



**Report
of the Expert Panel
on the Reaccreditation
of the University Postgraduate (Doctoral) Programme
Pedagogy and culture of contemporary school
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, J. J. Strossmayer University
of Osijek**

**Date of the visit:
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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 Prevention science and disability study on the basis of the Self-Evaluation Report of the Programme, other documentation submitted and a visit to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, J. J. Strossmayer University of Osijek.

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. President of the Expert Panel, Prof. Nihad Bunar, Stockholm University, Sweden
2. Dr. Rachel Shanks, University of Aberdeen, United Kingdom,
3. Prof. Juana M Sancho Gil, University of Barcelona, Spain
4. Prof. Rachel Msetfi, University of Limerick, Ireland
5. Dr. Matthew Schuelka, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom,
6. Prof. Bosse Bergstedt, Lund University, Sweden,
7. Justīne Viķe, Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia,
8. Ieva Bloma, European University Institute, Italy,
9. Prof. Annekathrin Schacht, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Germany,
10. Prof. Cathy Craig, Queen's University Belfast, United Kingdom,
11. Dr. Michel Denis, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, France,
12. Prof. Thomas Morton, University of Exeter, United Kingdom,
13. Dr. Hrvoje Stojić, London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom.

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

1. Prof. Nihad Bunar, Stockholm University, Sweden
2. Dr. Matthew Schuelka, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom (moderator)
3. Prof. Bosse Bergstedt, Lund University, Sweden,
4. Ieva Bloma, European University Institute, Italy.

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

- Dr. Josip Hrgović, coordinator, ASHE,
- Lida Lamza, Report translator, ASHE.

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,
- External stakeholders,*
- Alumni.*

*While there were scheduled sessions to meet with external stakeholders and alumni, this was not fulfilled to the satisfaction of the Expert Panel. The 'external stakeholder' was not an external stakeholder at all, but rather a Faculty member. The Expert Panel expected to meet with community members from outside of the University. This perhaps highlights the issue of relations between the HEI and community organizations (see Recommendation 3 below). The meeting with the 'alumni' was unsatisfactory in that there was only one alumnus and they were an exceptional case and not the typical part-time student experience.

The Expert Panel also had a tour of the library, IT rooms, student register desk and the classrooms.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme contained in the licence: Postgraduate university (doctoral) study;
Pedagogy and culture of contemporary school

Institution delivering the programme: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, J. J. Strossmayer
University of Osijek

Institution providing the programme: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, J. J. Strossmayer
University of Osijek

Place of delivery: Osijek

Scientific area and field: Social Sciences, Pedagogy

Number of doctoral candidates: 32

Number of funded doctoral candidates: 5

Number of self-funded and those funded by employer: 27

Number of inactive doctoral candidates (still entitled to graduate): 1

Number of supervisors: 9

Number of teachers: 11

Ratio of officially appointed supervisors and their doctoral candidates: 1:1.7

Ratio of potential supervisors to total No. of doctoral students: 1:2.5

Taught / research ratio: 1:3

Taught component: 33% (60 ECTS)

Research component: 66% (60 ECTS)

Learning outcomes of the study programme (as stated in SER):

- LO 1: KNOWLEDGE
- LO 2: UNDERSTANDING
- LO 3: APPLICATION
- LO 4: ANALYSING
- LO 5: SYNTHESISING AND CREATING
- LO 6: EVALUATION AND CRITICAL THINKING
- LO 7: GENERIC AND SPECIFIC SKILLS OF SCIENTIFIC-RESEARCH APPROACH
- LO 8: INDEPENDENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY.

