



**Report
of the Expert Panel
on the REACCREDITATION
of the University Postgraduate (Doctoral) Study Programme
“Quality in Education”
University of Zadar**

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INTRODUCTION

The Expert Panel appointed by the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE) created this Report on the Re-accreditation of the University Postgraduate (Doctoral) Programme “Quality in Education” on the basis of the Self-Evaluation Report of the Programme, other documentation submitted and a visit to the University of Zadar Department of Pedagogy.

The Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE), a public body listed in EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education) and a full member of ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), re-accredits higher education institutions (hereinafter: HEIs) and their study programmes in line with the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education (Official Gazette 45/09) and 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 (OG 24/10). In this procedure parts of activities of higher education institutions and university postgraduate study programmes are re-accredited.

Expert Panel is appointed by the Agency's Accreditation Council, an independent expert body, to carry out independent evaluation of post-graduate university study programmes.

The Report contains the following elements:

- Short description of the study programme,
- The recommendation of the Expert Panel to the Agency's Accreditation Council,
- Recommendations for institutional improvement and measures to be implemented in the following period (and checked within a follow-up procedure),
- A brief analysis of the institutional advantages and disadvantages,
- A list of good practices found at the institution,
- Conclusions on compliance with the prescribed conditions of delivery of a study programme,
- Conclusions on compliance with the criteria for quality assessment.

Members of the Expert Panel:

1. Professor Lianghuo Fan, Head of Mathematics, Science and Health Education Research Centre, University of Southampton;
2. Professor Carlinda Leite, Centre for Research and Intervention in Education, University of Porto;
3. Professor Neven Ricijaš, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Zagreb;
4. Professor Nihad Bunar, Department of Child and Youth Studies, Stockholm University;
5. Professor Reinhold Stipsits, Universität Wien;
6. Professor Maria Assumpta Aneas Alvarez, Faculty of Education, University of Barcelona;
7. Professor Matthew John Schuelka, School of Education, University of Birmingham;
8. Professor Rachel Katherine Shanks, School of Education, University of Aberdeen;
9. Professor Lasse Lipponen, University of Helsinki.

The higher education institution was visited by the following Expert Panel members:

1. Professor Maria Assumpta Aneas Alvarez, Faculty of Education, University of Barcelona, Spain;
2. Professor Lianghuo Fan, Head of Mathematics, Science and Health Education Research Centre, University of Southampton, United Kingdom;
3. Professor Lasse Lipponen, University of Helsinki, Finland.

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

- Emita Blagdan, ASHE, coordinator;
- Ivana Rončević, ASHE, interpreter at the site visit and translator of the Report.

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

- Management,
- Study programme coordinators,
- Doctoral candidates,
- Teachers and supervisors.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme: **Postgraduate doctoral study programme: “Quality in Education”**

Institution providing the programme: **University of Zadar**

Institution delivering the programme: **University of Zadar, Department of Pedagogy**

Scientific area and field: **Social sciences, pedagogy**

Place of delivery: University of Zadar

Number of doctoral candidates (all): 34

Number of HEI-funded doctoral candidates: (assistants at the University of Zadar): 1

Number of self-funded and employer-funded doctoral candidates: 33

Number of inactive doctoral candidates (not enrolled in a regular year, but retaining the right to study): 3

Number of teachers in the doctoral study programme: 16 in total; 11 from the University of Zadar and 5 from other HEIs (1 from the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, 2 from the University of Osijek, 1 from the Institute of Education, University of London and 1 from Columbus State University, USA).

Ratio of teachers at this PhD programme from the UNIZD and other HEIs: UNIZD = 68,75 %; other HEIs = 31,25%

Number of supervisors and doctoral candidates they supervise: 9 officially appointed supervisors, 10 doctoral candidates

Ratio of appointed supervisors to doctoral students: 1.1

Number of doctoral candidates to whom a supervisor has been officially appointed: 10

Learning outcomes of the study programme:

LO 1: To understand, interpret and critically reflect on education theories

LO 2: To formulate and explain problems in the area of the educational sciences

LO 3: To compare and interpret critically pedagogical concepts (pre-school, primary and secondary, alternative and standard education)

LO 4: To understand theories and argumentation models about educational goals

LO 5: To use categorical pedagogical concepts and terminology appropriately

LO 6: To postulate, formulate and operationalise research issues in the field of pedagogy and the educational sciences

