the Croatian Register of Shipping and Bureau Veritas Croatia. The University has adopted several strategic documents: the key one that relates to the internal quality assurance system entitled Quality Assurance Strategy was adopted in 2013 and has no specified period of implementation. The internal quality assurance system comprises various activities and operations of the University. The procedures of the quality assurance system include the following: financial and accounting aspects; public procurement procedures; the preparation, maintenance and recording of examinations; the preparation, conduct and recording of courses; development procedures; the enrolment and recording of students; the ordering, processing and issuing of library materials; publishing; the maintenance and equipping of premises; internal and external communication; the conclusion of contracts; the professional development of staff; changes and additions to study programmes; the preparation and assessment of theses and dissertations; the introduction of new and the updating of existing lifelong learning programmes, etc. Documents describing the aforementioned procedures are available on the University website.

The Quality Assurance Strategy document provided to the panel comprises the University's vision and mission, the Quality Assurance Strategy, Strategic Goals of Quality Development, Implementation of the Quality Assurance Strategy, Monitoring Mechanisms and Information on Achieved Goals. There are, however, also five other strategy documents, including one on the Development Strategy which is also covered under the Strategic Goals of Quality Development of the key document. Two of the other five strategies covered a period up to 2022. It was explained to the panel that the decision to have a whole set of strategies was made by the University's leadership team, but it is unclear to the panel why this was seen as beneficial and why the strategies are set for a variety of implementation periods that do not necessarily overlap and the periods are also of differing lengths. Whether the University opts for a series of strategies or for one overarching strategy, these need to be aligned and geared towards the University's overarching vision and mission. It is unnecessary to develop mission and vision statements for a particular area of activity for which the strategic document was written,

as is the case, for example, with the Research Strategy. Also, the University's mission and vision statements should exist only in one version. It is not clear from the available documents whether students and external stakeholders were involved in the preparation of the strategic documents.

The strategic goals defined in the Quality Assurance Strategy are not formulated well and do not comply with SMART principles. The use of the term 'strategic goals' in the title is misleading as, for example, goal number eight – "Infrastructure Development Strategy" – cannot in any way be considered a goal. A strategic goal is not a strategy, the goal should be defined as "improving the infrastructure of the University of Dubrovnik". Then, it is necessary to identify specific, quantifiable and hence measurable, time-sensitive objectives that turn the goal's general statement into what is to be accomplished. It is also necessary to set completion deadlines, plan and allocate necessary financial resources, and specify the service/person monitoring the completion.

The same applies to the Measures and Activities for Quality Assurance and Improvement Operational Plan which is adopted on an annual basis. The operational plan consists of specific actions or activities that are set up to achieve the objectives that make a goal achievable. The actions need to be specific and clearly defined and, what is important, they need to be measurable. The Operational Plan for 2021 starts off with a series of strategic goals which – as already explained – are not goals. The items listed under the heading Tasks bear a closer resemblance to goals. As already mentioned, the goals need to be translated into objectives that can then be operationalized as actions or activities. As an example, we can look at the Operational Plan for 2021, number 13 in Section 2: Strategic goal: Quality of Study Programmes.

Task	Documents/Activities	Deadlines	Responsibility	Realization indicator
Developing different forms of teaching adapted to the needs of the economy and social community	Number of different forms of organization and delivery of teaching that are carried out as full-time, part-time, or as a part of the lifelong learning programmes (seafarer training programmes,	Continuously	Vice-Rector for Study Programmes and Students, Career Advice Service for Students and Alumni Office	Delivery of different forms of teaching

	courses), with a greater emphasis on the Merlin system (e-learning) and an increased scope of the field and practical teaching where applicable			
--	---	--	--	--

First of all, Quality of Study Programmes should be turned into a goal and the following is an example of how the above table can be improved (the example is hypothetical, and the numbers do not correspond to the current situation):

Objective	Indicators	Deadlines	Responsibility	Initial state	Outcome indicator
Improvement of the existing and development of new forms of teaching adapted to the needs of students, the economy, and the social community	Number and type of newly introduced forms of organization and delivery of teaching at all levels of the study and lifelong learning programmes	Continuousl y	Vice-Rector for Study Programmes and Students, Career Advice Service for Students and Alumni Office		3 (exercises in the neuroscience laboratory, restoration of materials using a new method, TV studio)
	Number of courses where the Merlin e-learning				452
					18

	system is applied.				6
	Number of realized field lessons.				6
	Number of study programmes with practical teaching included.				
	Average number of ECTS obtained through practical classes within the study programme				

Apart from the fact that measurable indicators are not defined to any significant extent in strategic documents and operational plans, no baseline values are usually set either, which makes it impossible to monitor the achievement of strategic objectives and propose appropriate measures. In addition, for many activities the deadline for implementation is "continuous", which is not a recommended method for scheduling tasks and activities in all cases (continuous implementation is to be avoided, except in cases where it is not possible for objective reasons).

Although a relatively significant proportion of the objectives and planned activities set in the strategic documents has not been realised, the self-evaluation report does not refer to an analysis of the factors that influenced this, nor to measures introduced to eliminate these factors (it is not even possible to systematically monitor whether the revision

process of the strategic documents has been carried out), which raises the question of the level of functioning of the internal quality assurance system.

The operational plans, which the University has identified as basic tools for the implementation of the Strategy, are usually adopted in May for the current year, instead of before or possibly at the very beginning of the implementation period. As the operational plans are adopted almost in the middle of the implementation period, the question of their functionality and effectiveness arises.

The reports on the implementation of the various strategies are not publicly accessible on the website. Only reports on the implementation of activities from the operational plans of measures and activities for internal quality assurance and improvement system are available on the website.

The report on the implementation of the activities from the Operational Plan is submitted to the University Senate at the end of the calendar year. Unfortunately, the scope of the report is relatively poor, especially in the part describing the goals that were not achieved. In most cases there is no clear explanation as to why they have not been achieved. Some of the indicators that are measurably defined are not expressed in the measures in which they are listed in the Operational Plan. For example, task number 12 – Promoting awareness of the internal quality assurance system among all stakeholders – foresees the organization of six workshops, while the report on the implementation of the Operational Plan states that the head of the Quality Assurance Office periodically and as needed holds short presentations to teaching and non-teaching staff and students on the internal quality assurance system, without mentioning the number of workshops held.

From the documents provided to the expert panel it is not entirely clear whether and in what way all stakeholders (students, employers, alumni, professional associations, civil society organizations, etc.) are actively involved in quality assurance procedures, and thus also in the internal quality assurance system. For example, the procedure for changes and additions to study programmes is described in detail, including the first part related to identifying and determining the need for changes and additions, but there is no plan for the active involvement of alumni or employers, for example. Although the labour market and economic interests are mentioned as relevant criteria for identifying needs, the task of monitoring and identifying needs is assigned to University staff. The situation is similar in other documents, which generally do not provide for the appropriate involvement of relevant stakeholders in certain processes. Although the University has an internal review committee, which has its own rules of procedure, the internal review of the quality assurance system was only carried out in 2014 and 2015.

The University regularly collects and analyses data on the structure of enrolled students, enrolment quota fulfilment, and student survey results, while it is not evident from the self-evaluation report and website that other methods of information collection are used (e.g. collaborative assessment, graduate student satisfaction survey, employer feedback information, student and other services work satisfaction survey, teacher self-

assessment, etc.). It is also not clear whether and in what way the collected and analysed data were used for the improvement and development of the University's activities.

The University has adopted documents that regulate and promote the training of its staff and work towards effective human resource management (procedures for professional development of staff, admission of staff and external collaborators, regulations for the awarding of honours and prizes, regulations for the annual awards and recognition of the most successful students). The award regulations define the types of awards and the criteria for awarding them. With regard to the professional development of employees, apart from the procedure itself, no plans for professional development have been defined, nor is it systematically monitored.

Recommendations for improvement

The expert panel strongly recommends the withdrawal of the existing Quality Assurance Strategy and the creation of a high-quality strategy within a reasonable timeline. The other strategies should be reviewed as it is necessary to harmonize all strategic documents and to consolidate some (the panel cannot identify a benefit in singling out an area like e-learning for a separate strategy). If the University opts for a number of strategies rather than an overarching one, it should identify areas that will benefit from tailor-made strategies based on solid criteria rather than in what seems to be an ad hoc or reactive manner. It is also important that the strategy/strategies cover the same time period. Also, operational plans should be prepared and adopted before the start of the implementation period.

When creating a strategy, it is necessary to include all stakeholders (students, associates, teachers, academic staff, support staff, external stakeholders, alumni, etc.) in the process and use a variety of different fora, actions and methods such as townhall meetings, open fora, focus groups, surveys, etc. It is important that the strategy/strategies have a collective ownership so the results of the various actions and the basis of decisions about the strategy/strategies should be made available to all stakeholders.

The panel did not see evidence of internal evaluation procedures for the existing system of internal quality assurance, and it recommends the introduction of internal quality evaluation procedures. The expert panel also recommends that the University introduces a variety of additional methods for collecting information on the University's activities (self-evaluation, collaborative assessment, post-graduation student satisfaction survey, employer and alumni surveys, etc.) and uses the analyses of the data to improve the relevant activities of the University and record the revisions made.

The University is advised to make reports on the implementation of strategies publicly available and to organise the documents on its website more clearly and systematically (e.g. on the quality assurance system page, if possible, or additionally group or organise documents according to appropriate criteria).

Quality grade

Minimum

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

Analysis

Most departments and programmes that were reaccredited in the period from 2011 to 2015 submitted as evidence reports on the implementation of action plans (for different departments/programmes for different periods, mainly from the academic year 2016/17 or 2018/19), which were adopted and approved in 2022 and 2023 respectively. Apart from these reports, for the entire period since the last reaccreditation, no previously prepared (dated) action plans, or previously prepared reports on their implementation are available in the self-evaluation report or on the websites of most departments/degree programmes. For some of the departments/programmes, no action plans have been prepared, and as documents related to the implementation of recommendations from previous evaluations, there are reports on the adoption of the recommendations of the expert panel (Department of Economics and Business, study programmes of Nursing and Clinical Nursing) or a summary of quality improvement following the reaccreditation procedure carried out in 2012 (Maritime Department), all of which were prepared and adopted in 2023.

The expert panel has access to reports of previous evaluations conducted under the auspices of ASHE and while it is clear that improvements have been made based on the recommendations of these, there remain gaps, especially at the overall University level. Although the evaluations were normally based on the departmental level, some of the important recommendations were related to University-wide challenges and the expert panel has identified some of these as still relevant. These include the continuing low enrolment/high drop-out rates, key performance indicators as the basis for evaluating outcomes related to various strategies, pressures on teaching capacity in some areas and similar.

Recommendations for improvement

The expert panel advises the University to prepare action plans according to the recommendations that are the outcome of the evaluation procedures (external and internal evaluation of the quality assurance system) within reasonable deadlines after the evaluations have been carried out. It is of key importance to regularly monitor the implementation of the action plans and report regularly according to established deadlines. And finally, the impact of the actions taken should also be monitored and recorded in order to identify and improve the functioning of the quality assurance system.

The panel strongly recommends that the University leadership considers how relevant recommendations that go beyond the level of departments can be implemented. Some of the most pressing challenges observed at department level are best addressed with University-wide measures.

