



**REPORT  
of the Expert Panel on the  
RE-ACCREDITATION OF**

**THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENTS  
(NON-PHILOLOGY PART) OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ZADAR**

**Date of the site visit:**

**18-21 May 2014**

**July 2014**

## Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED INSTITUTION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>CONCLUSIONS OF THE EXPERT PANEL.....</b>	<b>8</b>
ADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION.....	8
DISADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION .....	9
FEATURES OF GOOD PRACTICE.....	10
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT.....	10
<b>DETAILED ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE TO THE STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR RE-ACCREDITATION.....</b>	<b>17</b>
1. Institutional management and quality assurance .....	17
2. Study programmes .....	20
3. Students.....	24
4. Teachers.....	26
5. Scientific and Professional Activity.....	28
6. International cooperation and mobility .....	32
7. Resources: administration, space, equipment and finances .....	34

## INTRODUCTION

This report on the re-accreditation of the humanities departments (non-philology part) of the University of Zadar was written by the Expert Panel appointed by the Agency for Science and Higher Education, on the basis of the self-evaluation of the institution and supporting documentation and a visit to the institution.

Re-accreditation procedure performed by the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE), a public body listed in EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education) and ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) full member, is obligatory once in five years for all higher education institutions working in the Republic of Croatia, in line with the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

The Expert Panel is appointed by the ASHE Accreditation Council, an independent expert body, to perform an independent peer-review-based evaluation of the institution and their study programs.

The report contains:

- a brief analysis of the institutional advantages and disadvantages,
- a list of good practices found at the institution,
- recommendations for institutional improvement and measures to be implemented in the following period (and checked within a follow-up procedure), and
- Detailed analysis of the compliance to the Criteria for the assessment of quality of higher education institutions within universities.

The members of the Expert Panel were:

- Prof. Kurt Villads Jensen, Department of History, University of Southern Denmark, The Kingdom of Denmark, president of the panel
- Prof. Mihael Budja, Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Republic of Slovenia
- Prof. Gudrun Dahl, Department of Social Anthropology, Stockholm University, The Kingdom of Sweden
- Professor Peter Lautner, Faculty of Arts, Pázmány Péter Catholic University Budapest, Hungary
- Anna Kocsis, Centre for Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb, Republic of Croatia, student

In the analysis of the documentation, site visit and writing of the report the Panel was supported by the ASHE staff:

- Davor Jurić, coordinator, ASHE
- Vlatka Derenčinović, translator, ASHE

During the visit to the Institution the Expert Panel held meetings with the representatives of the following groups:

- University Management;
- Committee for quality assurance;
- heads of departments;
- teachers;
- teaching assistants and junior researchers;
- heads of research projects;
- heads of PhD studies;
- students, i.e., a self-selected set of students present at the interview

The Expert Panel also had a tour of the library, IT rooms, student register desk, and the classrooms at the University of Zadar, where they held a brief question and answer session with the students who were present.

Upon completion of re-accreditation procedure, the Accreditation Council renders its opinion on the basis of the Re-accreditation Report, an Assessment of Quality of the higher education institution and the Report of Fulfilment of Quantitative Criteria which is acquired by the Agency's information system.

Once the Accreditation Council renders its opinion, the Agency issues an Accreditation Recommendation by which the Agency recommends to the Minister of Science, Education and Sports to:

1. **issue a confirmation** to the higher education institution, which confirms that the higher education institution meets the requirements for performing the higher education activities or parts of activities, in case the Accreditation Recommendation is positive,
2. **deny a license** for performing the higher education activities or parts of activities to the higher education institution, in case the Accreditation Recommendation is negative, or
3. **issue a letter of recommendation** for the period up to three (3) years in which period the higher education institution should remove its deficiencies. For the higher education institution the letter of recommendation may include the suspension of student enrolment for the defined period.

The Accreditation Recommendation also includes an Assessment of Quality of the higher education institution as well as recommendations for quality development

## **SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED INSTITUTION**

NAME OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION:

University of Zadar (humanities and social science departments)

ADDRESS:

Mihovila Pavlinovića bb, Zadar

NAME OF THE HEAD OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION:

Prof. Ante Uglešić, PhD, rector

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

25 departments (19 of them are humanities and social science departments)

The humanities and social science departments are the following:

- Department of English
- Department of Archaeology
- Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology
- Department of Philosophy
- Department of French and Ibero-Romance Studies
- Department of German Studies
- Department of Information Sciences
- Department of Teacher and Preschool Teacher Education
- Department of Classical Philology
- Department of Croatian and Slavic Studies
- Department of Linguistics
- Department of Teacher Training in Gospić
- Department of Pedagogy
- Department of History
- Department of Art History
- Department of Psychology
- Department of Sociology
- Department of Italian Studies
- Department of Tourism and Communication Studies

## LIST OF STUDY PROGRAMMES

- Undergraduate university study program English language and Literature (double major)
- Graduate university study program English language and Literature (double major)
- Undergraduate university study program German language and Literature (double major)
- Graduate university study program German language and Literature (double major)
- Undergraduate university study program Italian language and Literature (double major)
- Graduate university study program Contemporary Italian Philology (double major)
- Graduate university study program Contemporary Italian Philology (single major)
- Graduate university study program Italian language Translation studies (double major)
- Graduate university study program Italian language Translation studies (single major)
- Undergraduate university study program French language and Literature (double major)
- Undergraduate university study program Spanish language and Literature (double major)
- Graduate university study program French language and Literature (double major)
- Graduate university study program Hispanic studies (double major)
- Graduate university study program Romans language (single major)
- Undergraduate university study program Croatian language and Literature (double major)
- Graduate university study program Croatian language and Literature
- Undergraduate university study program Croatian language and South Slavic Philology
- Graduate university study program Croatian language and South Slavic Philology
- Undergraduate university study program Russian language and Literature (double major)
- Graduate university study program Russian language and Literature (double major)
- Undergraduate university study program Greek language and Literature (double major)
- Graduate university study program Greek language and Literature (double major)
- Undergraduate university study program Latin language and Roman Literature (double major)
- Graduate university study program Latin language and Roman Literature (double major)
- Graduate university study program Linguistics (double major)
- Graduate university study program Linguistics (single major)
- Undergraduate university study program Archaeology (single major)
- Undergraduate university study program Archaeology (double major)
- Graduate university study program Archaeology (single major)
- Graduate university study program Archaeology (double major)
- Undergraduate university study program Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology (double major)
- Graduate university study program Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology (double major)
- Undergraduate university study program Philosophy (double major)
- Graduate university study program Philosophy (double major)
- Graduate university study program Philosophy (single major)
- Undergraduate university study program History (double major)
- Undergraduate university study program History (single major)
- Graduate university study program History (double major)
- Graduate university study program History (single major)
- Undergraduate university study program Art History (double major)
- Undergraduate university study program Art History (single major)
- Graduate university study program Art History (double major)
- Graduate university study program Art History (single major)
- Undergraduate university study program Information Sciences-Librarianship
- Graduate university study program Information Sciences-Librarianship
- Undergraduate university study program Pedagogy (double major)
- Graduate university study program Pedagogy (double major)
- Undergraduate university study program Psychology
- Graduate university study program Psychology
- Undergraduate university study program Sociology (double major)