LO 7: To demonstrate the ability to create, design, implement and adapt scientific-research processes

LO 8: To research issues in the field of education independently and autonomously and publish original results

LO 9: To participate in the work of scientific-research teams and create new scientific-research projects

LO 10: To plan, organise, manage and lead scientific-research and project tasks and activities, to achieve research goals in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary teams and apply them in multicultural environments

LO 11: To analyse critically, evaluate and synthesise new and complex research ideas

LO 12: To write scientific papers according to the requirements of scientific and professional standards

LO 13: To disseminate scientific insights and use scientific arguments to communicate one's areas of expertise to colleagues, the wider scientific community and the wider social setting

LO 14: To apply ethical principles to social research, particularly those pertaining to the confidentiality of personal and other data, a professional research attitude towards respondents, interpreting and disseminating the results of research, protecting research participants, avoiding conflicts of interest, and the harmfulness and negative consequences of plagiarism.

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

Upon the completion of the re-accreditation procedure and the examination of the materials submitted (Self-Evaluation Report, etc.), the visit to the higher education institution and interviews with HEI members in accordance with the visit protocol, the Expert Panel renders its opinion in which it recommends to the Accreditation Council of the Agency the following:

Confirmation on compliance for performing parts of activities – renew the licence and label it as “high quality”.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The HEI should:

1. Consider forming research groups organized around and focused on well-defined topics, based on the staffs' areas of expertise. Thereby, the quantity and the quality of research output is expected to increase.
2. Set up a programme for continuous monitoring of the PhD students' overall study conditions in order to increase the completion rates and to prevent dropout from the programme.
3. Identify and implement new strategies to enhance the societal impact of doctoral training and research.
4. Develop strategies aiming at supporting international and national research collaboration and mobility.
5. Closely monitor the balance between research and teaching for the academic staff to ensure they have enough time for research activities and mobility.
6. Introduce the RRI approach (Responsible Research and Innovation) into the doctoral programme.
7. Increase grants and other economic support measures for doctoral students and researchers.
8. Actively apply Continuous Quality Assurance plan.

ADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

- In a structural sense, it is the expert panel's opinion, that the programme is characterized by organizational flexibility, ambitious leadership, clear vision, collaborative climate at all levels and positive organizational culture. The programme benefits from being part of a relatively small and internally well-integrated university, which facilitates inclusion of academic staff from other universities, and from sharing the same quality framework with other 27 doctoral programs at the HEI.
- The HEI offers national and international researchers opportunities for taking temporary positions as guest teachers and researchers.
- Good PhD student-supervisor ratio.
- Interdisciplinary nature of the programme, allowing induction of new methods, and a variety of theoretical approaches to the field of Pedagogy.
- Professionally experienced and ambitious PhD students with high expectations on the programme quality and the conditions of its delivery.
- One of the expert panel's findings is that PhD students are satisfied with their academic learning process, as well as with the programme's innovative and open approach (i.e. non-formal education settings, organizational pedagogy, adult education, etc.). Furthermore, the students expressed satisfaction with teaching methodology, access to literature, and other necessary learning materials.
- The supervisors possess a variety of competences and expertise in different fields.
- Changing supervisor, irrespective of reason, is a flexible process, leading to no penalties for students.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

- There is no formal virtual platform, for example Moodle, for internal communication and exchange of information, assignments, papers, evaluation, etc. Currently Google Drive is used, which the expert panel does not consider as adequate for the purpose.
- The absence of formal research groups that could address relevant areas more thematically and in more depth.
- Institutional grants are limited. The expert panel has learned, during the visit, that the HEI is trying to increase funding opportunities through institutional, national and international projects. Anyway, a large number of the students have to, entirely on their own, carry the economic cost of the programme. This could potentially constitute a risk compelling some student to drop out of the programme.
- The expert panel has noticed that the students' skills in English are at a low to medium level. The HEI has to set up and implement plans to improve the language skills.
- Readiness to participate in international mobility activities among staff is limited due to a lack of time, money, professional and family-related obligations.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

- The HEI provides Turnitin Software to prevent plagiarism.
- Transparent and clear procedures for admission to the programme, supervision, monitoring and evaluating individual performances of the students and supervisors.