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:

issue a letter of expectation for the period up to three (3) years in which period the higher education institution should make the necessary improvements.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. Provide more incentive and support for faculty to publish in rigorous, peer-reviewed, international journals. The HEI should also recognize a paper at the moment of acceptance for publication, rather than the actual printing of the paper, as there can be a significant gap. (See 1.1 & 1.3).
2. Assign students with a research supervisor at the very beginning of the programme, even if that supervisor may change once the thesis topic has been chosen and approved. The student and supervisor can also immediately begin working on a research plan. (See 1.4 & 3.4).
3. The HEI can do more to support doctoral candidates' research and academic independence in the field, particularly in terms of making more positive connections and communication with students' employers and community organizations. The HEI can do a better job in articulating the benefit of their programme to the local community and employers. (See 2.5).
4. The HEI can do more to attract students not only from all areas of Croatia, but also regionally and internationally. Additionally, the HEI can do more to support students and faculty to engage in international scholarly communities and partnerships. (See 2.8, 3.5 & 4.8¹).
5. Provide a clear procedure for student voices to be heard, particularly if there is a serious complaint about a supervisor. The student should be able to approach an independent third-party to formalize a complaint or issue. (See 3.10).
6. More milestone checks should be in place regarding the progression of the thesis. This also includes a better alignment of learning outcomes to *both* coursework and thesis completion. We recommend that a learning outcome/curriculum map be made for the entire programme so that the 'big picture' of student learning can be more accessible. (See 3.10, 4.2, 4.3, & 4.4).

ADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. It is recognized that the HEI is motivated and enthusiastic, with a dedication to improvement.
2. There are appropriate procedures for feedback, evaluation, and quality assurance within the programme and Faculty.
3. It is recognized that the HEI has ambition for increased internationalization and interdisciplinarity.
4. The HEI and faculty are transparent and accessible.
5. The study programme provides opportunities for learning and skills-acquisition, as well as supports regional scholarship and communities.

¹ Corrected based on factual error in the original report, adopted on 96th session of the Accreditation Council (22 May 2018).

DISADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

1. Even though there is ambition for internationalization, there is still a lack of sustained research and scholarly activities with other European and international partner institutions and colleagues.
2. The learning outcomes need to be better thought-through and aligned with all aspects of the programme.
3. Students expressed difficulty trying to complete the programme balanced with full-time employment and home obligations, particularly with employers that do not understand the benefits of the student gaining a higher qualification.
4. Students were not very involved in the research activities of their supervisors and other faculty members.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. Quality assurance and performance monitoring activities by the Faculty, which include student satisfaction surveys. It is clear that the Faculty have taken these surveys seriously and implemented concrete changes as a result.
2. Increasing opportunities for professional development for faculty.
3. Software is used to detect student plagiarism.
4. Resilience of the HEI, proved by an effective management of crises caused by sudden reduction of teachers, due to death and resignation.

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

Minimal legal conditions:	
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 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 (MOZVAG)
5. Student: teacher ratio at the HEI is below 30:1.	YES (MOZVAG)
6. HEI ensures that doctoral theses are public.	YES
The doctoral dissertations defended within this study programme are published on the Dabar interface (https://repositorij.ffos.hr/).	
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 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.	YES (Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek is in charge of this procedure, and HEI also proscribes its part of the procedure)
Additional/ recommended conditions of the ASHE Accreditation Council for passing a positive opinion	
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 (partly implemented).
3. The doctoral programme is aligned with the HEI's research strategy.	YES (Strategic Research Programme)

	2013 to 2017 in Annex 6)
4. The candidate : supervisor ratio at the HEI is not above 3:1.	YES (1:2.46)
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.	a)YES b)YES c)YES d)NO e)YES f)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.	YES. (NO before 28 June 2017)
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.	N/A