- Graduate university study program Sociology (double major)
- Graduate university study program Cultural Sociology (single major)
- Undergraduate university study program Culture and Tourism
- Graduate university study program Ecology in Tourism
- Graduate university study program Cultural Heritage and Tourism
- Graduate university study program Journalism and Public Relations
- Graduate university study program Entrepreneurship in Culture and Tourism
- Integrated university undergraduate and graduate study program Teacher Education
- Undergraduate professional study program Preschool Teacher education
- Postgraduate university study program Archaeology of Eastern Adriatic
- Postgraduate university study program Humanities
- Postgraduate university study program The Adriatic - a link between continents
- Postgraduate university study program Knowledge society and information transfer
- Joint postgraduate university study program Sociology of Regional and Local Development

#### NUMBER OF STUDENTS

5 550 students (4 400 students at humanities and social science departments)

#### NUMBER OF TEACHERS

143 employed teachers elected to scientific-teaching grades and 55 employed teachers elected to teaching grades (humanities and social science departments)

#### NUMBER OF SCIENTISTS

143 employed teachers elected to scientific-teaching grades (humanities and social science departments)

TOTAL BUDGET: 162.094.487,00 HRK

MSES FUNDING: 70%

OWN FUNDING: 30%

#### SHORT DESCRIPTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION:

The University of Zadar was established in 2002 but originally it was founded in 1396 and it is the first Croatian university. The modern development of higher education in Zadar started in 1955 with the Faculty of Philosophy in Zadar – University of Zagreb (from 1975 as part of the University of Split) and later establishment of the Teacher Training College in 1978. These two institutions formed the basis for the founding of the University of Zadar in 2002.

The University of Zadar is legally and functionally integrated university with 25 departments and 5 500 students. During its history the work of the University of Zadar was dedicated to humanities and social science study programs but in recent period it started to perform study programs from other fields.

## **CONCLUSIONS OF THE EXPERT PANEL**

The re-accreditation of 19 humanities and social sciences departments of the University of Zadar was done by three international expert panels:

- expert panel for the re-accreditation of 7 humanities departments (philological part)
- expert panel for the re-accreditation of 5 humanities departments (non-philological part)
- expert panel for the re-accreditation of 7 social science departments

Three international expert panels visited the University of Zadar on May 19-21, 2014 after a preliminary briefing session by Agency staff on May 18. Prior to the visit, panel members were provided with a self-evaluation report for the social sciences and humanities departments of the University, written in English. Self-evaluation reports for individual departments were prepared in Croatian only, and so could not be read by most of the panel members. During the visit, the panels had meetings with management, senior and junior teaching staff, PhD students, undergraduate students, and technical staff, during which those attending each meeting responded to questions raised by panel members. In the final session, the University management presented the University strategic plan and vision. The panel members wish to record their appreciation for the University's hospitality and for the full and frank discussions we were able to hold with all groups of staff and students. We also wish to commend the Agency for the efficiency with which our visit was organised.

## ***ADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION***

1. The University of Zadar has a clear vision and strategic plan which involves the establishment of the University as a key player in the Adriatic region, both as a teaching and research institution, and having a particular focus on maritime studies across multiple disciplines. This is inclusive of social sciences and the humanities so avoids compromising the breadth of disciplines in the University.



2. The finances of the University are well managed within the limited budget constraints.
3. There is a strong community of younger academic staff that are very enthusiastic to ensure the success of the University.
4. The staff have confidence in the University management.
5. Some individual departments are implementing excellent discipline-specific initiatives for enhancement within existing resources.

### ***DISADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION***

1. There is a lack of consistency between, on the one hand, the University strategic plan and quality assurance processes for teaching and research, and on the other hand the practice and implementation across the University. It is not clear what contingencies there are in the strategic plan to accommodate funding reductions that have occurred since the plan was first formulated or that might occur in the future. The administrative burden of quality control evaluation is high and therefore the evaluation process itself may be having a negative effect on the quality of the activities that these processes are intended to evaluate.
2. There appears to be limited or no feedback to students regarding how their concerns are being addressed and students feel that their concerns are not being taken seriously. Students feel that systems for monitoring and enhancing teaching quality are not effective. At least one notable exception is the Sociology Department, which implements student feedback procedures that could serve as a model for the rest of the University.
3. Laboratory provision is very poor where this is required in the social sciences, most notably in Psychology and in the Language and Linguistics Departments.
4. There appear to be no procedures in place to ensure common marking standards for student assessments across the University or to ensure that assessments are appropriate for any given course. There is not clear evidence of a process of curriculum review and development to minimise duplication of teaching across

courses, to ensure that there is progression of learning across the years of a given degree programme, or to ensure that course contents are regularly updated.

5. There are very few publications in international peer-reviewed journals or with international publishers, there is very little involvement in international level research grant applications, and only limited support for staff development. Staff appear to be overburdened with administration, leaving very limited time to undertake the high quality research that would be required to be internationally competitive. Some staff appear to have very high teaching loads.

### ***FEATURES OF GOOD PRACTICE***

1. Procedures in Sociology for responding to student concerns
2. Initiatives in Information Science and in Sociology for raising the international profile of staff
3. Management of finances
4. Focus on regional issues including multidisciplinary approaches to maritime studies.

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT***

Specific recommendations for improvement of quality that HEI should implement in accordance with the Criteria for the assessment of quality of higher education institutions within universities which are based on the ESG:

#### **1. Management of the Higher Education Institution and Quality Assurance**

- Ensure that agreed procedures for addressing ethical issues, student complaints, and for rolling out the university strategic plan are being implemented and are effective at Department level. Such procedures should be maximally efficient to avoid a substantial administrative burden on staff.

- Develop contingency plans for sustainability and development of the University to accommodate reductions in funding from the Croatian Government and lack of availability of new academic positions. This could include plans and effective support mechanisms to diversify income streams.
- Put in place effective staff development programmes, particularly for junior academic staff, and procedures for recognizing and rewarding academic staff success in teaching and in research. The term 'academic staff' and its equivalent in Croatian could be used to reflect the expectation that staff should undertake both research and teaching, and that they are not only teachers.
- Develop administrative support for staff preparing major research grant proposals for international level competitive funding, for example within Horizon 20/20. The university should create a Research Office actively engaged in providing help to facilitate large project applications and share good practice. From the self-evaluation document there is no office currently in the university that explicitly deals with research in any shape or form. Additional research support might be provided at the level of a Croatian Government Agency and that is shared across several universities and research institutes. The University of Zadar would benefit from more autonomy with regard to staff appointments and spending decisions within their available budget to allow more active pursuit of their strategic plan and goals.