- Due to positive organizational culture and flexibility (paired with dedication) of the staff and the students there is a readiness to with a short notice organize activities, such as for example mobility, seminars in weekend, etc.
- Two international conferences have been organized. One of their particular aims was to provide doctoral students with opportunities to create contacts and build networks.
- School principals from the city of Zadar are in diverse roles involved in the doctoral programme delivery.
- The expert panel was informed by the interviewed students that the programme is served by a fast and good-quality information system.
- Social networks (WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.) are frequently used in communication between students and supervisors, something that has fostered a sense of community.
- PhD students are dedicated and involved in the programme's development.
- Flexible approach to students' needs and strong commitment to dialogue by the supervisors concerning conflict resolution, decision-making, methodology of teaching.
- Theoretical reflections are built on students' professional background and previous knowledge.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRESCRIBED CONDITIONS FOR THE DELIVERY OF A STUDY PROGRAMME

Minimal legal conditions:	YES/NO notes
1. Higher education institution (HEI) is listed in the Register of Scientific Organisations in the scientific area of the programme, and has a positive reaccreditation decision on performing higher education activities and scientific activity.	YES
2. HEI delivers programmes in the two cycles leading to the doctoral programme, i.e., first two cycles in the same area and field/fields (for interdisciplinary programmes), and employs a sufficient number of teachers as defined by Article 6 of 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 (OG 24/10).	YES
3. HEI employs a sufficient number of researchers, as defined by Article 7 of the the Ordinance on Conditions for Issuing Licence for Scientific Activity, Conditions for Re-Accreditation of Scientific Organisations and Content of Licence (OG 83/2010).	YES
4. At least 50% of teaching as expressed in norm-hours is delivered by teachers employed at the HEI (full-time, elected into scientific-teaching titles).	YES
5. Student: teacher ratio at the HEI is below 30:1.	YES
6. HEI ensures that doctoral theses are public.	YES Defences of the dissertations are published on the University website http://www.unizd.hr defended in the University's public rooms and open to all interested members of the public. Dissertations in printed form are available at the University Library and stored in a digital format in the Digital Repository of the University of Zadar and the National Repository of Doctoral Dissertations DABAR, available on the DART-Europe portal, https://repozitorij.unizd.hr/en
7. HEI launches the procedure of revoking the academic title if it is determined that it has been attained contrary to the conditions stipulated for its attainment, by severe violation of	YES The procedure for revoking the academic degree of Doctor of Science is regulated

the studying rules or based on a doctoral thesis (dissertation) that has proved to be a plagiarism or a forgery according to provisions of the statute or other enactments.	by the Ordinance on Postgraduate Studies.
Additional/ recommended conditions of the ASHE Accreditation Council for passing a positive opinion	YES/NO notes
1. HEI (or HEIs in joint programmes) has at least five teachers appointed to scientific-teaching titles in the field, or fields relevant for the programme involved in its delivery.	YES
2. In the most recent reaccreditation, HEI had the standard Scientific and Professional Activity marked as at least "partly implemented" (3).	YES In the previous reaccreditation procedure (2014) the HEI was assessed as being "in the initial phase" for the standard Scientific and Professional Activity, but after producing and delivering the Strategic Programme of Scientific Research and accompanying Action Plan, this drawback was eliminated (Supplement 4, Agency for Science and Higher Education certificate).
3. The doctoral programme is aligned with the HEI's research strategy.	YES
4. The candidate: supervisor ratio at the HEI is not above 3:1.	YES
5. All supervisors meet the following conditions: a) PhD, elected into a scientific title, holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position and/or has at least two years of postdoctoral research experience; b) active researcher in the scientific area of the programme, as evidenced by publications, participation in scientific conferences and/or projects in the past five years (table 2, Supervisors and candidates); c) confirms feasibility of the draft research plan upon admission of the candidate (or submission of the proposal); d) ensures the conditions (and funding) necessary to implement the candidate's research (in line with the draft research plan) as a research project leader, co-leader, participant, collaborator or in other ways; e) trained for the role before assuming it (through workshops, co-supervisions etc.); f) received a positive opinion of the HEI on previous supervisory work.	YES
6. All teachers meet the following conditions: a) holds a scientific or a scientific-teaching position; b) active researcher, recognized in the field relevant for the course (table 1, Teachers).	YES

7. The supervisor normally does not participate in the assessment committees.	No doctoral theses have been presented yet.
8. The programme ensures that all candidates spend at least three years doing independent research (while studying, individually, within or outside courses), which includes writing the thesis, publishing, participating in international conferences, field work, attending courses relevant for research etc.	YES
9. For joint programmes and doctoral schools (at the university level): cooperation between HEIs is based on adequate contracts; joint programmes are delivered in cooperation with accredited HEIs; the HEI delivers the programme within a doctoral school in line with the regulations and ensures good coordination aimed at supporting the candidates; at least 80% of courses are delivered by teachers employed at HEIs within the consortium.	Not applicable.