Quality grade

Satisfactory

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

Analysis

The University's Quality Policy was adopted in 2021 and it aims, among other things, to ensure ethics, independence and transparency of work and business. The University has a Code of Ethics for academics, teachers and staff, conclusions on the implementation of the Code of Ethics, a set of rules on the procedure for the withdrawal of professional and academic titles and degrees, and a set of rules on the disciplinary responsibility of students. The Ethics Committee deals with questions of implementation and violations of the Code of Ethics, and the University also has a student ombudsman. From the above statements and the procedures and cases described in the self-evaluation report, it can be concluded that the University is committed to ensuring and promoting academic integrity and freedom, while respecting ethical principles and has developed mechanisms to prevent and sanction unethical behaviour. If violations or disputes occur, the University has various mechanisms in place to resolve them, depending on their nature. The University has procedures in place to determine the authenticity of works and mechanisms to detect and sanction plagiarism. From conversations with staff, it can be concluded that they are aware of their own responsibility to uphold academic freedom and integrity as well as ethics. Although the students whom the expert panel met during the site visit were familiar with ethical and academic norms, they showed less awareness of the existing mechanisms for exercising and protecting their own rights (student ombudsman, procedure for reporting irregularities). Although insufficient student knowledge of the mechanisms for exercising and protecting their rights and detailed knowledge of ethical principles, including plagiarism, are generally relatively common, the University should make additional efforts to inform and educate students about these issues. According to Article 105 of the Ordinance on Studies and Studying at the University of Dubrovnik (Article 105), it is prescribed that "in case that there is plagiarism in the undergraduate/graduate thesis, i.e., if the report of the software tool for the detection of plagiarism shows that its content is totally or partly similar to another existing undergraduate/graduate thesis, the mentor shall return such undergraduate/graduate thesis to the student for rewriting and finishing". An example was given which shows that

it is necessary to inform students more extensively about plagiarism but also to sanction attempts at plagiarism more strongly. The above quoted excerpt from the Ordinance shows that an attempt at plagiarism is not punished as an ethical or disciplinary offence, rather the student's work is merely returned for revision, although it is an attempt at plagiarism, which is a disciplinary offence.

An example of good practice in the field of dedication to ensuring ethics and equality is the introduction of the Committee for Animal Welfare to protect lab animals used for scientific purposes and adoption of the Gender Equality Plan.

Recommendations for improvement

The expert panel recommends that the University takes measures to better inform students and employees about the mechanisms for protecting their rights (e.g. clearly visible and easily accessible contact information for the student ombudsman on the website, a described procedure for internal reporting of irregularities).

The University should also provide additional training for students on issues of academic integrity, freedom and ethics, in particular on plagiarism that should be well-timed and if possible, recurring (e.g. training students on the above issues at the time of enrolment and then at the beginning of each academic year, providing resources on the website, establishing stricter sanctions for attempted plagiarism, including information on plagiarism in implementation plans, etc.). Having such training established will become particularly valuable when the English-language programmes are fully implemented and the number of students increases significantly.

Quality grade

Satisfactory

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

Analysis

The University ensures the availability of relevant information on its website in Croatian and English, as well as on social networks. Each unit of the University has its own subpage, which ensures better visibility and availability of information. The information is aimed at students, employees and the general public and relates to studies, student life, science and cooperation. The University has made relevant documents and regulations available on its website. Various current information and announcements of events at the University and at individual University units are published on the website. Prospective students are provided with a concise overview of study opportunities, enrolment requirements, quotas and competitions. As far as the study programmes are concerned, implementation plans and brochures with the most important information have been

published, but accessing study programme descriptions and syllabi is not straightforward. Also, no detailed implementation plans were published for individual study programmes, i.e., not for all academic years. On the website, students can find information about student life, including information about accommodation, meals, grants, scholarships, the Student Union, the University libraries, etc. All important information about teaching activities can be found on the website (lecture and examination calendar, internships for students, contacts with teaching staff and office hours, etc.). News and announcements on scientific activities are published regularly, and information about scientific projects, research centres, activities in the field of science popularisation, conferences, university publications and the like is also available. The University has organised communication with the media, which is informed through announcements and invitations. The University and its constituents cooperate very actively with schools in the implementation of programmes for potential future students. The Quality Assurance System pages publish analyses of the structure of enrolled students, results of student surveys are published, but not all results of previous evaluations (e.g. reaccreditation outcomes) or other evaluations and analyses are available. The website contains information on international cooperation and alumni, but not on cooperation with various other stakeholders (e.g. business, professional associations, civil society, professional organisations etc.).

Recommendations for improvement

The expert panel learnt in the course of the site visit that the University is working on improving its website and our recommendations here relate to increasing the variety of information available and also to making information more easily accessible. Members of the expert panel struggled to find course descriptions and other key information. The expert panel recommends that the University publishes analyses of various indicators that may be of interest to the public (e.g. employability of graduates, pass rates, results of previous evaluations, etc.) and that it extends the information about cooperations to a wider variety of actors. The expert panel believes that the University could publish more information about study programmes (e.g. reports about these) and that it could make access to some information more straightforward and more user-friendly, e.g. easier accessibility of links to online catalogues of university libraries (e.g. shortcuts on the home page of the website).

Quality grade

Satisfactory

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

Analysis

The University has defined its mission to realise societal interests through the delivery of education through its study programmes, through lifelong learning, scientific research, artistic and professional activity. It focuses actively on the transfer of knowledge through the establishment of research centres and laboratories that produce scientific ideas and results of greater social and economic significance, e.g. the business-research centre called Laboratory for Intelligent Autonomous Systems – LARIAT, the business-research Centre for Research of Digital Transformation (CREDO), the Behavioural Research Laboratory (AXON) at the Department of Economics and Business, and the Information Fact-Checking and Civil Resilience Centre (DU-CHECK). The University fulfils its social role through partnering with all initiatives aimed at establishing regional competence centres. The staff and students at the University are highly active in numerous programmes aimed at popularizing science by organizing lectures, various trainings, workshops for the general public or for specific social groups. The self-evaluation report contains examples and evidence of numerous activities that contribute to the community (civic education of young people, cooperation with pensioners' associations, implementation or cooperation in projects that try to respond to current challenges, etc.). The University makes its lecture rooms and laboratories available to the Associations for Promoting Natural Sciences, and a number of the University's teachers participate in the work of these associations. Furthermore, the University participates in city and county strategy deliberations, and faculty and students are members of various associations, boards, humanitarian organisations, etc. An example of social responsibility and cooperation with the local administration is the offer of free retraining for people with disabilities in cooperation with the local authority and public administration, about which the panel was informed by representatives of employers.

Recommendations for improvement

The University's activities, programmes and forms of cooperation and social contribution are numerous and varied, so it can only be recommended that they continue to develop, perhaps with a slightly stronger emphasis on the commercial transfer of knowledge and technologies, while also maintaining the responsibility to contribute to the development of the community.

Quality grade

High

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

Analysis

In its strategic document – Development Strategy – the University of Dubrovnik recognizes the need to develop lifelong learning programmes. The document states that, in accordance with market needs and traditional economic activities, lifelong learning programmes in tourism (e.g. a course for tourist guides and foreign language courses for tourism) and seafaring (e.g. seafarer training programmes in Croatian and English and special education programmes for seafarers) have been organized in Dubrovnik. These programmes are regulated by the ordinances of the ministries responsible for maritime affairs and tourism. In addition to these programmes, courses organized by the Centre for Languages, Department of Arts and Restoration, and Department of Economics and Business are also listed.

At present, the University does not conduct a systematic analysis of the needs of the labour market for the development of lifelong learning programmes. It would be advisable to conduct systematic analyses of the needs of the labour market, which would also cover adjacent areas (including neighbouring countries), on the basis of which lifelong learning programmes can be developed.

The University has some prescribed procedures related to lifelong learning which are described in the Ordinance on the Evaluation of Lifelong Learning Programmes and relate mainly to proposals for lifelong learning courses but do not deal with the actual implementation of lifelong learning courses.

There are elements that are regulated in the implementation of lifelong learning, such as the Internal Call for Applications for the Position of Lifelong Learning Programmes Manager, which are not regulated by the Ordinance on the Evaluation of Lifelong Learning Programmes (https://www.unidu.hr/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/odluka_Senata-interni_poziv.pdf), or a specific unit's obligation to submit reports on lifelong learning programmes it implements. However, there are no clearly regulated procedures for the delivery of these programmes. There is also no single system for monitoring the quality of course delivery, which results from the diversity or absence of results of a survey on satisfaction with individual courses (of the Maritime Department), as well as different ways of reporting on the courses conducted.

Neither the self-evaluation report nor the information gathered on site suggest that the University utilizes the possibilities offered to higher education institutions by the Croatian Employment Service within the implementation of the voucher system for the education of unemployed and employed persons. The University also does not recognize the potential benefits of implementing the European micro-credentials model (<https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/micro-credentials>).

Recommendations for improvement

The expert panel strongly recommends that the University establishes a regulatory framework, an operational plan for implementation and a quality monitoring system for its lifelong learning programmes. The monitoring of quality should include standard tools such as student surveys and should be a way of establishing measures for improvement. While the University has a standardized procedure for proposals of lifelong learning programmes, it is essential there are standardized procedures in place across all University constituents. The expert panel recommends that the University invests additional resources in the development of its activities in this area. It would be desirable to have an appointed member of staff – preferably professional support staff – who would be tasked with overseeing and improving the lifelong learning system. The University can also improve the promotion of its lifelong learning programmes, the website can be improved in this respect, the Lifelong Learning section (Study menu) does not show all lifelong learning programmes offered by the University.

Quality grade

Satisfactory

II. Study programmes

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

Analysis

The general objectives of the study programmes implemented by the University are in accordance with the mission and strategic goals set out in the University's strategic documents (University of Dubrovnik Development Strategy 2016-2025), bearing in mind that there are several documents with different vision statements as already mentioned under standard 1.1.

The University of Dubrovnik, like many other higher education institutions, is facing a noticeable decline in the number of enrolled students. Therefore, in accordance with aim 7 of its Strategy of Education, Science and Technology, it decided to expand its study programmes. At the time of re-accreditation, the University has three undergraduate study programmes and six accredited graduate study programmes in English (Register of Study Programmes). These degree programmes build on the internationalisation of the University's study programmes which began with the introduction of the graduate double degree programmes in Economics; Business – field of study Marketing; and Business – field of study Tourism with the University of Palermo from Italy.