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

<p>1. RESOURCES: TEACHERS, SUPERVISORS, RESEARCH CAPACITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	
<p>1.1. HEI is distinguished by its scientific/artistic achievements in the discipline in which the doctoral study programme is delivered.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>In Table 1 of the Self-Evaluation Report, the HEI has presented a list of 16 teachers to various degrees involved in the delivery of the doctoral program in Pedagogy and Contemporary School Culture. The number of teachers has obviously varied over the years and is down to 11 (7 internal and 4 external) per 30 June 2017. The 16 listed teachers have together 234 publications (books, book-chapters, articles, conference proceedings and manuals) in the past 5 years, which makes it 14.6 publications per teacher, or around 3 per year.</p> <p>The Expert Panel finds that the majority of scientific output is in the Croatian language and published in in-house and national journals, and by national publishers. A general review of these publications leads to a conclusion that they are of good quality and relevant for the discipline. However, the teachers – although active participants in international conferences – have scarce output published in international peer-reviewed journals. This is important since a blind-review process guarantees high-quality, access to a wider international audience, and greater scientific impact.</p> <p>According to information provided in <i>Hrvatska Znanstvena Bibliografija</i> (Croatian Scientific Bibliography), 16 teachers (8 from Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Pedagogy, 5 from Faculty of Education, University of Osijek and 3 from University of Zagreb) have together, in the past five years, published 13 articles in international peer-reviewed journals. This makes it less than an article per teacher. Even more troubling is that 10 teachers have no such publications at all. The 8 teachers from FHSS, Department of Pedagogy (the discipline in which the doctoral study is delivered), have together 7 articles in international peer-reviewed journal in the past five years.</p> <p>The teachers' participation in and/or leadership of research projects is not very prominent. According to information provided at http://www.ffos.unios.hr/znanstveni-portal/domaci-znanstveni-i-strucni-projekti and http://www.ffos.unios.hr/pedagogija/projekti, during the</p>

	<p>last five years the listed teachers have lead/participated in two domestic and no international research projects. Based on information from http://www.ffos.unios.hr/pedagogija/collaboration, the scope of national and international cooperation is scarce and mostly confined to faculty staffs' participation in editorial boards of regional journals.</p> <p>The Expert Panel concludes that with regard to scientific achievement in the discipline, the HEI is positively distinguished in Croatia and regionally. There is a relatively large number of publications in in-house and national journals and books/book chapters with good quality. The HEI teachers' publications in international peer-reviewed journals, participation in national and international research projects and collaboration is rather scarce. The HEI should provide more support and incentives to its teachers to get their work published in international and peer-reviewed journals and for getting involved in research projects and collaboration. Our recommendation is therefore that HEI should present a comprehensive development strategy on how to achieve improvement with regards to these two goals for the period 2018-2020.</p>
<p>1.2. The number and workload of teachers involved in the study programme ensure quality doctoral education.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>During the interviews, it became clear that the Faculty has encountered unforeseen circumstances with regard to teachers supply due to death, resignation, and retirement. The Faculty is taking necessary steps to deal with these circumstances, which is facilitated by an agreement on partnership with Faculty of Education in Osijek and Department of Education at University of Zagreb. The Expert Panel finds these agreements not just positive, but crucial for the program's sustainability. More than 50% of teaching at the doctoral study programme is delivered by the Faculty's own staff. Teacher-student ratio is below 1:3 and the teachers' workload is, with a few exceptions, around the limit of 360 norm hours.</p>
<p>1.3. The teachers are highly qualified researchers who actively engage with the topics they teach, providing a quality doctoral programme.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>Teachers are qualified researchers, and they actively engage with the topics they teach. However, their research has not been sufficiently critically scrutinized by the international scientific community, i.e. through the system of blind peer-review in journals. It also appears that the program has had limited benefit from opportunities for international cooperation. Our recommendation is therefore similar to 1.1. The HEI should provide more</p>