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

	Quality assessment (“high level of quality” or “improvements are necessary”) and the explanation of the Expert Panel
1. RESOURCES: TEACHERS, SUPERVISORS, RESEARCH CAPACITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE	
1.1. HEI is distinguished by its scientific/ artistic achievements in the discipline in which the doctoral study programme is delivered.	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The delivery of the study programme is directly linked to the scientific activities of the staff of the Department of Pedagogy. Teachers, supervisors, and doctoral students publish actively in relevant national forums. However, improvement to publish more in international journals and for a wider scientific community is needed.</p>
1.2. The number and workload of teachers involved in the study programme ensure quality doctoral education.	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>Teachers from the University of Zadar (11) deliver 68.75 % of the study programme. The number of teachers and their workload in the doctoral study appears to be reasonable. This ensures the quality of the programme in this dimension.</p>
1.3. The teachers are highly qualified researchers who actively engage with the topics they teach, providing a quality doctoral programme.	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The teaching staff has good qualifications, and a moderate number of scientific publications relevant for the programme area. However, most of the publications are still published in national forums. More work could be published in English, and in international forums.</p>
1.4. The number of supervisors and their qualifications provide for quality in producing the doctoral thesis.	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>There are nine supervisors, and 10 doctoral students. The supervisors include one full professor with tenure, two full professors, two associate professors, and three assistants. The supervisor-student ratio of is good.</p>
1.5. The HEI has developed methods of assessing the qualifications and	<p>High level of quality</p>

<p>competencies of teachers and supervisors.</p>	<p>There are necessary documents and established procedures for evaluating teachers' and supervisors' competences and qualifications, such as, "Quality Assurance System at the University of Zadar".</p>
<p>1.6. The HEI has access to high-quality resources for research, as required by the programme discipline.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The University of Zadar offers students various learning resources such as textbooks, databases and the University Library holdings. These provide sufficient and comprehensive information to conduct doctoral studies. These materials also allow self-study opportunities, engage students in the course content in a gradual manner, and sustain learning interest. Further, doctoral students have opportunities to work with Croatian and foreign experts in the field of pedagogy as part of domestic and international research cooperation. The HEI supports the mobility of doctoral students to carry out research and write their doctoral dissertations. These issues were also confirmed in the interviews with doctoral students.</p>
<p>2. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE PROGRAMME</p>	
<p>2.1. The HEI has established and accepted effective procedures for proposing, approving and delivering doctoral education. The procedures include identification of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social and economic needs.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The HEI has an explicit procedure for the application and the amendment of study programmes by the Regulations on Accreditation of Study Programmes. These are available on the university website. The programme (as well the whole university) works in cooperation with public and private sector, and in doing so serves a wide local community.</p>
<p>2.2. The programme is aligned with the HEI research mission and vision, i.e. research strategy.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The programme is aligned with and serves the HEI research mission and vision. The doctoral programme has been launched in accordance with the Strategy for Knowledge Development of the University of Zadar: Plan of Activities 2009-2014 (July 2009). The programme appears to fulfil the University's mission and being part of</p>

	that contributes in making the whole university a strong regional research institute.
2.3. The HEI systematically monitors the success of the programmes through periodic reviews, and implements improvements.	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>Quality Assurance at the University of Zadar is implemented through the annual activity plans. In every academic year, student evaluations of postgraduate doctoral study programmes are conducted at the University of Zadar. The doctoral study programme is systematically analysed and updated.</p>
2.4. HEI continuously monitors supervisors' performance and has mechanisms for evaluating supervisors, and, if necessary, changing them and mediating between the supervisors and the candidates.	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>According to SER and interviews, there is a compulsory annual evaluation in which candidates provide a short overview of their work and an evaluation of their supervisor and the study programme. The Regulations define the procedure for changing the supervisor when a candidate is not satisfied with the current one. The work of the supervisors and co-supervisors is monitored regularly and evaluated in two ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluations of mentors by students, and self-evaluations by mentors (Supplements 7 and 8). • Students surveys that are conducted annually; Supplement 16).
2.5. HEI assures academic integrity and freedom.	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The HEI has procedures that assure academic integrity (prevent plagiarism and other forms of academic fraud) and freedom of research. According to interviews and SER, students are taught about ethical standards and practices of science as well as the principles of academic freedom and the institutional autonomy of universities.</p>
2.6. The process of developing and defending the thesis proposal is transparent and objective, and includes a public presentation.	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The programme has developed the procedures for submitting, producing, defending, and evaluating the doctoral thesis proposal. The process is transparent and documented, and all the information concerning the procedure can be</p>