The enrolment quotas for certain degree programmes are set too high and are not in line with the demand or need for these programmes. In addition, the number of enrolled

students decreases annually; for example, the enrolment quota for the undergraduate programme in Electrical and Communication Technologies in the Maritime Sector was increased from 22 applicants to 28 for the academic year 2021/22, although the number of students enrolled is declining. Also, in the undergraduate programme Maritime Technology of Yachts and Marinas in the academic year 2021/22 the enrolment quota is 15, but there was not a single enrolled student, and the interest was already low in 2020 (5 students) and 2019 (1 student). There are a number of other examples of study programmes where enrolment quotas do not reflect the actual numbers of applications or student numbers over the period from 2019 to 2021, e.g. Electrical Engineering and Maritime Communication Technology, Applied Computer Science / Information Management, Aquaculture, History of the Adriatic and Mediterranean, etc. The small number of students enrolled in some study programmes raises questions about their financial viability. This is the case with several programmes based on the data in Table 3.1 of the Analytic Supplement e.g. Mariculture; Economics; full-time students on Conservation – Restoration, specialization: Wood, Paper, Textile, Metal, Ceramics, etc. In terms of analysing and implementing the recommendations of professional associations, the self-evaluation report highlights the Maritime Department's membership of the International Association of Maritime Universities (IAMU) which assessed the Department's application. Another example in the self-evaluation report relates to Nursing, a regulated profession, whose learning outcomes are prescribed by Directive EU 2005/26 EC. The expert panel was provided with the opinion of the Ministry of Education on the compliance of the study programme with the provisions of Directive 2005/36 EC (for undergraduate studies) and while the self-evaluation report states that the Croatian Chamber of Nursing has expressed a positive opinion about employed graduates, the expert panel was not provided with evidence of this. The University provides higher education for a wide range of professionals in the fields of engineering, bioengineering, social sciences, humanities, biomedicine and healthcare working in the private and public sectors. In the self-evaluation report, it was stated that the recommendations for educational enrolment policies and scholarship policies of the Croatian Employment Service (CES) are taken into account when planning study programmes, as well as the data that the University regularly collects from the records of the Central Statistics Department of the CES on the exact number of unemployed persons according to the profile of completed studies at the University, provided that they have registered with the CES after completing their studies. From the available data, it appears that the majority of graduate students are employed, although CES data indicate that 22 catering students, 15 public relations graduate students and 40 business graduate students (various majors) are unemployed, thus further supporting the need to reconsider enrolment quotas for some study programmes.

Recommendations for improvement

During the site visit, the expert panel learnt that the University was in the initial stages of work aimed at tackling low enrolment and high drop-out rates on some degree programmes. The panel thinks that this work needs to be the University's top priority. The expert panel appreciates external factors at play, but the University can be as bold in its tackling of this issue as it has been in building its research culture and research income. The planned expansion of the provision of English-language study programmes is certainly ambitious and building on the success of the existing double degree could be another avenue. Dubrovnik is uniquely geographically and culturally located for the study of history; there could be opportunities for developing a joint postgraduate degree programme with some Mediterranean universities. This could be an interesting offer for international students but also home students due to the specificity of the degree programme in comparison with other history degree programmes in Croatia. This would require institutional investment – mainly in teaching staff – but would be in line with the foundation of the Department of Humanities and could form the basis of its development. The expert panel also encourages the University to continue its work on establishing a department that would house the study programmes in Nursing.

Quality grade

Satisfactory

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

Analysis

The self-evaluation report states that learning outcomes are set at the level of programmes and courses and are established according to Bloom's taxonomy, although as the concrete examples from various study programmes below suggest these are often not set at the appropriate level. It is of the utmost importance that the learning outcomes are aligned with the Croatian Qualifications Framework, i.e. that each qualification corresponds to the relevant level of learning outcomes for that qualification. The expert councils of the individual constituents of the University review and harmonise the learning outcomes at degree programme and course level. The self-evaluation report suggests that at the University level, the mutual alignment of learning outcomes of study programmes and courses as well as the assessment of learning outcomes in the teaching process has been carried out. Any change and harmonisation of learning outcomes at the degree programme level is done through the process of amendments and additions to the existing study programmes.

The expert panel had difficulties in accessing full syllabi for courses; in some cases the panel was able to access course descriptions that are part of the study programme specification. However, these documents were not always consistent in providing the distribution of ECTS, a description of assessment modes, weightings and grading scales. In some cases, the required reading lists and learning outcomes did not appear to be complete or linked to the degree programme-level learning outcomes.

The examples below should illustrate the key issues with the learning programmes. Overall, greater attention needs to be paid to the level at which the learning outcomes are set, as there should be a clear indication of progression from one level of study to the next. The expert panel found that learning outcomes often use verbs from Bloom's taxonomy, but they tend to be from lower levels of study (which may be used but should not be predominant, especially not on a degree programme). The panel also found that the linking of course learning outcomes to the overarching degree programme-level learning outcomes is often inadequate.

It is not possible for the expert panel to provide an exhaustive list of inappropriate learning outcomes for all the study programmes and every course; however, we offer the examples below as concrete manifestations of the problems that we describe in a more abstract manner above.

The undergraduate professional study programme in Nursing has 15 learning outcomes that are consistent with Bloom's taxonomy. However, when analysing the learning outcomes of individual courses and their link to programme level learning outcomes, significant gaps were identified. For example, Nursing degree level learning outcomes 12 "Contribute to improving standards of nursing practice" and 14 "Recognise own needs and opportunity for further learning..." are linked to the Infectious Diseases course in Table 2.1 of the Supplement on Study Programmes, however, these are not applicable for this course.

The Anatomy course lists learning outcome 12 "Contribute to improving standards of nursing practice", which is not a competence related to the knowledge of anatomy. The distribution of ECTS credits that capture the workload required to master the knowledge, skills and competence on a course should link to the number and nature of learning outcomes. However, the principles guiding this were not evident from the course descriptions, for example, the Anatomy course has 3 ECTS and 6 learning outcomes, while Dietetics with the same number of ECTS has 8 and Pharmacology 5. Course learning outcomes frequently use verbs for lower levels (understand, explain, interpret).

The Clinical Nursing study programme has 15 learning outcomes defined at study programme level. A large number of programme level learning outcomes are repeated in the course learning outcomes, suggesting that the programme level learning outcomes are either too general or that the courses are too similar in the knowledge, skills and competences that they cover. Some courses have only 2 learning outcomes at a very low level, which is inappropriate for a postgraduate study programme (Dermatology has 1

learning outcome with the verb 'explain'; Medical Genetics has 2 learning outcomes and the verb 'interpret'). On the other hand, the Methodology of Authoring and Writing a Scientific Paper has 3 ECTS and 12 learning outcomes; these clearly are excessive and they have very little connection to the outcomes at the study programme level (Table 2.1 for this study programme in the Supplement on Study Programmes links the course learning outcomes to two programme level outcomes that relate to clinical practice and are hence irrelevant for this particular course).

The undergraduate study programme of Maritime Technologies of Yachts and Marinas has 11 programme level learning outcomes and there are discrepancies in how these relate to the learning outcomes of the individual courses. The number of learning outcomes in relation to the ECTS credit load is inappropriate in many courses, e.g. the Mathematics course with 5 ECTS has 7 learning outcomes, while Fundamentals of Engineering I with 4 ECTS has 4 learning outcomes (the student will acquire basic knowledge, will be able to do). In the Sailing and Nautical Skills course, the learning outcomes are listed descriptively, for example: The course offers the opportunity to acquire specific knowledge and skills in the field of sailing and nautical skills. The above knowledge and skills have a high application value for working in marinas and harbours. At the undergraduate university study programme in Business Economics (all majors), there is one fundamental problem with learning outcomes at the programme level. The breakdown of study programmes by majors shows that the learning outcomes at the level of different programmes differ strongly (e.g. Tourism major and Marketing major); however, the courses that make up these study programmes are mostly shared across the two majors. The first year of study is completely identical in these two majors, and the outcomes acquired through these courses are not included in the degree level outcomes. In the second year, there are only two different compulsory courses between the two analysed majors. There is, again, the issue of not including course outcomes within the degree level outcomes.

Furthermore, there is the problem that the course learning outcomes (the verb 'define' is often used), but also of the degree programme (e.g. the verb 'interpret' is used) do not correspond to the level 6/7 of the Croatian Qualifications Framework for which they are set.

The verbs used are not suitable for verification and for describing learning outcomes according to Bloom's taxonomy (e.g., understand, face, etc.).

Examples of poorly defined outcomes at degree programme level:

- Know how to design, conceive, organise, and economically valorise marketing.
- Implement modern knowledge of tourist destination marketing (DMC, DMO, and other organisational forms of destination management).
- Understand managerial economics in the hospitality industry.
- Comprehend macroeconomic systems at the national level.

An example of a learning outcome that is well defined at degree programme level:

- Analyse the positive and negative effects of tourism development on the environment.

Examples of poorly defined outcomes at course level:

- After attending the course and passing the exam, students will be able to face fundamental problems and questions in the field of theoretical economics and provide answers to them.
- After attending the course and passing the exam, students will master the knowledge and skills in the broader field of business finance with an emphasis on the issue of financial planning in the company, forecasting and determining financial needs, and choosing the optimal way to finance business.

Some courses do not have defined outcomes, but goals such as:

“The course enables the development of specific and general competencies, knowledge, and skills. The aim of this course is to acquaint students with basic concepts from organisational theory, as well as with contemporary trends in organisation. (...) students will get acquainted with the way of designing organisational structures, but also with all the key elements for building an organisation. (...) The knowledge that students are expected to acquire after taking the course and passing the exam can be universally used for the organisation of any company, bank, institution, profit or non-profit sector.”

Examples of learning outcomes that are well defined at course level:

- Analyse internal and external environment.
- Analyse and synthesise financial innovations and their role in the international financial system.
- Analyse and critically valorise the results of the regression analysis of the time series.

Improvements were made in new programmes in English compared to the programmes available on the website of the repository of the Department of Economics and Business (<https://www.unidu.hr/odjel-za-ekonomiju-i-poslovnu-ekonomiju-repozitorij/>). It is extremely important to provide a clear and unambiguous description of the learning outcomes for each course. It is also important to clearly describe which course learning outcomes contribute to which degree programme learning outcomes. The distribution of the student workload on a course must be indicated for each assessment method by stipulating the workload it carries.

The expert panel is not aware of any reason why descriptions for English-language programmes should have different elements and be qualitatively different from those for programmes delivered in Croatian.

The undergraduate programme History of Adriatic and of the Mediterranean has 13 degree level learning outcomes, a large portion of which are defined at a lower level (e.g. name, specify, describe, etc.). Among the learning outcomes of the programme, there are those that are not adequately formulated, i.e. they are not measurable or focused on the competences that the student will acquire by achieving the learning outcomes (e.g. HOP06

"Students will be educated to use the basic software tools for compiling documents and presentations", HOP13 "Students will be encouraged to develop a responsible and rational attitude towards work based on objective self-assessment, flexibility and pragmatic time management").

Only one or two courses are linked to some of the degree level learning outcomes which are mainly learning outcomes that develop generic competencies and/or learning outcomes that are of a higher (appropriate) level.

The learning outcomes at the individual course level are also mostly at a lower level, and some are defined as learning outcomes using inappropriate verbs (e.g., "knowing basic determinants", "understanding the meaning", "develop critical skills", etc.). The number of learning outcomes in each course varies, and this difference is not always self-evident i.e. due to different teaching methods, the number of different student activities or the number of ECTS credits (e.g. English for Historians 1 as an elective has 3 ECTS and 9 learning outcomes, and the Mediterranean in Prehistory and Antiquity as a compulsory course has 6 ECTS and 5 learning outcomes).