## **2. Study Programmes**

- There should be the introduction of some form of independent assessment of marking standards and procedures for validation of assessments against stated learning outcomes. This should be coupled with procedures to address the very high failure rate on some courses, for example by having stricter entry criteria for those courses or adjusting assessments so that they accurately reflect learning outcomes.
- There should be procedures in place for regular curriculum and programme review to ensure that course materials are updated and include recent research.

Perhaps an initial major curriculum review could occur every three years, with the assistance of specialists outside the University. Special care should be taken to involve students, and if relevant also external stakeholders.

- The university at a central level should take the initiative to encourage course coordination between departments, and also to identify whether there are bureaucratic obstacles to such cooperation. It might also be useful more generally to draw PhD students into the education of BA students.
- The university has to investigate into the overall situation of giving ECTS credits, streamlining it and later monitoring its consistency.

### **3. Students**

- The University should consider supplementing the State Matura with assessments that can better guide students towards the courses that best fit their talents and interests.
- There should be implementation of procedures across the university to provide students with regular feedback regarding how their concerns are being addressed.
- Further development of contact with alumni and systematically collecting data about e.g. career and employment should be pursued.
- The university should test student peer mentoring, particularly at courses with a low level of passing.
- The University should consider employing an information officer, who could stay in contact with the students, monitor the websites and advice the departments on how the information can be improved.
- The University should regularly check the effectiveness of the mechanisms enabling the students to exert influence on decision-making.
- It is strongly recommended that the University take seriously complaints about mismanagement of teaching.

#### **4. Teachers**

- The university needs to make a revised strategy that takes the new situation regarding financing and recruitment into account, answering what problems the new situation creates in relation to staff reproduction and motivation and research output.
- It is recommended that strategies of 'human resource development' in general and the 'growth of scientific-teaching staff' in particular are discussed and defined at the institutional level.
- Administrative time needs to be explicitly registered and regulated, and sabbatical terms planned in good time, especially in order to safeguard that all staff get enough continuous time for doing research.

#### **5. Scientific and Professional Activity**

- It is strongly recommended to create an international and interdisciplinary based strategic research programme that can involve larger clusters of researchers.
- The university should try to identify the obstacles to international publication and suggest ways to address them.
- The university has to find the means to reward those who excel in research, either financially or by other means.
- There could be more proactive approaches to increasing international co-operation, and involvement in larger scale international projects or with a larger share of the research work and associated funding. It is recommended that as many staff as possible register as evaluators in relevant EU programs.
- There is an urgent need to provide staff with additional support to undertake the high quality preparation work required to be successful in attracting large international research grants. Establishing a University Research Office would be an important first step in providing such support. It would also be important to

seek ways to reduce administrative burdens on staff who have the highest chances of success in attracting such grants.

- Consider referring to full time staff involved in teaching undergraduates, as 'academic staff', and its Croatian equivalent, rather than teachers or teaching staff. This should be coupled with systems for assessing research quality and not only research quantity, together with systems to reward staff for high quality research as well as for high quality teaching. Some staff seem to have the impression that research is viewed as a hobby rather than a professional activity. These changes should help emphasise that staff are expected to undertake professional level research as well as professional level teaching. There would also have to be development of more efficient administrative procedures or provision of additional administrative support to monitor and reduce the administrative burden on academic staff.

## **6. International Cooperation and Mobility**

- Develop procedures to recognise courses completed by students at other universities as part of their programme in order to allocate ECTS on their return to the University of Zadar.
- Implement systems to encourage greater staff mobility, allowing for extended periods working in universities in other countries, and seek to recruit native speakers of foreign languages to permanent academic positions within the University of Zadar. Put in place further mechanisms to encourage non-academic experts in other countries to teach in guest lectures, or to teach guest courses. For example, in some countries there are foreign experts appointed on a part-time basis - e.g. 10% or 20% as adjunct professors for repeated visits over several years to provide this kind of external input. This might help increase the provision of courses in non-Croatian languages to encourage more visiting students from countries nearby (e.g. Italian and German) as well as from more distant countries (primarily in English).

## **7. Resources, Administration, Space, Equipment and Finance**

- There is a requirement to find means to reduce the administrative burden on academic staff, by provision of more administrative staff and by seeking to develop more efficient administrative procedures. The administrative load on staff should be monitored to ensure that it does not negatively impact on the quality of their teaching and research.
- There is a clear requirement to consolidate and organise the fragmented library facilities and to have a single and complete digitized catalogue. There should be a substantial increase in the number of student study spaces provided and student access to on-line search facilities.
- Look to co-operate with other Croatian Universities or with a Government agency in providing administrative support and financial advice (e.g. costing salaries and overheads) to help academic staff to prepare applications for very much larger competitive research grants, for example from the European Research Council or other Horizon 20/20 funding schemes. Some existing internal research support grants and national grants could be viewed as supporting pilot work as preparation for such larger grants. Support is required in the preparation of individual grants as well as in provision of workshops and training of staff to help raise their ambitions as well as their capacity for seeking external research grants. As a first step, it would be very important for the University to establish a Research Office with administrative resources that are wholly focused on supporting research grant preparation and the administrative and financial aspects of managing grants that are awarded, as well as managing internal funds to support pilot research and small scale projects.
- Laboratory provision and laboratory equipment for Psychology and for Language Learning urgently require modernising and expansion to meet international standard for these academic disciplines, and to give them the infrastructure required to be internationally competitive. Specifically, for both teaching and research, Psychology requires several more laboratory rooms that allow

individual interviews and experimental projects in settings that are comfortable and reasonably free of distractions, and modern electrophysiological equipment to support one of their main areas of strength. With appropriate infrastructure, the department would then be in a position to seek external grant funding to further develop their research facilities. Language teaching requires a language laboratory to support foreign language learning, and there should be serious consideration given to providing recording studio facilities for teaching and research both for Languages and for Linguistics.

- The University should seek to increase its financial reserves to ensure long-term sustainability and allow for future investment in major new initiatives.



## ***DETAILED ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE TO THE STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR RE-ACCREDITATION***

For Sections 1, 6 and 7, evaluations in this report refer to the departments covered by all three panels.

For Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5, evaluations in this report refer only to the following departments: Department of Archaeology, Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Department of History, Department of History of Art, Department of Philosophy.

### **1. Institutional management and quality assurance**

1.1 The University of Zadar has a clear vision which involves its establishment as a key regional player both as a teaching and research institution, and of being nationally leading in some areas, e.g. related to the Adriatic Sea and to marine studies, drawing on a range of disciplines, including the Social Sciences. This has been achieved thus far without compromising the Humanities. However, the strategic goals are broad, and there is not a clear operational plan with monitoring mechanisms to ensure progress towards those goals. The University has established links to a number of universities outside Croatia, many of which are comparable in being also small or medium size institutions with a strong regional profile. There is a lack of clarity as to how the university is modifying its strategic planning in response to the recent worsening financial situation. The financial limitations are frequently mentioned in the self-evaluation report as a cause of revision and downsizing of various projects and objectives.