	accessed on the university web portal.
2.7. Thesis assessment results from a scientifically sound assessment of an independent committee.	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The study programme has elaborated procedures for writing, assessing and defending a doctoral thesis. The doctoral thesis is assessed by the Committee for the Assessment and Defense of the Doctoral Thesis. At least one member of the Committee is required to be external.</p> <p>The panel recommends an article-based dissertation as one of the options of a thesis defense.</p> <p>Students should also be encouraged and supported to write their thesis in English.</p>
2.8. The HEI publishes all necessary information on the study programme, admissions, delivery and conditions for progression and completion, in accessible outlets and media.	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The Self-evaluation report shows that all necessary information on the study programme, admissions, delivery and conditions for progression and completion are publicly available.</p>
2.9. Funds collected for the needs of doctoral education are distributed transparently and in a way that ensures sustainability and further development of doctoral education (ensures that candidates' research is carried out and supported, so that doctoral education can be completed successfully).	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The programme has a system of funding the programme and the candidates within the institution. Most of the students are financed partly by the Ministry of Science and Education and the Ministry of Defense – their institutions of employment, and from their personal resources.</p> <p>The panel suggests that the doctoral programme should expand its funding system, and explore new ways and opportunities for funding. The programme should offer students more opportunities to do their thesis as full-time students. The documentation provides evidence that the funds are distributed in an open manner.</p>
2.10. Tuition fees are determined on the basis of transparent criteria (and real costs of studying).	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The SER explains financial resources. Fees are allocated as follows: 45 % of all enrolment fees (6 semesters) for the administrative and material costs of organizing the study programme and 55</p>

	% for: travel, expert committees, international meetings. The criteria are transparent.
3. SUPPORT TO DOCTORAL CANDIDATES AND THEIR PROGRESSION	
3.1. The HEI establishes admission quotas with respect to its teaching and supervision capacities.	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The enrolment quota is delivered in SER (Table 1) with respect to the availability of supervisors and co-supervisors, that is, teachers engaged in the study programme and their workload.</p>
3.2. The HEI establishes admission quotas on the basis of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social, economic and other needs.	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The number of students enrolled in the doctoral study programme is partly determined in accordance with educational needs in Croatia. Doctoral students are mostly employed in pre-school, primary and secondary, and tertiary institutions, or in scientific and other institutions. Therefore, this study programme can be expected to make a positive effect on the development of pedagogy/education as a scientific field in Croatia, and also make an impact on the local cultural and social needs. The programme offers tools and options for students' professional development, and to upgrade one's knowledge and skills.</p> <p>The panel noted that being a part-time student (employed in pre-school, primary and secondary, and tertiary institutions) probably holds up the finishing of the thesis. Despite that, we consider this dimension "High quality".</p>
3.3. The HEI establishes the admission quotas taking into account the funding available to the candidates that is, on the basis of the absorption potentials of research projects or other sources of funding.	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>Students enrolled in the doctoral study programme "Quality in Education" are financed partly by the Ministry of Science and Education and the Ministry of Defense – their institutions of employment, and from their personal resources.</p> <p>Furthermore, the doctoral study programme is directly linked to the scientific and research activities of the Department of Pedagogy. Doctoral students are selected primarily on the basis of their proposed topics of research. As a</p>