Recommendations for improvement

The expert panel strongly encourages the University to undertake significant work on learning outcomes, allocation of ECTS credits and alignment with teaching methods and modes of assessment across its study programmes. The panel understands that this is a significant task that requires training, support and resources but it is absolutely essential that it is carried out as soon as possible and to a high standard. As the analysis suggests, the main weakness is that learning outcomes tend to be defined at a basic level and they do not match the level of the study programme for which they are defined. When defining learning outcomes, the Croatian Qualifications Framework as well as Bloom's taxonomy need to be taken into account. It is important that the learning outcomes reflect progression between individual years of study and it is absolutely crucial to differentiate between undergraduate and graduate programmes in terms of knowledge, skills and competences that are developed through the programme and that are reflected in the learning outcomes. Aligning ECTS credit allocation with the actual workload and how these link to learning outcomes and assessment modes is another task that needs attention across the board. The expert panel found that the course descriptions for the newly accredited study programmes in English show some improvements compared to the descriptions in Croatian, so some of these could be used as examples of good practice.

Quality grade

Minimum

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

Analysis

The University ensures the achievement of learning outcomes in all study programmes in accordance with the provisions of the University of Dubrovnik Study Regulations. In the study course descriptions that the expert panel could access, in addition to the learning outcomes at the study and course level, the outline of the course, ECTS credits, teaching method/s and assessment mode/s and their weighting and grading scale are provided. In the implementation of the study programmes, different teaching methods are used to achieve the learning outcomes according to the course description, e.g. lectures, seminars, exercises, workshops, field classes, laboratory classes, independent assignments, distance learning and the like. Student performance is assessed against the defined learning outcomes, which are assessed through continuous assessment in class (class preparation, presentations, independent assignments, seminar papers, professional practice diaries, project assignments, team assignments, colloquia etc.) and in the final exam (written and/or oral exam). It should, however, be noted that there are inconsistencies when it comes to specifying the key information – as outlined above – for each course.

During the site visit, the expert panel had an opportunity to look at seminar papers, final theses, exam papers, etc. and in some cases the panel was not satisfied with the quality of these. This may be linked to the issues with learning outcomes that are not set at appropriate levels (see 2.2). The University's self-evaluation report as well as meetings during the site visit confirm that work on aligning study programmes with the Croatian Qualifications Framework has not been completed yet.

The University has study programmes that are regulated by external bodies (government and professional ones) and in these cases the completion of studies depends directly on completing the required assessments. One example of this is the 100% pass rate for exams at the Harbour Master's Office to obtain the Certificate of Competency.

In the meeting with the Vice-Rector for Study Programmes and Students, it was established that there are no defined procedures for recognising informal and non-formal learning.

The Senate of the University of Dubrovnik has decided to establish the UNIDU Alumni Club in order to create a lasting connection between the University of Dubrovnik and its former students and to promote common goals and interests. Several alumni are involved in the work on study programmes as external collaborators (holding tutorials) who can advise on employers' requirements in relation to learning outcomes, and several constituents have alumni among their staff. However, after speaking with the alumni, the expert panel was under the impression that the Alumni Club is not yet fully functional and operates very informally.

Recommendations for improvement

The expert panel strongly advises the University – as already stated in 2.2 – to prioritize the work on aligning study programmes with the Croatian Qualifications Framework, as this will also improve the achievement of learning outcomes at the required standard.

The University should introduce a way in which it can better monitor and assess the achievement of degree level learning outcomes, especially at a time when work on these is in progress.

The University should adopt guidance on informal and non-formal learning. The expert panel believes that it would be beneficial to introduce mentoring for students in professional practice.

Quality grade

Minimum

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

Analysis

The self-assessment report states that the University of Dubrovnik systematically carries out activities and procedures for planning, proposing and adopting new study programmes and revising (amending) existing ones with the involvement of various stakeholders. Department councils analyse the competences of graduates, the pass rate, the degree of achievement of learning outcomes, the forms of work and teaching methods, the criteria, methods and procedures for evaluating student performance, the distribution of ECTS credits, the labour market's need for new competences and the transfer of new scientific knowledge to teaching content.

The expert panel was not able to locate a formal and concrete procedure on how and in what way changes to the study programme are initiated on the University website. At the request of the expert panel, the Vice-Rector for Study Programmes and Students presented the Rulebook on Amendments to the Rulebook on the Procedure for Evaluation of Study Programmes at the University of Dubrovnik.

In the meeting with students, the expert panel was informed that they were actively involved in the revision of study programmes. However, from meetings with alumni and external stakeholders the expert panel had the impression that they were not involved in the process of amending and/or supplementing individual study programmes in a significant way. Nevertheless, both alumni and external stakeholders believed that students graduating from the University of Dubrovnik had well-developed skills and knowledge needed for their work and emphasised the importance of the high-quality tutor-student relationship.

In the meeting with heads of department and staff, there was confusion about how changes are made to study programmes and whether in the case of major changes in study programmes, the reaccreditation of the programme was carried out as prescribed if the changes amounted to more than 30%.

Workshops for teaching staff on learning outcomes are organised when degree programmes are revised; however, in a meeting with the heads of department the expert panel learnt that some had not been revised since 2011. The Vice-Rector for Study Programmes and Students and the Quality Assurance Office are involved in the workshops. The expert panel was not provided with regulations for changes and additions to degree programmes and could not locate these on the University website.

The University's self-evaluation report provides examples of changes that were implemented on the basis of recommendations of previous evaluations. For example, the Department of Art and Conservation changed the names of the undergraduate and graduate study programmes to Conservation-Restoration; course of study: Wood, Paper, Textile, Metal, Ceramics and the academic titles of graduates, based on the recommendations of the review panel in the first cycle of reaccreditation. Another example provided in the report refers to the recommendation of the re-accreditation in the academic year 2012/2013, which called for a study programme with a broader, holistic approach to marine sciences. In response, the undergraduate study programme in Aquaculture was revised and the undergraduate study programme in Applied Marine Ecology was introduced. When revising the programme, the opinions of external stakeholders and the needs of the labour market were also taken into account and a positive opinion was obtained from the Mali Ston Shellfish Fishermen's Association on the learning outcomes of the latter programme.

Recommendations for improvement

The expert panel strongly recommends that the University carries out further work in this area to deal with inconsistencies in the process and implementation of revisions in particular. The University should consider the introduction of a regular internal periodic review of study programmes that would create a procedural and temporal framework for evaluating and revising study programmes. The University appears to rely extensively on outside actors and processes (such as re-accreditations etc.) when it comes to revising and updating its study programmes. It needs to be stressed, however, that the periodic review should not become a bureaucratic exercise. If done correctly, such a review is an opportunity to conduct in-depth analyses of study programmes and make revisions that improve quality and make the programmes more relevant and appealing to applicants. The timing of such reviews can coincide with key moments in the institution's development, for example, with key strategic goals and their implementation.

More work can also be done on making the outcomes of revisions easily accessible and raising awareness of the regulations, processes and outcomes among staff is also important.

Quality grade

Minimum

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

Analysis

The University of Dubrovnik regularly conducts anonymous surveys on the actual workload of students. The surveys are carried out every semester, by subject area and academic year. The University analyses the surveys and compares the ECTS credits with the actual workload based on feedback from those involved in the teaching process. According to the self-evaluation report, since the academic year 2019/2020, the University has been carrying out a review of the correspondence between the ECTS credits awarded and the actual student workload, based on a questionnaire established by the University's Internal Quality Assurance Committee. The expert panel was provided with an excel sheet (proof 2_5_1) that provides details for each academic year starting with 2018/19 and states whether the workload and ECTS credits are in line, but the expert panel was not provided with the underlying principles that guided this work and with an overview of the outcomes. The panel was not provided with guidance on how to interpret the data either and a lot of it is not self-evident. Although it is clear that some work was carried out, the expert panel was not provided with enough information and evidence to be able to judge the quality of this work and its outcomes.

The expert panel did not have access to individual course syllabi, but was able to gather some information from degree programme descriptions that were available on the website (however, in some cases the panel was unable to access these). When analysing these for various study programmes, discrepancies were found between individual courses and ECTS credit allocation. In the Nautical Studies programme, for example, the Expert Systems in Maritime Affairs course has 6 learning outcomes, 30 hours of lectures and 15 hours of exercises and 5 ECTS. The Business Ethics course has 7 learning outcomes, 28 hours of lectures and 14 hours of exercises and is also awarded 5 ECTS points, while the Maritime Transport course has 1 learning outcome, 45 lectures and 5 ECTS points.

Problems with the allocation of ECTS credits were also found in the undergraduate programme in Marine Engineering. The electives, for example, have 60 hours of teaching using different methods and 1 ECTS credit.

In the Clinical Nursing programme, the Clinical Exercises 2 course has 100 hours of exercises and 6 ECTS points, and the description states that students will also have a seminar, distance learning and on-site teaching as part of the exercises, so it is not clear

how many of the hours and ECTS credits are actually allocated for clinical exercises in a hospital under the supervision of a mentor. The Dermatology course has 20 hours of lectures and 2 ECTS credits allocated, Neurology has 30 hours of lectures and also 2 ECTS credits, while Clinical Pharmacology has 30 hours of lectures and 3 ECTS credits.

The above are just some examples that are indicative of problems with the allocation of ECTS credits. The expert panel does not have capacity to provide an exhaustive list of these.

Recommendations for improvement

The expert panel recommends that the University carries out a review of ECTS allocation across all its courses and study programmes. The University leadership is urged to provide support and resource for this work centrally, rather than rely on resource and capacity in individual constituents (e.g. Nursing has only one full-time member of staff). Principles and guidance on the allocation of ECTS must be based on solid pedagogic reasoning and should be arrived at through consultation and decision making that involves all stakeholders rather than a top-down approach. The expert panel understands that there can be some variation between study programmes (assessment modes, learning processes etc. will vary) and that some flexibility is necessary, but from the evidence the panel was given it appears that rather than having variation and flexibility, the allocation lacks adherence to basic principles. The University should establish a process for monitoring and revising ECTS credits on a regular basis.

Quality grade

Minimum

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

Analysis

Professional practice is a compulsory part of certain degree programmes at the University and can be found at University undergraduate level in the following programmes: Nautical Study; Conservation-Restoration; courses of study: Wood, Paper, Textile, Metal, Ceramics; Applied Marine Ecology; Media and Social Culture; in the following professional undergraduate studies: Nursing; Financial Management and Hotel Industry; Restaurant Industry and Gastronomy; and in the University graduate study programme Conservation-Restoration; courses of study: Wood, Paper, Textile, Metal, Ceramics and the Professional graduate study Clinical Nursing. Students also have the opportunity to undertake voluntary internships. In the professional graduate studies programmes of the University of Dubrovnik, professional practice can be a requirement set by a regulatory body. Students can undertake internships locally, nationally or internationally.

Students receive ECTS credits for professional internship that is part of the study programme and the self-evaluation report provides examples related to different study programmes. The content of the internship depends on the study programme, but in all cases there is supervision and evaluation/assessment involved, records are kept, and students and employers are regularly surveyed. The professional internship programme is aligned with the learning outcomes of a specific degree programme. In this way, students prepare themselves for the labour market on the one hand, and on the other hand, professional practice adds value to their studies. Students have the opportunity to apply the knowledge they have acquired in practice in a real-life environment, to collaborate with external stakeholders and to build up a network of contacts.

During the site visit the expert panel met with students and alumni who generally express a high level of satisfaction with the internship programmes; however, students on the Marine Engineering study programme would welcome on-site teaching.

Overall, the expert panel considers student internship well organised and functional.

Recommendations for improvement

The expert panel encourages the University to continue its work on providing students with internship opportunities (compulsory as well as voluntary) and to expand this provision where possible. The University can also explore ways of incorporating learning that takes place in the field or on other sites (e.g. in the case of Marine Engineering). The University plans to expand its number of international students who will be taught in English and it should prepare for a potential increased demand for internships in English.