The panel was also surprised to see that the strategic plan and goals of the University were not clearly presented in the University webpages or during the initial meeting of the panels with the institutional managers. It was presented only at the request of the panels during a final session at the end of the evaluation visit. These are weaknesses for a university which aims to project itself as an international institution with a clear vision of its present and future role as a teaching and research centre.

1.2 The panel was satisfied that the institution has developed adequate structures and processes. However, there were repeated complaints from staff that these structures were not efficient and overly burdensome, there were complaints from students that monitoring and quality assurance structures did not function effectively to ensure that underperforming staff or processes were corrected, and that student complaints were often not addressed.

### 1.3 N/A

1.4 Most study programs are in line with the mission of the university, but some have not been updated for some considerable time and there appears to be no regular process for curriculum review. More could be done in order to engage with the university's aim to integrate its institutions and students within the context of the demands of the labour market at regional and national level.

1.5 The panel appreciated the adoption of policies and procedures concerning the university governance and teaching. However, there is a lack of an equivalent procedure for monitoring research quality. Moreover, external private or public stakeholders are seldom involved in these procedures, and students complained that they were only nominally and not actively included.

1.6 The main instrument for monitoring teaching is student evaluation, which is implemented across the University. However, there was general consensus among students and some staff that most of these evaluations did not lead to any changes, or if changes occurred these were not communicated to the groups who had raised the concerns. A notable exception was in the Department of Sociology which organises staff-student meetings to discuss concerns and to inform student about any changes that had been made in response to those concerns. This could be a model for the rest of the University. It is also important to inform students when changes have not been made and why. For example, a course or process might be required within a degree programme even if students find it very challenging or would prefer to avoid it. If this is explained to students then they are more likely to accept that cases in which there is a lack of change are based on a justified decision rather than a lack of response.

Despite the presence of a number of initiatives aimed at monitoring and improving teaching quality, the panel felt that these developments were still at an initial stage, mainly directed at younger staff. Feedback received from staff and students during our visit tended to confirm this impression. Student evaluations of all courses and the presence of student representatives in various committees are highly commendable initiatives. However, once again, students seemed rather sceptical as to their real efficacy. More should be done in order to reassure the student body of the serious and committed approach of the university towards the improvement of teaching quality. Some staff take part in Erasmus exchanges but this is on a very small scale.

1.7 This is the area in which the panel found considerable space for improvement. The current system seems to be mainly based on a quantitative collection of data (e.g.

numbers of publications), with little incentive and no clear strategic plan to internationalise research output and improve the overall quality of research.

Sabbaticals are intended to provide concentrated time for research and, in principle are granted to staff if they have a clear research plan accepted by their department. In practise, however, sabbaticals are often only possible if colleagues can be persuaded to take over the teaching. This means that they rarely occur. If teaching and sabbaticals could be planned more than a year in advance at department level, this would ease the process of reorganising teaching and also allow research planning.

The University does not appear to have procedures or administrative staff that specifically support researchers with the administrative and budgetary aspects of preparing research grant applications that are internationally competitive and that attract large amounts of funding. If there are insufficient resources within the University of Zadar for this kind of support, then perhaps it could be organised at a national level through one of the national agencies and then shared among similar sized universities. It is not sufficient to run voluntary training workshops for staff. There is a need to provide support at the level of preparing individual grant applications. However, this should facilitate staff in the process of preparing applications, and not add to the administrative burdens of doing so.

There appears to be no strategy for concentrating on a limited number of strong research grouping to build research capacity that is competitive on a national level or international level, such as for Horizon 20/20.

There is a range of models for doctoral education across different departments, some with a focused topic and relatively full curriculum, while others are flexible and can be adapted to any topic. The average time for completing a dissertation varies from 4 to around 6 years, and a high percentage of doctoral students never finish. This is a concern for the university and is being discussed on different levels, but no clear, general strategy has been established to make the doctoral study more effective.

1.8 The creation of the Ethics committee is a positive sign of the University's commitment towards monitoring unethical behaviour more thoroughly. However, the committee seems to have a mainly reactive role, with little being done to spread good practice and encourage students to take ownership of the mechanisms which allow them a voice. The panel noticed that the only case in which the Ethics committee took a disciplinary stance was subsequent to a legal case. At the other end of the spectrum, there was widespread scepticism amongst the students consulted concerning the

university's capacity to address and solve questions of unethical behaviour amongst its staff.

## **2. Study programmes**

2.1 The five departments assessed here are monitoring the study programmes to greater or lesser extent, some only minimally. Some study programmes have not been revised for a considerable period. Stakeholders from private and public sectors, such as museums and cultural institutions, do not seem to be systematically included in monitoring the study programmes, and a significant proportion of students we met from four of the departments complained that they were not effectively included in the developing of study programmes. In some cases, they also complained for having too little influence on the way curricula are introduced, and that their feedback was frequently disregarded.

Recommendations: The University is recommended to formulate an operational plan for how to achieve national and regional leadership in marine and Adriatic studies, indicating methods of benchmarking and with explicit and realistic monitoring mechanisms.

Particular attention should be paid to the feedback of the students regarding the programs. It is also recommended that the university develop procedures for monitoring and adjusting study programmes with regular intervals, and that external stakeholders are involved or consulted in this work when relevant.

2.2 In many cases, enrolment quotas are probably in accordance with the need of society, but the exact need of society is difficult to define, unpredictable and highly debatable. Most departments enrol many students but let only a remarkable tiny proportion of them continue to graduate level. As the panel was also informed that a bachelor degree alone normally is considered much less qualifying for the labour market than a master degree, the enrolment quotas in these cases seem to be highly unbalanced. The best fit appears to be found within archaeology, where the demand is tied to museums and relatively assessable. Sometimes the Matura exam does not match the knowledge area of the university course, and the opportunities for the departments to select for the most suitable students and to limit the numbers of students, were not entirely clear. The representatives of the departments claimed that they lacked such possibilities, while representatives of the Agency for Science and Higher Education appeared convinced that it was up to Zadar University to regulate the intake of students themselves. At the national level an over-establishment of courses was argued to exist,

in some of the disciplines concerned, but the solution suggested was to stand up against competition from other universities, rather than to reduce the intake.

In the context of economic and financial crisis in the region the recent changes in social needs for the graduates of the study programmes in Humanities have not been analysed. The dynamics in regional labour market needs have not been studied as well. It seems that neither the University nor the Departments are aware of the danger of the oversized enrolment quotas. Also, horizontal mobility between the programmes and the interdisciplinary studies that may enlarge the competences of graduates and postgraduates are missing.

Recommendations: The University should take measures to the effect that the high rate of drop-outs becomes smaller. In some cases it may be achieved by giving a clear view as to what the departments can offer for the would-be students and what they cannot.

In the present economic situation, it might be advisable for the higher university authorities to take initiatives to regulate the size of intake at a national level to avoid oversized admittance, and to encourage coordination and internal mobility between Croatian institutes of higher education and research, rather than competition. Also, more detailed and reliable data on employment on the national level is necessary so that Zadar University and other universities can make realistic estimates of the number of students that it is necessary to educate within different disciplines.