	<p>support and incentives to its teachers to get their work published in international and peer-reviewed journals and for getting involved in research projects and collaboration. Therefore, our recommendation is that the HEI should present a comprehensive development strategy on how to achieve improvement with regards to these two goals for the period 2018-2020.</p>
<p>1.4. The number of supervisors and their qualifications provide for quality in producing the doctoral thesis.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary There are 9 appointed supervisors guiding 15 doctoral candidates. Additionally, there are 8 advisors advising 17 doctoral candidates. The ratio of supervisor-student is less than 1:3. However, the Expert Panel is critical to this artificial division between supervisors and advisors and recommends HEI to appoint a supervisor to all doctoral candidates at the very beginning of their admission. This will help students to earlier gain knowledge of various scientific fields, theories, methodologies, and develop skills in the art of writing papers and theses. This will enable a doctoral candidate to be immediately introduced into a scientific community and start working on his/her research. This would also, in our opinion and based on our experiences, further promote independence and skills for critical reflection of young researchers. The supervisors have good qualifications to provide for quality in producing the doctoral thesis. Nevertheless, as previously pointed out, the supervisors need to have incentives and support in publishing their research in international peer-reviewed journals, for getting involved in national and international cooperation and in nationally and/or internationally funded research projects. The Expert Panel is also critical to a large number of supervisors relatively new to that role. The HEI should put in additional efforts to recruit more senior supervisors.</p>
<p>1.5. The HEI has developed methods of assessing the qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors.</p>	<p>High level of quality The Expert Panel finds methods of assessing the qualifications and competencies of teachers and supervisors satisfactory. There are a number of evaluation forms disseminated among doctoral students aimed at assessing the quality of courses and supervision. The results, mostly very positive, are listed in the Self-Evaluation Report.</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 The Expert Panel finds that the HEI provides its doctoral students, teachers, and supervisors with satisfactory</p>

	quality resources for research as required by the program discipline.
2. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE PROGRAMME	
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>High level of quality</p> <p>The basic mission of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences is to educate students to meet measurable learning standards and acquire distinct knowledge, professional competencies, and skills. The programme is in line with many other fundamental strategic documents from both Croatia and Europe. Its aim is clear and includes identification of scientific/artistic, cultural, social, and economic needs. The programme also relies on the existing international standards for the transformation and enhancement of higher education, with an emphasis on the concept of lifelong learning.</p>
2.2. The programme is aligned with the HEI research mission and vision, i.e. research strategy.	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The Strategic Plan of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences sets off from the idea of the Faculty being a strong regional, international, and national centre of humanities and social sciences; with a focus on systematic development, strengthening of its research groups, and fostering teaching programmes that offer students the knowledge and skills required to meet the challenges of contemporary society. The programme is fully aligned with the Strategic Plan as it fits in with the mission and vision of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and promotes its core values. The programme has an explicit praxis focus, which is consistent with the research area.</p>
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 and performance are monitored at all levels by means of periodic external evaluation, self-evaluation conducted by the teachers delivering the studies, and evaluation by the students. The achievement of the goals set by programme is analysed by means of surveys completed by the doctoral candidates, formative evaluation, and upon completion of their studies, with particular regard to the type of job for which the acquired competencies are needed and the degree of their qualification for the job. The evaluation procedure is described in detail and change has been implemented in the programme since the last evaluation.</p>
2.4. HEI continuously monitors supervisors' performance and has	High level of quality

<p>mechanisms for evaluating supervisors, and, if necessary, changing them and mediating between the supervisors and the candidates.</p>	<p>HEI continuously monitors supervisors' performance and has mechanisms for evaluating supervisors. An example of this is the annual reports and the individual research plans, submitted by the doctoral candidates. All doctoral candidates and supervisors electronically received this evaluation and returned it to the Head of the Doctoral Programme. This type of monitoring is initiated for the first time in this academic year. Besides the existing forms and templates, the surveys for the evaluation of the supervisory relationship and the supervision process, the Guide for Supervisors and professional development (workshops for supervisors) have been developed. At the site-visit interviews by the Expert Panel, the students say that they are satisfied and that most worked well. If there is any problem, then the senior management will meet with the supervisor.</p>
<p>2.5. HEI assures academic integrity and freedom.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary Academic freedom to develop as independent researchers is an important element of PhD study. It proves difficult to fulfil this purpose, as the program is controlled by determined courses and implementation requirements, and that the majority of the students carry out their studies close to their workplaces. This requires special measures to strengthen academic freedom. The program needs better communication with the workplaces the students come from. Greater insight into the historical development of the academy should be included in the program. The same applies training about ethical aspects of research and writing.</p>
<p>2.6. The process of developing and defending the thesis proposal is transparent and objective, and includes a public presentation.</p>	<p>High level of quality The procedure and the conditions for the application, acceptance, evaluation, and defence of the doctoral dissertation are in accordance with the Statute of the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek. The procedure follows generally accepted academic rules, it is transparent and objective, and includes a public presentation. There is a public announcement of the doctoral dissertation before the defence.</p>
<p>2.7. Thesis assessment results from a scientifically sound assessment of an independent committee.</p>	<p>High level of quality The programme encourages the participation of external members in the committees, and it is stipulated in the regulations that at least one member of the Committee for the Evaluation and Defence of the Doctoral Dissertation should be external, i.e. a person who is neither a teacher</p>