Quality grade

Satisfactory

III. Teaching process and student support

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

Analysis

The criteria for admission or continuation of studies are published online and are consistently applied during the admission process. According to the self-evaluation report and the information on the University website, an entrance exam was introduced for the Conservation and Restoration University undergraduate study in response to a recommendation of a previous accreditation panel. The University has recognition procedures in place; in this respect the panel heard positive feedback from current students and alumni who spent a period of study abroad. The University collects data on

admission criteria and on student performance; however, more analytical work is required, especially in the light of the high drop-out rate and its potential link to the admissions criteria and admissions process. In this respect, it would have been useful for the panel to understand the impact of the introduction of the entrance exam for the Conservation and Restoration University undergraduate study.

Recommendations for improvement

The University should engage in more in-depth analyses of the admissions criteria and student performance as well as student retention. This is particularly important in the context of the high drop-out rates and also the University's planned introduction of English-language degree programmes at scale. The analyses should also include the impact of measures that have been introduced to improve the admission process, such as the entrance exam on the Conservation and Restoration University undergraduate study. These analyses are not important only for the calibration of admission criteria but also for strategies for improving student retention.

Quality grade

Satisfactory

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

Analysis

The University and its constituents have established monitoring procedures that are clearly defined. The University has already identified potential factors that negatively impact on completion and pass rates. The self-evaluation report as well as the meetings that the panel had during the site visit confirm that the University is in the initial stages of a project that will address the high drop-out rates and introduce effective measures to handle these.

Recommendations for improvement

The expert panel strongly encourages the University to develop the initial work on the measures for increasing pass rates. The panel understands that there is a variety of factors at play and each study programme has its specific conditions and challenges in this respect but improving retention across the board is of key importance.

Quality grade

Satisfactory

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

Analysis

The self-evaluation report, course syllabi as well as feedback from current students and alumni suggest that the University encourages the use of different teaching methods, including research, fieldwork and practice/internships. In terms of the modes of delivery, the University has a large number of part-time students and this may pose its own challenges when it comes to the delivery of teaching. The University has made a significant investment in providing state-of-the art facilities; particularly notable ones are for students in the Maritime Department, the Mass Media and Communications Department and the Department of Arts and Restoration. The University enables its students to take electives from other programmes – so-called horizontal mobility – the pedagogic rationale and benefits are well defined. The University’s teaching staff make an active effort to be part of innovative teaching and exchange programmes. Student surveys are conducted on a regular basis. The expert panel met with teaching staff of various grades during the site visit and heard positive feedback about the mentoring of staff at the early stages of their teaching careers. As detailed in section 2 of this report, the panel has concerns about some learning outcomes and when making improvements to these, modes of teaching should also be reviewed.

Recommendations for improvement

While the University carries out work on the learning outcomes, it is also essential to review teaching methods and the expert panel recommends making the alignment of the revised learning outcomes with teaching methods a priority. There is mentoring in place for staff new to teaching. With the planned expansion of English-language programmes, the expert panel recommends that the University plans more formal arrangements for staff who may have less experience of teaching in English. The University has a large number of part-times students and the suitability of teaching methods for these students should be regularly assessed. Further work can also be done on adjustments to teaching methods for students from vulnerable groups or those with disabilities.

Quality grade

Satisfactory

3.4. The higher education institution ensures adequate student support.

Analysis

The University has established regulations on studying and new students are provided with information on various aspects of their studies and student life. The panel visited various facilities during its time on-site; these included libraries, conservation and

restoration workshops, the radio studio as well as administrative offices. The panel did not receive detailed information on the number and qualification structure of support staff; however, in the course of the site visit the panel became aware that in some cases there was heavy reliance on a limited number of staff. The panel gathered first-hand information about the services provided and their availability and also had in-person feedback from current students and alumni. The various degree programmes require different facilities and services and the panel was particularly concerned about how part-time students' needs are met. Library services and the availability of literature vary across degree programmes; some students have access to copying services which they welcome, but the panel also heard from current students who were not satisfied with access to literature. Some student support and counselling services are established at the University: career and counselling services are provided by the Service for Professional Orientation and Counselling of Students and Alumni. The University is in the process of extending the provision of psychological counselling. The feedback that the panel had from current students and alumni confirmed the dedication of teaching staff; positive feedback from students and alumni also related to the mobility programmes and support they received for these. There was less positive feedback on the career guidance provided by the University and on counselling services. The University has its Student Union, student ombudsman and students are also represented on relevant University-wide bodies. Formal support that the University provides to the Student Union was not clearly identified in the self-evaluation report or on the University website; however, the panel heard from an alumnus about material support (space and equipment) that he received when starting up an organization which eventually formed the basis for his successful business.

Recommendations for improvement

The panel has concerns about the provision of administrative and other services in some departments that are small in size or have a student population that studies largely part-time. In addition to a study programme that only has a part-time mode of study, the University has a large number of part-time students across its degrees. The University should conduct an audit of its support staff and make adjustments in light of the needs of its current student body and also of its planned expansion of English-language study programmes. The panel strongly encourages the University to reconsider the way it operates its Service for Professional Orientation and Counselling of Students and Alumni and to strengthen the provision provided. The panel understands that the University is in the process of extending its psychological counselling service and this should be a priority. It is unclear from the self-evaluation report and other documents what kind of training opportunities the University provides for support staff. It is likely that the non-teaching mobility covered in table 4.6 is part of such training and the panel encourages the

University to utilize mobility programmes and provide other training and professional development opportunities to non-teaching staff.

Quality grade

Satisfactory

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

Analysis

The University has a special regulation for the admission of applicants from certain vulnerable groups and it provides scholarships to full-time students who are socio-economically underprivileged. The University regulation on the award of scholarships sets out the eligibility and the application process clearly, and it also explains the decision making. The panel was not provided with statistical data on the numbers of students from vulnerable and under-represented groups, and the budgetary details of the support and resources available to these students were not detailed enough to make conclusions about their adequacy. The self-evaluation report provides some information about finances spent on providing access to applicants from vulnerable and under-represented groups and those with disabilities, but the most recent reference is to the academic year 2017/18. The University appointed a coordinator for students with disabilities and examples of adjustments to assessments and teaching materials were provided to the panel.

Recommendations for improvement

The panel encourages the University to continue its work on the implementation of the national plans in this area. Even though the numbers of students with disabilities are likely to be small, it is important that these students get the support and adjustments needed quickly and efficiently.

Quality grade

Satisfactory

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

Analysis

The University has a high share of students involved in outgoing as well as incoming mobility. The distribution of these students across the University programmes varies, as students on some degree programmes may find it difficult to spend time abroad while working and studying part-time (e.g. Nursing). The University provides clear and up-to-

date information to outgoing and incoming students and the Erasmus+ programme is working particularly well; the panel heard positive feedback from both current students and alumni. The University offers a joint degree programme with the University of Palermo and the offer of English language courses for incoming students is well developed. The University carries out surveys among the students and the panel identified examples of good practice in this respect. There are also some opportunities for internships abroad.

Recommendations for improvement

The work that the University carries out in this area is of high quality and the panel encourages the formal recognition of good practice so it can be emulated when the provision of English-language programmes is scaled up.

Quality grade

High

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

Analysis

The University has a well-functioning offer for international students in the English language and has been running it successfully. Feedback is collected regularly and international students are provided with up-to-date information on the website as well as in an information brochure. The University also works with the Erasmus Student Network and runs a buddy scheme for international students.

Recommendations for improvement

The University is doing high quality work in this area and our only recommendation is to plan for the scaling up of the English-language programmes so that the quality of the provision can be maintained.

Quality grade

High

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

Analysis

The University has a series of regulations and processes in place that ensure the consistency and objectivity of evaluation. The assessment criteria and methods are

publicly available on the University website and are also published on the intranet. The members of the expert panel experienced some difficulties in accessing syllabi but when looking at descriptions of study programmes, the panel found some inconsistencies in the way assessment methods and grading scales were specified. For example, in the 2023 study programme description for the university undergraduate study of Electrical Engineering and Communication Technologies for Maritime Industry, some courses have detailed descriptions of assessment modes, their weighting and grading scales, such as Basic of Electrical Engineering I and Basics of Maritime Transport. However, some only state the modes of assessment without weighting or grading scales such as Maritime Law and Accidents and Marine Electrical and Machinery Systems. In the case of Physical and Health Culture the assessment mode is problematic as the pass/fail grade is based on attending 80% of the exercises. Attendance in itself cannot be used to judge whether the students are able to do what the learning outcomes specify. Similarly, course descriptions for the newly accredited English-language programme Business Economics are uneven in the information in the Grading and Evaluation of Student Work over the Course of Instruction and at the Exam rubric. While Introduction to Economics has a detailed description, Mathematics offers information about the assessment modes only, while, for example, Statistics and Economic Policy have no information in this rubric. The assessment on the Physical and Health Education course has the same issues as above; class participation is not a suitable assessment mode even if the outcome is pass/fail. In contrast, the ability to perform a certain set of exercises to a certain standard is a way of assessing at least one of the learning outcomes. In this particular case, it is also unclear where the learning outcomes at the level of the study programme to which the course contributes were taken from, as these do not appear in the learning outcomes listed for this study programme and “Students’ future occupation in the field of economy is based on sedentary lifestyle and heavy workloads” is not a learning outcome. The University has a functional appeals process and adjustments that take disabilities etc. into account are made based on individual requests.

Recommendations for improvement

In Section 2 of this report the expert panel strongly urges the University to carry out targeted and systematic work on learning outcomes. It is, however, also necessary to make sure that the teaching methods and assessments are aligned with the learning outcomes, so a holistic approach is recommended in this respect. The way in which grading and evaluation is described in course descriptions should be unified so that it includes all the key information: assessment modes, their weighting and also a grading scale. The panel also recommends that as part of staff development and training, support should be provided to teaching staff in the development of skills related to testing and assessment methods: see recommendations under standard 4.3.

Quality grade

Satisfactory

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

Analysis

The University provides diplomas and diploma supplements in line with the relevant regulations; the diploma supplements contain all the prescribed information.

Recommendations for improvement

The panel has no recommendations in this respect.

Quality grade

High

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

Analysis

The University analyses employment data related to its graduates and takes the demands of the labour market into account in its planning. The University has developed connections particularly with local and regional employers; these are particularly important for study programmes with compulsory work experience. The University also maintains a relationship with other relevant organizations such as chambers of commerce, associations of employers, etc. The expert panel met with current students, alumni as well as employers, and while the panel heard positive feedback from work experience providers/employers, current students and alumni made suggestions about improvements that could be made. In 2017 the University established its Alumni Club.

Recommendations for improvement

The panel encourages the University to further develop career support within the Service for Professional Orientation and Counselling of Students and Alumni. The panel understands the challenges surrounding the organization of career fairs but a diversification of the services provided is desirable. The introduction of a course on personal growth appears to be a good initiative in this respect. The Alumni Club should be part of a broader strategy regarding the University's engagement with its alumni. Further work in these areas is likely to require an investment in resources, particularly human resources, so the expert panel encourages the University to commit to these.