2.3 In general, the number of qualified teachers corresponds well to the number of students. However, in a number of cases, junior teachers had to teach outside their special research area, especially when they had to jump in as stand-ins for absent teachers, and, less frequently, courses had been cancelled because of lack of teachers, or the full range of relevant topics could not be covered with the present staff. Combined courses between more departments exist to some extent, but more on ad hoc level than as a deliberate strategy to utilize teaching resources more effectively. One exception might be the joint effort of the departments of philosophy and classical philology to teach ancient philosophy in common.

Recommendations: The University at a central level should take the initiative to encourage course coordination between departments, and also to identify whether there are bureaucratic obstacles to such cooperation. It might also be useful more generally to draw PhD students into the education of BA students which would both ensure that new research is presented in teaching, and would give the PhD-students important teaching training.

2.4 For several courses in different departments, syllabi do not exist or have been created only shortly before the present assessment. Thus the expected outcome of these courses has been unclear to the students. For most courses syllabi do now exist, but no

consequent procedure seems to exist to ensure a uniform, clear defining of learning outcomes.

It was equally unclear how the reading material for certain courses (such as Logic) was provided.

Recommendations: The University should regulate an interval for the departments, within which they have to supply full syllabus information to the students, accessible in Croatian and English on the Internet. Full syllabus should include specified outcome of each course, and a list of accessible reading materials.

2.5 In general, most teachers and most exam regulations at the departments ensure a fair and full assessment of learning. However, some courses are completed with solely oral exams, a method which does not assess the full range of learning and which the students raised complaints about. In other courses obligatory work/exercises or similar are not included in the final assessment, so that the students' presentations remain unrecognized. There doesn't seem to exist any general monitoring system which would control and make sure that the assessments are in line with learning outcomes.

Recommendation: The University should find forms of recognizing all student presentations and to provide a sufficiently varied range of examination methods.

2.6 It is the clear impression from discussions with staff and students, that the allocation of ECTS is almost arbitrary. The ECTS can be very different between comparable courses, and exactly the same course has counted 3 ECTS for students on one level, 6 for students on another level (e.g. depending upon whether the course is part of a single or a double major), or that courses of similar content count sometimes 3, sometimes 4 ECTS. The students are aware of these discrepancies, which hazards the legitimacy of ratings.

Recommendations: The University has to investigate into the overall situation of giving ECTS credits, streamlining it and later monitoring its consistency. It may be useful to have standardized forms of assigning ECTS values to each type of course.

2.7 The variation between the study programmes is considerable. Some are comparable to good regional or international standards while others have not been adjusted to include recent research for a considerable time.

At some departments (most markedly the Department of Philosophy) important areas that the department should cover have no qualified teachers at all, where proper qualifications are demonstrated by publications relevant to the particular field.

Although emphasis in principle is put on the integration of research results and study programmes, some departments (markedly the Department of Philosophy) have very rigid study programmes, without considerable variation for a long period of time. We got very varying replies to the question how quickly a course can be updated; some

informants said it was a matter of weeks, others saw a bureaucratic process lasting over many months, even years.

Interdisciplinary approaches are missing at both graduate and postgraduate levels.

Recommendations: It is strongly recommended that study programmes are monitored and adjusted regularly to include recent research, and that courses are developed across different studies which would support an interdisciplinary approach, but also help towards a more effective use of teaching staff.

2.8 Based on interviews and short observations of teaching, it is the impression that varied and appropriate teaching methods often are applied. However, students repeatedly complained that independent and critical learning was not encouraged by more teachers but openly disapproved of, even though skills of critical and independent thinking should be a central outcome of good learning in all the subjects concerned.

We were told that some reading lists have not been updated for a long time and that some are not available at all.

It is regrettable that the panel members could not attend the course "Philosophy of science" which was scheduled, but later unfortunately cancelled. It meant that we could not attend any course offered by the Department of Philosophy.

Recommendations: The University could apply an international reviewer/review panel to monitor with regular intervals that curricula are up-to-date with societal or scientific change. The university should also design a way to monitor how often up-dating is made, and how long it takes for such updating to pass through the system at departmental level.

Critical and investigative thinking is fundamental in all research and should be encouraged within all fields at the university and reflected in all teaching. If this should not be the case, the university is strongly recommended to raise general discussion of it at departmental and university level.

2.9 The university and the departments have put great efforts into making important resources available for student, through the university library and through the electronic sites of departments or elsewhere. However, there is still a marked lack of access to relevant material for students on all levels.

The facilities (e.g., laboratories, reference collections, library resources, internet access to the databases) at the Departments of Archaeology and History of Art do not allow students to be fully involved in study and research processes.

Recommendations: Students may be involved in research which is part and parcel of university education anyway. In order to do that, they may be allowed full access to the research facilities – with the supervision of teachers, if needed.

2.10 Internship, training, practises on sites and similar are important elements in most studies, but not all. Good practices should be pointed out at the Departments of Archaeology and Anthropology (students participation in the research (field) works organized by the museums) and at the Department of History (student research papers yearly published in the Journal – edited by the students). The situation reflects an active and laudable ambition to secure marketable skills for the students in a situation when jobs are scarce.

### **3 Students**

3.1 Applicants to studies are admitted according to the Matura exams. Some studies have introduced additional requirements but not all. The department assessed here have not systematically collected data about the students' academic performance and the results of their Matura exams. A problem here is that the areas of knowledge and skill that are needed by the students in these subjects at the university level are normally not part of secondary education, and therefore difficult to assess.

Recommendation: The University should investigate the possibilities for testing skills central to particular disciplines, when these are not covered by the secondary education.

3.2 The university does support students' extracurricular activities in areas such as e.g. sport, voluntary solidarity work, housing, food, cultural events. In addition, many activities are organised for students who share a study area, some by departments, some on student initiative. In the latter case it is unclear how great support they receive from the respective department. Such activities will, however, be an important part of the new campus under construction.

3.3 The university has mentor institutions for new students, which in principle is an important initiative. However, the initiative is only directed towards first year students. There were general complaints that the system does not work in practise. In some departments we were not even able to trace out how mentorship works officially.

The institution does not organize senior students to mentor and support their younger peers which would be very beneficial especially in courses that have proven to be a problem for students and have very low pass-rates.

Recommendations: The University should test student peer mentoring, particularly at courses with a low level of passing. The University (or the departments) may take effort to attract senior students to mentor freshmen in order to help them find their way in the environment.



3.4 Procedures and methods for assessment are to some extent established at all departments, including students' possibility for appealing against an assessment, but to very varying degree. In some departments, only few methods are implemented; see above point 2.5. The evaluation panel has heard substantial complaints about how serious students' appeals are handled by the department, and especially about the lack of constructive feedback from teachers.

Pass-rates are not being systematically analysed, and little is being done concerning some courses that have alarmingly low pass-rates, for example Art History and part of the History study program.