	<p>consequence, students examine many topics and from various perspectives. One way to improve the research impact of the programme, would be to create clear focus areas of research, to establish research groups around these areas, and to integrate students into these research groups from the very beginning of their studies.</p>
<p>3.4. The HEI should pay attention to the number of candidates admitted as to provide each with an advisor (a potential supervisor). From the point of admission to the end of doctoral education, efforts are invested so that each candidate has a sustainable research plan and is able to complete doctoral research successfully.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The panel advises that an earlier formal definition of the doctoral study research theme/topic might provide student with a faster start, and might help them to complete their studies in a shorter time.</p>
<p>3.5. The HEI ensures that interested, talented and highly motivated candidates are recruited internationally.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>An explicit strategy to recruit international students (and staff as well) is needed. The number of publications and theses submitted in English is low.</p>
<p>3.6. The selection process is public and based on choosing the best applicants.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The panel suggests that as part of the selection process the applicants should submit a research proposal that is evaluated for example by a committee set up by the department/faculty.</p>
<p>3.7. The HEI ensures that the selection procedure is transparent and in line with published criteria, and that there is a transparent complaints procedure.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The SER demonstrates that the selection is clear and that rejected candidates have the right to complain.</p>
<p>3.8. There is a possibility to recognize applicants' and candidates' prior learning.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The HEI has established a quality procedure (e.g. has an ordinance) for recognizing prior learning and achievements relevant for the doctoral programme, e.g. recognition of ECTS from a master or another doctoral programme (began, or completed).</p> <p>A part of the quality procedure could be a research proposal submitted by the candidate</p>

	(see 3.6).
3.9. Candidates' rights and obligations are defined in relevant HEI regulations and a contract on studying that provides for a high level of supervisory and institutional support to the candidates.	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The rights and obligations of the candidates are defined in the ordinance on doctoral study programme at the faculty and university level. The candidates are made aware of their rights and obligations at the start of the admission process.</p>
3.10. There are institutional support mechanisms for candidates' successful progression.	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>Institutional support (forms of supervision) is very good considering the small amount of funds available. Candidates are mainly supported through the Ministry of Science and Education and the Ministry of Defense, their institutions of employment, and from their personal resources. However, to receive more support to complete their studies faster, the programme (and the university) should find new forms and sources of funding.</p>
4. PROGRAMME AND OUTCOMES	
4.1. The content and quality of the doctoral programme are aligned with internationally recognized standards.	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>According to SER and interviews, whilst drafting the doctoral study programme, the members of the Doctoral Study Council have consulted a variety of international institutions and organizations to explore the best practices of setting up a postgraduate programme.</p> <p>The programme is research-oriented and focused on the candidate's independent work, but also encourages collaboration. The programme provides three years of independent research experience, as regulated by the Croatian Qualifications Framework – CROQF). The study programme includes lectures, seminars and independent scientific-research work by students under supervision.</p> <p>The programme is aligned with internationally recognized standards, but there is a lot of work needed to achieve the standards (see all</p>

	<p>improvements are necessary).</p> <p>One of the main issues is the time of completion of the doctoral studies, which is too long. This needs to be shortened to be competitive in the international context.</p>
<p>4.2. Programme learning outcomes, as well as the learning outcomes of modules and subject units, are aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF. They clearly describe the competencies the candidates will develop during the doctoral programme, including the ethical requirements of doing research.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The reaccreditation panel sees that the SER proves that programme learning outcomes, as well as the learning outcomes of modules and subject units, are aligned with the level 8.2 of the CROQF. The programme’s structure, and the course contents support the main aim of the programme. The courses cover all the topics that are required to fulfil the aim of the programme. There is a variety of assignments (such as seminar papers) to achieve the learning outcome. In addition to research competencies, the programme also provides for competencies in research ethics.</p> <p>We evaluate standard 4.2 as ‘High level of quality’, albeit there could be more focus, support and opportunities for scientific writing and presenting in English.</p>
<p>4.3. Programme learning outcomes are logically and clearly connected with teaching contents, as well as the contents included in supervision and research.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>SER and interviews with candidates (and alumni) demonstrate that learning outcomes are logically and clearly aligned with individual courses, supervisory work and research.</p>
<p>4.4. The doctoral programme ensures the achievement of learning outcomes and competencies aligned with the level 8.2 of the CroQF.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The doctoral study programme “Quality in Education” was launched in 2014/15. By now, no doctoral dissertations have been completed and defended. Comparing to international standards, a student should be able to complete her or his studies within 4-5 years. It is stated in the SER that the doctoral study programme is organized to last three years. The completion rate should be increased.</p>