Quality grade

Satisfactory

IV. Teaching and institutional capacities

4.1. The higher education institution ensures adequate teaching capacities.

Analysis

The ratio of teachers to students at the University of Dubrovnik is extremely positive – there was an average of 9.40 students per teacher (in scientific-teaching, artistic-teaching, teaching, and associate positions) in the period from 2017 to 2021 (Self-Evaluation Report, Table 4.3.). However, this is only partly due to the University's recruitment of teachers. The ratio is influenced by the constantly declining enrolment numbers and the high drop-out rate. If the University's launch of English-language programmes is successful and the quotas are filled, a significant increase in teaching workloads is a realistic scenario, especially in the case of study programmes with fewer employees.

Teaching coverage by the University's full-time staff is one of the important indicators of quality, and it ranges from 33% to 93%. It is important to note here that most study programmes are within the range of 60% to 80% teaching coverage by own staff. According to the self-evaluation report and the panel's analysis, this indicator is least favourable in relation to the professional undergraduate study programme in Financial Management and the professional specialist graduate study programme in Financial Management. It should be noted that these study programmes are conducted as part-time only; however, the University has already developed a number of study programmes in the field of Economics, which are relatively well covered. It can allocate staffing for these part-time programmes better in the future or it can integrate these into existing programmes in Business Economics. In this respect, it is important to note that some of the teachers elected for the field of Economics have not reached the maximum number of hours (e.g., they have 187.50 standard hours according to Table 4.3. of the Analytical Supplement).

The lack of full-time staff employed by the University is especially noticeable in the case of the professional undergraduate study programme in Nursing and the professional specialist graduate study programme in Clinical Nursing. The university undergraduate study in History of the Adriatic and of the Mediterranean is delivered by a small number of full-time staff.

The university undergraduate study in Marine Navigation has a high proportion of full-time staff and, at the same time, relatively good enrolment in the full-time programme (100% student enrolment quota in 2021 according to Table 3.2. of the Analytical Supplement). An in-depth analysis of the workload of teachers elected to technical

sciences (scientific area of traffic and transport technology) reveals that staff in teaching positions are not sufficiently utilized, and, at the same time, those in scientific-teaching positions have an extremely high teaching workload (Table 4.3. of the Analytical Supplement).

The employees were appointed to scientific-teaching positions in accordance with the relevant legal regulations and hence they are qualified for the subjects they teach.

In the upcoming period, the main challenge facing the University is the equalization of the workload among employees (Table 4.3. of the Analytical Supplement). The Analytical Supplement shows that employees in teaching positions have a relatively low workload (e.g., 97.50 standard hours) and some in scientific-teaching positions have, for example, 30 standard hours, while at the same time, others have over 1,000 standard hours per year. None of these extremes are in accordance with the Collective Agreement for Science and Higher Education (OG 9/2019). The expert panel raised some of its concerns especially about very high workloads in a meeting while visiting the University and was informed that some of the staff in question have since retired or left the University. The expert panel is cognisant of the difficulties with achieving a perfect balance in workload allocation that complies with legal requirements and the needs of the University; however, this is an issue that must be taken extremely seriously as it is key to achieving the quality of the teaching process.

One of the shortcomings related to teaching staff is certainly the presence of employees who do not participate in the teaching process but are a part of a separate Institute for Marine and Coastal Research. It would benefit the quality of teaching if these employees could also contribute to it.

Recommendations for improvement

The expert panel recommends that the University monitors the student-staff ratio particularly once the English-language programmes are launched.

The panel strongly recommends that the University addresses staffing in relation to the programmes that have a low proportion of full-time staff employed by the University. The University has a number of options in this respect, and this should be designated an institutional priority. The expert panel understands that study programmes in the field of Nursing are characterized by employing external staff due to the required expertise but the fact that a single member of staff is employed full-time for study programmes that are highly complex and regulated by two ministries is an issue that needs to be addressed in a holistic manner as soon as possible. It is equally important to increase the teaching staff of the undergraduate university study programme in History of the Adriatic and of the Mediterranean. In this case, all employees of the University of Dubrovnik who were appointed to teaching, associate, and scientific-teaching positions in the field of History should be transferred to this study programme. At the same time, according to the options available and in line with the University's intentions stated in the self-evaluation report,

it is important to invest in hiring staff for this study programme as a prerequisite for the formation of the Department of History. Although there are a number of Croatian universities that provide study programmes in history, the panel is of the opinion that, due to its specificities, Dubrovnik is a unique location with valuable historical records where it is essential to maintain and strengthen this study programme with its own staff. The University is also in need of work on the equalization of workloads. In relation to the employees of the Institute for Marine and Coastal Research, it is recommended, if possible at all, that these are included in the teaching process in the coming period and new employees are hired at the Institute for Marine and Coastal Research exclusively for scientific-teaching positions.

Another area in which improvements can be made is the development of support mechanism, e.g. grants for staff in teaching positions who wish to meet the conditions for transitioning to scientific-teaching positions.

Quality grade

Satisfactory

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

Analysis

When hiring, selecting, and re-appointing teachers, the University complies with all legal requirements and its internal documents are harmonized. All procedures are prescribed by internal acts and are public and transparent. When selecting candidates, their past activities and achievements in scientific, professional, and teaching work are taken into account.

As a particularly positive example, we highlight the practice in place in the Department of Economics and Business and the Department of Mass Media and Communication, which, in addition to the basic prerequisites specified in the Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity (OG 119/22) and Ordinance on Appointment to Associate Grades and Corresponding Positions, also include additional conditions for the selection of the best candidates. Additional prerequisites for the employment posed by certain University units agree with the strategic goals of the University in elements that refer to the competencies of human resources necessary to achieve the University's mission and vision.

Recommendations for improvement

As the re-accreditation procedure is carried out for the period up to the academic year 2021/2022, it cannot be subject to harmonization with the new Act on Higher Education

and Scientific Activity (OG 119/22). Nevertheless, it is recommended that the University harmonizes all internal acts with the aforementioned Act as soon as possible.

The expert panel recommends that the University applies the example of good practice in the Department of Economics and Business and the Department of Mass Media and Communication across the University and in relation to all posts rather than associate ones only.

Quality grade

High

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

Analysis

At the University of Dubrovnik, there is no systematic plan for the development of teachers' competencies; instead training and professional development are carried out in accordance with the means/opportunities available and the expressed needs. It is commendable that the University allocates a certain fixed portion of funds to all teachers for dedicated institutional financing of their scientific activity so that each employee can develop their competencies at their own discretion.

The University conducts student surveys of teachers' work each semester and it has procedures in place for poor results. At the time of the re-accreditation, no peer evaluation was in place, for example, peer observations of teaching and the like.

Section 2.2 of this report deals with shortcomings related to learning outcomes at the programme level (see 2.2.). The panel believes that in order to improve these, training is required for all employees in teaching, associate, and scientific-teaching positions on learning outcomes as well as on related teaching methods and assessment modes.

The introduction of annual rewards for employees in a number of categories, including teaching activities, is highly commendable.

The University has clear rules on the use of sabbatical leave, and some of the teachers have already fulfilled the requirements to obtain the right to use it.

The University actively encourages the mobility of both teaching and administrative staff. There are clear systems for implementing mobility, as well as reporting on it. Likewise, the University encourages collaborative projects financed through the Erasmus+ programme. The Erasmus Without Paper Champions award is particularly commendable. This systematic focus on encouraging the internationalization of the University, which is accompanied with promotional activities, has led to a high level of both incoming and outgoing mobility (Tables 4.5. and 4.6. of the Analytical Supplement), which is to be commended.

Recommendations for improvement

The panel's most important recommendation is to introduce a University-wide systematic approach to the development of staff competencies through: (1) the establishment of a system for determining the training and professional development needs of teachers, (2) the adoption of a professional development/training plan for a five-year period in accordance with the University Strategy and the needs determined through the previously conducted analyses, and (3) the monitoring of the execution of the plan and its outcomes, particularly the newly developed/improved competencies.

The University dedicates funds to training, rewards etc. and we recommend that data are collected in a systematic manner on how these funds are spent and what their impact is.

The expert panel encourages the University to introduce peer evaluations of teaching, particularly for those new to teaching or needing a refresher. The panel also proposes organizing training sessions that would improve the teaching competencies of all participants in the teaching process.

The expert panel appreciates that the University is already doing a large amount of very successful work in international mobility but where possible the panel recommends encouraging outgoing mobility for a period longer than three months, especially for employees in associate positions.

Quality grade

Satisfactory

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

Analysis

The University of Dubrovnik has exceptionally high-quality premises, equipment, and infrastructure that are sufficient for the delivery of study programmes and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The panel would especially like to emphasize the equipment and premises of the Maritime Department, as well as the equipment and premises for practical work of the Department of Mass Media and Communication, and the workshops of the Department of Arts and Restoration. The expert panel was also impressed with the neuroscience laboratory at the Department of Economics and Business that plays a role in improving scientific work.

Although the expert panel did not have the opportunity to visit the new student dormitory, it is hugely important in improving the living and study conditions of students,

especially under the pressures that Dubrovnik is experiencing in terms of affordable accommodation.

Recommendations for improvement

The expert panel is very impressed with the work that the University carried out in improving its facilities and equipment. The panel's recommendation relates to monitoring staff and student satisfaction with these facilities; results of such monitoring will help maintain the quality of the premises and facilities and can also be used in determining future investments.

The expert panel is aware of the importance that the city's and region's political leadership accords to the University and it encourages the University to work closely with the municipality and the region, particularly when it comes to securing stable and affordable accommodation for students.

Quality grade

High

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

Analysis

The University of Dubrovnik has library premises in different locations according to the location of the unit to which they are attached. This enables easier access to literature for students and employees. However, there are differences among the library stock and resources that are at the disposal of different departments.

As an example of a department that efficiently utilizes resources and runs a unique archive, we would like to mention the Department of Economics and Business, which, in addition to its own in-house collection provides access to an online database of economics literature in Croatian housed in most economic faculties across the country. The Department also houses the Centre for Tourist Documentation and Information, and it would be desirable to provide more suitable spaces for the collection and allow greater access to those researching the history of tourism. The Department also has a reading room and premises for teamwork. The expert panel understands that there are constraints that the University has been trying to overcome when it comes to premises for its collections and resources and reading rooms for students.

During its site visit the expert panel had opportunities to visit all the libraries and talk to librarians as well as gather feedback from employees and students. The panel noted that updates to literature – in Croatian as well as in English – are desirable across the board and students also mentioned that access to literature can be a challenge. The expert panel understands that library costs are often some of the highest costs that a University faces

but encourages the University to look into options around electronic copies, open access publications and the like. In some cases, the ratio of literature for study programmes in the same subject area is not ideal; for example, for studies in Nursing, it is recommended to acquire more literature from the field of nursing (as opposed to literature in the field of clinical practice).

The University has a thesis storage repository (<https://repozitorij.unidu.hr/>) and it also uses Merlin – an e-learning system in higher education.

Recommendations for improvements

The expert panel strongly recommends that the University prioritizes the introduction of a University-wide literature and study resource procurement plan in accordance with the University's strategic goals. Clear criteria and processes for the procurement of literature and other study materials should be adopted and the criteria should include the following: (1) verification of the number of copies of compulsory and optional literature in accordance with the course syllabi, (2) the obligation to procure a sufficient number of copies of compulsory literature in accordance with the Ordinance on the Content of a Licence and Conditions for Issuing a Licence for Performing Higher Education Activity, Carrying out a Study Programme and Re-Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions, (3) protocols for the procurement of both compulsory and optional literature, as well as an online database, and (4) a rulebook on disposal and write-off of literature that is no longer in use in order to free up space in the libraries.