Recommendations: The University should find ways of monitoring assessment methods and pass rates, and try to identify causes of difficulties. The departments should introduce formal regulations of how to handle students' feedback, which then should be observed.

3.5 Some departments do have contact with former students, but on an informal basis, and none of the departments has any procedures for systematic collection of data on their alumni's employment, except for relying on official data on unemployment for the whole country.

Recommendation: The University should set up a future alumni register, so that the career opportunities for examined students can be better assessed.

3.6 No material has been provided for the evaluation panel to assess to which extent the departments inform about their study programs. To judge from their homepages on the web, all departments have a public description of the content of the study programmes. Many of these webpages, however, need updating, and they have only described outcomes, qualifications and employment opportunities in very general terms.

The Doctoral Program for Humanities Studies has no curricula and the homepage of the university does not provide any information about the students enrolled or the faculty involved in it either. Thus the evaluation panel was left without substantial information about the numbers of students enrolled and their field of study.

Recommendations: The University should consider employing an information officer, who could stay in contact with the students, monitor the websites and advice the departments on how the information can be improved. The Doctoral Programs should make an effort to become visible in an informative way which means full description of the activity and detailed requirements.

3.7 Formal procedures have been established for students to express opinions and influence decision-making, but the clear impression from interviewing students is that these procedures do not work as well in practise as they are aimed to do.

Recommendations: The University should regularly check the effectiveness of the mechanisms enabling the students to exert influence on decision-making. If the formal procedures turn out to be ineffective or not observed, those responsible for that must be located and measures taken to ensure the future effectiveness of the procedures. The University also needs to design methods for ensuring feedback to the students. The University should design a teacher's training system which is regular, predictable and suits the temporalities of planning research and teaching.

3.8 The panel experienced general dissatisfaction among students concerning receiving feedback on e.g. surveys of teaching or complaints about some teachers who mismanage their teaching duties. The overall impression among students was that their opinion was not taken seriously. If it were taken into account, this was not communicated to the students.

Recommendations: See above. It is strongly recommended that the university take seriously complaints about mismanagement of teaching which not only creates problems for learning, but also leads to a general lack of credibility for the university, both among students and among staff.

## **4 Teachers**

4.1 All departments fulfil formal requirements concerning the number and qualifications of staff. The staff also covers core disciplines corresponding to the strategic goals for research. However, most departments do not satisfactorily cover all areas of teaching in the study programs. The plans for ensuring continuity of teaching in relevant areas in the future were only vaguely described, which might reflect the imposed restriction on new employments. However, most departments appeared to think of recruiting mainly in local terms, i.e. planning to recruit from the body of students they themselves had taught, rather than in terms of a possibly country-wise or international circulation of academic staff.

The panel understands that the current financial situation and the need for being somewhat specific impede such ambitions a great deal, but still highly relevant areas cannot be totally neglected as a result of these impediments since it might lead to a serious drop-out rate of students who for example will go to another university for doing their studies.

In addition, it seems to be difficult to get a reliable and certain estimate of the number of active PhD students, which in practise may be relatively small. The institution seems to support fragmentary postgraduate studies that contradict modern interdisciplinary approaches in Humanities.

Recommendations: The University needs to make a revised strategy, that takes the new situation regarding financing and recruitment into account, answering what problems the new situation creates in relation to staff reproduction and motivation and research output – and how these problems can be tackled or adjusted to, under the present hardship conditions. Co-operation between departments may help to ease the burden of young teaching staff to a certain degree.

4.2 With the present economic restraints, the possibilities for the departments for developing staff are restricted. There are considerations about replacements for potential retirements in all departments, but they are responses to single problems rather than part of a plan or a deliberate policy. No strategy has been developed for replacement, no discussions seem to have been conducted on the possibility of long-term adjustments or changes of research profile when members of staff retire, and part-time faculty may also be an issue that needs further consideration. Continuing work on the areas where one has been successful before is part of the strategy for research.

The evaluation panel lacked detailed programmes of invited teachers from abroad (invited lectures) and lists of teachers staying abroad (for a semester perhaps) or being invited as visiting professors.

Recommendation: It is recommended that strategies of ‘human resource development’ in general and the ‘growth of scientific-teaching staff’ in particular are discussed and defined at the institutional level.

4.3 The departments in general are concerned about the ratio of full time teachers to students. In a few cases, it is not optimal, but these are exceptions, and the pertinent departments are aware of the situation and strive to amend it. Overall, the rates do not seem worse than in many similar departments in other parts of Europe.

4.4 As concerns research, the departments support the staff in different ways. For example, a course in academic writing in English was recently given at the university, and there has been economic support to attend conferences, assistance publishing and similar. However, there are no well-developed and transparent policies for giving such support. As concerns teaching, new teacher training courses have been established, but there is no fully developed policy with defined goals for pedagogical development. The main attitude of the teaching staff was that teaching is learned individually by practise, and by apprenticeship.

Recommendations: The University should design a policy for how pedagogic development can be ensured in spite of the hardship conditions. It also needs to design a policy for encouraging its staff to get more comfortable in using non-Croatian languages when so is needed and for how to practically address issues of international publishing etc.

4.5 Assignment of workload is regulated by contract. In most cases it seems to be distributed in a relatively fair way among colleagues. This seems to be a practise reached by common consent rather than through formal regulation. In other cases, however, some teachers repeatedly had to teach for and more than their colleagues, and had difficulties in getting time for research. In most cases, it is possible for staff to get sabbatical years for research once in seven years, if they have had a project accepted by the department. Such arrangement, however, inevitably means more teaching for their colleagues. None of the departments have fixed plans or schedules for sabbaticals which would enable the department to plan both research and teaching in advance. It would seem that if sabbaticals are not pre-planned, the department's offer of courses or lecture hours will regularly be over-dimensioned. The number of hours in the presence of a teacher that the students can expect per week appears to be generously supplied, compared to what is often possible at other universities. This is advantageous to the students, but may be a setback for the research productivity of the university.

Recommendations: Administrative time needs to be explicitly registered and regulated, and sabbatical terms planned in good time, especially in order to safeguard that all staff get enough continuous time for doing research.

4.6 External commitments are regulated and have to be approved by departments so that they do not interfere with the staff member's obligation at the department.

## **5 Scientific and Professional Activity**

5.1 Some of the departments have clearly defined research profiles, e.g. problems linked to the Adriatic region, but not all, which is quite understandable in some cases, e.g. in the Department of Philosophy. The departments are registering research output in form of publications. However, no general, well-defined performance indicators have been presented to the evaluation panel, and none of the departments seem to have developed a regular procedure for internally monitoring and evaluating research. Introductory efforts have been carried out to identify criteria and also been tested on a voluntary basis in some departments, but it was not clear what had happened to this project.

In general, the strategic research agenda seems to be fragmented.