<p>4.5. Teaching methods (and ECTS, if applicable) are appropriate for level 8.2 of the CroQF and assure achievement of clearly defined learning outcomes.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>Teaching methods (and ECTS, if applicable) are appropriate for the level 8.2 of the CROQF and assure the achievement of clearly defined learning outcomes. Interviews with the students revealed that student are provided with the opportunities to give feedback to improve teaching and learning practices.</p>
<p>4.6. The programme enables acquisition of general (transferable) skills.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The programme provides for the acquisition of generic (transferable) skills through workshops and other forms of support such as presentation, writing and project management skills, applying for funding, etc.</p>
<p>4.7. Teaching content is adapted to the needs of current and future research and candidates' training (individual course plans, generic skills etc.).</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The courses delivered are flexible and adapted to individual academic needs and research plans. Interviews with the students revealed that their satisfaction with the programme and with supervision is high.</p>
<p>4.8. The programme ensures quality through international connections and teacher and candidate mobility.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>During the drafting of the postgraduate doctoral study programme in pedagogy, the members of the Doctoral Study Council have consulted a variety of international institutions and organizations to explore the best practices of setting up a postgraduate programme.</p> <p>Doctoral students and staff members are encouraged to participate in international conferences, and provided with the opportunities to participate in exchange programmes. The interviews demonstrated that the staff members and students are systematically informed, for example, about the mobility opportunities and possibilities for international collaborations.</p>

*** NOTE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXPERT PANEL TO THE ASHE'S ACCREDITATION COUNCIL AND QUALITY LABEL**

The role of the Expert Panel in the re-accreditation of doctoral study programmes is manifold. The Expert Panel or part of the Expert Panel visiting a higher education institution drafts a report on the basis of a self-evaluation report, the accompanying relevant documentation, and a site visit to HEI. The draft report is adopted by all members of the Cluster Expert Panel, while the president of the Cluster Expert Panel is responsible for coordinating the assessment levels.

The report contains an assessment on whether a doctoral study programme delivered at a higher education institution complies with the prescribed laws and by-laws, as well as any additional/recommended requirements defined by the Agency's Accreditation Council, and whether a higher education institution can obtain a positive, i.e. satisfactory quality assessment according to the criteria set out in this document. Moreover, the Expert Panel must make recommendations for quality improvement.

Based on the assessment of all these elements, the Expert Panel may propose to the Accreditation Council of the Agency to issue either a confirmation on compliance, a letter of expectation for the period up to three (3) years in which period the higher education institution should eliminate the identified deficiencies, or to deny the license.

If the Expert Panel has assessed that a doctoral study programme delivered by a higher education institution does not meet legal and other requirements or that the quality of a study programme is not ensured (i.e. that HEI does not meet additional requirements or recommendations made by the Accreditation Council, or has a very poor quality assessment), they should propose to the Accreditation Council to deny the license.

If the Expert Panel considers that the relevant laws and bylaws have been met by a higher education institution, but that certain elements mentioned above do not meet the quality requirements, while they consider that the identified shortcomings can be corrected within a time frame of three years, they should issue a letter of expectation.

If the Expert Panel considers that all legal and additional/recommended requirements have been met and the quality assessment is satisfactory, i.e. that a study programme fulfils the learning outcomes appropriately defined for that level and scientific area, they may propose the issuance of a certificate and have a HEI commit to quality improvement and reporting to the Agency during the follow-up period.

Finally, if the Expert Panel has, in accordance with the criteria mentioned above, proposed issuing the certificate of compliance and assessed that, in addition to meeting the minimum quality requirements – i.e. the qualification framework level - for a study programme, the programme should be identified as a doctoral programme of a 'high level of quality', the Expert Panel may propose to the Agency's Accreditation Council that such a doctoral study programme be awarded the 'high quality label'. Thus the Agency, with the consent of the Accreditation Council, grants a higher education institution the right to use the label for their academic and promotional purposes.

The 'high quality label' cannot be proposed or awarded to a programme or a higher education institution that does not comply with the requirements laid down by the laws and bylaws mentioned

in this document, and any additional requirements recommended by the Accreditation Council. Moreover, the quality assessment awarded to a study programme should reflect a high level of quality inasmuch that at least half of the sub-criteria in each of the quality assessment criteria are assessed as being of high quality. The Accreditation Council of the Agency issues a final opinion on the label awarded. The content and form of the quality labels shall be prescribed by the Agency in a relevant general act.

The Accreditation Council of the Agency discusses the final report with all recommendations and suggestions, and issues their opinion on the report. Based on a prior opinion of the Accreditation Council, the Agency issues an Accreditation Recommendation to the minister responsible for science and higher education, and upon receipt of the minister's final decision on the outcome of the procedure, awards the 'high quality label' to a higher education institution.