The expert panel encourages the University to continue the work on the allocation/renovation of spaces for the storage of library stock and study spaces, although it acknowledges the significant challenges that the University faces in this respect.

The expert panel recommends the introduction of monitoring in relation to staff and student use and satisfaction with library and related services. A monitoring system for satisfaction with the e-learning system is also recommended. The extent of monitoring does not need to be overwhelming, rather it should be designed in a way that will feed into strategic goals and objectives related to teaching and learning as well as scientific activity.

Quality grade

Satisfactory

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

Analysis

The University of Dubrovnik manages its financial resources transparently. All fundamental financial documents are published on the University website (<https://www.unidu.hr/dokumenti/>). In accordance with the set strategic goals, the University has significantly improved the sustainability of its finances in the past period,

reducing dependence on the state budget, and increasing the share of income from national and international projects and economic activities. Additional funding sources are used for the improvement and development of the institution. The University has an Ordinance on the Acquisition and Distribution of Income from Own Activities. It is commendable that grants are provided for the excellence of scientific papers and grants to project managers as motivators for further improvement.

Recommendations for improvements

The panel has no recommendations.

Quality grade

High

V. Scientific/artistic activity

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

Analysis

University teachers and associates have been actively publishing a significant number of high-quality scientific publications. From 2017 to 2021, they have published a total of 317 original scientific papers and review papers in 187 scientific journals indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) database. Of these, 55 papers were published in journals ranked in the first quartile (Q1), which indicates a high level of quality, and a further 59 papers in the second quartile (Q2) indicating an above average quality. According to the data in the WoS database, the published papers were cited a total of 2,185 times, and the h-index of the institution was 21 (as of March 2023). The University's teachers and associates publish a large number of original scientific and review papers that are cited in the WoS database. Also, the scientific journals published by the University of Dubrovnik: *Naše more* (Our Sea) and *Ekonomska misao i praksa* (Economic Thought and Practice), were included in the WoS database (ESCI), confirming their quality and providing a basis for the further development of the University's publishing. Regarding the University's procedures for encouraging high-quality scientific publications, the University of Dubrovnik has efficient systems in place. They directly reward the publication of papers in the first quartile (Q1) journals of the WoS database, thus promoting excellence and the publication of quality papers. For instance, in 2021 incentives totalling EUR 18,484.76 were awarded to University teachers for their high-quality publications. Additionally, as reported in the self-evaluation document, the University regularly informs all employees about opportunities to apply for national and international projects and about mobility programmes. Workshops on writing and publishing scientific papers and on writing and

submitting projects for available funding and programmes are organized regularly. The University also attempts to publish the achievements of high-quality scientific papers on its website and maintains records of staff publications in the CroRIS (previously CROSB) database.

The University's scientific activity is evident in PhD theses. Many students become part of research groups and use the required scientific infrastructure to write their qualification theses, and thus actively participate in scientific research. The preparation of theses and dissertations is an important part of graduate education, and students are encouraged to participate in research or write their own research papers, which they present at scientific conferences or publish in scientific journals.

The faculty and associates of the University have been actively involved in disseminating their research. Over a period of five years, they have participated in national and international conferences with 380 presentations, of which 162 full papers and 218 abstracts have been published in conference proceedings. The research activities of the individual departments are reflected in the teaching programmes, especially in the higher years of study and in the graduate and doctoral programmes. This commitment has a significant impact on students' employment opportunities and demonstrates the University's commitment to the social relevance of its scientific, artistic, and professional research and knowledge transfer.

However, although the University has implemented an internal system for promoting excellence – in recognizing and rewarding scientific and artistic achievements of its employees with the goal to motivate faculty to engage in quality academic and research work, artistic activities, and quality teaching delivery – considering the diversity of scientific areas, and the number of the University constituents, the incentives programme is still diminutive and cannot achieve its full potential.

Recommendations for improvement

In order to increase the quality of publications and project applications, and to enhance academic transparency and quality, the expert panel recommends that the University of Dubrovnik introduces a formal and unified procedure for the internal review of scientific papers, project applications, and reporting by employees on successful project applications in all its constituents. The expert panel understands that information is circulated about opportunities but the systematic notification about upcoming project could be improved using a variety of platforms.

The University should expand the existing successful incentive mechanisms to encompass the promotion of excellence in project applications and other scientific activities, especially for young researchers and students.

Quality grade

High

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

Analysis

When planning its research activities, the University of Dubrovnik is oriented towards the needs of society and the labour market. The University strives to address social challenges through scientific and research activities and cooperation with the private and public sectors. University teachers participate in projects with private sector companies, transferring knowledge and technology and creating new jobs for their students. One example of this focus is the introduction of compulsory professional practice in many of the University's degree programmes, which demonstrates a commitment to aligning the educational offerings with the needs of society and the labour market.

The University's research activities are reflected in its teaching programmes, especially in higher years of study, graduate and doctoral programmes. This integration has a positive impact on students' employment opportunities. The University's programmes are developed by considering social needs, the analyses of the Croatian Employment Service and often in cooperation with the social community. This approach extends to practical programmes, various types of continuing education courses, seminars and workshops and demonstrates a comprehensive and efficient support system for research and knowledge transfer.

The University engages in the transfer of scientific ideas and knowledge at the local, regional, and national economy levels. They use modern information and communication technology for research purposes which enhances the sustainability of research and its results through technology and knowledge transfer. Notable initiatives include AXON, a member of the neuroscientific global research community iMotions, and the Information Fact-Checking and Civil Resilience Centre (DU-CHECK) which combats misinformation in Croatia. The University is involved in the SeaClear, MARLESS and BLUEfasma projects, addressing innovative technology for marine environment protection, focusing on circular economy and waste management in the sea. The University's faculty and associates publish articles aimed at popularizing science and participate in scientific programmes on radio and TV. They develop training and educational content for various societal segments through projects like VIBES, ESMEERALD, ESSENCE, and BOOMER, in collaboration with business and non-governmental sectors. Laboratories such as the biological laboratory B08 and the biotechnical laboratory B07 are used by students of the Department of Applied Ecology for projects and as presentation rooms for high school graduates. The Institute for Marine and Coastal Research and the Institute for Mediterranean Plants provide additional facilities for research in marine organisms and agricultural research focusing on Mediterranean crops. The Department of Economics and Business enhances academic excellence through the Neurolab, offering students professional development opportunities through technology.

The University's faculty and associates actively participate in national and international conferences. Over a five-year period, they delivered 380 presentations, with 162 full papers and 218 abstracts published in conference proceedings. This participation evidences their active role in scientific, artistic, and professional communities.

Recommendations for improvement

It is recommended to continue and further expand the activities of the Career Week at the University of Dubrovnik, not only through workshops, lectures or panel discussions, but also within the framework of a career fair (Job Fair), with the aim of acquainting, connecting and exchanging experiences between students at the University of Dubrovnik and a wider group of employers. Establishing connections with local and regional stakeholders focused on promoting career guidance and entrepreneurship among young people is also recommended.

The expert panel also recommends the introduction of a strategy for technology transfer with the aim of increasing the number of spin-off companies that develop from research activities at the University of Dubrovnik, and to continue developing cooperation with external stakeholders through student internships, student participation in the implementation of scientific projects, and the implementation of solutions achieved through the University's developmental professional and scientific activities. In this sense, intensifying cooperation with the local community – the City of Dubrovnik and the Dubrovnik-Neretva County – is recommended to expand and develop the infrastructural capacities of the University of Dubrovnik, especially in terms of laboratory spaces and equipment.

Quality grade

High

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

Analysis

Teachers, associates, and professional staff at the University of Dubrovnik have received university, national and international awards for their academic, artistic or professional achievements. The University nominates its successful faculty and students for various awards, and there is a long-standing practice of awarding recognitions and prizes for special achievements. The University's teaching staff and researchers have been noticed and evaluated by other institutions, resulting in national and international awards that add value to both the University and its staff. For example, awards have been received for the best scientific paper at the *EURA 2023* conference and the *TTRA* conference, as well as the Ivan Filipović Award for contributions to higher education were awarded by the Ministry of Science and Education.

The University is also the holder of an adequate number of scientific, artistic, or professional projects. This is evidenced by the internal system for promoting excellence, which includes the Ordinance on the Recognition Award at the University of Dubrovnik. This ordinance provides annual awards to researchers for special achievements in scientific research, artistic work, and research, including achievements like authorship of high-quality scientific papers published in journals indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) database, artistic achievements of exceptional significance, and scientific papers with high citations.

Faculty members have been awarded titles of visiting professor or invited as guest lecturers at other higher education institutions globally. For instance, Prof. dr. sc. Nebojša Stojčić from the Department of Economics and Business has been a visiting professor at Staffordshire University in Great Britain and is a research associate at the CERGE-EI Foundation in the Czech Republic. Prof. dr. sc. Martin Lazar from the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science has been a visiting professor in Spain and Germany. Professor Pero Maldini from the Department of Communication is a visiting professor at DePaul University in Chicago, USA.

In addition, teachers, associates, and professional staff participate as invited lecturers in an adequate number of national and international conferences and serve as members of conference boards and editorial boards of scientific journals. Faculty and staff have held editorship roles in various journals over the last five years, including *Acta Adriatica*, *Acta Avionica* and *Acta Botanica Croatica*, and have also been on the organizational committees of several conferences over the last five years, including *Aquaculture Europe*, organized by the European Aquaculture Society; *International Conference on Applied Electromagnetics and Communications (ICECom)*, organized by KoREMA; *International Scientific Conference Dubrovnik Media Days*, organized by the Department of Mass Communication; the international conference *VODA ZA SVE*, organized by the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University, and the *SedNet* conference.

Recommendations for improvement

The expert panel recommends that the University continuously informs the general public about its successes in research and development on its websites, through media appearances, at professional and scientific conferences, and strives to do this with uniform frequency and extent for all its constituents.

We also advise the University to encourage and promote the membership of faculty fellows, especially junior researchers, in international scientific and professional associations. The University of Dubrovnik should actively strive to include as many of its faculty as possible on the boards of high-level scientific journals and conferences.

The recognition of the University's activities and those of its faculty members and alumni at national level is not yet sufficiently developed, although it has the potential to be.

Quality grade

High

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

Analysis

The University adopted a strategic programme of scientific research first for individual scientific fields and then the overall Research Strategy for 2020-2025 in July 2020. This strategy envisions the University becoming an internationally recognized and globally competitive university, emphasizing excellence in teaching and research, high ethical standards, creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. The University aims to distinguish itself in disciplines where it has appropriate comparative advantages and necessary experience. Nevertheless, different strategy documents of the University were adopted at different times, and they are not completely aligned with each other or the Research Strategy from July 2020.

The strategic objectives include increasing the quality and volume of scientific research and artistic production; the number of scientific research, art, technology and professional projects; strengthening and investing in scientific staff, infrastructure and equipment; and raising the University's profile in specific scientific disciplines. This approach demonstrates the University's commitment to fulfilling its social responsibility and contributing to the development of the local community and economy.