	<p>delivering the programme nor a staff member at the Faculty. This is to make sure that the committee really is objective and independent from the surroundings in which the thesis was made. With regard to the two defended doctoral dissertations, there were four external members of the committee, and two were internal.</p>
<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>	<p>Improvements are necessary The program publishes necessary information on the web pages of the postgraduate university study programme in Pedagogy titled Pedagogy and Contemporary School Culture. There is also an article about the Doctoral Programme and photos of other interesting activities. Study Programme is available in pdf format. The program needs to be better at reaching out with information internationally, to enable students from countries other than Croatia. Today it is difficult for foreign students to enrol.</p>
<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>	<p>High level of quality The funds of the programme come from the own resources of the Faculty. The use of these funds is prescribed, at the level of the general act, on the use of own revenues. This distributes transparently and in a way that ensures sustainability and further development of doctoral education. The funds of the programme, i.e. tuition income, are recorded as a separate item in accounting.</p>
<p>2.10. Tuition fees are determined on the basis of transparent criteria (and real costs of studying).</p>	<p>High level of quality The predictable costs of the delivery of the postgraduate university study programme Pedagogy and Contemporary School Culture amount to 10,000 HRK per semester, based on a quota of 20 enrolled students. The programme can be funded in different ways, by Ministry of Science Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia, institutions that refer their employees to the Doctoral Programme, scholarship providers, and students. Financing is the same as for similar programs in Croatia.</p>
<p>3. SUPPORT TO DOCTORAL CANDIDATES AND THEIR PROGRESSION</p>	
<p>3.1. The HEI establishes admission quotas with respect to its teaching and supervision capacities.</p>	<p>High level of quality The HEI assesses its teaching and supervision capacities in the process of establishing admission quotas. The recent problems related to the reduction of staff have been taken into account when deciding on enrolment of a new cohort.</p>

<p>3.2. The HEI establishes admission quotas on the basis of scientific/ artistic, cultural, social, economic and other needs.</p>	<p>High level of quality The HEI takes into account scientific, social and economic needs of the region, as well as across the country in establishing admission quotas.</p>
<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>	<p>Improvements are necessary The Expert Panel did not obtain confidence that the HEI established the admission quotas taking into account the absorption potential of the ongoing or planned research projects. As a matter of fact, the students were not aware of the research projects carried out by their Professors. It would be recommended to ensure more chances for the students to be informed about and to become incorporated in the research carried out by their Professors.</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 It would be advisable to provide the students with a research supervisor (instead of a study advisor) from the very beginning of the study process to facilitate the elaboration of the dissertation topic. Currently, during the first semester a study advisor is assigned to the student. The official supervisor is usually assigned only <i>after</i> the approval of the dissertation topic. As for the research plan, in the written information the HEI claims that each student has a sustainable research plan, however, the students have expressed concern that in practice the research plan can be a very formal one, simply stating the courses and the exams the student must pass. Also, it appears that there is no clear requirement to elaborate the research plan from the very beginning of the doctoral studies. Currently, the research plan is a prerequisite for enrolment into the 3rd study year. It implies that in the first two years the research plan is not mandatory. Thus, the recommendation would be twofold: (1) To assign an official supervisor to each student from the very beginning so that the student is provided with proper support in the development of the dissertation topic. It also implies that additional procedures might be put in place for such cases where the supervisor is changed before the approval of the dissertation topic or if a co-supervisor is assigned during the same period (in general, such procedures already exist but – given that there is no official supervisor assigned before the defence of the dissertation topic – the procedures refer to the stage <i>after</i> the approval of the thesis topic).</p>