Recommendations: It is strongly recommended to create an international and interdisciplinary based strategic research programme that can involve larger clusters of researchers. If it is not possible at University level, the departments may elaborate a profile that both fits the capacities of the staff and enables them to do work of a broader

interest as far as possible. It is possible as some examples show, but could be much more generally applied.

5.2 Some departments have developed cooperation with other national institutions as museums, archives, and academy institutions, others to much lesser extent. Some arrange regularly international conferences in Zadar, and individuals participate in similar activities abroad. However, in general the level of activities could be much enhanced, and the departments have been able to attract or participate in only very few international common research projects, and the staff sometimes seemed hesitant in acknowledging the usefulness of wider academic exchanges of ideas when Croatian issues are concerned.

In addition, the departments' participation in national projects seems less sufficient. The cooperation with 'other scientific organization' is not well visible in 'the institutional mission' document. The weaknesses of the institution are to be seen in the presently underdeveloped inter-institutional collaboration, which has an impact on the lack of participation in international research projects, a smaller number of papers published in international journals (WoS) and books published by prestigious international publishers.

Recommendations: The University leadership need to encourage scientific collaboration but should do this on the basis of an understanding that such efforts must be based on the active involvement of research groups and individual scholars – not to get stuck in an unproductive top-down approach, as is often the case internationally. Thus the initiative may come from the departments, but the university may encourage such initiatives.

5.3 Some of the departments have an adequate number of researchers, for example History and Archaeology, while especially Department of Philosophy is understaffed within more important research areas which are not covered. The Anthropology department has two teachers/researchers presently abroad, which leaves no room for research for the remaining staff.

Recommendations: See above for planning of administrative work and of sabbaticals. The university should also encourage departments to develop longer-term strategies for recruitment of staff to understaffed fields, once the economy has improved.

5.4 With a few exceptions, papers are published in Croatian language in Croatian journals which, in spite of their academic qualities in general, cannot be claimed to provide a significant, global contribution to their scientific field.

The panel wants to emphasize that it sees no problem in Zadar researchers devoting their interest to Croatian issues, but we are convinced 1/ that these would also be of interest to a general European audience, 2/ that many Croatian issues have their

correspondences in other European countries, 3/ and that mutual lessons can be learnt in a more active interaction over the borders.

Recommendations: The University should try to identify the obstacles to international publication and suggest ways to address them – whether they rest in lack of contacts, limited language competence, lack of linguistic advice, or whatever. A continuous interdisciplinary seminar series, directed to the aim of international publication, could be a good resource. Also, a formalized series of conferences or research cooperation with researchers from countries that share some characteristics with Croatia (e.g. in size, location, history etc.) may lead to a fruitful exchange of ideas and demonstrate, that knowledge about Croatia certainly can be of interest also outside Croatia.

5.5 No formal system exists at any of the departments for recognizing and encouraging excellent research, except in the context of (now inhibited) promotion. The disincentive for striving toward research excellence that lies in a stop of promotions and new recruitment of staff should be a concern to Croatia.

Recommendation: The University has to find the means to reward those who excel in research, either financially or by other means (such as concentrating those persons in teaching at PhD level).

5.6 Many articles from all departments have been published in peer-reviewed journals. The evaluation panel does, however, consider the total number of publications relatively small. As stated above, the overwhelming number of articles is published in Croatian journals, and in Croatian. It remains a question of definition what actually constitutes 'an adequate number' of peer-reviewed publications. Still, considering the size and coverage of the departments, the evaluation panel would have expected a much higher number of publications in international, peer-reviewed journals.

Recommendations: See 5.4. The University may help by covering the occasional costs of publishing materials in international journals (such as copyright for pictures, etc.), and by establishing an internal office for translation or language revision.

5.7 The number of projects is unevenly distributed among the departments, but in general the number of international projects is much lower than one would have expected from an institution the size of Zadar University. To attract more projects, it is paramount that the University establishes efficient administrative institutions to help with all practicalities in applying, such as budget, but also advice on formulating fundable research projects that are formatted according to the expectations of international funding bodies. Many staff members have been evaluating projects in Croatia and neighbouring countries, but apparently none in the EU-context.

Recommendations: See above 1.7. It is recommended that as many as possible register as evaluators in relevant EU programs. Any single evaluator would gain important

experience to be shared with colleagues and utilised in applications. Evaluators with experience of such work can lead workshops in project formulation, and the university also needs to put aside money for some permanent advisory staff mastering budgets and project writing.

5.8 The Department of Archaeology has established well-functioning technology transfer, e.g. to museums and to private companies in connection with rescue excavations. Anthropology actively works with informational material for the tourist industry. The other departments have some interaction with different sectors outside academia, but on an ad hoc basis and irregularly.

Recommendation: Both the University and the departments should strive for establishing regular contacts with institutes outside the system of higher education. Museums or secondary schools (for giving extra-mural lectures to pupils) are an option.

5.9 Humanities departments have only few possibilities for procuring additional earnings from outside University, with the exception of Department of Archaeology. When it happens, the external activities do not impede core activities, and the ratio between core activities and additional earnings seems well balanced.

Within the scientific fields of the departments accredited here, there are no obvious ways of procuring additional earnings.

5.10 New doctoral study programs have been instituted in recent years and are an important improvement compared to the earlier apprentice system. However, they can certainly be developed further as concerns structure and especially content. The general study program in Humanities consists of a frame structure while the exact content of courses etc. seems to be shifting and decided for each individual doctoral student. The number of dropouts from the PhD study is far too high - the evaluation panel was told that it was near to 80% - which is explained also with the high number of doctoral students who have no state financing but must work in addition to their studies. This is not the most efficient use of academic resources, neither for the students nor for the teaching staff. It also means that the average time for completing the thesis normally exceeds three years, which is a significant disadvantage for the students internationally when applying for Postdoc position or for support for research projects.

Recommendations: The Humanities programme should be reviewed and elaborated so that it gives room both for structure and for individual adjustment. Individual students studying on individual schedules may need extra support and structure not to get delayed or losing motivation.

## **6. International cooperation and mobility**

6.1 In recent years, Zadar University has increasingly attracted students from outside as well as within the local and regional area. This is partly due to new, nationally defined admittance criteria so that students do not have to travel to Zadar to complete an entrance exam, and partly due to information about the different areas of study being made widely available, particularly on the university web pages.

There do not appear to be reliable data on how many students have chosen Zadar as first priority, and in which studies. These data would offer a major asset for increasing mobility from other institutions.

Therefore, mobility of students is only partly implemented and there are few data available which allow for a quantification and assessment of the results of university mobility policies. Moreover, there seems to be an expectation that students choosing to carry on to the graduate two-year course will do so in the same university as they completed their undergraduate studies.

6.2 There are examples of students from other countries attending courses at the University of Zadar, and of University of Zadar students undertaking part of their undergraduate study at universities in other countries. However, students commented that they do not tend to obtain ECTS for study completed abroad, and may have to undertake additional courses and assessments on return to the university. This is seen by students as a barrier to mobility, and few students take advantage of the opportunity to complete part of their programme abroad.