The University's internal system for promoting excellence includes the Ordinance on the Recognition Award, which provides annual awards to researchers for special achievements in scientific research, artistic, and artistic-research work. Also, as mentioned before, the University has received numerous awards and recognitions, including the award for the best scientific paper at the *EURA 2023* conference, the *TTRA* conference, and the annual Ivan Filipović Award for contributions in higher education, granted by the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia. The University of Dubrovnik has established a procedure for rewarding the publication of papers in the first quartile (Q1) journals of the WoS database. The University nominates its successful teachers and students for various awards and motivates its staff to engage in quality academic and research work, artistic activities, and quality teaching delivery.

As evidenced in the self-evaluation report, supplementary materials and in the meetings during the site visit, the University is making efforts to secure the needed resources and is focusing on efficient internal work organization; however, long-term sustainability and sustainable mechanisms for the formal allocation of resources are not yet fully in place.

The University has established a Project Office which, at the time of compiling this report, is staffed by 1 person with another person projected to join in the near future. Allocated resources for project application support are insufficient in practice. Likewise, the process

of quality control and assurance at the University of Dubrovnik and its constituents is defined but greater care should be taken to ensure its implementation. Information about upcoming project opportunities tends to be shared informally, not through formal and well-established processes using a variety of platforms. Faculty members more experienced in compiling applications for project funding share information and successful practices with their peers. This is primarily based on interpersonal relationships.

Concerning scientific publication by the University of Dubrovnik, modern digital tools and dedicated web platforms should be implemented to alleviate the work of staff members dedicated solely to the publication of the University's scientific journals, or other similar repetitive tasks, which will free up resources for other academic activities. All procedures concerning scientific activities should be made sustainable in the long term and primarily governed by a formal system with open access to information.

Recommendations for improvement

In implementing the recommendations below concerning the development of sustainable and developmental basis for scientific and artistic activities of the University, the following strategies should be methodically employed: 1) identifying opportunities, 2) mentorship and support, 3) recognition and incentives, 4) building networks, 5) professional development workshops, 6) research and publication support, and 7) collaboration with other institutions.

The University of Dubrovnik should establish a formal internal structure for scientific research activities based on groups, themes, or research pillars (or some other structure), rather than rely solely on projects which are by their nature contracted for a specific period. Such a structure, adequately supported by dedicated organizational units such as the Project Office, would ensure the longevity and sustainability of the development of scientific research activities, as it would not end with the completion of each individual project.

The University of Dubrovnik should continue to implement its Research Strategy and align it with other University strategies based on clearly defined and coherent goals for a period of at least five years. In the Research Strategy, the University should implement groups, themes, or research pillars from the previous recommendation and include all constituents equally: departments and studies, the Institute for Marine and Coastal Research Dubrovnik, the Institute for Mediterranean Cultures, and the Language Center. The University needs to invest continuously in the infrastructure and modernization of all laboratories for teaching and research. Special attention should be given to the infrastructure of those constituents that require significant investments. Capital investments should be planned in partnership with external stakeholders, keeping in mind the social and general significance for the local community, and regional and national interest.

The University of Dubrovnik should develop a unified plan for the renewal and maintenance of research equipment and instruments, which should be reflected in business and financial plans for specific periods, ensuring a systematic approach to resource management and operational efficiency.

Finally, the expert panel wants to emphasize that it is crucial that the management and faculty members fully appreciate and support the establishment of formal systems for sustainable development, which demand additional short-term efforts and investments in resources. However, these systems are significantly beneficial and essential for the institution's long-term and medium-term success.

Quality grade

Satisfactory

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

Analysis

Many students at the University of Dubrovnik are part of different research groups or laboratories and use the necessary scientific infrastructure for the preparation of their theses and dissertations. This infrastructure mostly includes modern equipment that is available to all students, enabling them to acquire knowledge and skills to be competitive on the global labour market. Undergraduate and graduate students have access to valuable equipment. For example, of note is the simulator equipment at the Maritime Department. Also, at the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computing of note are the following: a BluRov submarine, Matrice drone, BluRov 2 submarine, surface debris collection platform, underwater sensors, NIDO surface vehicle, boom-folding marine crane, BluRov2 kit, underwater robot drones, and virtual reality devices. This equipment is used for laboratory exercises in fields such as automation and electrical machines.

The University strives to make scientific research work an integral part of graduate education, and students often get involved in scientific research by completing a thesis. There are several examples of students being encouraged to participate in research and to prepare their own research papers, which they present at scientific conferences or publish in scientific journals. An example of student engagement is the INNOSID project, where undergraduate and graduate students in Applied/Business Computing modelled and created applications with modern technologies in international teams. This allowed them to combine theoretical and practical knowledge and engage in interdisciplinary work. However, the process of student participation – although currently successful – is informal and more effort should be spent on achieving long-term sustainability and progress.

Teachers often motivate students to engage in scientific research through their theses by presenting their projects and research work as part of the courses, and students are encouraged to participate in research or design their own research papers. These papers are presented at scientific conferences or published in journals, with some receiving the Rector's Prize for Special Scientific or Artistic Achievement. Also, students actively participate in the organization of conferences hosted or organized by the University of Dubrovnik.

The space, equipment, and the entire infrastructure, including laboratories, IT services, work facilities, and the like are appropriate for the delivery of study programmes, given the current number of enrolled students, and ensure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and the implementation of scientific activities. The library space is sufficient and modern, but the library stock needs to be renewed with modern titles, especially in the fields of mathematics, physics, and STEM.

Recommendations for improvement

The University is strongly encouraged to expand the inclusion of skills that are important for scientific training and progress (e.g. structuring scientific papers, information search, scientific and professional expression, knowledge management, etc.) in the curriculum across the board.

The University should continually involve as many students as possible in scientific projects and establish a formal procedure for involving students in appropriate scientific research projects.

The University should further encourage teachers and students to collaborate on scholarly publications, in addition to student internships and providing assistance in project activities.

Quality grade

High

APPENDICES

1. Quality assessment summary - tables

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

Quality grade by standard

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

Quality grade by standard

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

Quality grade by standard

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

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

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

Quality grade by standard

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

2. Site visit protocol

	Petak 10. Studeni 2023.	Friday 10 November 2023
14:00 – 16:00 ZOOM	Interni sastanka povjerenstva i priprema za posjet visokom učilištu	Internal meeting of panel members and preparation for site visit

	Ponedjeljak 13. Studeni 2023.	Monday, 13 November 2023
9:00 – 10:00	<i>Sastanak članova Stručnog povjerenstva</i>	<i>Internal meeting of the panel members</i>
10:00 – 11:00	Sastanak s rektorom, prorektorima, i tajnikom Sveučilišta (<i>bez prezentacija</i>)	Meeting with the rector, vice-rectors, and secretary (<i>no presentations</i>)
11:00 – 12:00	Sastanak s predstavnicima povjerenstva za pripremu postupka reakreditacije	Meeting with the members of the Committee for the Preparation of the Reaccreditation Process
12:00 – 12:15	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
12:15 – 13:15	Sastanak sa studentima (otvoreni sastanak za sve studente)	Meeting with the students (open meeting for all students)
13:15 – 14:30	<i>Radni ručak Stručnog povjerenstva</i>	<i>Working lunch</i>
14:30 – 16:00	Sastanak sa pročelnicima odjela	Meeting with heads of departments
16:00 - 17:00	Organizacija dodatnog sastanka o otvorenim pitanjima, prema potrebi	Organisation of additional meeting on open questions, if needed

	Utorak, 14. 2023.	Wednesday, 25 th October 2023
9:00 - 10:00	Sastanak s prorektorom za studije i studente	Meeting with Vice-Rector for Study Programmes and Students
10:00 - 10:15	Pauza	Break
10:15 - 11:45	Sastanak s nastavnicima (osim onih na rukovodećim mjestima)	Meeting with teachers (except those in managerial positions)
11:45 - 12:00	Pauza	Break
12:00 - 13:00	Sastanak s asistentima	Meeting with teaching assistants
13:00 - 14:00	<i>Radni ručak Stručnog povjerenstva</i>	<i>Working lunch</i>
14:00 -	Obilazak Sveučilišta (sastavnice, knjižnica, laboratoriji, uredi studentskih službi, ured međunarodne suradnje, informatička služba, predavaonice) i prisustvovanje nastavi	Tour of the University (faculties / departments, library, laboratories, student services, international office, IT services, classrooms) and observation of classes

	Srijeda, 15. studeni 2023.	Wednesday, 15 September 2023
9:00 – 9:45	Sastanak članova Stručnog povjerenstva <i>(Analiza dokumenata)</i>	Internal meeting of the panel members <i>(Document analysis)</i>
9:45 – 10:45	Sastanak s prorektorom za međunarodnu suradnju i znanost	Meeting with Vice-Rector for International Relations and Science
10:45 – 11:45	Sastanak s voditeljima projekata	Meeting with the heads of projects
11:45 – 12:00	<i>Pauza</i>	<i>Break</i>
12:00 – 13:00	Sastanak s alumnijima (bivši studenti koji nisu zaposlenici visokog učilišta)	Meeting with alumni (former students who are not employed by HEI)
13:00 – 14:00	<i>Radni ručak Stručnog povjerenstva</i>	<i>Working lunch</i>
14:00 – 15:00	Sastanak s vanjskim dionicima (nenastavnim) s kojima visoko učilište surađuje	Meeting with external stakeholders
15:00 – 16:00	Organizacija dodatnog sastanka o otvorenim pitanjima, dodatnog obilaska Sveučilišta ili prisustvovanja nastavi, prema potrebi	Organisation of additional meeting on open questions, additional tour of University or observing classes, if needed
16:00 – 17:00	<i>Interni sastanak članova Stručnog povjerenstva</i>	<i>Internal meeting of the panel members</i>
17:00 – 17:15	Završni sastanak s rektorom, prorektorima i tajnikom Sveučilišta	Exit meeting with the rector, vice-rectors and secretary

	Četvrtak 16. Studeni 2023.	Thursday 16 November 2023
9:00 – 12:00	Rad na završnom izvješću	Writing the Final report
13:00 – 13:45	Ručak	Lunch

SUMMARY

The expert panel has explored quality standards in five areas: (1) internal quality assurance and the social role of the higher education institution, (2) study programmes, (3) teaching process and student support, (4) teaching and institutional capacities and (5) scientific/artistic activity. The panel found that the University of Dubrovnik fulfils these at a minimum, satisfactory or high level of quality overall.

Two quality standards are fulfilled at the minimum level overall: internal quality assurance and the social role of the higher education institution, and study programmes.

Two quality standards are fulfilled at a satisfactory level of quality overall: teaching process and student support, and teaching and institutional capacities.

One quality standard is fulfilled at a high level of quality: scientific/artistic activity.

The most urgent areas in which the expert panel encourages the University of Dubrovnik to work harder to achieve improvements include:

- improvements to the internal quality assurance system, processes and regulations,
- alignment of learning outcomes at the level of study programmes with the level and profile of qualifications gained,
- adequate allocation of ECTS credits.

The expert panel has found that the University of Dubrovnik has great strengths in:

- its research culture that is strongly supported by the institution and has resulted in impressive improvements to outputs and research projects,
- its internationalization when it comes to home students gaining international experience and its educational offer for foreign students,
- the excellent facilities and infrastructure for the delivery of study programmes and the conducting of scientific research.