	<p>(2) To require a mandatory research plan to be established in the very beginning of the doctoral studies. Furthermore, it is vital to turn the requirement about the elaboration of the research plan into a less formalistic but instead a more practical and individual tool to organise the development of the student's research skills and to track the progress (s)he has made. This should be a plan which, primarily, focuses on developing the student's research skills, according to his/her research interests and the existing gaps in the skills. There is a relatively small benefit to gain if the research plan states that the student will follow a certain number of courses and will pass a certain number of exams, given that all the students of the cohort to a large extent must follow the same courses (i.e. research plan would be identical in this aspect for everybody thus failing to reflect individual needs in terms of students' research skills' development).</p> <p>A related issue here is the structure of the first two study years and the prerequisites for enrolment in the 2nd and 3rd year of the studies which prescribe that the minimum required ECTS can be obtained almost only by following taught courses (i.e. without fundamental work on student's own research). More emphasis should be put on developing students' research skills from the very first day of the programme. If this is done, the research plan would reflect such changes and would become more focused on the needs and the progress shown of a student as an <i>independent researcher</i>.</p>
<p>3.5. The HEI ensures that interested, talented and highly motivated candidates are recruited internationally.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>The HEI does not particularly aim to attract international students, although this currently appears to be part of their strategy.</p> <p>The information about the programme on the Faculty's website is practically available only in Croatian, The website offers several language choices (English, German, Hungarian, and Russian), however, when one actually clicks on the mentioned language choices, there is no further information available. The work on expanding the website in non-Croatian languages is obviously in progress. Without the information on the programme available in foreign languages, the recruitment of international candidates is difficult to achieve.</p>

<p>3.6. The selection process is public and based on choosing the best applicants.</p>	<p>High level of quality The Expert Panel is confident that the criteria of the selection process are public and well-known to the students (former applicants).</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 The selection criteria and enrolment procedure is transparent. The students were aware of the complaints procedure in relation to the enrolment procedure (though they had not been in the need of using it).</p>
<p>3.8. There is a possibility to recognize applicants' and candidates' prior learning.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary The HEI takes into account the background of the student. However, such recognition appears to take place in the situation where the newly enrolled student needs to follow (individually) additional taught courses to fill the identified gaps. The Expert Panel did not obtained the necessary evidence that the recognition of the students' previous learning takes place also in reverse situation – i.e. that the student might be exempted from passing certain taught courses of the programme is (s)he had already studied similar courses in the previous degree(s). Thus, the approach towards the structure of the programme for students could be made more flexible and less rigid in this regard.</p>
<p>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>	<p>High level of quality There is an ordinance regulating the rights and obligations of the students. Also, the students sign a contract with the Faculty upon beginning their doctoral studies. During the interviews, the students showed that they were aware of their rights and obligations in relation to the study process, supervision, and institutional support in general.</p>
<p>3.10. There are institutional support mechanisms for candidates' successful progression.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary The assessment of the criterion 3.10. is partly related to the assessment of the 3.4. above. Firstly, the research plan should be introduced as a mandatory requirement already from the very beginning of the studies. The actual content of the research plan should be less formalistic and more individual and more focused on research aspect and assessment of the student's research skills and necessary improvements throughout his/her doctoral studies. The students have expressed concern about the scientific aspect of their studies and would like to have received more help in developing their scientific skills (e.g. training in methods). Such considerations should be reflected in their individual research plans and the</p>