6.3 There are clear opportunities for staff to be involved in international cooperation. Academic staff and full time researchers are encouraged to take part in international cooperation through exchange schemes, by participating in international conferences, and by arranging international conferences in Zadar. International mobility relies mainly on informal recognition by fellow staff members and good will. There is no formal structure to reward or recognise participation in international work. From discussions with individual staff, there appears to be more international cooperation in the form of short visits than is evident from the university self-evaluation report. In Sociology there is an International Joint Master's Degree enabling mobility of staff and students organised with several other universities. This could serve as a model for other departments. However, current mobility is still rather limited in both staff numbers and duration of the period spent abroad. The University could be more pro-active in encouragement and support for such activity, coupled with a clear structure for



monitoring, evaluating and rewarding international cooperation, but such a structure should not have burdensome reporting requirements for staff.

The national research funding system in Croatia has moved to supporting fewer, larger projects, and access to this funding is more competitive than previously. However, staff have very little experience of writing larger grants that are nationally or internationally competitive, and there are no forms of administrative support at a national or at university level to facilitate researchers writing larger applications. A University Research Office should be established to provide this kind of support. The burden of administration on staff, also leaves very limited time to undertake the high quality research and thorough reading, pilot work and preparation that is required for an internationally competitive research grant application.

6.4 The University is making good progress in developing its international associations, particularly within the region of the Adriatic and other neighbouring countries. However, a great deal more could be done to promote and facilitate a higher international profile for research output by publishing more in languages other than Croatian, by having more members of staff represented on the boards of international organisations and learned societies, and by attracting more international research projects.

6.5 Exchange agreements have been established with a number of foreign universities, and relevant information made available internationally for prospective students from abroad. Still, only a limited number of courses are given in languages other than Croatian.

6.6 Exchange agreements have been established with a number of foreign universities, and teachers from abroad do come regularly for short visits to teach or attend conferences at University of Zadar. However, there seems to be no policy or expressed interest in attracting applicants from abroad for permanent positions, and the vast majority of staff seem to be educated almost exclusively in the Croatian educational system. It was also noticed that Foreign Language departments have no mother-tongue speakers amongst their staff. This was specifically mentioned by language students in both their written and oral feedback.

6.7 The number of international exchange agreements is high, although the implementation of these agreements in actual exchanges could be increased. In addition, there is a well-developed cooperation in teaching and research between departments and local institutions outside the university, for example museums, archives, and academy institutes. There are several European projects in which some departments are

involved as partners, although not a project co-ordinators. This is positive in the context of the University's relatively small size and of Croatia's place in European academic networks.

## **7. Resources: administration, space, equipment and finances**

7.1 There are satisfactory learning resources for classroom based teaching. However, other learning resources are far from being fully adequate. The laboratory provision in Psychology is very poor, and with the exception of a few modern computers, the equipment is largely of historical interest. There is a lack of individual rooms for research and student projects that require individual interviews or experimental work with human volunteers in a distraction free setting. The focus of Psychology on electrophysiological recording is a potential strength, but the outdated equipment and poor laboratory provision would not allow teaching of leading edge methodology or of staff research that will be recognised internationally. One of the few laboratories was unusable because the ceiling had collapsed. There is also a requirement for technical support to maintain and upgrade specialist equipment and for computer programme development in setting up experiments for student and staff projects. There is a lack of Language laboratories for the learning of foreign languages and this was mentioned by some students during our visit. The provision of study space and the unfinished digitization of the library stock is also in need of substantial improvement. Considerably more study spaces with access to online search facilities are required for students, and both students and staff should have the opportunity to browse books in the library stock rather than request individual items from library staff. The recent purchase of JSTOR is a major advance, but students should be given easier access to this resource. The IT support is under-staffed relative to the high number of students, staff and facilities for which it is responsible. It is hoped that these aspects will be given priority in the creation of new facilities in the new Campus, but also in refurbishment of facilities for Departments that will remain in their current accommodation.

7.2 Senior and junior academic staff reported that their administrative burden had increased substantially in recent years, and this was undermining their capacity to undertake their research and teaching. It was also surprising that, in the calculation of the work load of academic staff in the Self-Evaluation Report, there is a statement of teaching load, but there is no indication of administrative load. The recent freeze on all new posts of any kind has certainly impacted negatively on the situation, with a lack of an adequate number of administrative staff, leading to additional administrative burdens on academic staff. Although formally academic staff are expected to have 50%

of their time on teaching and 50% of their time on research, because teaching time is monitored, then it is research time that is dramatically reduced by increased administrative loads. There is a clear requirement to monitor the administrative load on staff, and to seek new and more efficient but effective administrative procedures that reduce loads on both administrative and academic staff.

7.3 The Self-Evaluation Report does not appear to address this topic nor, during our visit, were we invited to discuss it with non-teaching staff at the University.

7.4 The poor and outdated laboratory equipment in Psychology does not comply with international standards. There is also no obvious technical support to ensure training for students and staff in relevant usage protocols for the equipment that is available. The lack of a Language laboratory is a particularly worrying deficiency in a university which prides itself on the teaching of an impressive range of foreign languages. Some research leaders did not have a realistic impression of the status of their laboratories relative to international standards.

7.5 Within the given economic framework, the available teaching and research facilities are adequate, with the notable exceptions of very poor laboratory provision in Psychology and in Language learning. The computer replacement policy is good and important, but it is not clear that it is implemented throughout the university. There is a requirement to provide more on-line resources, provision of additional databases and computer study areas for supporting teaching and research, as well as substantially enhanced laboratory facilities, and these should be prioritized in the university's future planning. To reduce some costs, the university could also consider use of more open source computer software for applications that are not purchased at a national level. Examples might be use of the R statistical software, Open Office, Mozilla Firefox and Thunderbird, and Linux/Ubuntu operating systems.

7.6 With regard to the library, the panel identified three areas which need substantial improvement: a) Completion of the digital catalogue (currently at 70%); b) A substantial increase of student study space in the central site, including provision of dedicated space for group work; c) Integration of all departmental libraries in a single digitised catalogue system.

7.7 The University appears to have a solid financial plan which allows for a transparent and efficient management of its resources. Its limited autonomy with regard to ministerial funding is compensated by a number of other income-producing initiatives at local level as much as through European sources such as in the case of the refurbishment of existing buildings at the new campus site. The panel noted that the

University's reserves are not particularly substantial (700.000 Euros): increasing these should be a goal as a means to secure the University's long-term stability in potential times of national financial difficulties. The University could also seek to further diversify its income streams. Given the university's attractive location and its involvement in cultural history, there would seem to be possibilities for philanthropic funding, in particular in collaboration with Croatian associations abroad, and by developing links with successful alumni.

7.8 The panel is satisfied that the University does use its funds to increase the quality of teaching and research both centrally and at the level of individual departments. This is an issue on which all staff involved in our visit seemed to agree. The student body, however, did not seem entirely convinced that these initiatives are effective in addresses pockets of bad practice in teaching which are still present.