	<p>necessary measures should be taken by the Faculty when such needs are identified. <i>For more detail see the assessment for 3.4. above.</i></p> <p>Secondly, the doctoral programme could benefit from adding more milestones (i.e. quality control moments) as regards the development of the students' dissertation, in particular during the first two years of the studies. This would make the process of dissertation research more gradual and might work as a measure to avoid such situations where the students "suddenly" show insufficient thesis progress in their 3rd (and final) year of the studies. Such milestones could be reflected in the prerequisites for the enrolment in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year. Currently, the prerequisites for the enrolment in the 1st and 2ⁿ year do not have enough focus on monitoring and controlling the progress of the students' research projects.</p> <p>Thirdly, the HEI might want to review its procedures on dealing with possible complaints from the students about the supervisors or the supervision process. More precisely, it was not clear what exactly the procedure is when the supervisee wants to complain about his/her supervisor who at the same time happens to hold the main administrative position of the programme.</p> <p>Fourthly, the HEI might want to reconsider if the students are really motivated to assess their supervisors and the supervision process openly and unreservedly, if there is no anonymity guaranteed for them. In particular, this applies to the situations where the supervisor has only 1 supervisee. Thus, it would be easy for the supervisor to understand from which student the potentially negative assessment has come.</p>
<p>4. PROGRAMME AND OUTCOMES</p>	
<p>4.1. The content and quality of the doctoral programme are aligned with internationally recognized standards.</p>	<p>High level of quality</p> <p>The scope and breadth of coursework is adequately aligned to international standards, with a wide variety of content and topics covered that are appropriate to the overall programme and developing student knowledge and expertise. It is clear that the Faculty are aware of, and have made efforts, to align the programme with Croatian, regional, European, and international standards.</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</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary</p> <p>Whilst the learning outcomes are in most ways aligned with the CroQF level 8.2, it is less clear how the learning outcomes are actually used in practice during both</p>

<p>the competencies the candidates will develop during the doctoral programme, including the ethical requirements of doing research.</p>	<p>coursework and the assessment of the thesis. More thought needs to be placed in thinking through how <i>each</i> course can demonstrate mastery of multiple learning outcomes, if not all of them (ideally). It is recommended that a learning outcome and curriculum map be made so that not only have the learning outcomes been thought-through systematically, but all faculty members will have a knowledge of the overall scheme for student learning. Each learning outcome should be clear in how the student will demonstrate or deliver in order to achieve mastery of that outcome.</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>Improvements are necessary Following on from 4.2., learning outcomes can be more effectively utilized to support coursework and thesis work. It is clear from the Self-Report and site visit by the Expert Panel that there are a variety of pedagogical methods employed, and the students were satisfied with the modes of learning and content delivery. However, students were less clear about how particular lessons fit into the bigger learning outcome-picture. As suggested in 4.2, a more explicit and clear learning outcome map would be useful for both faculty and students.</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 A similar comment here as in 4.1 above. While the thesis does represent an implicit fulfilment of programme learning outcomes simply by its submission and acceptance, it is unclear how the learning outcomes are explicitly assessed in the thesis evaluation process. According to the HEI, the learning outcomes are not used in thesis evaluation so it is unclear how they ensure the achievement of learning outcomes from the thesis.</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 During the site-visit, students and alumni reported a variety of teaching methods that included a lot of seminar and discussion-based activities, writing assessments, and oral exams.</p>
<p>4.6. The programme enables acquisition of general (transferable) skills.</p>	<p>High level of quality Courses and learning outcomes provide opportunities for skills-acquisition that is generalizable and transferable.</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 Courses provide specific focus on research skills and methods training, although the Expert Panel supports further provision of specific research methods workshops and training.</p>
<p>4.8. The programme ensures quality through international connections and teacher and candidate mobility.</p>	<p>Improvements are necessary Awareness of international standards and practices are clear (see 4.1 above), but there is little support for faculty and students to engage in European or international scholarly communities. A primary mechanism to support this for students is to support this for faculty, so that they may introduce their supervisees to international research networks.</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.